



Southern Hemisphere

SUPPORTING MEANINGFUL CHANGE

Newsletter: May 2018

1 Child participation

This newsletter is about child participation which refers to *the active involvement of children in the decisions, processes, programmes and policies that affect their lives.*

2 Why is child participation important?

Participation is a fundamental right of children. It is also a means through which their other rights can be realised. It is important for a number of reasons, some of which include:

- Provides information on, and insights into children's lives that can inform legislation, policies, budget allocations and services.
- Children learn to cooperate with adults and other children.
- Empowered children can become active and effective advocates for the realisation of their own rights.
- Children acquire skills, knowledge, competencies and confidence through participation. Participation leads to better protection.
- Participation promotes civic engagement and active citizenship.

3 Legal obligations

The obligations on the state to protect, respect and promote the right of children to participate in decisions that affect them are governed by the UNCRC; the ACRWC; Constitution of the Republic of South Africa; and numerous pieces of national legislation.

Article 12 of the UNCRC states that every child who is capable of forming views has the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting him or her, and that their views must be given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity.

Despite these provisions there are gaps in the South African legislation with the most notable being that **there is no formal systemic political participatory spaces and processes for children.**

The National Child Participation Framework

There are many barriers to child participation such as cultural barriers and adult resistance, lack of adult capacities and fear of negative outcomes.

To address these barriers, and in light of the provisions articulated in the CRC and ACRWC, the National Department of Social Development facilitated the development of a National Child Participation Framework in order to provide a common framework to guide all spheres of government, civil society and different sectors to promote the meaningful participation of children. Southern Hemisphere was contracted by Save the Children South Africa to support DSD to facilitate the development of the National Child Participation Framework.

How was the framework developed?

We followed a participatory process using the following steps:

- Conducted a series of interviews to solicit inputs for the development of the framework.
- Undertook an extensive review of relevant documents and literature to draft the framework.
- Consultation workshop with key stakeholders in the children's sector.
- Consultation workshop with children at a national level workshop.
- Integration of all comments and finalization of framework.

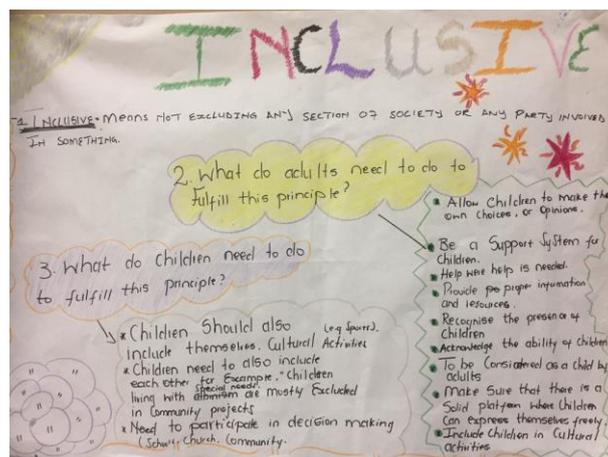


Figure 1 Children's input into child participation principles

Content of the framework

The framework provides a definition of child participation, why it is important and some of the myths and risks surrounding the concept; the background and context to child participation; an overview of the international, regional and national legislative framework relating to child participation; guiding principles underpinning child participation; and models and types of child participation including the different levels and settings in which participation can take place.

Most importantly, it includes **guidelines to implement the framework** in various settings; child participation standards; and a checklist for child participation.

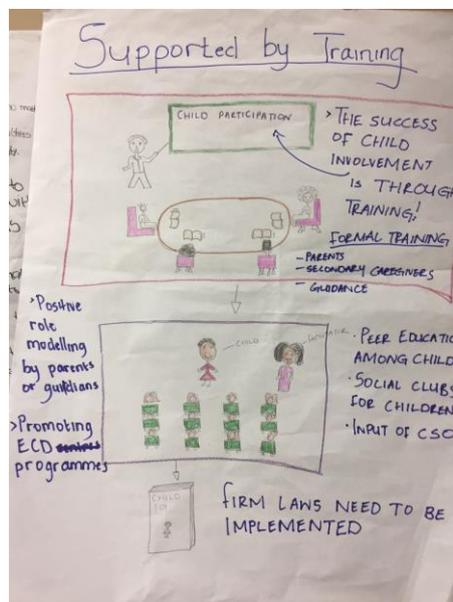


Figure 2 Children's input into guidelines for child participation

Models of child participation

There are a range of models of participation but Lundy's Model of participation was chosen as the most appropriate for the framework because it is grounded in the UNCRC and focused on a rights-based approach to involving children in decision making.

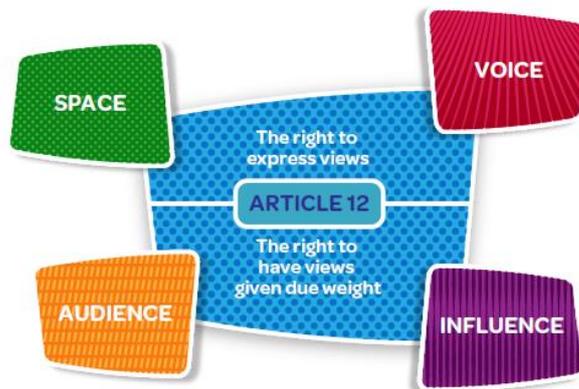


Figure 3 Lundy's Model of Participation

This model provides a way of conceptualising Article 12 of the UNCRC which is intended to focus decision-makers on the distinct, albeit interrelated, elements of the provision. The four elements have a rational chronological order:

- **SPACE:** Children must be given safe, inclusive opportunities to form and express their view
- **VOICE:** Children must be facilitated to express their view
- **AUDIENCE:** The view must be listened to.
- **INFLUENCE:** The view must be acted upon, as appropriate

Link: Lundy, L. (2007) 'Voice is not enough: Conceptualizing Article 12 of the UNCRC', British Educational Research Journal, Vol. 33, No. 6, pp. 927-42.

Useful links:

<https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/node/2035/pdf/2035.pdf> for Myths and Risk factors on children's participation

http://www.ci.uct.ac.za/sites/default/files/image_tool/images/367/Child_Gauge/South_African_Child_Gauge_20102011/sa_child_gauge_2010-11.pdf

<http://children.pan.org.za/sites/default/files/publicationdocuments/Children%27s%20participation%20Topical%20guide.pdf> for overview of gaps in legislation

<https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/insight6.pdf> for guiding principles of child participation