



# Manual on children's participation

including practical toolkit



terre des hommes

Help for Children in Need

# Manual on children's participation

including practical toolkit

Manual and toolkit were developed by Ornella Barros and Claire O'Kane. The toolkit as well as the documents of the Usefull Reading sections are available at:

[www.tdh.de/participation-toolkit](http://www.tdh.de/participation-toolkit)

The development of the manual was supported by Jan-Hinnerk Voss, Friederike Strube, Antje Ruhmann, Lena Niehaus, Marti Gensel, Lea Heise, Lisa Kramer und Marieke Rumpf. Special thanks for the support of the final design: to Edgar Marsh, Athanasios Melissis and the regional offices as well as project partners.

terre des hommes Germany  
Ruppenkampstr. 11a  
49084 Osnabrück  
Tel 05 41 / 71 01-0  
[info@tdh.de](mailto:info@tdh.de)  
[www.tdh.de](http://www.tdh.de)

with support of

**Terre des Hommes**  
International Federation

# 1. Introduction

terre des hommes Deutschland e.V. was founded in 1967 by dedicated members of the public to help children seriously injured in the Vietnam War. Since then terre des hommes has developed into an organisation advocating the rights of children and promoting equitable development without racial, religious, political, cultural or gender-based discrimination. terre des hommes operates independently of governments, economy, religious communities and political parties and supports 430 projects for children in need.

terre des hommes helps street children, abandoned and working children, looks after children who have become victims of war and violence and ensures their education. terre des hommes supports the cause of maintaining biological and cultural diversity and of protecting the rights of discriminated population groups.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is the conceptual framework guiding the activities of terre des hommes. According to article 12 of the UNCRC, all children have the right to be heard on all matters affecting them. terre des hommes has many years of practical experience in supporting children and young people's participation within projects, and aims to ensure that children's views are being heard and taken into account in policy and project activities at all levels. Building upon this knowledge and experience a definition and concept about children's participation were considered necessary to enhance the efficacy and effectiveness of terre des hommes efforts to promote children's participation.

## Overview of methodology

To create a basic understanding of this concept paper an initial phase of consultations was undertaken with staff and partners in regional and country offices. 19 questionnaires about children's participation in the work of the Member Organisations (MO) of the terre des hommes International Federation (TDHIF) were returned and analysed<sup>1</sup>. In addition, 16 key documents relating to children's participation shared by TDHIF offices were reviewed. During the second phase, a toolkit<sup>2</sup> of child friendly tools was developed to consult groups of children and young people about their understanding and experiences of children's participation. Six one-day consultation workshops were organised with children by TDHIF MOs and their partner organisations in five countries (Colombia, India, Nicaragua, Philippines and Zimbabwe). In total 77 children (38 girls and 39 boys), aged 10-17 years were consulted. Even though the sample of children consulted was small and non-representative, rich insights were shared and constituted the groundwork in the development of this paper.

---

<sup>1</sup> International Secretariat, terre des hommes Germany HQ, terre des hommes Germany Regional Office Southeast Asia (SEA) - Philippines, terre des hommes Germany Regional Office Southeast Asia (SEA) - Thailand, terre des hommes Germany Regional Office Latin America (ORLA), terre des hommes Germany Regional Office – South Asia (ROSA), terre des hommes Germany Regional Office Southern Africa (SACO), terre des hommes Schweiz Basel, Terre des Hommes Netherlands HQ & East Africa regional office, Terre des Hommes Netherlands Regional Office Latin America - Colombia and 8 partner organisations: La Caleta-Chile, MANTHOC-Peru, PASOCAP-Bolivia, FUNSAREP-Colombia, Tuktan-Nicaragua, CECOPAL-Argentina, Gitib-Philippines, Lifeline-Germany.

<sup>2</sup> The toolkit was developed by Ornella Barros and Claire O'Kane and is available at: [www.tdh.de/participation-toolkit](http://www.tdh.de/participation-toolkit)



#### Useful reading on documents from phase I and II of the consultation process

- Phase I Questionnaire used to consult tdh staff and partners about child participation
- Phase I Summary report on key findings from the consultations with staff and partners (April 2017)
- Phase II Toolkit for consultations with children
- Phase II Summary report of key findings from consultations with children (August 2017)

## 2. Common understanding of children's participation

terre des hommes Germany, partners, and children consulted understand children's participation as a right. In accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) children and young people<sup>3</sup> have the right to express their views and to be involved in all matters that affect them. tdh Germany encourages the realisation of children's rights to participation for all children, with particular effort to reach and involve the most marginalised children, including children with disabilities, stateless children and refugees, and children who face increased risks of abuse.



**Article 12, UNCRC: State parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.**

terre des hommes Germany and partners recognise that genuine participation requires a commitment to on-going processes, rather than children taking part in one-off events. Children and young people should be provided with information that is appropriate to their age and context in order to take informed decisions. Moreover, children's views should be seriously considered by adults so that they influence decisions affecting them in private and public spheres (in families, schools, communities, local governance, national policies and practices etc.).

Children emphasised the importance of freedom to express their views without being judged and the importance of listening to other's views. Freedom of expression requires efforts to work with adults (parents, caregivers, community and religious elders, government officials) and with children and young people themselves to create a safe environment for children of different ages and backgrounds to share their opinions, while feeling respected. Opportunities for children and young people to come together in groups with their peers provides space for them to share information, express their views, and plan action on issues affecting them.

Adopting a human-rightsbased approach tdh Germany and their partners seek to:

- Promote children's participation as a goal to increase fulfilment of children's rights to participation and to promote children's active role in society as societal actors, citizens and protagonists. tdh Germany recognises that article 12 is closely linked with other civil rights and freedoms including children's rights to: freedom of expression (article 13), freedom of thought, conscience and religion (article 14), freedom of association and peaceful assembly (article 15), privacy (article 16) and information (article 17). tdh Germany and their partners seek to promote all these civil rights to ensure children's participation.

<sup>3</sup> Under the age of 18 years (in line with the UNCRC).

- Promote children's participation as a principle that should be considered in each stage of programming, and in different thematic areas of work. While acknowledging the indivisibility of human rights, member organisations and partners underlined the interrelation that child participation as a guiding principle has alongside other UNCRC principles concerning children's rights to non-discrimination (article 2), best interests (article 3) and survival and development (article 6). Furthermore, in accordance with article 5 (responsibilities, rights and duties of parents), children's evolving capacities and the importance of parental guidance should be carefully considered especially when working with younger children of different ages to design, implement and monitor projects.
- Promote children's participation as a means to secure their rights to survival, development, and protection. Children are right holders and through their participation, girls and boys can speak up about things that concern them and they can claim and defend their rights.

When supporting children's participation, power relations between adults and children, and among children need to be considered. The UNCRC recognizes children as right holders with civil rights. Similarly the concept of children's protagonism<sup>4</sup> which has emerged from the Latin America region emphasises the importance of engaging with children as societal and political actors. The vision of protagonism encompasses changes in power relations between adults and children, leading to better relations, increased equity and inclusion and therefore benefiting children and adults in society. Both the UNCRC and child protagonism encourages children to be aware of their rights, to organise themselves, to exercise their rights, to represent themselves, and to participate in public decision-making. Children require spaces and power to influence decisions affecting them.

While seeking to mainstream and systematise child participation approaches and practices across tdh Germany, staff and partners acknowledge and respect cultural diversity and seek to ensure the application of children's participation practices that encourage respect for all, and which build upon the strengths of existing cultural traditions and practices. tdh Germany also recognises that children may face risks from their participation. Thus, it is crucial to identify and minimise risks and to ensure proper implementation of child protection policies.

#### **Useful reading on the concept of children's participation**

- CECOPAL. Escuela de formación en el derecho a la participación con enfoque del Buen Vivir: Propuestas para un currículo desde los procesos en Argentina.
- CRC (2009) General Comment No. 12: The right of the child to be heard. CRC/C/GC/12. [www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4ae562c52.html](http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4ae562c52.html)
- Cussiánovich, Alejandro. What does protagonism mean? in Manfred Liebel et al, eds., Working Children's Protagonism. Social Movements and Empowerment in Latin America, Africa and Asia, Frankfurt & London, IKO, pp. 157-170, 2001.
- La Caleta. Campaña »Movilizándonos por una cultura Integral de Derechos Encuentro Nacional de Niños, Niñas y Adolescentes que viven en Chile.«

<sup>4</sup> Child protagonism emerged in the Latin American context at least a decade before the UNCRC was adopted. The origin of the concept of protagonism is closely related to approaches of popular education and the appearance of organised child workers movements in the region.

- GITIB (2008) Child participation is a Must, Guidelines on child participation in its organisation, program and projects. GITIB: Philippines.
- Lansdown, G. (2011) Every child's right to be heard. UNICEF and Save the Children. [www.unicef.org/french/adolescence/files/Every\\_Childs\\_Right\\_to\\_be\\_Heard.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/french/adolescence/files/Every_Childs_Right_to_be_Heard.pdf)
- O'Kane, C. (2003) Children and young people as citizens: partners for social change. Save the Children South and Central Asia. [www.eldis.org/document/A22524](http://www.eldis.org/document/A22524)
- tdh Germany, South East Asia (2006) Discussion paper on child participation.
- tdh Schweiz (2010) Concept youth participation strategic priority of terre des hommes Schweiz.
- tdh Germany, Southern Africa Child participation guide.

### 3. Why does children's participation matter?

As a child-focused agency applying a human rights-based approach to development and humanitarian aid, tdh Germany has an organisational mandate to promote and support children's participation rights through their organisational work. Furthermore, consultations with staff, partners and children, and a review of key organisational reports and discussion papers have revealed a number of key benefits of children's participation including:

- Opportunities for children and young people to express their views and to participate in discussions, activities and decisions, strengthens children's competencies and abilities to communicate, solve problems, and negotiate both individually and collectively. Participation also enables children and young people to develop their personalities, skills, and talents.
- Empowerment increasing children's confidence to speak up, to access information about their rights and other issues affecting them, to access spaces that allow them to express their views and to influence decisions affecting them.
- Participation lays the foundation for children to be responsible citizens, and enables more equitable relationships between adults and children. It helps to prevent paternalistic work.
- Increased realisation of children's rights. When children and young people are empowered with information about their rights, and when they have confidence and space to express their views and to participate in decisions affecting them they are more able to assert and defend their rights to education, protection, health, and other rights.
- Increased child protection as girls and boys are more able to speak up about abuse, violence and exploitation, and are better able to protect themselves, individually, but also through their collective participation, especially through child groups and associations.
- Increased programme quality and more effective programmes and policies based on a better understanding of children and young people's views, suggestions and needs. Children's participation in the programme enhances innovation and increases ownership, effectiveness, and sustainability when those most affected by a programme or policy are actively involved.

- Greater authenticity in advocacy, while also needing to ensure risk assessments and risk mitigation to ensure protection of children and young people who are involved in advocacy.
- Increased accountability to children and young people when adult duty bearers respond to their concerns and provide feedback to children and young people.

#### **Useful reading on why children's participation is important**

- Hart, R. (1992) Children's participation from tokenism to citizenship. UNICEF Innocenti. [www.unicef-irc.org/publications/100](http://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/100)
- Plan (2004) Children changing their world: Understanding and evaluating children's participation in development. [www.participatorymethods.org/resource/children-changing-their-world-understanding-and-evaluating-childrens-participation](http://www.participatorymethods.org/resource/children-changing-their-world-understanding-and-evaluating-childrens-participation)
- tdh Germany, South East Asia (2006) Discussion paper on child participation.
- tdh Schweiz (2010) Concept Youth Participation Strategic Priority of terre des hommes Schweiz.

## 4. Operational guidance for implementing children's participation

This chapter provides brief guidance, promising practice examples, useful reading references, and links to practical tools (in the annex) on how to implement children's participation in: 1) research, 2) programming, 3) advocacy, 4) communications, and 5) fundraising.

At the operational level boundaries between different types of participation such as consultation, collaboration or child led participation may be appropriate depending on the context and the purpose. A recent classification of types of participation by Lansdown (2011) which builds upon the UN Committee's General Comment No.12 on a child's rights to be heard include:

- Consultative participation: where adults seek children's views in order to build knowledge and understanding of their lives and experience. It is often characterised by being: adult initiated; adult led and managed; lacking any possibility for children to influence outcomes.
- Collaborative participation: where there is a greater degree of partnership between adults and children with the opportunity for active engagement at any stage of decision, initiative, project or service.
- Child led participation: where children and young people have space and opportunity to initiate activities and advocate for themselves on issues affecting them. It is often characterised by: the issues of concern being identified by children themselves; adults serving as facilitators rather than leaders; children controlling the process.

Basic requirements for effective and ethical children's participation developed by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child can be used to plan and monitor children's participation<sup>5</sup>.

#### **Toolkit: Practical tools for effective and ethical children's participation**

##### 4.0 Applying the basic requirements as a planning to overcome common challenges faced

## 4.1 Children's participation in research

tdh Germany staff and partners can support children's participation in research in different forms:

- Children can be consulted by adult researchers to find out their views.
- Collaborative research engaging children as researchers working together with adult researchers can be supported, whereby children and adults work collaboratively to design, implement research, and to analyse, report, share and act on the findings.
- Child led research processes can also be supported, where children identify the issue they want to research, decide the research questions and the research methods, gather and analyse the data and develop and use the research report.

Children's participation in research, can lead to increased understanding of children's perspectives and recommendations in relation to specific child rights concerns. Opportunities for effective and ethical participation of children in research can empower children and young people with increased confidence and skills to assert themselves and to engage in projects or advocacy. Knowledge generated from the research can increase children's power to present their concerns and to advocate for positive changes. Participatory action research with and by children can be undertaken both through collaborative and child led processes. A close accompaniment, supporting children to understand key steps in a research process, to consider ethical issues, and to adapt and use relevant methods is important for the success of child led and collaborative research.

#### **Toolkit: Practical tools for children's participation in research**

- 4.1.1 Exploring research ethics: agree – disagree
- 4.1.2 Steps in the research process: Post –its storm

<sup>5</sup> See: Nine basic requirements for effective and ethical children's participation as a tool for planning and monitoring the quality of child participation (CRC/C/GC/12, 2009).



**Promising practice: »It's Time to Talk: Children's Views on Children's Work«, international**

»It's Time to Talk« was launched as a project by Kindernothilfe, Save the Children Canada, and Terre des Hommes in March 2016 to enable the views of working children to be heard in local, national and global decision-making processes. Through collaboration with more than 50 civil society partners, 1,822 children aged 5 to 18 years were consulted about their working lives in 36 countries. A commitment to children's rights shaped the research design, planning, implementation, monitoring and follow up<sup>1</sup>. 15 Children's Advisory Committees (CACs) were formed involving working children in 13 countries in Asia, Africa, Latin America, Middle East, and Europe enabling children's active role throughout the research process as advisers, analysts and advocates. Child friendly research tools including timelines, body mapping, flowers of support, and draw and write were used to consult children. For example, in separate groups of girls and boys a body mapping activity was used where they drew around the shape of a body and used the body parts as prompts to discuss what they liked and disliked about their work – for instance, hands: when you are working what activities do you do with your hand that you like or dislike?; shoulders – what responsibilities do you have that you like or dislike?. The flowers of support encouraged children to create a petal for each group of people they wanted to share messages with to improve their lives.

CAC members were involved in analysing risk and protection factors that increase the likelihood of having negative or positive outcomes of children's work. CAC members also reviewed and gave feedback on emerging findings from the global research, and they used the research results to inform their own action and advocacy initiatives to improve the lives of working children. For example, in Indonesia, CAC members organised a Public Action in the city displaying visual posters of their body maps, draw and write, and flowers of support to raise awareness on harmful work and the need to increase protection of their rights. CAC members were also part of a National Exchange that allowed them to meet with concerned government officials to share their key advocacy messages. An adult facilitator of the CAC in Indonesia shared »the most important thing that makes us very proud and happy is that the children are growing, besides running the CAC meetings, they are also becoming more open about themselves... and they have had a dialogue with the Mayor in Medan to deliver key points about how the local government should reach the children from scavenger and poor communities to improve their lives.«

<sup>1</sup> Lundy, L., & McEvoy (Emerson), L. (2012a). 'Childhood, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and Research: what constitutes a rights-based approach' in M. Freeman (ed.) Law and childhood. Oxford: Oxford University Press. pp75-91

**Useful reading on children's participation in research**

- Funky Dragon and Partnership Support Unit (2011) Children as researchers: resource pack. Swansea: Funky Dragon and Partnership Support Unit.
- Lundy, L., & McEvoy (Emerson), L. (2012a). 'Childhood, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and Research: what constitutes a rights-based approach' in M. Freeman (ed.) Law and childhood. Oxford: Oxford University Press. pp75-91.
- Lundy, L., & McEvoy (Emerson), L. (2012b). Children's rights and research processes: assisting children to (in)formed views, Childhood 19 (1) pp.116-129.

- Project of Joint Regional Study on the Mobility of Children and Youths in West Africa (2012) Which protection for children involved in mobility in West Africa: Our positions and recommendations.
- Time to Talk (2016) Research toolkit: facilitator's guide for organising consultations with children in support of the international campaign »It's Time to Talk - children's views on children's work.« Duisburg: »Time to Talk«[Kindernothilfe, Save the Children Canada, and Terres des Homme].
- Save the Children (2012) Child led data collection: A guide for young people to learn how to do research and create positive change. Beirut: Save the Children. <https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/library/child-led-data-collection-guide-young-people-learn-how-do-research-and-create-positive>

## 4.2 Children's participation in programming

In all tdh Germany and partner programmes that concern children, the principle of children's participation should be applied so that children are informed and involved in each stage of the programme/ project cycle including: situation analysis, strategic planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, learning and feedback. Children's participation is more meaningful when girls and boys are involved from the earliest stages of programming, and when they have access to information appropriate to their age, capacities, and local language. Opportunities for children's participation in research, advocacy and campaigns also enhance longer-term positive changes for children. Furthermore, in some contexts children may be interested to participate in communication and/or fundraising activities to raise funds for their own initiatives and to share messages with others.

### 4.2.1 Children's participation in situation analysis

Children should be informed about situation analysis processes, including child rights situation analysis and space should be created to meaningfully seek their views and insights. Consultations could be organised with groups of girls and boys of different ages and backgrounds to map and analyse child rights concerns affecting them. Child friendly tools can be used to enable girls and boys of different ages and backgrounds to explore immediate and root causes of concerns affecting them, and to reflect on different experiences and views based on gender, age, ethnicity, disability, or other factors. Children and young people can help identify and analyse their likes and dislikes, as well as protection and risk factors, which allow vulnerabilities and risks to be better identified and addressed, and strengths and assets to be built upon. Children and young people can also identify and assess the capacity of relevant actors (e.g. teachers, parents and caregivers, local government officials) and key institutions (e.g. schools, municipal structures) that need to be strengthened to fulfil their rights. Child led research or collaborative participatory research with children and adults can also provide important findings that can support situation analysis and child rights situation analyses.

#### **Toolkit: Practical tools for children's participation in situation analysis**

##### 4.2.1 Body Mapping on children's likes and dislikes

**Promising practice: Working children have been actively involved in situation analysis focusing on child labour and child rights, Peru**

The organisation MANTHOC in Peru is a movement of working children and youth. Around 2.500 members of MANTHOC are self-organized and consist solely of children and youth. Adults can support the organisation and its members but children and youth take the decisions. Therefore, the young members of MANTHOC are actively involved in situation analysis to identify the issues affecting working children, potential causes that should be addressed, and people that could be approached through their advocacy work. This participation of children and youth members is promoted locally in small urban and rural communities where children live, and aims to influence the national agenda of the Movement.

#### **4.2.2 Children's participation in planning**

Children's perspectives from situation analysis, assessments and research should be used to inform project planning processes, with attention to different perspectives based on gender, age, ethnicity, disability or other factors. Furthermore, tdh Germany and partners should create space to inform and meaningfully involve children's representatives in strategic planning processes. Children's participation in strategic planning processes can help ensure priority is given to issues that most concern them, and thus can enable increased human and financial resource allocations to issues that concern them.

Children can contribute to the planning and design of more effective project goals and activities, they can help to better identify key stakeholders, and children can contribute to the development of more relevant project indicators and child friendly tools for on-going monitoring and evaluation. In addition, when space is created in communities, schools and other settings for children to plan their own initiatives it often results in more creative and innovative projects and methods including the use of creative arts, theatre, social media etc. Use of creative methods during planning processes can further motivate children and young people to participate in on-going projects and to be agents of change in their communities.

**Toolkit: Practical tools for children's participation in planning**

4.2.2 How? How? How?

**Promising practice: Collaborative participation of children and adults in planning projects in FUNSAREP (TDHIF MO Partner), Colombia**

In the project of FUNSAREP in Colombia, children and adults collaborate in all stages of programme implementation including the proposal development, design and methodology, implementation, organising materials, facilitation, etc. In terms of planning, children and young people are actively involved in the design of advocacy initiatives such as campaigns, as well as in discussions to identify the target of advocacy actions, human and financial resources, and potential partners. To support these efforts an annual planning workshop is organised to gather the views of adults, children and young people, and additional sessions take place throughout the year to assess implementation, to review and update the initial plan.

### 4.2.3 Children's participation in implementation

Children's participation in the implementation of projects should be supported in all projects that concern them. It is crucial that tdh Germany and partner staff implement projects with children, rather than for children.

#### **Promising practice: The protective accompaniment of children on the move and at risk of abuse, TDHIF MO, West Africa<sup>1</sup>**

In the West Africa region TDHIF MOs have developed programme guidance on the »protective accompaniment of children« (l'accompagnement protecteur des enfants) working with children on the move, and with children who are vulnerable to trafficking, exploitation or abuse. The protective accompaniment of children recognises the active role of the child in his/her protection, and in protecting others. The way of working increases children's ability to analyse their needs and choices, and to find solutions; and it focuses on strengthening their relationships with other people and with their surroundings (integration). Protective accompaniment means: staying alongside children to help reduce the risks they face, to help them to be actors, access their rights, ensure that their best interests are respected and that assistance is provided to children. The protective accompaniment of children emphasises the importance of building a respectful relationship with the child, listening to the child's views and suggestions, and working with the children in a cooperative way around specific situations affecting the well-being and rights of children. Children are recognised as key social actors whose situation, needs, and perspectives on solutions need to be understood and taken seriously. The approach also emphasises the importance of building social relationships within families, communities, and NGOs. It ensures systematic efforts to strengthen the protective environment of children on the move taking into account the views of the child, family members, and community members. Children are linked to informal and formal protection systems.

<sup>1</sup> Boursin, F. (2014) The added value of protective accompaniment, terre des hommes.

Children and young people can participate in the implementation of projects in a wide range of ways, through their individual and/or collective expression of their views, ideas, and suggestions. Children are able to reflect, analyse and plan actions, which they can share with project staff. Working in collaboration with project staff children and young people can implement plans, manage resources (funds and materials), advocate, raise awareness, share information, and many other activities. Children and young people of different ages and abilities may plan and choose to participate in creative arts and media projects, awareness raising, action research, peer to peer learning, and child groups.

#### **Promising practice: tdh Germany Partners support children and youth groups, India and Nepal**

In many of tdh Germany's projects in India and Nepal, groups of children and youth are formed and capacitated on various issues pertaining to that particular project, as well as on their rights and roles to enable them to fully participate in the implementation of the project. For example, in the organisation SOSEC, tdh Germany partner in Nepal, children are organised in groups and play an important role in enrolment of children in schools through organizing campaigns as well as door to door contacts to sensitise the parents. Through their groups children have also raised issues regarding corporal punishment, irregularity of teachers and other concerns which have been further taken up by responsible project personnel at

different levels to get their concerns resolved. In India and Nepal, in order to protect their environment many children's group members have ensured that their villages are plastic free, they raise awareness for planting more trees, and stop open defecation etc.

There are increased opportunities to support child led as well as collaborative participation during project implementation. For example, children and young people may decide to form and strengthen their own groups and to plan and implement initiatives to address concerns affecting them in their communities, schools, care settings, or work settings. When supporting child or youth groups in communities, schools or other settings, project staff can encourage children and young people to reflect on patterns of exclusion and inclusion based on gender, age, disability, ethnicity, religion, or other factors, and to ensure respect for children from different backgrounds. Collaborative participation, where child group members work in partnership with project staff to improve project implementation, or with teachers to improve school governance, or with adults from communities to prevent child rights abuses can also be supported. Children may also elect their peers to participate and represent them in civil society organisations, school governance, community based protection mechanisms, local governance, or national governance structures. Moreover, tdh Germany and partners can support networking among child groups in order to support learning and collective advocacy. Children can also help facilitate and join national level consultations and child forums, which allow children and young people to collectively influence national policies and practice developments affecting them. institutional responsibilities and tasks that the staff is accountable for (e.g. filling in M&E forms, complete attendance lists, manage refreshments, etc.).

#### **Toolkit: Practical tools for children's participation in implementation**

##### **4.2.3 Supporting children's groups (Drama good/ bad groups)**

#### **Promising practice: Young people's participation in local governance, Philippines<sup>1</sup>**

In the Philippines, young people aged 15-17 are elected into local government positions in which they are allocated funds and technical assistance to initiate and implement their own activities in the community. The community is called the barangay. A team of children and youth leaders is elected by their peers every 3 years. This team of elected children and young people is called Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) or council of youth. These youth leaders are in charge of planning and implementing projects as well as bringing up issues concerning children and young people to influence policy development in their favour. Some councils focus on helping out-of-school youth, campaigning against drug addiction, and setting up facilities and programmes for recreational activities.

1

Forum-Asia (2011) A Guidebook on Spaces for Children's participation in ASEAN.



#### 4.2.4 Children's participation in monitoring and evaluation

Children should be consulted as part of regular monitoring activities. More collaborative or child led monitoring and evaluation processes can be supported to assess progress, challenges and achievements. As mentioned above, children's participation in monitoring and evaluation will be more meaningful if children and young people had opportunities to influence the design and planning of the indicators and use of child-friendly monitoring tools. Indicators relating to the quality of the participation process and outcomes of children's participation should be monitored and evaluated within each programme (see section 5).

In order to be accountable to children, it is crucial that tdh Germany staff and partners share feedback with children and young people regarding the outcomes of their participation – how their views and suggestions have or have not influenced decisions and any reasons why. Key results relating to project evaluations or other studies should be shared with children and young people. To ensure the accessibility of results, time and effort should be made to develop and disseminate child friendly reports. Children and young people can help to develop and disseminate child friendly reports. Within their own groups and networks, children and young people should also be encouraged to share feedback and to be accountable to their peers, particularly if they represent their peers in key meetings or activities.

#### **Toolkit: Practical tools for children's participation in monitoring & evaluation**

4.2.4 »H« assessment: analysing the strengths, weaknesses, and suggestions to improve

#### **Promising practice: NGO IDEAs**

NGO IDEAs consists of a monitoring concept and a toolkit. Often, academia takes possession of monitoring and evaluation, establishing complex inter-subjective indicators to measure social changes and compare the success of different projects. Instead, NGO IDEAs intention is to participate beneficiaries in project monitoring using participatory tools. Therefore, it works on the basis of self-assessment of the beneficiaries, using simple scales and point systems, rather than complex indicators. The most important tools of the concept are:

**Participatory Well-Being Ranking (PWR):** Communities or groups participating in the project analyse their situation. They define categories and definitions of »well-being« themselves, as far as possible.

**Situational Analysis and Goal Establishment (SAGE):** Each individual/household or family defines which individual changes they want to achieve until the end of the project and rank their starting situation on a point scale. The ranking is repeated periodically, measuring progress.

**Performance Appraisal of Groups (PAG):** Parallel to the individual analysis, this tool is used to establish and monitor collective goals.

**Participatory Impact Analysis and Reflection (PIAR):** This analysis tool helps to compare (triangulation) individual and collective progresses and the initial situation analysis. It does so by simply putting into relation the data collected.

All these tools can and have to be adapted to each specific project. With some facilitation, the tools can, in most cases be applied by children and youth themselves. The toolkit also describes how to include the NGO IDEAs in running projects, linking it to the logframe.

Various German NGOs and their partner organisations developed the concept. Partner organisations of terre des hommes in India (2004 -2007) and most recently in Latin America (2016 – 2017) participated in trainings projects.

Toolbox for download: [www.ngo-ideas.net/impact\\_toolbox/index.html](http://www.ngo-ideas.net/impact_toolbox/index.html)  
Spanish Video on NGO IDEAs: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=mVwe-SOv2pk&feature=youtu.be](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mVwe-SOv2pk&feature=youtu.be)

### Useful reading for children's participation in programming

- Boursin, F. (2014) The added value of protective accompaniment, Terre des hommes, (English and French) [www.tdh.ch/en/documents/la-valeur-ajoutee-de-lacompagnement-protecteur-desenfants](http://www.tdh.ch/en/documents/la-valeur-ajoutee-de-lacompagnement-protecteur-desenfants)
- Cussiánovich Villarán, A. Los derechos de la infancia desde el paradigma de su protagonismo. En: Historia del pensamiento social sobre la infancia. Lima: Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos. Fondo editorial de la Facultad de Ciencias Sociales (pp. 67-86). Peru.
- Forum-Asia (2011) A guidebook on spaces for children's participation in ASEAN.
- Hart, R. (1992) Children's participation from tokenism to citizenship. UNICEF Innocenti. <https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/100>
- Hart, R. (2008) Stepping back from 'the ladder': reflections on a model of participatory work with children. Ch. 2 in A. Reid et al. 'Participation and learning perspectives in education and the environment, health and sustainability.
- Lansdown, G. (2011) Every child's right to be heard. Save the Children and UNICEF. [https://www.unicef.org/french/adolescence/files/Every\\_Childs\\_Right\\_to\\_be\\_Heard.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/french/adolescence/files/Every_Childs_Right_to_be_Heard.pdf)
- Malherbe, N., Cornell, J., & Suffla, S. (2015) Taking pictures, telling stories and making connections: A Photovoice manual. Johannesburg. South Africa: Institute for Social & Health Sciences. University of South Africa.
- Save the Children (2013) Children's participation in the analysis, planning and design of programmes: A guide for Save the Children staff. Written by Claire O'Kane. <https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/library/childrens-participation-analysis-planning-and-design-programmes-guide-save-children-staff>

## 4.3 Children's participation in advocacy

Advocacy is an area in which children and young people are often involved, either because of its importance for programme implementation or for its broad opportunities to influence policy developments. Participation in advocacy also enables children and young people to acquire knowledge about power structures and ways to influence them; empowers them to impact policy-making processes; increases their self-confidence and develops valuable skills including: team-working, action planning, fundraising, public speaking, etc.

For tdh Germany and its partners, children's participation in advocacy increases the accuracy of advocacy plans and activities, as it better reflects children's views and needs; it amplifies the scope of the actions by giving children the opportunity to use creative ways of mobilisation; it helps change adults' perceptions of children's capacities; and it leads to greater attention from stakeholders to children's rights issues.

There are several ways to involve children and young people in advocacy. However, it is crucial that their involvement prioritises the best interest of the child and is according to their evolving capacities. In this sense, their participation in advocacy activities should consider many factors including: children's age range, topics that interest or concern them, and their background (for example, whether they are from an ethnic or religious minority, children with disabilities, refugee children, or stateless children). Risks associated with advocacy should be identified and minimised.

In order to ensure meaningful participation of children and young people in advocacy, it is important to:

- 1) Ensure adults are prepared to work with children and received proper training on children's participation and child safeguarding standards<sup>6</sup>;
- 2) Support children and young people in the development of their own advocacy actions (e.g. workshop on advocacy action planning), and provide them with the necessary training to improve their initiatives (e.g. child rights-related topics, fundraising, budgeting, etc.);
- 3) Use child-friendly formats and materials to undertake any advocacy-related workshop, activity, or project where children are involved.

Ideas for participation of children and young people in advocacy include participation in children's parliaments or groups; involvement in rallies or demonstrations; media work (e.g. child journalists projects, radio or TV programmes, blogs, social media campaigns); lobbying; child-led festivals and events. Internally, children and young people can also participate actively in developing the organisational advocacy strategy and annual planning. Their input can inform the advocacy agenda and enable collaborative work with adults.

#### **Toolkit: Practical tools for children's participation in advocacy**

4.3.1 The spider tool

4.3.2 The advocacy hot air balloon

#### **Promising practice: Child and youth participation in the day of general discussion of the United Nations committee on the Rights of the Child**

In September 2016, the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child hosted the Day of General Discussion regarding the topic ecological child rights following the suggestion of terre des hommes. Children and youth from tdh projects who are affected by the pollution of the environment participated in that day and discussed with international experts the need for ecological child rights. Prior to the event, they had intensive preparations with project partners, and tdh staff and volunteers to be prepared to advocate for their topic on an international expert level. As an outcome of this event, children and youth went back to their projects with rich insights of international advocacy and experts got a first-hand insights into the situation on the ground which they evaluated very useful.

<sup>6</sup> See: Nine basic requirements for effective and ethical children's participation as a tool for planning and monitoring the quality of child participation (CRC/C/GC/12, 2009).

#### Useful reading for children's participation in advocacy

- Save the Children (2007) Advocacy matters: helping children change their world. An International Save the Children Alliance guide to advocacy – Participants Manual, [www.savethechildren.org.uk/sites/default/files/docs/Advocacy-Matters-Participants-Manual.pdf](http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/sites/default/files/docs/Advocacy-Matters-Participants-Manual.pdf)
- Save the Children Sweden (2008) One Step Beyond: Advocacy handbook for children and young people, <https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/node/1787/pdf/1787.pdf>
- terre des Hommes (2016) Advocating for girl's rights, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=KjT56bKHww8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KjT56bKHww8)
- UNICEF (2010) Advocacy Toolkit – A guide to influencing decisions that improve children's lives, [www.unicef.org/evaluation/files/Advocacy\\_Toolkit.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/evaluation/files/Advocacy_Toolkit.pdf)
- Inter-Agency Working Group on Children's Participation (IAWGCP) (2008) Children as active citizens, [https://www.unicef.org/eapro/Children\\_as\\_Active\\_Citizens\\_A4\\_book.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/eapro/Children_as_Active_Citizens_A4_book.pdf)
- Inter-Agency Working Group on Children's Participation (IAWGCP) (2007) Children's participation in decision making: Why do it, When to do it, How to do it, [www.plan-international.org/publications/childrens-participation-decision-making#download-options](http://www.plan-international.org/publications/childrens-participation-decision-making#download-options)
- World Vision (2017) Child-led mobilisation: A guide for children and young advocates [www.wvi.org/sites/default/files/WV-Child-Led-Mobilisation%20final.pdf](http://www.wvi.org/sites/default/files/WV-Child-Led-Mobilisation%20final.pdf)

## 4.4 Children's participation in communication

Children's participation in communication projects such as radio, TV programmes or social media, is crucial to amplify children's voices and to enable children to claim their rights and to influence practices and policies on issues affecting them. The UNCRC articles that are particularly relevant to children's participation in communication are: their right to express their views and be taken into account (Article 12); their right to freedom of expression and to receive and disseminate information (Article 13); and their right to access information (Article 17). Each type of participation namely, consultation, collaborative participation and child led participation are relevant when supporting children's participation in communication and campaigns.

Collaborative participation is also encouraged for internal and external communication, especially in relation to lobby and advocacy activities in which children are involved. As mentioned above, in some cases children and young people also participate actively in communication in order to share feedback or disseminate activity outputs.

Internally, children and young people can participate by being interviewed or quoted for organisational newsletters, articles, or publications; giving advice about communication materials that target children or youth audience; or taking over the organisational social media channels and platforms. More meaningful participation includes: children and young people writing for articles, newsletters or publications; child-led communication initiatives (e.g. child journalists, photovoice, radio or TV programmes, child rights-related online platforms or applications; presenting at conferences, etc.). Externally, communication projects often support advocacy initiatives. Children's participation at this level includes: social media mobilisation and campaigning; design and production of communication pieces for advocacy purposes; coordination and dissemination of advocacy messages and actions through different children's groups or associations and available platforms.

Involving children in communication implies high responsibility, especially for the use of children's images. Systematic efforts are needed to ensure child safeguarding and protection of children's anonymity. It is crucial that informed consent is gained from children and their parents/caregivers before involving children in communication or advocacy activities. Media and communication guidelines must be developed and applied for internal or external communication initiatives, and a risk assessment is required to determine what information about the child is or is not sensitive for publication.

#### **Toolkit: Practical tools for children's participation in communication**

##### 4.4 Diamond ranking

#### **Promising practice: Children's participation TV and radio production, Tuktan, Nicaragua**

In Nicaragua, children are participating in the Tuktan project called »Aprender haciendo« (Learning by doing) that aims to give children and young people an opportunity to learn communication skills through practice, while raising awareness on issues affecting their lives. Thus, children are directly involved in all stages of content development for TV and radio programmes including context analysis, selection of topics, objectives, communication formats, data collection, and edition.

#### **Useful resources for children's participation in communication**

- Photovoice, [www.photovoice.org](http://www.photovoice.org)
- UNICEF, Voices of youth maps, [www.voicesofyouth.org/maps](http://www.voicesofyouth.org/maps)
- UNESCO (2006) Innovative Practices of Youth Participation in Media, <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001492/149279e.pdf>
- Tuktan, Manual de Comunicación, [www.tuktansirpi.org/MANUALDECOMUNICACION%20ENERO2016.pdf](http://www.tuktansirpi.org/MANUALDECOMUNICACION%20ENERO2016.pdf)

## 4.5 Children's participation in fundraising

Children's participation in fundraising can be relevant to mobilise resources in their local and national contexts to sustain child-led or collaborative initiatives. However, care should be taken not to manipulate or use children for raising funds for adult-run organisations.

tdh Germany and partner organisations could significantly support children's groups and associations by providing training on fundraising and budgeting skills. Children and young people could also make use of infrastructure and technical support to develop a fundraising strategy or to carry out child-led fundraising activities for their initiatives. Some ideas to fundraise in their communities included: food festivals or cook-a-thons, movie afternoons, game afternoons, sports tournaments, talent shows, holiday sales.



Children and young people may also be interested to link fundraising activities to their advocacy and campaigning causes. For example, if the children's groups or associations advocate for children's right to education, they could start a fundraising campaign selling school supplies (e.g. pencils, pens, or rulers) labelled with the name of their campaign or with a website that people could visit to learn more about the cause.

Online fundraising is another alternative for children's groups and associations. Adults' support and supervision to ensure child-safeguarding standards is crucial to make use of this option. Online fundraising tools include for instance online donations (e.g. through platforms such as gofundme or justgiving), and online auctions.

#### **Toolkit: Practical tools for children's participation in fundraising**

- 4.5.1 Mapping it out
- 4.5.2 Bricks in the wall

#### **Promising practice: Children's engagement in fundraising strategies (MOLACNATS)**

MOLACNATS, the Latin American movement of working children has three levels of children's involvement in fundraising: the first one takes place in the communities where children themselves plan and implement fundraising activities. The second level is considered as social entrepreneurship where children look for sponsors to carry out local and even regional activities. The last level is the national and international, which is mainly integrated by international cooperation agencies. Targeting potential donors and fundraising opportunities is a key step in the setting up process of a fundraising strategy.

## 5. Monitoring and evaluating children's participation

In recent years, among the child rights NGOs, governments and donors, there has been an increasing emphasis on the need to develop better indicators against which to monitor and measure process and outcomes in children's participation. An inter-agency toolkit for monitoring and evaluating children's participation (Lansdown and O'Kane, 2014) provides benchmarks or standards against which to measure the actual experience of participation in any programme or project, including:

- Scope - what degree of participation (not involved, consultation, collaboration, or child led participation) has been achieved and at what stages of programme development - in other words – What is being done? It also reflects on who? Which children have had the opportunity to participate?
- Quality - to what extent have participatory processes complied with the nine basic requirements for effective and ethical children's participation that is 1) transparent and informative, 2) voluntary, 3) respectful, 4) relevant, 5) child friendly, 6) inclusive, 7) supported by training, 8) safe and sensitive, and 9) accountable. – in other words – How is it being done?

- Outcome - what have been the outcomes of children's participation, on children and young people themselves, on their families, on the organisation supporting children's participation, and in terms of wider realisation of children's rights in their families, local communities and at local and national governmental level – in other words – What has changed?

Guidance and tools to support participatory monitoring and evaluation processes involving children, young people and adults are included in the toolkit.

Existing standards and tools developed by tdh Schweiz on youth participation also provide good indicators to measure the quality and scope of children's participation<sup>7</sup>. (see tool 5.1)

#### **Toolkit: Practical tools for monitoring and evaluating children's participation**

- 5.1 TDH Schweiz young people's participation assessment tool
- 5.2 Step behind

#### **Promising practice: »Paso Atrás« (The Step Behind Method) developed by Tuktan, Nicaragua**

Tuktan in Nicaragua developed a method called »Paso Atrás« (The Step Behind Method) through which children measure their participation based on certain criteria that include adults' involvement and the evolution of their supporting role in the exercise of children's participation<sup>1</sup>. This scale suggests that the development of children's participation is proportional to the »step behind« that adults are able to take in each stage of the process.

<sup>1</sup> See: Metodología »Paso Atrás.« Available at: [www.tuktansirpi.org/manualitos7.html](http://www.tuktansirpi.org/manualitos7.html)

#### **Useful reading for monitoring and evaluation of children's participation**

- Feinstein, C. and O'Kane, C. (2005) The spider tool: A self assessment and planning tool for child led initiatives and organisations. Save the Children. <https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/library/spider-tool-self-assessment-and-planning-tool-child-led-initiatives-and-organisations>
- Lansdown, G. and O'Kane, C. (2014) A toolkit for monitoring and evaluating children's participation. Save the Children, Plan International, Concerned for Working Children, World Vision and UNICEF. <https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/library/toolkit-monitoring-and-evaluating-childrens-participation-introduction-booklet-1>
- tdh Germany South East Asia Quality Assessment Matrix (QuAM).
- tdh Schweiz Youth participation assessment tool, terre des hommes Schweiz concept of youth participation.
- Tuktan Metodología »Paso Atrás.« Available at: [www.tuktansirpi.org/manualitos7.html](http://www.tuktansirpi.org/manualitos7.html)

<sup>7</sup> See: TDH Schweiz Youth Participation Assessment tool, terre des hommes Schweiz concept of youth participation.

## 6. Suggestions for institutional anchoring of effective and ethical children's participation

Ensuring the right of children to participate is an important value in tdh Germany's work with children and partner organisations and anchored within the framework of institutional structures. Representatives of the tdh Germany's youth networks are involved in processes of strategic goal setting on programme level. However, a holistic anchoring on all levels is still missing. Establishing a comprehensive approach to participation is necessary and important in order to:

- realize the right to participation across the tdh Germany institutional structure including research, advocacy/lobby, communication and fundraising
- contribute to the realization of the right to participation within our societies as well as our project regions
- strengthen the unique selling point of institutional participation that can be used for communication

To reach this goal, the following next steps should be taken:

- Ensure that children's participation is anchored as strategic objective across all levels in tdh Germany strategies, thematic policies as well as statutes and contributes to the activities of the TDHIF Working Groups,
- Consider the creation of a child participation focal point at TDHIF level to coordinate and mainstream all efforts to realise children's rights to participation,
- Highlight, communicate and strengthen children's participation as tdh Germany unique selling point in all internal and external communication channels,
- Support increased capacity building for tdh Germany staff and partners on children's participation at all levels to ensure the internalisation of children's participation as a cross-cutting principle of tdh Germany reflected in organisational policies, programmes, and practices.
- Increase documentation, learning and sharing on children's participation experiences across Member Organisations and projects in order to increase organisational learning and knowledge,
- Increase awareness and application of the nine basic requirements for effective and ethical children's participation as a tool for planning and monitoring the quality of child participation (CRC/C/GC/12, 2009),
- Increase inter-agency advocacy for mainstreaming children's participation in policy debates at local, national, regional and international level,
- Ensure that the participation of children and youth is guaranteed in every phase of a project and also within tdh Germany,
- Mainstreaming of institutional participation opportunities for children and young people with particular efforts to reach and involve the most marginalised,

**Useful reading for institutional anchoring of effective and ethical children's participation**

- Action for the Rights of Children ARC Resource Pack: A capacity building tool for child protection in and after emergencies. Foundation Module on Children's Participation and Inclusion. [www.arc-online.org](http://www.arc-online.org)
- Lansdown, G. (2011) Every child's right to be heard. Save the Children and UNICEF.
- Save the Children (2013) Guidelines for children's participation in humanitarian programming. Written by Claire O'Kane. <https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/library/guidelines-childrens-participation-humanitarian-programming>