

# A TOOLKIT FOR MONITORING AND EVALUATING CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION

BOOKLET

3

How to measure the scope, quality and outcomes of children's participation



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.

This guide was written by Gerison Lansdown and Claire O'Kane

## Acknowledgements

So many children and young people, adults and agencies have made significant contributions to shaping and improving this toolkit. We are sorry not to be able to mention all the individual names, but we really appreciate the crucial inputs that every individual involved has made.

We would like to particularly acknowledge steering group committee members who have steered and guided the inter-agency piloting process over a two-year period: Kavita Ratna (Concerned for Working Children), Alana Kapell (Office of the Special Representative on Violence Against Children), Bill Badham (Participation Works), Sara Osterland, Sarah Stevenson, Vera Gahm, and Elspeth Bo (Plan International), Rachele Tardi Forgacs, Bill Bell and Hannah Mehta (Save the Children), Miriam Kramer and Judith Diers (UNICEF), Phillipa Lei and Paul Stephenson (World Vision). Thanks also to contributions from Anne Crowley, Jo Feather, Tricia Young, Clare Hanbury, Ravi Karkara, Annette Giertsen and Monica Lindvall.

We also appreciate the immense efforts by the focal points and agencies involved in the piloting process and in participating in the global reflection workshop in Ghana: James Boyon, Gbedzonie Akonasu, Gift Bralaye Ejemi, Gabriel Semeton Hunge, African Movement of Working Children and Youth Nigeria  
Roshini Nuggehalli and Anitha Sampath, Concerned for Working Children, India  
Nohemi Torres and Harry Shier, CESESMA Nicaragua  
Lucy Morris and Brussels Mughogho, EveryChild Malawi

Edwin John, NCN, India  
Jose Campang and Helen Maralees, Plan Guatemala  
Santiago Devila, Plan Latin America, and Plan colleagues and partners in Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras, and Paraguay  
Alice Behrendt, Plan International Senegal  
Francis Salako, Akakpo Dofoe Kafui, Ali Essoh, Kegbao Fousseni, Plan Togo  
Dev Ale, Save the Children Nepal and Gurung Devraj, Tuki Nepal  
Clare Back, Rebecca Lawson, and Zoe Davidson, Save the Children  
Gregory Dery, Mary Appiah, Faustina Tietaah, Eugenia Atami, Cecilia Andersen, Philip Boadu, Doris Adjoa Arkoh Tetteh, Moses Gbekte, and Phillipa Nkansah, World Vision Ghana  
Manyando Chisenga, Lifuna Simushi, Ignatius Mufwidakule, World Vision Zambia  
Stella Nkuramah-Ababio and Juliane Simon, World Vision

We also extend our appreciation to the Oak Foundation, for funding the piloting and development of the toolkit, and also for a unique and consistent dedication to promoting genuine expressions of children's voices. We would like to thank the team in the Child Abuse Programme, and more particularly Jane Warburton, Fassil Mariam and Anastasia Anthopoulos.

Thanks also to Ravi Wickremasinghe, Sue Macpherson and Bharti Mepani of Save the Children for support in the final stages of publication.

Published by  
Save the Children  
1 St John's Lane  
London EC1M 4AR  
UK  
+44 (0)20 7012 6400  
savethechildren.org.uk

First published 2014

© The Save the Children Fund 2014

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Cover photo: Members of Child Brigade, an organisation of street and working children in Bangladesh. (Photo: Ken Hermann)

Typeset by Grasshopper Design Company  
Printed by Simmons Ltd

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# HOW TO USE THIS BOOKLET

This booklet describes why it is important to measure the scope, quality and outcomes of participation, and provides tables to help you do it; the tools that you need are in **Booklet 5**. The **scope** of participation involves looking at when children get involved (the point of engagement), what level they get involved at (level of engagement), and which children get involved (inclusive engagement).

We describe the three different levels of children's participation: consultative, collaborative, and child-led, using case studies from different countries to illustrate what the different approaches mean in practice. On pages 14–15, you will find two tables that you can work through with different groups of stakeholders (adults and children) to help you measure the scope of children's participation in your programme.

You will also need to measure the **quality** of children's participation, assessing whether the programme concerned has met the nine basic requirements for ethical and meaningful participation. You will find a table on page 21 that you can work through and complete with different groups (stakeholders) who were involved in the programme to measure the quality of children's participation.

Finally, you will need to measure the **outcomes** of children's participation, considering the programme's achievements in terms of behaviour change and attitudes among the children and adults most directly involved, but also the wider impacts of children's participation in the local community or at national level. There are tables to help you do this, on pages 31 and 34.



PHOTO: MATS LIGNELL/SAVE THE CHILDREN

**A member of a school child protection committee in Afghanistan.**

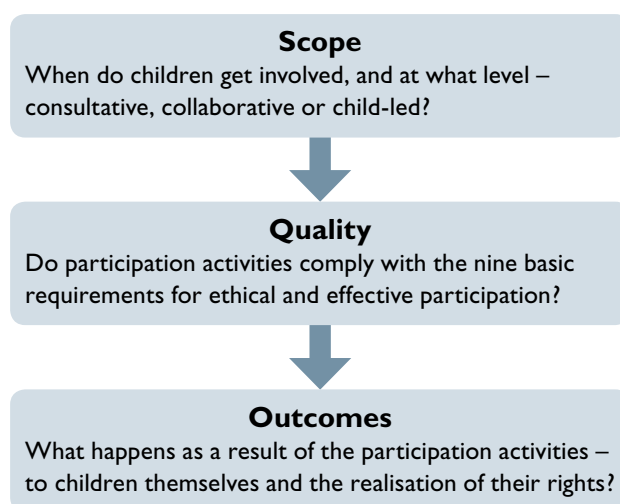
# INTRODUCTION

As well as creating an environment which is conducive to respect for children's participation, it is also necessary to develop mechanisms to enable you to assess how effective and ethical specific participation programmes are in practice. Too often, participatory programmes are created without clear objectives, and with no real indicators or benchmarks against which to measure progress. This can lead to frustration on the part of children and young people, and an inability to identify what is needed to improve the programme. It also makes it difficult to sell the importance of the programme to donors or to policy-makers. Furthermore, a commitment to monitoring and evaluation enables children themselves to be more actively involved at all stages of the programme cycle – focusing on what they would like to achieve through participation, being able to determine whether they succeeded, and identifying what needs to be done differently in order to become more effective.

There are three distinct dimensions to participation that you will need to measure:

- **Scope** – what degree of participation has been achieved, at what stages of programme development, and with which children? In other words – **What is being done?**
- **Quality** – to what extent have participatory processes complied with the agreed standards for ethical and effective practice? In other words – **How is it being done?**
- **Outcomes** – what have been the outcomes of children's participation, on children and young people themselves, on their families, on the organisation supporting or group supporting children's participation, and in terms of the wider realisation of children's rights in their families, local communities, and at local and national governmental levels? In other words – **What has changed?**

**Figure 1: Dimensions of participation**



This booklet explains each of these three dimensions in more detail, and includes a series of tables you can use to help you track the nature of participation in the programmes in which you are involved. The tables can be used at the beginning of a new initiative or can be applied to an ongoing programme on a regular basis to enable you to monitor progress over time.

The aim is to work with children, staff, volunteers, officials and other stakeholders to assess where you consider your programme fits in each of the tables. This will provide you with a visual overview of the scope, quality and outcomes of children's participation and what you need to be monitoring. It should help you determine whether children's participation is contributing to meeting your objectives, what is working well, and where the programme needs strengthening or developing. You will also be able to start examining how the three dimensions are interrelated. For example, you can analyse whether engaging children early on in a programme and giving them a greater degree of responsibility affects the quality of their participation. You will be able to see whether improvements in the quality of participation contribute to more effective outcomes.

As emphasised in **Booklet 2**, *Measuring the creation of a participatory and respectful environment for children*, you will need to ensure that you consider the views of all relevant stakeholders, as different groups may have very different perspectives on the extent to which participation is taking place, is meaningful, and is achieving change. You should always include girls and boys from different backgrounds, and may also include staff and partners, parents, local community leaders, teachers, and local or national politicians (depending on the nature of the programme). To find out more about how to involve different stakeholders, read **Booklet 4**.

The term 'programme' in this booklet is used to encompass a very wide range of activities, including peer education, consultations, conferences, children's parliaments, unions, clubs and committees, involvement in the media, policy development, policy advocacy and campaigning, and 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.

# I THE SCOPE OF CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION IN PROGRAMMES

## UNDERSTANDING THE SCOPE OF PARTICIPATION

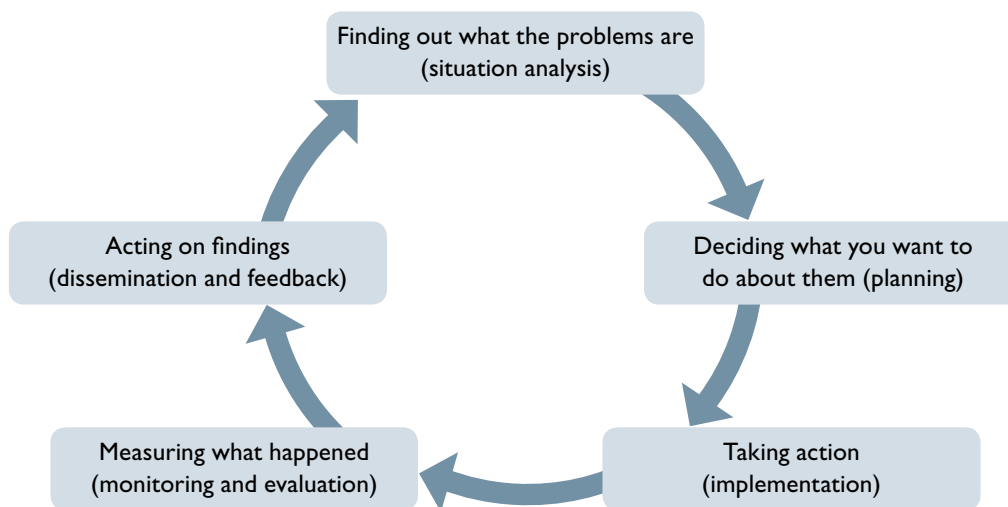
In order to assess the scope of children and young people's participation activities, you need to consider three questions:

- When do children get involved? (point of engagement)
- At what level do they get involved? (level of engagement)
- Which children get involved? (inclusive engagement)

### WHEN DO CHILDREN GET INVOLVED?

Children can be involved at different stages of the programme cycle (see figure) – from the initial concept through to implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. The earlier they are involved, the greater their degree of influence is likely to be.

**Figure 2: Stages of the programme cycle**



#### **a) Finding out what the problems are (situation analysis)**

Children can contribute a great deal to helping others understand their lives and the issues that are most significant for them. Adults should not assume that they have the knowledge and insight into what is important for children. Before undertaking a programme, therefore, it is important to ensure that it reflects children's concerns as stated by children themselves, and that children consider the proposed activities as relevant to their lives.

#### **b) Deciding what you want to do about them (planning)**

Children can play a part in helping plan what programmes/advocacy work might be undertaken by an organisation or group. If children have been involved in identifying problems or significant issues, it is obviously important to ensure that those views are taken seriously when drawing up plans for programme activities. The extent to which children play a part in this process can vary considerably. They can also undertake this process within their own groups or organisations.

### c) Taking action (implementation)

Once a programme is decided on, children can play a key role in its implementation. For example, they might play a part as researchers finding out more about one aspect of children's lives, run a school council, contribute ongoing ideas and feedback for developing a children's facility, or design and run an advocacy campaign.

### d) Measuring what happened (monitoring and evaluation)

Children need to be involved in regular monitoring of activities to be able to assess how effective a programme is. This not only provides them with a sense of ownership and interest in the outcomes, but helps them work towards improving those outcomes. Programmes evaluated by adults alone will not necessarily take account of children's perspectives and experiences.

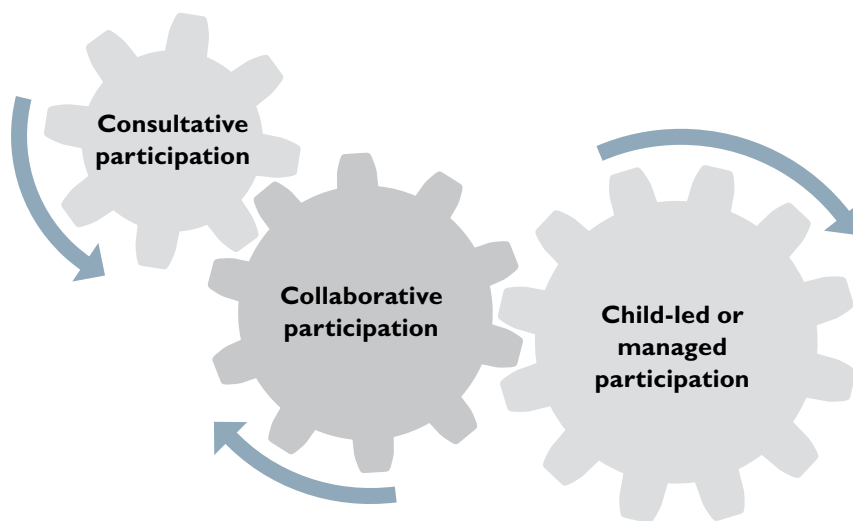
### e) Acting on findings (dissemination and feedback)

Once an evaluation has been completed it is important to act on the findings. Children need to be fully informed about the findings and be involved in reviewing their implications for future programming, as well as thinking about how the work could be strengthened, and planning the next steps.

## AT WHAT LEVEL DO CHILDREN GET INVOLVED?

There are three potential levels of engagement for children's participation – consultative, collaborative, and child-led (see figure). These may not always be completely clear cut and children may engage in different parts of a programme at different levels. However, the extent to which children are empowered to exercise agency within a programme will be influenced by their level of engagement.

**Figure 3: Levels of participation**



a) **Consultative participation** is where adults seek children's views in order to build knowledge and understanding of their lives and experiences, or in order to design a programme. It might be, for example, a government consultation on a proposed policy change, or to get children's views to include in a report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child. It might be a piece of academic research to find out more about how



children play, how they use social media, or what challenges they face in school. A local authority might consult with children on a regular basis on community issues. An NGO might consult with children about a campaign to end corporal punishment, or to improve water and sanitation facilities in local schools.

Consultative participation involves an approach that:

- is adult-initiated
- is led and managed by adults
- recognises that children have a valuable perspective to contribute
- allows children to influence outcomes
- maintains control in the hands of adults.

In other words, it is a process in which adults identify the issue to be considered, the questions to be asked, the methodology for the consultation and the analysis of findings, and what should be done with them. Children are largely passive in these processes. However, consultative participation can, nevertheless, be very valuable. It demonstrates respect for the expertise and perspectives of children; it recognises that children have a significant contribution to make, which cannot be provided by adults alone; and it enables decisions to be influenced by children's views and concerns. This, in itself, is a significant improvement on traditional assumptions that adults have all the answers about children's lives. Consultation is, therefore, an appropriate means of enabling children to express their views – for example, when undertaking research, in planning processes, in developing legislation, policy or services, or in decisions affecting individual children within the family, within healthcare or education services, or as witnesses in judicial or administrative proceedings (see box overleaf for an example of consultative participation with children in South Africa).

### **A CONSULTATIVE APPROACH TO STRENGTHENING CHILD PROTECTION<sup>2</sup>**

In Bangladesh, a local NGO was supporting a primary school outside a brothel. Children attended the school during the day and then returned to their mothers in the brothel in the evening. Several girls approached the NGO to say that they did not want to return home at night because they feared being initiated into prostitution. The staff and the girls discussed the matter with the mothers and for two years the girls slept in the offices of the NGO. Eventually, the NGO raised enough funds to build a safe home for the children. The mothers contribute financially to their children's education and upkeep.

In this example, the NGO (staffed by adults) was running the school. However, they provided a participatory environment in which it was possible for children to express their concerns. When they did so, the NGO responded positively and came up with a solution to the problem. This is another example of a consultative process – adults controlled the situation but respected and reacted to the experiences and concerns of children.

## CHILDREN AND HEALTHCARE IN SOUTH AFRICA<sup>1</sup>

In an NGO consultation with children in South Africa about their experiences of healthcare, 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 workers had a role to play in educating caregivers about early identification of health problems and referral. They also felt that health workers should be sensitised to the power relationships between adults as authority figures and children, about children's vulnerability when they are sick, and be encouraged to be more proactive in offering care in ways that acknowledge the child's feelings.

By consulting with children, the researchers were able to identify very significant evidence about how health workers were treating children in their care and they highlighted changes that needed to be made. The information from the consultation was used to help design a new child rights curriculum for health workers, sensitising them to children's experiences of being in hospital.

b) **Collaborative participation** is where adults – having identified a problem that needs to be addressed or decided to set up a particular programme – involve children in helping to work out what needs to be done and how. In other words, it involves a degree of partnership between adults and children. For example, a government might decide to set up a children's rights ombudsman or commissioner. However, having made the initial decision without children, they then involve children in designing the role, drawing up the job description, the recruitment process, and ongoing support and engagement in the work of the official appointed to the role. Children are collaborators in the implementation of the decision. Although the children's ombudsman is a position that is run and managed by adults, it is constantly informed and influenced by children. In this way, it is a form of collaborative participation that provides the opportunity for active engagement on an ongoing basis.

It can be characterised as:

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

Collaborative participation might include involving children in designing and undertaking research, policy development, or peer education and counselling, or it might include children's participation in conferences, or their representation on boards or committees. Individual decisions within the family, or in education and healthcare services, can also be collaborative rather than consultative, and involve children more fully in decision-making processes. For example, a child can decide together with his or her parents whether to go ahead with a particular medical intervention. Collaborative participation provides an opportunity for shared decision-making with adults, where children can influence both the processes and outcomes of any given activity. The box below gives an example of where collaborative participation was used to strengthen children's protection in Pakistan.

### **COLLABORATING WITH CHILDREN TO PROVIDE BETTER PROTECTION<sup>3</sup>**

In response to the influx of Afghan refugees into Pakistan following the US attack on Afghanistan in 2011, Save the Children began an initiative to strengthen children's protection and well-being in the refugee camps. They introduced a process known as Reflect-Action to bring together groups of children and adults within the camps to explore children's concerns. Reflect-Action is defined as "a structured participatory learning process, which facilitates people's critical analysis of their environment, placing empowerment at the heart of sustainable and equitable development..."

Save the Children provided training and ongoing support for a local team to facilitate a series of Reflect-Action groups. They provided opportunities for children to discuss and address the issues that were facing them. The children involved demonstrated that they were capable of analysing their own situation, identifying concerns, and developing strategies to address them.

Within months, the children won the confidence of the refugee camp management and relief agencies and established themselves as valuable partners in the camp administration, with whom they raised their concerns in fortnightly meetings. The issues raised included education, children under stress, disease, water shortages, drug use, and early marriage. Responses by the camp and relief administrators included improved school facilities, changes in teacher behaviour, checks on corporal punishment, increased awareness of child marriage and gender-related violence, increased access to hygienic sanitation and better access to water.

This collaborative process was initiated by Save the Children but the support they provided enabled children to exercise their rights to improve the conditions in which they were living. Instead of creating a consultative forum to find out what children needed and then acting to address those concerns, they collaborated with the children to help them play an active part in resolving the issues themselves.

A consultative process – for example, a research project with children – can be made collaborative by:

- 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.

### **CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE UN STUDY ON VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN: BEYOND CONSULTATION<sup>4</sup>**

In order to prepare the UN Study, it was agreed to undertake consultations with a wide range of stakeholders, including children in every region in the world. However, this process did not merely involve a commitment to listening to what children had to say. Instead, children were able to take on many roles, as advisers, documenters, advocates, respondents, researchers, and facilitators, as well as being active participants in the national, regional and global consultations.

Children and young people participated in many national and regional initiatives, activities and events associated with the study. They were also active participants in developing case studies and child-friendly publications, and documenting children's views. At each level they made clear recommendations about how to stop violence and demonstrated what actions they were taking to bring an end to violence. The final report gives strong weight to the recommendations made by children all over the world.

In this way, the process went way beyond a process of consultation and became a collaboration in which children worked with adults to play an active part in developing the report and its findings.

c) **Child-led participation** is where children are provided with the space and opportunity to initiate their own activities and carry out advocacy. Instead of responding to ideas or projects initiated by adults, they create their own structures or organisations through which to determine the issues that are most important to them, which they want to take action to address.

Child-led participation is characterised by:

- children coming together to organise their own activities
- children identifying the issues that concern them
- adults serving as facilitators rather than leaders
- children controlling the process.

Children can initiate action by establishing and managing their own groups or organisations for the purpose of, for example, advocacy, awareness-raising, child protection, influencing public policy, or contributing to community development (see box below for an example of children running their own parliaments in Tamil Nadu, India). The role of adults in child-led participation is to act as facilitators to enable children to pursue their own objectives, by providing information, advice and support. In addition, 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.

### **CHILDREN RUNNING THEIR OWN PARLIAMENTS, TAMIL NADU, INDIA<sup>5</sup>**

More than 10,000 children's Parliaments have been set up in Tamil Nadu, India, at the neighbourhood level. Around 30 families living in a given neighbourhood get together to form a Neighbourhood Parliament. The children of these families form the Neighbourhood Parliament of Children. All children of these families (aged between 6 and 18) are automatically members and no child can be denied membership.

The Neighbourhood Parliaments of Children have governance power deriving from the fact that the neighbourhood belongs to them. The children involved are organised and empowered, and the parliaments are sustainable, grassroots-based and well-federated, child-led participatory structures. They constantly respond to the needs of local children, focusing on the most disadvantaged.

Each Parliament has child ministers for health, hygiene, environment, human rights, child rights, disability, education, peace, justice, sustainable agriculture, poverty eradication, climate change, and any other concerns that affect children's lives. All decisions made by the Parliament are followed up and monitored to assess progress on implementation.

The objectives of the Parliaments are to provide opportunities for children:

- to speak and to be heard
- to create a movement of their own to fight for their rights
- to be active and responsible citizens motivated to protect their rights and security
- to participate in governance
- to be involved in action responses.

The Parliaments enable children to take responsibility for their actions, become self-disciplined and motivated, gain self-confidence, and acquire skills and talents. They have been successful in reducing the number of school drop-outs, persuading local districts to improve street lights, bringing clean water to villages, reducing the incidence of child marriage, and protecting children from harmful or exploitative forms of child labour.



PHOTO: KARIN BEATE NOSTERUD/SAVE THE CHILDREN

**A teenage girl from a slum community in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, gathers children to talk to them about healthcare, about the dangers of drugs and about the risk of abuse.**

### **WHICH CHILDREN ARE INVOLVED?**

You also need to find out which children are participating in a programme. Some programmes need to engage a broad cross-section of children, in which case you need to think about whether the programme has been successful in reaching all the groups of children who should have been involved. Too often, participation programmes involve children who are easiest to reach – those in school, the more able, and better educated. However, the UNCRC demands that every child has equal rights, including to participation. Efforts therefore need to be made to reach out to girls and boys who might find it harder to get involved, for whatever reason.

Some programmes will be designed for specific groups – for example, younger children, working children, or children with disabilities. In these cases, you will need to think about whether the programme has made as much effort as necessary to involve as many children as possible from those groups. So, if a programme has targeted children with disabilities, has it engaged children with a range of different impairments, including those with more severe disabilities? Does the group include boys and girls? Does it include children with disabilities from minority ethnic communities in the area?

Having identified which children have been targeted by a particular programme, you can then identify which children are being excluded from participation activities. This will help you begin to address what action is needed to involve children that are hard to reach.

Many different groups of children may be excluded from participation activities, as described below.

- **Girls** – in many societies, the pressures on girls' time are very demanding, which may limit the time they have available to take part in NGO or other activities outside the home. They are expected to contribute significantly to household chores and childcare. Parents may also fear that their daughters will be exposed to risk if they are involved in NGO or other activities. Girls are also less likely than boys to be in school, particularly at secondary level. However, some studies are now revealing that more girls than boys are actively involved in children's organisations such as child clubs or other groups. It is important to monitor and encourage participation of girls and boys in any activities.

- **Children with disabilities** – around the world, huge numbers of children with disabilities are out of school, and kept, often hidden, at home. They experience profound and multiple layers of discrimination and are often bullied and excluded from school, community activities, and play and recreation with their peers.
- **Poor children, children belonging to low castes, and minority ethnic children** – these groups of children, who are often socially and economically marginalised, often fail to access NGO programmes or other community-based initiatives.
- **Out-of-school children** – some programmes support children's participation through school-based projects, which by their nature do not reach out-of-school children, including working children.
- **Younger children** – many programmes focus on older children or adolescents. But even very young children are capable of participating in discussions on matters that affect them, and have views and perspectives that are important.
- **Young people who are gay, lesbian or transgender** – many young people are discriminated against or rejected by their communities because of their sexuality.

## MEASURING THE LEVEL OF CHILDREN'S INVOLVEMENT AT EACH STAGE OF THE PROGRAMME CYCLE

Having looked at all the stages of programming and understood the three levels of children's participation, you can then begin to measure which level of involvement best describes how children are participating in your programme, at each stage.

### 1 Finding out what the problems are (situation analysis)

You can measure whether this process is:

- **Consultative:** children are asked to give their views, but the design and process for information gathering as well as the analysis are undertaken by adults
- **Collaborative:** children are invited to contribute to designing the methodology for the analysis, and their views are sought in both the data collection and data analysis
- **Child-led:** children undertake their own research with other children to identify issues of concern.

### 2 Deciding what you want to do about them (planning)

You can measure whether this process is:

- **Consultative:** planning takes account of the issues raised by children in the identification of key issues
- **Collaborative:** children are involved in contributing ideas in terms of what programmes are to be developed and how they will bring about change
- **Child-led:** children are able to identify and determine what programmes they would like to see developed, or the issues on which they want to advocate for change.

### 3 Taking action (implementation)

You can measure whether this process is:

- **Consultative:** children are invited to participate
- **Collaborative:** 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
- **Child-led:** children organise and manage the programme and have full responsibility for its implementation.

### 4 Measuring what happened (monitoring and evaluation)

You can measure whether this process is:

- **Consultative:** children are consulted on whether the programme has been successful in achieving its objectives
- **Collaborative:** 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
- **Child-led:** children determine what should be evaluated and, with adult support, undertake the evaluation of the programme.

### 5 Acting on findings (dissemination and feedback)

You can measure whether this process is:

- **Consultative:** children are invited to make suggestions as to how to respond on the basis of the findings
- **Collaborative:** adults involve children in a joint discussion about the implications of the evaluation and explore how the findings should influence future programming
- **Child-led:** children reflect on the findings, and come up with proposals for their implications, which are then shared with adults.



**Children watch a performance by fellow students at a school in El Oro, Ecuador.**



## TABLES TO HELP YOU MEASURE THE SCOPE OF PARTICIPATION IN A PROGRAMME

**Booklet 5** provides examples of general activities you can use to help you gather information. It includes some tools that are useful for collecting data on the scope of children's participation, including:





- footsteps method
- visual programme cycle participatory mapping
- 'H' assessment
- circle analysis on inclusion/exclusion.

Here are two tables to help you measure the scope of children's participation. You can work with different stakeholders, including children, to complete these. The first will help you identify which level of engagement best reflects the nature of children's participation in your programme at each stage of the programme cycle. The second will help you identify which children were involved, again, at each stage. It is helpful to consider how and why the children were involved at that point and with that degree of involvement. Completing these tables may help you assess whether it would be possible to involve children at an earlier stage in subsequent activities, and with a greater degree of decision-making or control over the process.

When completing the tables, you should bear in mind the following important points.

- All three levels of participation are valid approaches and can be appropriate, depending on the programme's objectives, and the context in which it takes place. Different levels of participation and different stages of involvement can be appropriate for different activities. 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 (see pages 4–5).
- It should not be assumed that all programmes aim to involve children throughout, or that child-initiated activity is the universal goal. Not all children want to be involved in a child-led initiative. They may prefer to participate on a collaborative basis with adults. What is important is to ensure the optimum level of participation possible and appropriate in any process or activity.
- A programme will not necessarily remain at one level of engagement. There is a dynamic and often over-lapping relationship between the different levels. A programme can start as a consultative process, then move on to become collaborative, ultimately creating space for children to initiate their own agenda 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.

### WHEN DO CHILDREN BEGIN TO PARTICIPATE, AND AT WHAT LEVELS?

	<b>Children are not involved</b> 	<b>Consultative</b> 	<b>Collaborative</b> 	<b>Child-led</b> 
<b>Finding out what the problems are (situation analysis)</b>		Children are asked to give their views	Children are asked to contribute to the process of finding out what problems they face in life	Children undertake their own research with other children to identify issues of concern
<b>Deciding what to do (planning)</b>		Planning takes account of the issues raised by children	Children are involved in deciding what programmes to prioritise and develop	Children decide for themselves what issues they want to work on
<b>Taking action (implementation)</b>		Children are invited to take part in the programme	Children work with adults to design and implement the programme	Children organise and manage the programme and have full responsibility for its implementation
<b>Measuring what happened (monitoring and evaluation)</b>		Children are consulted on whether they think the programme achieved what it planned to do	Children work with adults to decide how to evaluate the programme	Children determine what should be evaluated and, with adult support, undertake the evaluation of the programme
<b>Acting on findings (dissemination and feedback)</b>		Children are invited to make suggestions as to how to respond on the basis of the findings	Adults involve children in a joint discussion about the implications of the findings and explore how they should influence future programming	Children reflect on the findings and come up with proposals for the implications, which are then shared with adults

### WHICH CHILDREN ARE INVOLVED, AND HOW MANY?

- Analyse which children are or have been involved in an initiative
- Identify the extent to which those children are or were involved
- Record the numbers of each group in the following table

Note: The column headings are only suggestions. You will need to add the appropriate headings once you have undertaken the analysis of which children the programme aimed to involve.

	Age range	Balance between boys and girls	Overall numbers involved	Number of children with disabilities	Number of children not in school	Other marginalised groups of children
Finding out the problems						
Deciding what to do						
Taking action						
Measuring what happened						
Acting on findings						



Children watch a play about sexual violence performed by members of a children's club in South Kivu, Democratic Republic of Congo.

## 2 THE QUALITY OF CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION

There is an emerging consensus as to the requirements for achieving quality standards for meaningful and effective children's participation; programmes should, at the very least, be safe, respectful and non-discriminatory. These requirements, which we describe below, have been elaborated in the General Comment on Article 12 produced by the Committee on the Rights of the Child.<sup>6</sup>

However, it does need to be recognised that there will be many circumstances where these requirements 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 may not all be met at the outset or even by the end of the programme.

### **BASIC REQUIREMENTS FOR GOOD-QUALITY CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION**

It is important that you monitor and evaluate the extent to which the participation activities implemented by the programme complied with the nine basic requirements (standards) for ethical and effective practice. Below, we provide an overview of the basic requirements and suggest some benchmarks against which you can measure whether or not they have been met.

#### **REQUIREMENT 1: PARTICIPATION IS TRANSPARENT AND INFORMATIVE**

Children must be given information about their right to participate in a child-friendly and accessible format. The information should include how they will participate, why they have been given the opportunity to participate, the scope of their participation, and the potential impact their participation could have.

##### **In practice, this means that:**

- children's participation has a clear purpose
- children understand how much say they will have in decision-making
- the roles and responsibilities of those involved are clear and well understood
- children agree with the goals and targets associated with their participation.

#### **REQUIREMENT 2: PARTICIPATION IS VOLUNTARY**

Children must be able to choose whether or not they would like to participate and should be able to withdraw from activities at any time. Children must not be coerced into participating or expressing their views.

##### **In practice, this means that:**

- children are given time to consider their involvement and are able to provide informed consent

- children are aware of their right to withdraw and are able to do so at any time they wish
- children's other commitments (eg, work and school) are respected and accommodated.

### **REQUIREMENT 3: PARTICIPATION IS RESPECTFUL**

Children should be treated with respect and provided with opportunities to express their views freely and to initiate ideas. Staff should also respect and gain an understanding of the family, school and cultural context of children's lives.

#### **In practice, this means that:**

- children are able to freely express their views and are treated with respect
- where children are selected as representatives, the process will be based on principles of democracy and active steps to be inclusive
- ways of working build self-esteem and confidence, which enables children to feel that they have valid experience and views to contribute
- programme staff should encourage all adults involved in the programme to be respectful towards children at all times.

### **REQUIREMENT 4: PARTICIPATION IS RELEVANT**

Participation should build on children's own knowledge and should be focused on issues that are relevant to their lives and the local context.

#### **In practice, this means that:**

- activities that children are involved in are of real relevance to their experiences, knowledge and abilities
- participation approaches and methods build on local knowledge and practices
- children are involved in setting the criteria for selection and representation for participation
- children are involved in ways that are appropriate to their capacities and interests, and at the appropriate levels and pace.

### **REQUIREMENT 5: PARTICIPATION IS CHILD-FRIENDLY**

Child-friendly approaches should be used to ensure that children are well prepared for their participation and are able to contribute meaningfully to activities. Participation approaches and methods should be designed or adapted based on children's ages and abilities.

#### **In practice, this means that:**

- time and resources are made available for quality participation, and children are properly supported to prepare for participation
- methods of involvement are developed in partnership or in consultation with children
- adults have the capacity to support and deliver child-friendly approaches and ways of working

- meeting places and activity locations are child-friendly and accessible to children with disabilities and other minority groups
- children are given accessible information in child-friendly formats.

### **REQUIREMENT 6: PARTICIPATION IS INCLUSIVE**

Children's participation must provide opportunities for marginalised children to be involved and should challenge existing patterns of discrimination. Staff must be sensitive to the cultures of all children involved in participation activities.

#### **In practice, this means that:**

- children are not discriminated against because of age, race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status
- participation activities aim to include children from all backgrounds, which could mean reaching out to children in their local community
- participation activities are flexible enough to respond to the needs, expectations and situations of different groups of children
- the age range, gender, and abilities of children as well as other diversity factors are taken into account
- participation activities challenge existing patterns of discrimination.

### **REQUIREMENT 7: PARTICIPATION IS SUPPORTED BY TRAINING FOR ADULTS**

Staff must have the knowledge and capacity to facilitate children's meaningful participation. This may involve training and preparation prior to engaging children in activities, as well as ongoing support as required.

#### **In practice, this means that:**

- all staff and managers are sensitised to children's participation, understand its importance and understand your organisation's commitment to it
- staff are provided with appropriate training, tools and other opportunities to learn how to use participatory practices
- staff are effectively supported and supervised and participatory practice is evaluated
- staff are able to express any views or anxieties about involving children, in the expectation that these will be addressed in a constructive way
- specific technical skills or expertise is built up through a combination of recruitment, selection, staff development and learning from the good practice of others
- relations between individual staff and between staff and management model appropriate behaviour, treating each other with respect and honesty.

**REQUIREMENT 8: PARTICIPATION IS SAFE AND SENSITIVE TO RISK**

Adults working with children have a duty of care. Staff must take every precaution to minimise the risks to children of abuse and exploitation and any other negative consequences of participation.

**In practice, this means that:**

- the protection of children's rights must be paramount in the way children's participation is planned and organised
- children involved in participation activities are aware of their right to be safe from abuse and know where to go for help if needed
- skilled, knowledgeable staff are delegated to address and coordinate child protection issues during participatory processes
- safeguards are in place to minimise risks and prevent abuse
- staff organising a participatory process have a child protection strategy that is specific to each process. The strategy must be well communicated and understood by staff
- staff recognise their legal and ethical responsibilities in line with the organisation's code of conduct and any child safeguarding policy
- child protection procedures recognise the particular risks faced by some children and extra barriers they face in obtaining help
- staff obtain consent for the use of all information provided by children, and information identified as confidential is safeguarded at all times
- a formal complaints procedure is set up to allow children involved in participatory activities to make complaints in confidence. Information about the procedure is available in relevant languages and formats
- no photographs, videos or digital images of a child can be taken or published without that child's or their caregivers' explicit consent for a specific use
- responsibilities relating to liability, safety, travel, and medical insurance are clearly delegated and effectively planned for.

**REQUIREMENT 9: PARTICIPATION IS ACCOUNTABLE**

After they have been involved in participation activities, children must be provided with feedback and/or follow-up that clearly explains how their views have been interpreted and used, how they have influenced any outcomes, and (where appropriate) what opportunities they will have to be involved in follow-up processes and activities.

**In practice, this means that:**

- children are involved in participation activities at the earliest possible stage
- staff and partners are accountable to children for their commitments
- children are supported to participate in follow-up and evaluation processes
- children are supported to share their experiences of participation with peer groups, their local communities and other organisations

- children are given rapid and clear feedback on the impact and outcomes of their involvement, and any next steps
- feedback reaches all children who were involved
- children are asked about their satisfaction with participatory processes and their views on how they could be improved
- mistakes identified through evaluations are acknowledged and commitments given about how lessons learnt will be used to improve participatory processes in the future.

## HOW TO MEASURE THE QUALITY OF CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION





**Booklet 5** includes an activity called 'Pots and stones' that can be used with children and adults to measure whether the participation activities they are involved in meet the nine basic requirements described earlier.

The table below presents benchmarks that will help you identify the extent to which your participation activities meet the basic requirements for ethical and meaningful participation. The process of completing the table will provide you with a clear picture of what needs to improve, and how. It is essential that you conduct this analysis with staff and the children involved, as children may have a very different perspective on their involvement in the programme. You should also consider the following issues.

- Make sure that you have given active encouragement and support to enable ALL participating children to respond, and not just those who are most articulate or vocal. It is really important to capture the experiences of the different children involved in the activities, including younger children, children with disabilities, and girls and boys.
- You may find that completing all the requirements with all the children who were involved is too time consuming, or that children find it too tedious. If this is the case, you could split the children into groups and let each group look at three of the requirements. The groups can then meet in plenary and feed back their assessment, checking that the other participants broadly agree.
- The benchmarks can be used to help children and other stakeholders think about how well each of the basic requirements has been met. However, particularly when undertaking the process with children, it is probably not helpful to expect them to be able to assess each of them individually. Rather, you can use them as a general guideline to introduce the requirement. For example, in the case of *Requirement 2, Participation is voluntary*, rather than expect children to score each benchmark separately for this requirement, you can explain in general terms what it means – that children have chosen to take part, that they were not coerced, and they know they can leave at any time if they choose to do so. On the basis of that explanation, you can then ask them to decide which of the columns best describes their experience.







## BENCHMARKS TO MEASURE BASIC REQUIREMENTS FOR ETHICAL PARTICIPATION

	Questions to use as prompts when using this table	Requirement has not been considered 	Awareness of requirement but not reflected in practice 	Efforts made to address requirement but no systematic procedures 	Requirement fully understood by all staff, implemented and monitored 
<b>Requirement 1: Participation is transparent and informative</b>	<p>Do children have enough information about the programme to make an informed decision about whether and how they may participate?</p> <p>Is information shared with children in child-friendly formats and languages that they understand?</p> <p>Are the roles and responsibilities of everyone involved clearly explained and understood?</p>				
<b>Requirement 2: Participation is voluntary</b>	<p>Is children's participation voluntary?</p> <p>Have children been given enough information and time to make a decision about whether they want to participate or not?</p> <p>Can children withdraw (stop participating) at any time they wish?</p>				





continued overleaf

**BENCHMARKS TO MEASURE BASIC REQUIREMENTS FOR ETHICAL PARTICIPATION** *continued*

	<b>Questions to use as prompts when using this table</b>	<b>Requirement has not been considered</b> 	<b>Awareness of requirement but not reflected in practice</b> 	<b>Efforts made to address requirement but no systematic procedures</b> 	<b>Requirement fully understood by all staff, implemented and monitored</b> 
<b>Requirement 3: Participation is respectful</b>	<p>Are children's own time commitments (to study, work, play, etc.) respected and taken into consideration?</p> <p>Do the ways of working with children consider local values and cultural practices?</p> <p>Has support from key adults in children's lives (eg. parents, carers, teachers) been gained to ensure respect for children's participation?</p>				
<b>Requirement 4: Participation is relevant</b>	<p>Are the issues being addressed of real relevance to children's lives?</p> <p>Do children feel any pressure from adults to participate in activities that are not relevant to them?</p> <p>Are activities appropriate in terms of children's abilities and interests?</p>				





*continued opposite*

**BENCHMARKS TO MEASURE BASIC REQUIREMENTS FOR ETHICAL PARTICIPATION** *continued*

	<b>Questions to use as prompts when using this table</b>	<b>Requirement has not been considered</b> 	<b>Awareness of requirement but not reflected in practice</b> 	<b>Efforts made to address requirement but no systematic procedures</b> 	<b>Requirement fully understood by all staff, implemented and monitored</b> 
<b>Requirement 5: Participation is child-friendly</b>	<p>Are child-friendly approaches and methods used?</p> <p>Do the ways of working build children's self-confidence, among girls and boys of different ages and abilities?</p> <p>Are child-friendly meeting places used?</p> <p>Are these places accessible to children with disabilities?</p>				
<b>Requirement 6: Participation is inclusive</b>	<p>Are girls and boys of different ages and backgrounds given opportunities to participate, including younger children, children with disabilities, children from different ethnic groups, and other marginalised children?</p> <p>Is the process inclusive and non-discriminatory?</p> <p>Are children encouraged to address discrimination through their participation?</p>				

*continued overleaf*

**BENCHMARKS TO MEASURE BASIC REQUIREMENTS FOR ETHICAL PARTICIPATION** *continued*

	<b>Questions to use as prompts when using this table</b>	<b>Requirement has not been considered</b> 	<b>Awareness of requirement but not reflected in practice</b> 	<b>Efforts made to address requirement but no systematic procedures</b> 	<b>Requirement fully understood by all staff, implemented and monitored</b> 
<b>Requirement 7: Participation is supported by training for adults</b>	<p>Do staff have appropriate skills and knowledge to work with children?</p> <p>Do staff have the confidence to facilitate children's participation?</p> <p>Are staff able to effectively support children's participation in the community?</p>				
<b>Requirement 8: Participation is safe and sensitive to risk</b>	<p>Do children feel safe when they participate?</p> <p>Have risks and ways to keep children safe been identified?</p> <p>Do children know where to go for help if they feel unsafe while involved in participation activities?</p>				
<b>Requirement 9: Participation is accountable</b>	<p>Are children supported to participate in follow-up and evaluation processes?</p> <p>Do adults take children's views and suggestions seriously and act on their suggestions or give explanations as to why suggestions were not acted on?</p> <p>Are children given feedback from adults about any requested support needs and follow-up?</p>				

# 3 THE OUTCOMES OF CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION

You also need to measure the outcomes of children's participation – on children and young people themselves, their families, on the organisation or group supporting children's participation, and in terms of the wider realisation of children's rights within families, local communities and at local and national governmental levels. In other words – what has been achieved?

When assessing the outcomes associated with children's participation, you will need to refer back to the programme's original objectives. For example, a participatory programme might be designed to promote children's self-esteem and build skills and confidence, perhaps to enable children to challenge neglect or violations of their rights. Or it might aim 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 as they will influence the indicators or benchmarks used for measuring effectiveness.

In this section, we describe the different types of outcomes you will need to consider, and provide some benchmarks you could use when measuring change, outcomes and effectiveness. These are illustrative only, and have been developed in order to stimulate ideas and suggest possible outcomes. Across all the benchmarks, the outcomes need to be assessed by all relevant participants – children, parents, staff and community members. Your assessment should also try to give concrete evidence of change, rather than merely stating that a certain impact has been achieved – for example, how a child's self-esteem has been increased and with what effect.

You will need to consider the following issues when measuring outcomes.

- **Importance of establishing clearly defined objectives and indicators:** Unless the programme has been explicit at the start about what it was hoping to achieve, it is not possible to measure its effectiveness. Clear objectives and the indicators against which to measure progress are fundamental to meaningful monitoring and evaluation. (See **Booklet 4** for an explanation of how to develop objectives and indicators.)
- **Negative outcomes:** Participation can sometimes lead to negative outcomes for children. They may be exposed to hostile reactions – for example, from parents, teachers or religious leaders in the community. They may be subject to retaliation from politicians who are sensitive to criticism; the media might write abusive or critical pieces about an initiative undertaken by children; or they may face a backlash leading to further violations of their rights. It is important to recognise and document any negative outcomes, as it is only by beginning to understand the risks to which children might be exposed that effective mitigation and protection steps can be taken, alongside working with children to help them make informed choices about those risks.
- **Attribution:** You cannot always establish a clear link between children's involvement in participatory activities and a given outcome. Many factors can contribute to change. For example, children might take part in a two-year campaign

to try and reduce the use of corporal punishment in schools. During that time, many other factors (over which the children have no control) might influence teachers' behaviour – such as new legislation, changes in teacher training curricula, media coverage of the issue, or reduced class sizes. It is always hard to attribute exactly what difference a particular campaign has made. This is as true for adult-led campaigns as it is for those involving children. However, you may be able to identify specific activities that had a strong influence and where you can see a clear link between the children's actions and a concrete change. It is important to document this evidence. It is usually easier to see these links when the activity is taking place at a local rather than national level.

- **Time frames:** Many of the outcomes children are seeking will take considerable time to achieve. It is always important, therefore, to ensure that a programme has short and long-term objectives in order that children can begin to see the impact of their involvement even if the overall goals still seem a long way off. For example, if children want to work towards creating a safer environment in their local community, they could introduce:
  - **short-term objectives** such as getting the agreement of the local municipality to meet with them on a regular basis, or producing a report based on evidence collected by children in the community that identifies the places in which they do not feel safe, and why
  - **medium-term objectives** such as getting more effective street lighting or setting up a reporting mechanism to report bus drivers or other service providers when they abuse or insult children
  - **long-term objectives** such as setting up a local child-protection committee, introducing effective mechanisms for reporting and redress for all children who are abused, or an end to all corporal punishment in schools.

### A REMINDER OF SOME RELEVANT DEFINITIONS

<b>Benchmark</b>	A standard, or point of reference, against which things can be compared, assessed, measured or judged.
<b>Objective</b>	A summary statement detailing what the programme or project should achieve given its time frame and resources.
<b>Indicator</b>	A quantitative or qualitative factor or variable that provides a simple and reliable means to measure achievement, to reflect the changes connected to an intervention, or to help assess the performance of the different actors involved.
<b>Outcomes</b>	The likely or achieved short-term and medium-term changes prompted by the outputs of one or more interventions.
<b>Impact</b>	The long-term effect produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended, positive or negative, and primary or secondary.

## TYPES OF OUTCOMES

The outcomes of any programme can be grouped into two broad categories:

- personal outcomes related to children's behaviour and attitudes
- wider external outcomes

### PERSONAL OUTCOMES

These outcomes describe the impact that a programme's **participation activities** have had on the people most directly involved or affected by it – for example, children, their parents or caregivers, staff of the supporting organisation, or the wider community. This is the impact that has been created simply by the process of taking part in the programme. Behaviour or attitudinal outcomes are relevant to all programmes, whatever their focus. Whether a programme is designed to create a children's Parliament, address violence in the family, or improve water and sanitation in schools, it is important to measure how taking part in it affects the children involved, as well as the key adults around them. This evidence can provide invaluable information about the positive potential of participation, possible harmful implications, and what factors contribute to an experience for children that is rewarding and sustainable. The outcomes for different groups might include the following.

#### (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.



Children participating in a focus group in Nicaragua.



**A children's group meeting in Rajasthan, India.**

**(ii) Outcomes on parents' or caregivers' 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 children and take their views into account.

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

- greater sensitivity to children's rights and needs
- improved quality of relationships with children
- greater understanding of children's capacities
- enhanced commitment to strengthening participation.

**(iv) Outcomes for programmes supporting participation:**

- 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 programme activities to more accurately reflect children's concerns and priorities.

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

- greater awareness of children's rights and more respectful attitudes towards children
- improved status of children
- increased willingness to involve children in decision-making.



## WIDER EXTERNAL OUTCOMES

These are outcomes which indicate that a concrete change has happened in the community, or at local or national level, as a consequence of children's participation. These outcomes will obviously vary widely across programmes, depending on their objectives – for example, some might have focused on advocacy to achieve legal reform, while others might have focused on community development, improving media access, or promoting a more democratic school environment. Some of these objectives will have child participation as a means while others will have participation as an end in itself.

- **Participation as a goal:** In some programmes, participation itself is the desired outcome. If the objective of a programme was to establish a forum for children to influence decisions of the local municipality, the outcomes will be defined in terms of the extent and effectiveness of their participation – for example, the formation of a children's forum, access to municipal meetings on a six-monthly basis, or the local municipality's commitment to producing child-friendly versions of key documents. The programme will be monitored and evaluated in terms of whether it actually secured mechanisms through which children can participate in discussions and decisions on matters that affect them. Of course, once such a forum is established, the children will want to use it to achieve other changes in their lives, introducing new objectives and plans that will also need to be measured. However, in the beginning, the objective is to establish the opportunity for participation through the forum, and that might therefore be the outcome to be measured.
- **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, work around advocacy, highlighting the issue in the media, undertaking or commissioning research, or sensitising the community to the issue. 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 that helped bring about that change. So, when collecting data, you will need 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 put pressure on the local authority to build the bridge?

If you are starting up a programme rather than monitoring and evaluating one that has already been implemented, you, together with the children involved, will need to decide what your objectives are and what indicators or benchmarks you will use to assess whether or not you have been successful in achieving those objectives. For example, the children may want to participate in a project to reduce the numbers of girls forced into early marriage, to end the use of corporal punishment in schools, or to set up a children's Parliament.

## TABLES TO HELP YOU MEASURE OUTCOMES

**Booklet 5** provides a number of tools to help you collect data. They include:

- body mapping
- red, amber and green traffic lights
- children in context analysis of change
- stories of 'most significant change' with creative expression
- self-confidence rating
- decision-making chart
- red ribbon monitoring
- tracking school attendance





The following tables provide an illustrative framework to help you monitor 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 identified at the outset of a given programme. The table 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.



PHOTO: MICHAEL TEMWOLDE/SAVE THE CHILDREN





**Girls dancing at a children's centre in a refugee camp in Ethiopia's Somali region.**

## I BEHAVIOUR OR ATTITUDE OUTCOMES

Outcomes	Suggested criteria for measuring behaviour or attitude outcomes. <i>This list is not exhaustive and you may want to change/add others</i>	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 
<b>For children</b>	Acquisition of skills and knowledge				
	Enhanced self-esteem and self-confidence				
	Greater rights awareness				
	Sense of efficacy and empowerment				
<b>On parents and staff</b>	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				

continued overleaf

**I BEHAVIOUR OR ATTITUDE OUTCOMES** *continued*

<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Suggested criteria for measuring behaviour or attitude outcomes.</b> <i>This list is not exhaustive and you may want to change/add others</i>	<b>Negative change/harm arising from participation</b> 	<b>No change</b> 	<b>Immediate change/change only in some stakeholders/lack of sustainability</b> 	<b>Significant and sustained change acknowledged by children and adults</b> 
<b>On parents and staff</b> <i>continued</i>	Greater sensitivity to children's rights and needs				
	Improved quality of relationships with children				
<b>On institutions</b>	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				
<b>For the local community</b>	Improved status of children within the community				

## 2 WIDER EXTERNAL OUTCOMES

We have used a case study from India (see box below) to help you see how you might analyse your findings on the outcomes of participation. The table that follows uses the case study and is for illustrative purposes only.

### **MAKKALA PANCHAYAT (CHILDREN'S LOCAL GOVERNMENT) INTERVENES TO REDUCE ALCOHOLISM IN THEIR COMMUNITY<sup>7</sup>**

Alcoholism was a way of life and a major issue in a local panchayat<sup>8</sup> in India, much of the liquor being sold by unlicensed vendors, in vegetable and grocery shops, by bike and under the trees, and other innovative ways. Although the local community had discussed the issue at various meetings, nobody paid it any serious attention. However, a group of children who were involved in a Makkala Panchayat<sup>9</sup> undertook research and found that alcoholism was a major issue of concern both for them and their communities, leading to disharmony and violence at home, loss of income, inability to study, inadequate food, debt, health problems, injuries and death.





The children presented their findings at the Gram Sabha,<sup>10</sup> but it produced no action or interest. This was a blow to the children. At the next meeting of the Makkala Panchayat, the children decided that they required a better plan of action. They discussed the reasons adults were ignoring this issue and decided that the only way to 'open their eyes' was to prove it in monetary terms.

The first step was to collect some quantitative information. Each day, they gathered all the empty sachets of alcohol near the shops and counted them. They found that, on average, 300 packets were consumed each day. Then they made their calculations. A packet of alcohol costs 11 rupees, so 300 packets cost 3,300 rupees. This worked out to 99,000 rupees a month and 1,188,000 a year.<sup>11</sup> This was a huge amount for only a small hamlet with a total population of about 400 to 450 people.

The children presented all the information they collected to the Gram Sabha and explained the process of information collection to the local community, which was shocked by the findings. The huge revenue loss for the village was inconceivable. The entire gathering also felt ashamed – that they had been informed of the problem by children; and that they, the adults, had not recognised this as an issue and none of them, including those holding senior positions, had taken any action about it. There was a unanimous public response demanding that the concerned authorities take the matter seriously and take stringent and immediate action.

As a first step it was decided to stop the sale of alcohol through all sources other than licensed stores. It was decided that the panchayat would issue notices immediately to ban the sale of liquor from non-licensed stores – and its sale by vegetable and grocery stores, from bikes, and from under the trees was prohibited. In addition, local politicians organised a huge campaigning rally against alcoholism with a view to declaring the entire panchayat 'alcohol-free'.

**WIDER EXTERNAL OUTCOMES (ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLE ONLY)**

Aim of programme	Objectives	Negative change/harm arising from participation 	No change 	Immediate or short-term change/change only among some stakeholders 	Significant and sustained change acknowledged by children and adults 
<p><b>Reduction in alcohol misuse and consequent violence within children and families</b></p>	<p>To raise awareness of the scale of the problem of alcoholism</p>				<p>Children undertook research on levels of illicit drinking Produced clear evidence of high levels of sales of alcohol</p>
	<p>To close illicit alcohol outlets</p>				<p>Lobbied local community Persuaded them as to the level of drinking and scale of harmful impact on families Local officials closed down the illegal outlets selling alcohol</p>
	<p>To reduce levels of alcohol consumption</p>				<p>Sales of alcohol significantly reduced. Commitment by community leaders to achieving an alcohol-free zone</p>
	<p>To reduce the incidence of violence in the home</p>			<p>Some evidence of reduced violence but not yet possible to assess whether it will be sustained</p>	

## 4 SUMMARY

Once you have completed the process of measuring the scope, quality and outcomes of children's participation, you should have a much clearer understanding of what you have achieved and whether you have met the objectives you set for the programme. It will also help the children who are involved to develop a more critical and reflective insight into their participation and how effective it has been. For example, the analysis of the scope of their participation may confront children with the recognition that they could be involved at an earlier stage in the programme cycle, and that the nature of their participation has been limited to consultation, whereas they would like a more collaborative approach.

Overall, the process should promote a more rigorous approach to future programme design, enabling you to build on the strengths you have identified, and address any weaknesses. It may also provide you with invaluable data with which to advocate for greater commitment to children's participation rights. For example, if an evaluation reveals consistent evidence that participation contributes to children's skills, confidence and self-esteem, this information can be used to press for greater opportunities for recognition of children as active participants in their own learning in schools.



**A girl at a refugee camp in Iraq holds a drawing she did for Universal Children's Day.**

# ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> S Moses and G Urgoiti, *Child Rights Education for Professionals (CRED-PRO), Pilot of the Children's Participatory Workshops*, Cape Town, March 2008

<sup>2</sup> Adapted from: K Heissler, *Background paper on good practices and priorities to combat sexual abuse and exploitation of children in Bangladesh*, UNICEF, Dhaka, Bangladesh, 2001

<sup>3</sup> See *Child Protection: The Kotkai Experience, Save the Children, Pakistan and Child participation in camp management, Kotkai Refugee Camp, Save the Children 2002*

<sup>4</sup> Report of the Independent Expert for the UN Study on Violence against Children, General Assembly, 61st Session, October 2006, A/61/299

<sup>5</sup> Children's Parliament website: <http://www.childrenparliament.in/index.html>

<sup>6</sup> 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 Save the Children's Practice Standards in Children's Participation, 2005

<sup>7</sup> The case study is adapted from a fuller account produced by The Concerned for Working Children, India, [www.concernedforworkingchildren.org/](http://www.concernedforworkingchildren.org/)

<sup>8</sup> A panchayat is a cluster of villages with a population of approximately 3,500 to 10,000.

<sup>9</sup> Children's Village Development Council

<sup>10</sup> The Gram Sabha is a children's village council meeting with relevant officials where children raise issues that concern them and their community.

<sup>11</sup> Equivalent to around US\$19,500



# A TOOLKIT FOR MONITORING AND EVALUATING CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION

BOOKLET

3

How to measure the scope, quality and outcomes of children's participation

This toolkit looks at how to monitor and evaluate children's participation in programmes, communities and in wider society. It is aimed at practitioners and children working in participatory programmes, as well as governments, NGOs, civil society and children's organisations seeking to assess and strengthen children's participation in society.

The toolkit comprises six booklets:

**Booklet 1: Introduction** provides an overview of children's participation, how the toolkit was created and a brief guide to monitoring and evaluation.

**Booklet 2: Measuring the creation of a participatory and respectful environment for children** provides a framework and practical tools to measure children's participation in their community and society.

**Booklet 3: How to measure the scope, quality and outcomes of children's participation** provides a conceptual framework for children's participation and introduces a series of benchmarks and tables to measure children's participation.

**Booklet 4: A 10-step guide to monitoring and evaluating children's participation** looks at involving children, young people and adults in the process. It includes guidance on identifying objectives and progress indicators, systematically collecting data, documenting activities and analysing findings.

**Booklet 5: Tools for monitoring and evaluating children's participation** provides a range of tools that you can use with children and young people, as well as other stakeholders.

**Booklet 6: Children and young people's experiences, advice and recommendations** has been produced by young people who were involved in piloting the toolkit. It consists of two separate guides: one for adults and one for children and young people.

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