

# **CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING**

## **Background paper**



**Making Europe and Central Asia Fit for Children**

**Sarajevo 13 - 15 May 2004**

**Second Intergovernmental Conference**

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Making Europe and Central Asia Fit for Children.  
Its contents do not necessarily reflect the policies or the views of UNICEF.

# CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING

## 1. Introduction

This paper has been prepared as a background document on children's participation<sup>1</sup> for the Second Intergovernmental Conference on Making Europe and Central Asia Fit for Children. It is intended to stimulate discussion on participation throughout the conference and lead to the adoption of recommendations for further actions, particularly for strengthening capacity to assess and monitor the extent of children's participation. Information for the paper was collected through a literature search, from key informants in countries and organizations working on children's participation,<sup>2</sup> and from UNICEF annual country reports. The paper contains an overview of strategic approaches used to increase participation and examples<sup>3</sup> of good practice in the five thematic areas.

At the first intergovernmental meeting on *Children in Europe and Central Asia: Setting an agenda for children in Europe and Central Asia* held in Berlin in May 2001, participation by children (age 0 to 18)<sup>4</sup> was seen as a particular challenge.<sup>5</sup> It was recognized that most children remain systematically excluded from decision-making processes on matters that affect their lives. Particular attention was paid to participation in the context of those transition countries with limited recognition of children's rights, or civil society.

At the Sarajevo Conference, issues of participation will be discussed in each of the thematic working groups. The following three discussion points should be covered during the working group discussions, as well as the recommendations at the end of this paper.



### Discussion points

- **How can we move from events-based approaches to mainstream and institutionalize children's participation opportunities in the home, at school and within the community?**
- **How can we further increase children's skills in decision-making and opportunities for them to use these skills?**
- **How can we develop systems for the effective monitoring of children's participation at country level?**

This paper takes into account a rights-based framework in its analysis. It recognizes that human rights principles and the general principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) should guide all efforts aimed at increasing the participation of children and young people. This human rights perspective helps to map different, but related participation roles of children, which can be clustered as follows: *identifying the unfulfilled rights* of children; developing strategies for children to *claim their rights* and *identify solutions*; and providing children with opportunities to *participate in implementing solutions* and *monitoring, evaluating and reporting* on progress.

## 2. Recent developments and lessons learned

### Recent developments

- Identifying the *unfilled rights of children* has been assisted through involving children in participatory action research (in particular, children living in poverty, internally displaced and refugee children, and children who have been subjected to abuse and violence). Their involvement in the research process has had other positive benefits, such as, developing skills, capacity and increasing self-confidence.
- Involving children in the development of National Plans of Action (NPAs) has proved invaluable and in some instances led to country wide participation in the consultation process and the creation of local, as well as national structures for participation. It has helped children to *claim their rights* and *identify, implement and monitor solutions*. (See section below for further information.)
- Participation in Children's and Youth Councils and Parliaments has increased children's capacity and decision-making skills to *claim their rights* both inside and outside the school environment. It has also helped policy makers to understand the important contribution that children can make in policy making and implementation, addressing issues such as ethnic violence, peace building and tolerance, bullying, substance use and truancy.
- Since the Berlin conference, many toolkits have been developed to assist in increasing participation and measuring it (see Annex 1).
- Standards or codes of practice on participation have been developed on a range of issues from child-friendly cities (CFC) to child abuse and violence. They have mainly been developed by adults and are being implemented in many countries throughout the region.

### Lessons learned

- The more children participate in decisions that affect their lives, the more they develop confidence, competencies and aspirations which have a positive effect on their health and development, relationships within their family and community, and participation can influence the effectiveness of programmes developed.
- There is no standard model of participation that can be replicated everywhere. There are however, some key principles to observe and indicators of participation are being developed to help us understand what combination of factors is the most beneficial.
- Participation should be *voluntary* and not foisted on children, especially in situations where the child has experienced a traumatic event, such as trafficking or violence. Children have the right to decide if they wish to participate, to what degree and how.
- Direct experience in civic and community processes and life skills-based education are important contributions to building children's skills to participate in making decisions that affect them.
- There needs to be a greater mutual understanding and sharing of power between adults and children. Joint training of adults and children on the CRC and issues of concern to children has led to improved intergenerational communication.
- Attention to participation needs to be maintained throughout the year, so it is not a one-off activity without a strategy for future *sustainability*. Local or community-based initiatives for participation are often more sustainable, especially if linked with designated budgets for jointly agreed activities.
- While there has been work on measuring *coverage*, (the actual number of children participating in programmes/activities), more attention is required to measuring the *quality* of participation and its effect on individuals, families, communities, government and programme outcomes.

### 3. Children's participation in the development of National Plans of Action

National Plans of Action for Children (NPAs) have provided an important opportunity for children to contribute to setting priorities and shaping policy. Increasingly, it has also been recognized that NPAs benefit from these inputs. Children are the people directly targeted by the NPAs and at the same time, have the most direct insights on their own situations – insights essential to understanding their realities and developing solutions. Likewise, children can be actively involved in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the NPA. There is emerging evidence that their participation improves the effectiveness and impact of the plan, helps to build democracy and encourages responsibility among children for their lives, communities and societies (Save the Children Canada, *Shaping a Country's Future with Children and Young people: National Plans of Action for Children*, Ontario 2002). However, precise indicators need to be agreed on to measure the extent of participation on programme effectiveness, behaviour change (in children, adults and families), as well as organizational and societal changes.

The case study below from Tajikistan shows the effort made to include a broad range of children from different communities in the development of an NPA. This included children who are not often involved in policy making processes, such as children living in institutions.

A Child Reference Group (CRG) was established in Tajikistan in 2003 as a follow up to a 'World Fit for Children' with support from Save the Children UK and UNICEF. Members of the group were trained in leadership skills, basics of journalism, peer to peer approaches and networking. The CRG has been the key link between the children of Tajikistan and government officials, NGOs, media and other members of civil society. The CRG organized a national meeting of 200 children from different communities (street children, boarding schools, special and vocational schools, disabled children) and the media to discuss issues and recommend actions for inclusion in the NPA for Children.

**Vision of the CRG members:** NPA is a document about the best interests of children. Through joint participation in the NPA consultations and guidelines development we became partners in the process.

**View of a Government official on children's involvement in the NPA:** It took time to learn that adults and children are citizens of the same country and need to work together to find solutions instead of trying to apportion blame. It was a period of learning for both children and adults...Children will definitely be involved in implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the NPA. If children are involved in the NPA design they will be very interested in what is going on. As children are the main target of the NPA only they can give a real feedback on what they feel the Government has done to improve their lives.

**Outcomes:** As a result of the NPA consultations with children, 70 per cent of children's proposals were incorporated in the NPA. This helped children to gain confidence and also realise their importance in the process and implementation. It also showed that adults and children do have the same vision, which resulted in the new and meaningful partnership between the two. It shows that children are not the cause of the various problems, but they are resources to provide solutions. (UNICEF Tajikistan, 2003 and Save the Children Tajikistan, 2004)

#### Lessons learned

Children's participation in the development of NPAs<sup>6</sup> is most successful when it includes all children (irrespective of age, disability, ethnicity, gender and socio-economic status); provides opportunities for capacity building through training in a range of areas; involves country wide consultation at all levels and; has strong political leadership and continued commitment.

#### 4. Investing in children

This review found the least documentation on children's participation in the area of budgetary allocations. In some countries, municipalities (especially those in the Child-Friendly Cities Initiative) do routinely consult children to ascertain their views on how future funds should be allocated. Although not involved in the development of the budget itself, there are also examples of youth groups accessing municipal funds through open competition with criteria established by adult-led committees. On the whole, this is an area of untapped opportunity for young people to influence the allocation of funds, both in terms of increasing priority given to children, and within that, determining where resources are most needed.

In 2001, the Cordoba City Council in collaboration with civil society introduced an innovation for Spain: a participatory budgeting process. The idea was to bring local authorities closer to their citizens (including children) and involve them in decisions about how and for what purposes the municipal budget should be used. The initiative has been highly successful and the City Council intends to extend participatory budgeting to include broader participation and focus on programmes on Education and Children. (International Secretariat for Child-Friendly Cities, 2004)

In addition, there are emerging examples of participation in Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP) through the organization of roundtables on Children and Poverty (Bosnia and Herzegovina), the development of National Youth Strategy as an integral part of the PRSP (Republic of Moldova), and participatory action research on children's perspectives of poverty (Serbia and Montenegro). Mechanisms for monitoring children's participation in PRSP development and implementation need to be developed.

#### 5. Children moving across borders

Whatever the reason and circumstances, the very fact that children find themselves in a country other than their own accentuates their vulnerability and brings to the fore clear and often major challenges regarding their protection. In such contexts, soliciting and giving consideration to the concerns, views and perspectives of children is essential to finding appropriate solutions. In some cases, such as trafficking, there are also opportunities for young people's participation in preventing exploitative movements across borders. Children's participation in community mobilization and awareness-raising for prevention can contribute to better protection of potential victims of trafficking.

In Albania, the NGO, Help the Children, is working with young people to encourage parents to keep their children in school, establish community monitoring systems to reduce the risk of trafficking, and produce television programmes on the issue of domestic violence. Collaboration with young people has resulted in the establishment of youth-led clubs in two small towns. These clubs create space to socialize and provide support for activities such as: local campaigns, participatory action research to learn about trafficking and the effectiveness of interventions, as well as advocacy at national and international levels. (Van Gaalen, A.M.J., Review of initiatives to combat child trafficking by members of the Save the Children Alliance, Working paper, 2003)

In many trafficking prevention initiatives, peer education<sup>7</sup> has been a key tool to create awareness among at-risk young people through activities in schools, youth clubs and child centres. Listening to the views and experiences of children who have been trafficked has been a

critical aspect of prevention initiatives. It is important to note that children who have been subjected to trafficking or other forms of exploitation may be severely traumatized, and re-living their traumas through participation in certain activities should be avoided. Participation, particularly in political processes and with the media, can have a positive impact on individual children moving across borders. For example, young refugees and asylum seekers report an increase their self-confidence and sense of worth through such processes.

## **6. Violence against children**

A critical starting point and frame of reference for addressing violence against children must be the experience of children themselves. Therefore children and young people must be meaningfully involved in promoting and strategizing action on violence against children.

Children should be involved, with their consent and with appropriate safeguards, in debates on law and policy development, in the design of training and services and in research. They may be engaged as active researchers with their peers as well as being the respected objects of research into their experiences of violence and of the child protection system.

The United Nations Study on Violence against Children is developing mechanisms to ensure children are involved and participate in a meaningful way, as observers and researchers, and in the planning, analysis and dissemination stages. Other strategies such as child-to-child surveys, interventions developed by children themselves to confront violence, and participation in regional consultations, will be included (UNSVAC Concept Paper, 2003). A comprehensive measurement framework on participation in research against violence is under development and should look at the benefits to the boys and girls who participate, their friends, families and communities, as well as the research community who will learn new skills, perspectives and ways of working (Save the Children Sweden, 2004).

Consultations in the United Kingdom on corporal punishment in the home decided that it was essential to obtain the views of those most affected – young children themselves. Sixteen group discussions were held with groups of three to six children according to age: five, six and seven year olds. The researchers from the National Children's Bureau and Save the Children's Fund (UK) believed that children had a right to be heard on matters affecting them and that it was the responsibility of adults to engage with children in an appealing and effective manner. It was found that a playful and child-focused approach (using cartoon characters and puppets) created an interesting and safe environment for children willingly to offer their thoughts and opinions on smacking. (Willow and Hyder, 1998)

### **Lessons learned**

A supportive environment is a pre-condition to safely allow children to share their experiences of violence. Children have also been found to be instrumental in finding effective solutions to preventing and addressing violence, for example, bullying in schools. Some governments have developed standards to ensure that child participation is factored into reviews of child abuse cases (UK Department of Health, 1999).

## **7. Combating discrimination and social exclusion: The role of education**

The issue of discrimination and social exclusion is of particular relevance to children and young people in their daily lives, especially in the school setting. There is much potential for young people to play an active role in exploring the factors contributing to discrimination and social exclusion and in finding solutions. Child-Friendly Schools (CFS) is one mechanism which can

facilitate children's participation in addressing these issues. CFS are based on a participatory, grassroots approach to education and aim to increase programme support, relevance, efficiency and sustainability and develop new skills and attitudes in all individuals participating in the process (UNICEF CARK, 2002).

Participatory action research has been used to assess the extent to which the educational system meets the needs of socially excluded children and young people in five European countries (Euronet, 2002). Young people trained in research methods and report writing found that:

- their rights were not respected at school
- Citizenship education did not include reference to children's rights
- More support was needed for young people with disabilities
- Alternatives to formal schooling were needed
- Greater measures were required for the protection of young children against violence.

## 8. Cities fit for children

Participation in civic affairs at the local and municipal level is one of the most effective ways that children can be connected to and have a say in their communities. The Child-Friendly Cities Initiative provides opportunities for children and young people to become involved in local decision-making and to grow into citizens who are aware and can exercise their rights responsibly from a young age. CFCs focus on the interests of children in the planning process. Their views are taken into account when establishing priorities and modifying recreational areas, transport systems and urban neighbourhoods so they respond to the real needs of children.

In Italy, La città dei bambini (Children's city) in Fano was established in 1991 based on the philosophy that children should be used as the yardstick for determining the needs of all citizens. Fano is a dormitory town where the mainly male workers leave in the morning and return in the evening, yet most of the cities facilities were based on their needs. The main aim of the programme was to substitute the perspective of the average citizen (adult male worker) with that of a child, so that the gaze of the local administration was lowered to the level of the child and included everyone. The project was designed to promote children's autonomy and participation. The pilot project has now been extended to 57 participant cities in Italy, 17 small towns in Spain (Barcelona, Valencia and Madrid), as well as cities in Latin America (International Secretariat for Child-Friendly Cities, 2004).

Children have also been consulted on issues ranging from children's rights, to racism and homelessness. Several cities have included participation in the context of commitments to *Agenda 21* (International Secretariat for Child-Friendly Cities, 2004). Indicators for CFC have been developed in Croatia, Germany, Italy, Spain and Ukraine; although it is not clear to what extent children have been involved in their development.

Where structures for children's participation at local level link directly with municipal officials and cooperate with legislative authorities, participation in high-level decisions on children's issues has been achieved. Annual meetings to monitor implementation of the CRC provide a good opportunity for children to give feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of municipal services.

## 9. Approaches to assessing and monitoring children's participation

Activities to measure participation should fully involve children. There are some impressive and measurable examples of increased participation in decision-making at local authority level.<sup>8</sup>

Measurement frameworks need to look at both the process of participation (coverage and quality indicators) and measure the effects of participation on children themselves, family, community, programme efficiency, implementing agency/ies, partner organizations and government.<sup>9</sup> There has been little monitoring and evaluation of the latter. They also need to contain an equity check (Rajani, R., *The Participation Rights of Adolescents: A Strategic Approach*, Working Paper Series, Programme Division, UNICEF, August 2001) to ensure that both boys' and girls' experiences of participation are monitored, as well participation by age, social status, and vulnerability.

### Tools that help measure participation

Various tools have been developed which can assist with the measurement of participation. These include:

#### Surveys

- One method of listening to the voices of children is through opinion polls such as the *Young Voices Opinion Survey*. It has provided data on access to services, social exclusion, and children's participation in civic and social life (UNICEF/OSCE/ODIHR, 2001).
- Eurobarometer (EU research to gauge public opinion within the European Union on wide ranging issues including young people and political participation). The Eurobarometer public opinion analysis of young people within the 15 countries of the EU formed the basis for EU White Paper on Youth Policy.
- The UNICEF/Innocenti *Social Monitor* documents changes in children's health and development outcomes. This mechanism has the potential to monitor children's participation.

**Participatory Action Research** is emerging as a useful tool, especially for working with socially deprived and vulnerable children. It has been used to understand poverty and identify solutions from a child's perspective, to identify violence and solutions using a child's lens, and in work on HIV prevention, to understand how adolescents regard sexuality and sexual behaviour and their perceptions of risk. Toolkits on how to use this methodology with children have been developed by Save the Children.

**Standards** of service delivery are fundamental to the measurement of quality of services. Many cities in the CFC initiative have developed, or are in the process of developing standards for assessing the child friendliness of cities. The Child-Friendly School Initiative is also working on the development of standards, although more work needs to be conducted on strengthening the indicators for participation. WHO is developing a tool kit *Making it happen* which should provide guidance on participation within the context of health services for adolescents.

**Indicators** on children's participation are being developed by many agencies and some examples are given in **Annex 2**.

**Evaluation protocols:** UNICEF has developed a protocol to evaluate children's participation throughout the CEE/CIS region. Some evaluations of participation have been undertaken and the results synthesized as examples of good practice (CIDA, 2003). There is clearly needed to mainstream and systematize evaluation of participation.

## **10. Recommendations**

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Progress has been made in mainstreaming participation throughout a range of spheres at country level. There are many examples of good practice to learn from and tools to assist with further strengthening participation. However, we need to do more to improve children's participation and to measure its effectiveness. The following recommendations are proposed to advance the full participation of children within Europe and Central Asia:

- 1. Countries should accord priority to the establishment of mechanisms to allow children to participate in:**
  - **identifying their unfulfilled rights**
  - **claiming their rights and identifying solutions**
  - **implementing solutions, and monitoring, evaluating and reporting on progress.**
- 2. Further support should be given to help children build their capacity to undertake participatory action research and become involved in monitoring children's policies and programme implementation.**
- 3. Further studies should be undertaken on:**
  - **the process and effect of participation on programme quality and sustainability**
  - **the costs of participation (human, financial and material)**
  - **children's perceptions of the effects of participation on their own development.**
- 4. Collection of data on children's and young people's participation (broken down by age and gender).**

## **Annex 1**

### **Toolkits on children's participation**

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#### **CHILD TO CHILD**

Child-to-Child<sup>1</sup> ideas and activities represent an approach to health education. They do not constitute an alternative programme. Child-to-Child activities stress the potential of children to promote better health: to younger children; to children of the same age; and to their families and communities. Child to child uses a six-step approach:

1. Identifying a local health issue and understanding it well
2. Finding out more about the health issue
3. Discussing what's been found out and planning action
4. Taking action
5. Evaluation: discussing results
6. Discussing how we can be more effective next time and sustain action.

The six-step approach has an important effect on the way we teach and learn because:

- It links what children learn with what they do
- It links what children do in class with what they do in the home
- The activities are not taught in one lesson and then forgotten; they are learnt and developed over a longer period of time.

#### **SAVE THE CHILDREN**

##### **Canada**

Guidelines have been developed on how to involve children and young people in the development of National Plans of Action (NPA's) for children. The guidance was developed by children and young people interviewed by Save the Children, Canada in 14 countries around the world. Five of the countries were from Europe and Central Asia: Albania, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro, Sweden, and the Netherlands.

Save the Children Canada, *Shaping a Country's Future with Children and Young People: National Plans of Action for Children – Involving Children and Young People in their Development*, Save the Children, Toronto, 2002, 18 pp.

##### **International Save the Children Alliance**

International Save the Children Alliance, *So you want to consult with children? A toolkit of good practice*, London, November 2003.

##### **Sweden**

A toolkit has been developed to support children's meaningful and ethical participation in research relating to violence against children.

Save the Children Sweden, *So you want to involve children in research: A toolkit supporting children's meaningful and ethical participation in research relating to violence against children*, Save the Children, Stockholm, 2004.

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<sup>1</sup> Taken from CIDA (2003) based on the Child-to-Child website ([www.child-to-child.org](http://www.child-to-child.org)) and from Pridemore, P., and Stephens, D., *Children as partners for health*, London, Zed Books, 2000.

## **UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION CANADA**

In 2002, the United Nations Association in Canada produced a handbook for children and young people to assist them in participating in global meetings *Navigating International Meetings – A Pocketbook Guide to Effective Youth Participation*, written by Monika Rahman (Project Officer), with the support of Christine Parsons (Project Officer), and Julie Larsen (Project Officer). Ontario, 2002.

## **UNAIDS**

UNAIDS, *Guide to monitoring and evaluating national HIV/AIDS programmes for young people*. Addendum to the UNAIDS *National AIDS Programmes: A Guide to Monitoring and Evaluation*, Draft for final comment, Geneva, 19 December 2003.

## **UNICEF**

### **New York**

UNICEF, *Programme policy and procedure manual: programme operations*, Chapter 6, Programming Tools ('Toolbox'), Section 13, Guidance Note on Promoting Participation of Children and Young People, New York, 2003.

In March 2002, UNICEF produced a *Guide to Effective Youth Participation* designed to introduce children and young people to UN procedures and ways of working so that their participation is maximized. The paper proposes a systematic approach based on the understanding of participation as a Human Right, and discusses the ethical issues of promoting participation of children and young people. Some principles and standards in relation to the involvement of children and young people are provided. It describes the programmatic implications of promoting the participation of children and young people in national development and in UNICEF-assisted programmes. It discusses options for involving children and young people in the preparation of National Plans of Actions and similar policy processes, and how to move from event-based approaches to mainstreaming and institutionalizing participation opportunities in the home, the school and the community. The paper also includes an annotated list of further reading and websites.

UNICEF, *The Participation Rights of Adolescents: A Strategic Approach*, Working Paper Series, Programme Division, UNICEF, August 2001 (principal author: Rakesh R. Rajani), 57 pp.

This is a good resource for the design of new initiatives to support meaningful participation of adolescents 10-19 years old. Based on an extensive literature review, the paper provides the theoretical and conceptual basis for effective participation, then focuses on the programmatic and strategic aspects, and finally gives a set of tools for defining goals and indicators and for assessing and promoting adolescent participation. The paper emphasizes investing in young people's assets – strengthening their capabilities, enlarging their access to opportunities, and providing them with safe and supportive environments. This approach has been shown by a number of large studies to be far more effective than focusing on young people's problems.

### **Belarus, Russian Federation and Ukraine**

In 2002, UNICEF (Belarus, Russian Federation and Ukraine) published *Youth Participation Resource Kit – a set of resource materials both theoretical and practical for youth leaders*. It is available only in Russian.

## **WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION**

WHO has undertaken a range of initiatives to support the measurement of adolescent participation in programmes and the effect of adolescent participation on programme effectiveness (WHO/FCH/CAH, September, 2002 and February 2004). The first meeting attempted to identify the main domains of measuring adolescent participation. The consultation began to identify a set of measures that could capture the process of participation, and the effect of participation on individuals, on programmes, and on the wider socio-cultural environment. The report summarizes the presentations, measurement domains identified, discussions, and recommendations to improve measurement tools and indicators for adolescent-focused programmes, and suggests areas for developing indicators for measuring participation. The second meeting assessed organizational commitment and capacity to promote/implement young people's participation, measurement indicators for the process of participation and effects of participation.

World Health Organization, *Report of a meeting on measuring adolescent participation in programmes and the effect of adolescent participation on programme effectiveness*, WHO/FCH/CAH, Geneva, 2-4 September 2002.

World Health Organization, WHO Technical note of the Second Workshop on *Measuring the process and the effects of adolescent participation in programmes*, Arlington, VA, 19-21 November 2003.

World Health Organization, *Participation in the Second Decade of Life: What and Why?* Adolescent Development and Participation Unit, UNICEF and Commonwealth Youth Programme (CYP), 2003, 17 pp. This booklet explains what participation is and why it is important, and gives examples of adolescent participation. It describes the levels of participation according to Hart's ladder, and provides a checklist to clarify what real participation is.

## Annex 2

### Examples of indicators to measure the process and the effects of participation<sup>10</sup>

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The indicators presented below will need country-specific adaptation.

- **Table 1** presents indicators relevant to measuring the **process** of adolescent participation in programming. They are organized according to the generic 'stages' or 'steps' of the programming cycle: needs assessment, planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. In addition, the measures collected at each programming stage can contribute to either providing evidence of the **coverage** of participation, and/or to providing evidence of the **quality** of participation promoted/implemented by the project.
- **Table 2** presents indicators relevant to measuring the **effects** of adolescent participation. It is sub-divided into the main areas/groups on which such effects can be accrued (within the context of the sample project): on adolescents themselves, their parents and/or families, the implementing organization, partner organizations, the wider community, and the government.

Adapted from WHO Technical note of the Second Workshop on *Measuring the process and the effects of adolescent participation in programmes*, Arlington, VA, 19-21 November 2003.

**Note:** Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and interviews should be conducted with the primary stakeholder i.e. adolescents. In some exceptional cases, they could be expanded to include field staff of the implementing organization.

**Table 1: Example of indicators to capture the process of adolescent participation in programming**

PROCESS	Indicator/measurement area	Type of indicator *	Method of measurement
<b>Needs assessment &amp; prioritization</b>	No. or % of girls and boys who report they were involved during the needs assessment phase (research, carrying out needs assessment and analysis, prioritization of activities)	C	Interviews, FGDs
<b>Planning</b>	No. or % of girls and boys who report they were consulted during the planning and design phase (planning the strategies, prioritizing approaches etc.)	C & Q	Interviews, FGDs
	% increase in enrolment of girls and boys from ethnic minorities	C	Monthly/quarterly/annual reports
	% increase in partnership MOUs signed by the adolescents and the organization or the implementing organization and the donor agency	Q	Project proposal
<b>Implementation</b>	No. or % of adolescents in target population reached by at least one activity of the project disaggregated by age and sex	C	Monthly/quarterly/annual reports
<b>Monitoring and evaluation</b>	% of girls and boys who report that their feedback has resulted in a change in project approach and implementation	E	Interviews, FGDs

**Table 2: Example of indicators to capture the effects of adolescent participation**

EFFECTS	Indicator/measurement area	Method of measurement
<b>On the adolescents</b>	% increase of girls and boys who feel that opinion is heard by peer leaders and supervisors	Interviews, FGDs
<b>On parents, families</b>	% increase in girls and boys who report they were included in the household decision-making process and provide an appropriate example to support their claim	Interviews, FGDs
<b>On implementing organization</b>	No. of changes made in the project approach and strategy due to views from the field	Annual reports, successive project proposals from the same implementing organization(s)
<b>On partner organizations</b>	No. of organizations that carry out activities specific to handing over project management to the adolescent and community	Monthly/quarterly/annual reports
<b>On wider community</b>	No. of business/entrepreneurial initiatives launched by girls and boys	Monthly/quarterly/annual reports
<b>On the government</b>	Increase in number of government schemes available for girls and boys – policy, projects, funding etc.	Meetings between relevant government departments and implementing and/or donor agency, government reports, documents

C = Coverage  
 Q = Quality  
 E = Evaluation  
 FGD = Focus group discussion

- <sup>1</sup> Hereafter referred to as participation.
- <sup>2</sup> I am grateful to those who sent material for inclusion in the paper: Jovana Bazerkovska, Gabriela Fabiani, Clare Feinstein, Shika Ghildyal and Ruslan, Larisa Lazarescu-Spetetcl, Eliano Riggio, Olena Sakovych, and Jan Kulenovic.
- <sup>3</sup> The examples selected are not meant to be representative of the regional situation. They are illustrative of the types of activities some countries have been engaged in. Undoubtedly there are many more examples which could not be reflected in this overview paper. There is also a range of rich examples of children's participation in thematic areas outside the remit of the Sarajevo conference.
- <sup>4</sup> Throughout this paper the following definitions are used: children to refer to the age group 0 to 18 years, young people 10 to 24 years and youth aged 15 to 24 years. In some cases the precise age of the children/young people is not known. The terms children and young people are used interchangeably.
- <sup>5</sup> The Berlin conference called on governments to:
- take appropriate steps to ensure that all schools introduce meaningful democratic decision-making structures enabling children to participate in all aspects of school life.
  - establish national and local mechanisms through which children's views and concerns can be heard and taken seriously in the development of legislation and policy in consultation with children and young people themselves
  - introduce training for all professionals working with children and in particular teachers and school administrators in accordance with the principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)
  - establish statutory, independent children's rights commissioners/ombudspersons to promote and protect children's rights
  - initiate research, evaluation, and dissemination of effective models of good practice, guidance and tool kits to facilitate children and young people's participation in decision making.
- <sup>6</sup> These factors were synthesized from the report by Save the Children Canada, (2002) and UNICEF Country Annual Reports for 2003.
- <sup>7</sup> The distinguishing characteristics of Child-to-Child are the direct involvement of children in the process of health education and promotion and the nature of their involvement. The most effective programmes are those that involve children in decision-making rather than merely using them as communicators of adult messages ([www.child-to-child.org](http://www.child-to-child.org)).
- <sup>8</sup> For example, in the UK nearly 90 per cent of local governments surveyed said that the amount of work they had done to involve young people in decision making had increased over the past four years.
- <sup>9</sup> This work has been developed during two WHO meetings on *Measuring adolescent participation in programmes and the effect of adolescent participation on programme effectiveness* (WHO, 2004) and through application at country level in the UNICEF-led (UNF/UNFIP-supported) project *Meeting the development and participation rights of adolescent girls* in Bangladesh. See Tables in Annex 2 for the comprehensive set of indicators proposed to measure participation.
- <sup>10</sup> Developed by the UNICEF-led (UNF/UNFIP-supported) project *Meeting the development and participation rights of adolescent girls* in Bangladesh.