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# A change of rhythm, Nicaraguan style, in children and young people's participation

A simplified interpretation of the new international framework  
"A toolkit for monitoring and evaluating children's participation"  
informed by the experience of the Nicaraguan pilot project  
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# A change of rhythm, Nicaraguan style, in children and young people's participation

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## Credits

Written by Harry Shier, with the support of Nohemí Molina and the CESESMA team.

Parts 1 and 3 are based largely on sections of "**A toolkit for monitoring and evaluating children's participation**" by Gerison Lansdown and Claire O'Kane. Part 2 is original material developed by CESESMA.

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# A change of rhythm, Nicaraguan style, in children and young people's participation

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## INTRODUCTION

### **Why is children and young people's participation so important?**

Since the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopted in 1989, we have known that all the world's children have the right to participate; particularly, as defined in Article 12, the right to express their opinions and have these given due weight on decision-making on all aspects of their lives.

In subsequent years, thanks to advances in both the theory and practice of children's participation, we have come to understand better why participation is so important for children and young people:

- Children's perspectives on their own lives help improve laws, policies, public services and budgets, thus improving the quality of life in many areas including education, healthcare, violence prevention and family life.
- Through their participation, children and young people generate new knowledge and skills, and raise their self-esteem, which increases the benefits of education.
- Empowered children and young people become advocates for, and defenders of, their own rights and the rights of others.
- Children and young people who can speak out without fear about what is happening in their lives are able to protect themselves against violence and abuse, or seek protection from others.
- Child workers who organise improve their conditions of work and help prevent economic exploitation.
- Through participation, children and young people exercise active citizenship, helping to build fair and democratic communities and societies.
- Children and young people's participation demands responses and responsibility from adults, and so contributes to transparency, accountability and good governance in both state agencies and civil society.

## Challenges still to be met

However, there are still major challenges to be faced if we want to see children's right to participate fully realised:

- There is still little understanding of the true nature of the right to participate, which is much more than just Article 12.
- There are no laws to protect and guarantee the right to participate (or in some countries like Nicaragua, there are good laws on paper, but they are not applied in real life).
- Many adults resist change. This resistance is often rooted in old-fashioned cultural beliefs. There is also fear of the social changes that increased participation might lead to.
- Adults are generally not well-trained to facilitate and support children and young people exercising their right to participate.
- There are no effective tools to monitor, measure or evaluate participation.

## Save the Children's international Toolkit project

Save the Children's "*Toolkit for monitoring and evaluating children's participation*" project was developed to meet this last challenge. It set out to formulate, validate, publish, disseminate and implement a new international framework to promote and guide the monitoring and evaluation of children and young people's participation.

The project was coordinated by Save the Children UK in partnership with World Vision and Plan International, with financial support from the Swiss-based Oak Foundation, and facilitated by international children's rights consultants Gerison Lansdown and Claire O'Kane. Its overall objective was to:

"Increase the learning from, and the quality of, children's participation in decisions that affect them through significant improvement in the evidence base on its outcomes, with a particular focus on the protection of children from abuse, violence and exploitation.

Ten organisations were identified across three continents to participate in the project to pilot and validate the new framework. Two Latin American organisations were selected: The Centre for Education in Health and Environment (CESESMA), based in San Ramón, Matagalpa, and Plan Guatemala. However, a number of other Latin American organisations joined the project during the pilot process and participated in some of the project activities on a self-funded basis.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The following Latin American organisations participated in the project: CESESMA (Nicaragua), Plan Guatemala, Save the Children Ecuador, Plan International Regional Office for the Americas (Panama), Plan Ecuador, Plan Paraguay, Plan Honduras and the Yupana Foundation (Ecuador).

The pilot process involved the following stages:

1. Initial meeting for project presentation and training, Nairobi, Kenya, June 2011.
2. Eighteen-month implementation phase: Implementing the new monitoring and evaluation tools in participatory processes with children and young people in projects already running in the partner organisations, July 2011 to December 2012.
3. Preparation and presentation of reports: January to March 2013.
4. International meeting for sharing of experiences, collective reflection and input to the final versions of the framework and toolkit, Accra, Ghana, May 2013.
5. Preparation of final documents, review, feedback and revision: July to October 2013.

The final Toolkit was published in March 2014, and is available to download, in English, French and Spanish, from:

<http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/resources/online-library/toolkit-monitoring-and-evaluating-childrens-participation>

## What we want to share in this Nicaraguan version

The official publication consists of a set of six booklets. To create this Nicaraguan version we have extracted the essence of these six booklets, so as to present it in a simpler form in a single book.

Following this introduction, **Part 1** explains the new international framework for the monitoring and evaluation of children and young people's participation, and presents a ten-step participatory process for putting this into practice.

**Part 2** describes CESESMA's experience in carrying out the pilot project to validate the new framework and toolkit, with reflections from the CESESMA team on the experience and its impact.

Finally **Part 3**, which takes up most of the book, is a new version of the toolkit that accompanies the new framework. Making use of CESESMA's extensive experience of piloting the tools from the original kit, we have re-designed the tools to suit the Nicaraguan context. Some have been simplified and others have had new ideas added.

# PART 1: FRAMEWORK AND PROCESS

## 1.1 Monitoring and evaluation of children and young people's participation

### THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN “MONITORING” AND “EVALUATION”

“**Monitoring**” is the continuous process of looking to see “What’s going on?” in a project or process. It therefore requires gathering information (which we call “data”) on the activities carried out, the people who participate in them, the resources used and the outcomes observed. Thinking about the “monitor” of a computer is a helpful analogy. The monitor is the screen that enables us to see what the computer is doing and what results it is outputting. A computer can function with its monitor switched off, but we would have no idea what it was doing, whether it was working correctly and producing the required results. It’s the same with the “monitoring” of the activities of our projects. If we don’t do the monitoring – that is, the regular collection of information – we don’t know what is going on in the field, whether things are going well or badly, if problems are occurring, or what the outcomes are.

“**Evaluation**” is the process of analysing the information produced by “monitoring” in order to make an assessment of some aspect – or various aspects – of the process. It is sometimes said that “monitoring” is what you do during a project, and “evaluation” what happens at the end, but this is not always the case. Evaluation can be done at any time. Evaluations done during a project can be the most useful, because they enable us to take the decisions necessary to make changes, correct mistakes and achieve objectives. Ideally evaluation should be done with reference to objectives established at the start of a project (which should also have indicators). Evaluation uses the monitoring data to assess to what degree the objectives have been achieved. If they haven’t been achieved, evaluation looks for explanations, and identifies the factors that are preventing them from being achieved. Evaluation can also identify and make visible unexpected outcomes; that is the consequences of project activities – positive or negative – that were not identified at the beginning as objectives to be achieved.

### WHY INVEST IN A NEW FRAMEWORK FOR THE MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION?

- It enables us to identify the strengths and weaknesses of different interventions and initiatives.
- It enables the more effective methods and approaches to be promoted and multiplied; it identifies mistakes and weaknesses so they can be corrected.
- It helps us identify the support and resources required to promote and strengthen participation.
- It provides a set of universal indicators for quality participation, which enables comparison and sharing between different contexts and cultures.

- It provides solid evidence to support the demand for greater political and institutional commitment to children and young people's participation.
- It helps convince the government agencies that are the man duty-bearers in relation to children's participation rights to fulfil their obligations.
- It provides an incentive for international development agencies to invest resources in promoting and realising participation rights.

### THREE DIMENSIONS: SCOPE, QUALITY AND OUTCOMES

This framework suggests that to evaluate children and young people's participation, there are three distinct dimensions that must be measured and assessed: Scope, Quality and Outcomes.

**Scope:** What type, or types, of participation are in evidence? At what stages of the project are the different types more evident? Which children and young people are participating more and which participate less at each stage (or are excluded)?

**Quality:** Are participation processes meeting the international standards for ethical and effective participation (referring to the 9 Basic Requirements established by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in its General Comment No. 12)?

**Outcomes:** What are the results of the participation process? This includes outcomes at all levels: Effects on the children and young people themselves, on their families, schools or communities, effects on adult attitudes or on laws, policies, practices or projects at local or national level. In other words; what has been achieved through children and young people's participation?

## 1.2 Measuring scope

To measure the scope of participation we have to consider three more dimensions: The different types of participation; participation at different stages of a project; and the degree of inclusion or exclusion.



### THREE TYPES OF PARTICIPATION

The framework suggests a simplified model with just three types of participation:<sup>2</sup>

**Consultation** is when adults ask children for their views. This can be done through interviews, questionnaires, surveys or focus group discussion. What distinguishes this type of participation is that children and young people are not involved in decision-making or project development in any way beyond offering an opinion. Adults can take the information provided by the children into account in decision-making if they wish to, but they can just as easily ignore it. (It is important to note that children and young people can carry out their own consultations or work in partnership with adults to carry out consultation, but where this happens it becomes a different type of participation as described below).



**Collaboration** is when adults and children and young people work together, sharing roles and responsibilities in the planning, design or implementation of a project. These activities are usually proposed or initiated by adults, but decision-making may be shared with children and young people.

**Child-led participation** (known as “protagonismo infantil” – child protagonism – in Spanish) refers to processes or activities initiated, organised or run by children and young people themselves. Although children and young people participate in many kinds of activities without any adult help or involvement, such activities are often invisible to the adult world and remain unrecognised. In child-led participation it is common for adults to take on a facilitating or supporting role, helping the children and young people to achieve their own goals through processes they themselves control.



### FIVE STAGES IN THE PROJECT CYCLE

Children and young people can get involved in different ways (consultation, collaboration, child-led activities) in all five stages of the project cycle:

1. Finding out what the problems are (sometimes called “situation analysis”, or “diagnóstico in Spanish).
2. Deciding what to do about the problem and how to go about it (project planning).
3. Taking action (implementation).
4. Measuring and analysing what happened (monitoring and evaluation).
5. Acting on findings (dissemination and feedback).

<sup>2</sup> For more detailed models of different types of participation, such as Hart’s or Shier’s models, see “Participación de niñas, niños y adolescentes en el mundo real” (Save the Children Nicaragua 2012), pp 155-157 [Spanish only].






## INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION

Information on the types of participation practised at different stages of the cycle still doesn't answer the question of which children and young people are participating and which aren't. For example, are there differences due to gender, age, educational level, ethnicity etc. between those who participate more and those who participate less or don't participate? Are disabled children and young people participating? If a small group has been chosen to participate in a project, how were they selected, and by whom?

To make these issues visible, we need to include this third dimension to complete our analysis of the scope of participation.

## A SIMPLIFIED TABLE TO MEASURE THE SCOPE OF PARTICIPATION

Combining the three dimensions: types of participation, stages of the cycle and inclusion/exclusion, produces the following table. Identifying which box best describes the level of participation at each stage of a project, and filling in the right-hand column with details on who is included and who isn't, gives us a quick and easy overview of the scope of participation.

	Children are not involved	Consultation (by adults)	Collaboration	Child-led participation	Which children and young people are participating, and how many?
<b>Situation analysis</b> 		Children and young people are asked for their views.	Children and young people are involved in the process of finding out what the problems are.	Children and young people undertake their own research with other children to identify issues of concern.	
<b>Project planning</b> 		Planning by adults takes account of the issues raised by children and young people.	Children and young people are involved in project planning.	Children and young people decide on actions to take and plan them themselves.	
<b>Implementation</b> 		Children and young people are invited to take part in some activities.	Children and young people work with adults to carry out the programme of activities.	Children and young people organise and run the programme of activities.	
<b>Monitoring &amp; evaluation</b> 		Children and young people are asked if they think the activity or project has been successful.	Children and young people work with adults to evaluate the programme.	Children and young people evaluate the programme according to their own criteria.	
<b>Dissemination and feedback</b> 		Children and young people are invited to comment on the results of the evaluation or make suggestions for future work.	Children and young people and adults together consider the findings of the evaluation and develop ideas for future work.	Children and young people develop their own proposals and present these to adults.	

Tool No.20 in Part 3 includes a simple technique to work on this topic with children and young people.

### 1.3 Measuring quality

#### NINE BASIC REQUIREMENTS FOR ETHICAL AND EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION

The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child set out 9 basic requirements for ethical and effective participation in its General Comment No. 12 on the child's right to be heard in 2009. They are essentially a reformulation of the Quality Standards for Children's Participation published by Save the Children in 2005.

The requirements are:



1. Participation is transparent and informative.
2. Participation is voluntary.
3. Participation is respectful.
4. Participation is relevant.
5. Participation is child-friendly.
6. Participation is inclusive.
7. Participation is supported by training for adults.
8. Participation is safe and sensitive to risk.
9. Participation is accountable.

#### INDICATORS TO MEASURE HOW THE REQUIREMENTS ARE MET

Based on these nine requirements, Save the Children and UNICEF have developed a series of indicators to measure the quality of participation. In the new framework these have been simplified to make it easier to work on this issue with younger children. Each requirement has just three indicators.

Tool No. 14 includes a self-evaluation questionnaire designed by CESESMA which sets out the nine requirements and their simplified indicators in a format that enables you to measure the quality of participation in any organisation or project in a participative way (see the Appendix).



## 1.4 Measuring the outcomes

### DIFFERENT KINDS OF OUTCOMES

Measuring and evaluating the outcomes of a project is a different kind of task from measuring the scope or the quality of participation. This is because each project sets its own desired outcomes, which are unique to that project and don't necessarily correspond to the outcomes of any other project. Because of this, the new framework cannot offer a fixed table or a check-list to measure outcomes. Instead, it considers the different kinds of outcomes that may be achieved through children and young people's participation, so each organisation can draw up its own table to measure and evaluate outcomes.

There are basically two kinds of outcomes:

#### A. Changes in attitudes or behaviour.

These can be seen at all levels:

- In the children and young people,
- In their parents,
- In school,
- In the local community,
- In the institutions of local and national government and of civil society.



#### B. External outcomes:

These are concrete changes that can be observed in communities or at municipal or national level as consequences of the participatory actions of children and young people (for example, in San Ramón children and young people researched the problem of alcohol consumption in their community and as a result the National Police imposed tighter control of illegal liquor sales in the district).

## THREE THINGS TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT IN THE MEASUREMENT OF OUTCOMES

### Objectives and indicators:

If a project's objectives haven't been made clear from the start, or if no indicators have been set to measure their achievement, it is almost impossible to measure the effectiveness or the success of a project. Therefore clearly defined objectives and indicators are fundamental to effective evaluation.

### Negative effects:

There is always the possibility that a participation project has negative outcomes alongside the positive ones. For example, if children and young people decide to work on certain sensitive topics, they may find themselves facing a hostile reaction from teachers, religious leaders or employers. There is a tendency for NGOs to hide or ignore these negative effects, but only through open and honest monitoring and evaluation is it possible to understand the risks and face up to the challenges that these present.

### Cause and effect:

It is difficult – almost impossible – to prove a relationship of cause and effect between the actions of children and young people and the changes that happen in society. For example, when the Minister of Education pronounced a decree that put an end to all corporal punishment in Nicaraguan schools, how can we tell how much the campaigns by organised children and young people on this issue influenced the Minister's action? Therefore, although it is difficult, it is important to obtain and document as much evidence as possible on chains of cause and effect that link the actions of children and young people to outcomes of social change at all levels.



## 1.5 A ten step approach

### **Step 1: Identify a project or programme to evaluate**

Identify the project or programme that will be the focus of your monitoring and evaluation of children and young people's participation, and the objectives set for this project.



### **Step 2: Build institutional support and "buy-in"**

Build institutional support for your monitoring and evaluation project and seek a firm commitment from the staff who are going to be involved in the process.



### **Step 3: Form a team**

Set up a working group to coordinate and manage your monitoring and evaluation process. Senior management of your organisation should be represented.



### **Step 4: Train the staff involved**

Train the working group and other staff involved on the new monitoring and evaluation framework and the process to be implemented.



### **Step 5: Make a plan**

Draw up your monitoring and evaluation plan, or if your organisation already has a monitoring and evaluation plan, integrate this new process into the existing plan.



### **Step 6: Tell the children and young people and other groups involved**

Present your monitoring and evaluation proposal to the children and young people and other groups involved; for example, parents, teachers and community leaders.



### **Step 7: Establish a base-line**

Collect data, using the tools suggested in Part 3 of this guide, and carry out an initial analysis to create a base-line for your monitoring and evaluation project.



### **Step 8: Use the tools to gather information**

During the implementation of your project, choose and use the tools with children and young people, collecting data to measure the scope, quality and outcomes of their participation.



### **Step 9: Document the process and write a report**

Both the process and the data generated by the activities must be documented. Produce a report to document the analysis of the data.



### **Step 10: Draw up an action plan**

Draw up an action plan to disseminate the results of the evaluation, implement recommendations, and give feedback to the children and young people and other groups involved.

## PART 2: CESESMA'S EXPERIENCE

### 2.1 CESESMA's proposal

In March 2011 CESESMA was selected as a partner in the pilot project for the new framework. We were originally going to focus our monitoring and evaluation project on the “*Safe, Quality Schools*” programme<sup>3</sup>, running in northern Nicaragua since 2008 with backing from Save the Children Nicaragua. CESESMA was implementing the programme in 34 schools in the municipalities of El Tuma-La Dalia, Rancho Grande and Waslala.

However, in 2011 CESESMA was also about to launch a new project, “Young workers participating in the prevention of economic exploitation” with emphasis on the coffee-producing sector, as part of another Save the Children international programme, “*Children lead the way*”. As the two projects were to run in the same municipalities of Rancho Grande and El Tuma-La Dalia, we decided to extend the focus of our monitoring and evaluation project to cover both of them.

CESESMA was one of only ten organisations selected to participate in the international pilot project, and one of only two Latin American projects (this later became a challenge since, with so few Spanish-speakers participating, everything had to be done in English). We were also one of the few independent organisations selected, as most of the partner projects were under direct management of the major international development agencies. We saw this as recognition of CESESMA as a capable and committed organisation on the international stage; and also of Nicaragua as a country able to exercise leadership in the promotion of the right to participate.



<sup>3</sup> For more information on Save the Children's “*Safe, Quality Schools*” programme, see: [http://www.savethechildren.org.ni/index.php?option=com\\_docman&task=doc\\_details&gid=20&Itemid=27](http://www.savethechildren.org.ni/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_details&gid=20&Itemid=27), and also CESESMA's documents “*Escuelas seguras y de calidad*” (2010), and “*Construyendo una escuela segura y de calidad con los niños y niñas*” (2012), available at: <http://www.cesesma.net/publicaciones/lista/?page=1> [Spanish only]

## 2.2 How we organised it

To start the process, the framework guide instructed us to form a working group to run the project, which must include representation of senior management. CESESMA's response was a bit different: We decided that the whole of CESESMA's coordination team would take on shared responsibility for the project, which meant that the monitoring and evaluation of children and young people's participation would not be the responsibility of just a small group, but would have its own space on the agenda of every meeting of CESESMA's collective management team.

The guide also asked us to think about how children and young people would be represented in the management of the project. In response to this, we started a process that eventually led to the formation of young advisory teams in each of the three municipalities where the project was implemented (of which more later).

As for the day-to-day management of the project, a big problem for us was that Save the Children UK was only offering symbolic financial support and was not providing salaries for the staff who would carry out the work. Save the Children Nicaragua helped us out by providing a special grant to cover the salary of a person to coordinate the work, as well as some of the running costs. Save the Children Nicaragua's decision to give this project a high profile nationally (including this publication) has been a key factor in ensuring its success.

In the first months of the project, another problem for us was not having the new framework available in Spanish. All the documentation was in English. However, thanks to the efforts of our colleagues in Plan Guatemala, in July 2011 we received draft versions of the framework and toolkit in Spanish, which caused a real "change of rhythm" in the project.

Based on the example tables in the framework document, we developed new tables incorporating the specific objectives and expected outcomes of our two focus projects, "Safe, Quality Schools" and "Children lead the way". Using these new tables as a framework we drew up a detailed monitoring and evaluation plan that was approved by CESESMA's coordination team and launched in September 2011.





## 2.3 Training

Introducing a new framework and a whole new toolkit had implications for staff training. For CESESMA this meant both internal and external training.

Within the organisation, we devoted a special meeting of the Coordination Team to the project, looking in detail at both its conceptual framework and the process to be carried out. Later we arranged a full-day training workshop with the entire education team so they could learn about the framework, the new tools, and the project activities that were being planned.

As mentioned above, Save the Children Nicaragua gave this project a high profile and invited us to lead a number of national training events:

- A two-day training workshop in April 2012 for representatives of organisations that were members of the National Working Group on Children's Participation.
- A one-day workshop in June 2012 for programme directors and other officers of Save the Children Nicaragua, as well as representatives of other organisations that weren't members of the participation working group.
- A one-day workshop in October 2013 to share the framework and toolkit with staff of Save the Children's partner organisations in the north of the country.
- Also in May 2012 we presented the "Change of Rhythm" project to representatives of the NGOs who are members of CODENI (the National Coordinating Committee of NGOs working with Children and Young People) at a national meeting for reflection and sharing of experiences on child participation.

## 2.4 International sharing and liaison

Besides maintaining regular and fluid communication with Save the Children UK in London, CESESMA participated in the project's two international meetings: the initial introduction and training meeting in Nairobi, Kenya, in June 2011; and the final meeting for sharing experiences, reflection and feedback in Accra, Ghana, in May 2013.

Between these two meetings, Save the Children UK organised a series of internet meetings or "webinars". At first these were held in English, which made it difficult for the Latin American partners to participate fully. However, when more organisations from Central and South America joined the programme, a number of Spanish webinars were also held. CESESMA staff not only participated in these, but also helped with the facilitation of the meetings in cyberspace, which was a new experience, and a new challenge, for us.

## 2.5 The base-line

For this project, a "base-line" meant having data on the current state of the "scope", "quality" and "outcomes" of participation at the start of our monitoring and evaluation pilot, before we started to encourage, and then measure, changes in these. To create our base-line we organised six focus groups with children and young people: one with children (8-12) and one with adolescents (13-17) in each of the three municipalities of Waslala, Tuma-La Dalia and Rancho Grande. We collected data on the three dimensions of participation in the following ways:

**Scope:** We used our version of the tool "*Walking through the programme cycle*" (Tool No. 20 in Part 3).

**Quality:** We used our new self-evaluation questionnaire based on the nine basic requirements for quality participation, which was completed by working in small groups. Tool No.14, "*Self-evaluation questionnaire*", in Part 3 is based on CESESMA's original questionnaire format.

**Outcomes:** Participants completed an individual survey form to determine a starting-point in relation to the expected outcomes of our two evaluation focus projects, thus establishing a base-line to measure "outcomes" of children and young people's participation.

We produced reports on all six groups and consolidated the data from all six reports to draw up the base-line document for the project incorporating elements relating to the scope, quality and outcomes of participation.

## 2.6 Implementing the framework and tools

Throughout 2012 and the first six months of 2013, we continued to implement the framework and toolkit in a continuous effort to monitor and evaluate the scope, quality and outcomes of participation. Among the tools and techniques we used were:

- The three basic tools of observation, interviews and, above all, reflection and discussion in focus groups (Tools No. 1, 2 and 5 in Part 3). Our emphasis on these tools as fundamental to monitoring and evaluation is reflected in the final version of the Toolkit.
- The tools *“Tours led by children and young people”* (No. 8), and *“Project visual timeline”* (No. 12), were particularly useful in our children and young people's action-research programme and in the mid-term evaluation of Save the Children Nicaragua's strategic plan.
- The *“H evaluation”* tool (No. 21) was useful for evaluation with local community groups.

In other processes and spaces we also used: *“Body mapping”* (No. 16), *“Circle analysis of inclusion and exclusion”* (No. 22), and *“Stories of most significant change”* (No. 23).

New tools developed by CESESMA include:

- *“The spaceogram: How do I participate?”* (now included in the toolkit as Tool No. 7);
- *“Self-evaluation questionnaire”* which we developed to help establish our base-line (now included in the toolkit as Tool No. 14);
- *“Action-research by children and young people”*. This last is not so much a tool, but rather a whole approach to participative work with children and young people. Although it is not in the toolkit, it has been described in a number of CESESMA's publications available on our web-site.<sup>4</sup>



<sup>4</sup> Los Consultores y las Consultoras Infantiles de la Finca Santa Martha Investigamos la Problemática de Violencia (2009); Estudio sobre la problemática de violencia hacia niños, niñas y adolescentes en el sector de Samulalí, Matagalpa (2009); Niños, Niñas y Adolescentes Defendiendo nuestro Derecho a Jugar (2009); Respete nuestros derechos (2011); Aprender a vivir sin violencia (2011); Aprendimos que la sexualidad es pensar, actuar y sentir (2012). All are available from: <http://www.cesesma.net/publicaciones/lista/?page=1>



CESESMA's other contributions to the "Change of Rhythm" approach include the use of creative expression, particularly drawings, to support evaluation processes (see Tool No. 9), the use of drama and role-play (No. 10) and the use of games (No. 11).

Although we didn't use Tool No. 15, "*Pots and beans*" in this context, because we think our "*Self-evaluation questionnaire*" (No. 14) gives better results, it was used to great effect in the 2012 "Cabildo Infantil" (Children's Council Lobby) in San Ramón, to let the Mayor and his officials know the children and young people's priorities among a number of different proposals for child-friendly improvements in the municipality.

Another important aspect of our experience was the simultaneous introduction and implementation of our Child Protection Guidelines. The synchronisation of this with the implementation of "Change of Rhythm" in CESESMA helped create a "virtuous circle": To protect children and young people requires ethical and efficient monitoring, and the new techniques for monitoring and evaluation helped the team to comply with the protection guidelines.

## 2.7 The children and young people's advisory groups

The children and young people who participated in the base-line focus groups mentioned above elected representatives to form advisory groups, so as to continue to contribute to the development of the project. Subsequently these groups were expanded to create what we call "children and young people's area teams" with the aim that these children and young people will take on a key role as advisors on many aspects of CESESMA's work, not just the "Change of Rhythm" project. They thus form part of a network of children and young people's groups that CESESMA works with in a coordinated way, including the Federation of Primary Students (FEP), the children's reading network, the sustainable agriculture group, and the "Reconstructing Masculinity" groups.

## 2.8 The impact of the experience on CESESMA

1. The experience has made us look at the question of how children and young people participate in CESESMA's "programme cycle". They themselves felt they were participating more in the first stage (situation analysis) and the third stage (implementation of activities). We recognised that we need a new strategy to get children and young people involved in all stages of the cycle in a permanent and organised way.
2. An important impact is that children and young people have increased their capacity to act as advisers to the organisation from their own perspectives (see the previous section).
3. It has been important for us to understand the difference between "monitoring" and "evaluation", as these require different emphases in the project. For CESESMA, evaluation has been a more conscious and organised process, at the end of every activity, every three months and at the end of every project. However, we now need to look more closely at how we carry out the monitoring of our activities, which must emphasise both monitoring of participation and monitoring through participation. We recognise the need for additional training and awareness-raising in our team on the importance of monitoring and evaluation, as well as new methods and techniques for facilitating participatory monitoring and evaluation processes.
4. Child protection as an institutional responsibility goes beyond simply understanding children's need to be protected because they are children; their age, their lack of maturity, and their limited ability for self-protection. Now we understand protection as the development of life-skills. We have thus developed capacity in our team to work for effective child protection in compliance with our child protection guidelines.
5. Although the tools in the Toolkit are provided with a view to their specific application in monitoring and evaluation processes, for us they represent a multi-use toolkit. They can be adapted to other contexts and are valid for many kinds of interventions for the promotion of children's rights. One example already mentioned was the use of the "*Pots and beans*" tool in the San Ramón children's council lobby (cabildo infantil) to determine children and young people's priorities for development. Another is the use of "*Tours directed by children and young people*" as part of a process to carry out participatory appraisals in rural communities.
6. Through this experience we have a better understanding of children and young people's participation as a political issue. This has strengthened our commitment to a rights-based approach in all our projects.
7. It has given us new ideas on the use of playful and creative approaches.
8. We are more aware of exclusion, and the factors that can cause it; for example the limited participation of children and young people with disabilities.
9. We have had the opportunity to learn about good practice in other countries through sharing experiences with the other partners in the international pilot project.
10. This project has made a significant contribution to the archive of evidence we have accumulated that demonstrates the effectiveness of our work.

## 2.9 The impact of CESESMA's experience on the new international framework

- The title of the project in Spanish, "*A change of rhythm in the monitoring and evaluation...*", was suggested by CESESMA, as we couldn't find a good translation for the original English title, "*A step change....*".
- When discussing the "scope" of participation, the draft framework document did not address important questions about "Who is participating and who isn't?" and "Those who aren't participating, why aren't they?" If we don't ask these questions, discrimination and exclusion remain invisible; including the exclusion of children and young people with disabilities, gender discrimination, and intolerance of cultural, racial, language or other differences. Asking these questions at every opportunity has helped ensure that the final version of the framework addresses the issue of inclusion and exclusion more fully. It now gives more guidance on how to identify and make visible different forms of discrimination, including discrimination by adolescents against younger children.
- We have helped to make sure the final version of the framework gives more importance to the fundamental techniques for monitoring and evaluation: focus groups, interviews, observation, etc. Although the official toolkit now provides more information on these techniques, we believe it is still not sufficient, so in our version of the toolkit (part 3 of this book) we have provided more detailed guidance.
- We took the table for measuring quality from the original framework and turned it into a practical tool for working with children and young people. This is our "*Self-evaluation questionnaire*" (Tool No. 14), which is now part of the official toolkit.
- CESESMA has developed and validated a number of new tools, new versions of existing tools, or improved tools. Many of these are already mentioned in Section 2.6 above: "*The spaceogram*", "*Walking through the project cycle*", "*Pots and beans*" and "*Tours led by children and young people*" among others.

## 2.10 Reflections and recommendations

### What is a "child"?

For us, a weakness of the project documents is that they use the definition of "child" from the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which includes everyone from birth to their eighteenth birthday. Nobody here thinks like this, and for us it is important to recognise that there are two groups with very different experiences, interests and abilities: children (0 to 12 years old) and adolescents (13-17 years old). We have adapted our documents using the Spanish term "niñas, niños y adolescentes" (children – female and male – and adolescents) to describe people up to 18 years old, and we applied this distinction in our work, for example organising separate focus groups of children and adolescents.<sup>5</sup>

We did not win the argument for this concept to be used in the official project documents. It seems the misleading language of the CRC is strongly entrenched in the international NGOs, who continue to use "children" for everyone up to 18. At least the framework document now includes a brief paragraph "Defining childhood" which acknowledges the problem.

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<sup>5</sup> The English expression used in this translation, "children and young people", is less satisfactory, as neither term is clearly defined, and "young people" is often understood to include young adults of 18 and over, causing further confusion. However it is very common, and is used here for ease of reading.

### **Long-term processes**

Processes of education and empowerment, which in turn lead to political influence and social change, are long-term processes. CESESMA, therefore, takes a strategic approach, looking for medium- and long-term interventions which enable the groups involved, particularly children and young people, to take a leading role, and thus allows us to move gradually from a facilitating role to the role of supporting and accompanying autonomous action.

To measure and evaluate these processes requires the evaluation and analysis of outcomes over the longer term; that is, periods of 3-5 years. The pilot project, however, limited us to evaluations within an 18-month period. It is important now to continue applying these techniques over a number of years in order to gather evidence of the long-term impact of children and young people's participation.

### **Multiple, diverse spheres of participation**

When the framework document talks about the "scope" of participation, this concept is limited to the NGO programme cycle. CESESMA promotes children and young people's participation in many different spheres, far beyond the world of NGOs and their programmes. We feel the concept of "scope" here needs to take account of the true scope of children and young people's participation both inside and outside NGOs, including spaces such as the family, the school, the municipality and the media. This learning has been important in our work with children and young people as researchers, and is also relevant to the question of the limited participation of children and young people with disabilities.

### **Challenging adultism**

CESESMA uses an integrated approach in our work with children and young people, which means working in parallel with adult stakeholders on training and awareness-raising processes that support changes in attitudes and behaviour. In this work we encounter entrenched adultism which manifests itself in violence, mistreatment and the refusal to recognise children and young people as rights-holders and citizens. This is another reason why we need to generate and document more and better evidence on the positive results of children and young people's participation.

### **The playful approach**

It has been a challenge to adapt some of the tools to work with children under 10 years of age. For example, although we created a simplified child-friendly version of our self-evaluation questionnaire on the 9 basic requirements, it was still difficult for younger children to complete it unaided. It is therefore important to continue working on alternative techniques to enable children under 10 to realise their right to participate. One key to this is the inclusion of approaches using play and games as part of the new toolkit. This needs to be strengthened through staff training on facilitating playful techniques for monitoring and evaluation.<sup>6</sup>

### **Saying "No" to manipulation**

We still see too many instances of false participation and the manipulation of children and young people by adults. We need to explore this issue, both with the children and young people, and with our adult team. Common examples include when participatory activities are organised and then manipulated to help adults achieve their objectives; or where children participate in a purely decorative way (we see a lot of this in celebratory or commemorative events in schools); or symbolic participation, where children are invited to participate just for the appearance, and there is no intention to take their views into account or act on their proposals.

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<sup>6</sup> See "*Participación de niñas, niños y adolescentes en el mundo real: Caja de herramientas*" (Save the Children Nicaragua, 2012), Módulo 4: "La importancia del juego y el enfoque lúdico" [Spanish only].

## PART 3: THE TOOLKIT

### 3.1 The tools and their uses

Tools in the toolkit	Basic multi-use tools	Tools to kick off the M & E process	Tools to collect baseline data	Tools to measure scope	Tools to measure quality	Tools to measure outcomes	Tools for younger children
	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼
1. Focus group discussion	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
2. Interviews	✓		✓		✓	✓	
3. Surveys and opinion polls	✓		✓		✓	✓	
4. Personal testimony and case studies	✓		✓		✓	✓	
5. Direct observation	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
6. Analysis of existing reports and statistics	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
7. The Spaceogram: How do I participate?		✓	✓	✓			
8. Tours led by children and young people		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
9. Creative expression: Drawing and painting		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
10. Creative expression: Drama and puppets		✓		✓		✓	✓
11. Games and playful techniques		✓		✓	✓		✓
12. Project visual time-line		✓		✓			
13. Comal and tortillas		✓	✓				
14. Self-evaluation questionnaire			✓		✓		
15. Pots and beans			✓		✓		
16. Body-mapping			✓			✓	✓
17. Decision-making chart			✓				
18. Self-esteem rating			✓			✓	
19. Footsteps				✓			
20. Walking through the project cycle				✓			
21. H evaluation				✓			
22. Circle analysis of inclusion and exclusion				✓			
23. Stories of most significant change					✓	✓	
24. The magic carpet					✓		✓
25. Scrapbooks						✓	✓
26. Traffic light						✓	
27. Change analysis						✓	

## 3.2 Six basic multi-use tools



### TOOL 1: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

A facilitated group discussion on a specific topic, commonly known as a “Focus group”, is one of the most basic and useful techniques in monitoring and evaluation. The benefits of a focus group discussion, compared to an individual interview or conversation, arise from the sharing and interaction between the participants, which:

- highlight people’s attitudes, priorities and frames of reference;
- encourage communication and sharing of ideas;
- help identify the norms and values held in the group;
- locate people’s personal opinions within the framework provided by these norms and values.

To organise and facilitate a focus group, here are some things to consider:

#### **Participants**

- Generally the participants in a focus group belong to the same social group or have something specific in common; for example, a group of children who have been participating in a project, a group of parents of the same children, a group of adolescent agricultural workers, or a group of community leaders. (An exchange of views between people belonging to different groups is also a valuable monitoring and evaluation tool, but this falls outside the usual definition of a focus group and requires a different facilitation technique).
- A group of between 8 and 15 participants is recommended to encourage active participation. If there are more than 12 participants it may be helpful to divide them into smaller groups to encourage everyone to participate in the discussion.

#### **Conditions**

- A focus group should be held in a comfortable place where there will be minimal interruptions, and nobody present who is not participating in the group.
- Starting and finishing times should be mutually agreed, and all participants asked to make a commitment to keep to these times.
- If people have mobile phones, try to persuade them to turn them off or, if this is not possible, at least agree to put them in silent mode.

#### **Facilitation**

- The facilitator should try to establish a calm, friendly, informal atmosphere. Participants should feel a sense of equality and mutual respect.
- It is important that everyone knows the purpose and objectives for the focus group.
- Prepare some key questions to guide and structure the discussion. Try to use questions that will encourage critical reflection, rather than the repetition of fixed opinions. New questions or themes may arise, but it is important not to deviate too much from the set topic.
- Encourage everyone to participate. This means supporting shy or quiet people, and preventing others from dominating the discussion.

#### **Documentation**

- It is important to document a focus group well, in order to provide good data for your monitoring and evaluation process. There are various ways you can record the meeting: have someone act as secretary and make notes in a notebook or portable computer, write up key points on flip-chart sheets, or record the conversation with a digital voice recorder. It is important that everyone agrees with the chosen recording method. For example, a digital recorder may inhibit some people from expressing their true feelings or opinions.



## TOOL 2: INTERVIEWS

The individual interview is another basic and valuable technique for all monitoring and evaluation processes. It makes use of the natural process of conversation to better understand, and find out more about, people's thoughts, ideas, actions, practices and perspectives.

To use interviews effectively in monitoring and evaluation, here are some points to consider:

- Interviews with children may be more effective after they have participated in other project activities, when they feel more confident about expressing their views.
- Children and young people can also be excellent interviewers, interviewing other children and young people and also adults.
- Aim to establish a sense of trust and security, where people know they can express their true opinions; where it isn't necessary to know the "right answer" or to say what the interviewer wants to hear.
- Although it is usual to start with a set list of questions to be asked of all interviewees, the interviewer can also ask supplementary questions to encourage people to say more about interesting topics.
- Avoid asking questions which invite a "yes" or "no" response. Try to use "open" questions that need a fuller, more thoughtful reply.
- The interviewer should practice "active listening", as it is off-putting for the interviewee to feel they are not really being listened to.

### **Documentation: To record or not to record?**

How to record your interview data is an important decision. The basic choice is between (a) taking notes in a notebook or prepared report form, or (b) with the interviewee's permission, recording the interview using a digital recorder (or both). This table shows some of the advantages and disadvantages of each method.

	Advantages	Disadvantages
Taking notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☑ Gives you written data immediately, without having to transcribe it.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☑ May interrupt the flow of conversation.</li> <li>☑ You may lose nuances and details of the conversation (it's hard to write every word).</li> <li>☑ May be a distraction.</li> </ul>
Recording the interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☑ Gives you a complete record of every word including tone of voice and emphasis.</li> <li>☑ The interviewer can concentrate on being a good listener, since they aren't writing at the same time.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☑ Knowing that they are being recorded may make the interviewee nervous, and affect their responses.</li> <li>☑ You risk losing all or part of the interview through a recorder malfunction.</li> <li>☑ Transcribing interviews is a tedious job and a disincentive for whoever has to do it.</li> </ul>



### TOOL 3: SURVEYS AND OPINION POLLS

A survey means collecting the responses of a number of people to a series of questions, usually printed on a form called a “questionnaire”. This is different from the “Interviews” tool, because the results obtained have more to do with tendencies seen in a sample of many people, and are less concerned with individual opinions or perceptions.

If the survey target group can all read and write, one option is to give them the questionnaire to fill in themselves and then collect the completed forms. This lets you collect a lot of data quickly and efficiently and is recommended as a way to carry out surveys of children in schools or organised groups.

If not everyone can read and write, an alternative is to ask the questions as if it were an individual interview, and write the replies on the questionnaire form. This takes more time, but it is the only way to be sure the subjects understand the questions and answer them accordingly.

Creating a good questionnaire is not easy. Your first attempts need to be tested on a small sample to see how well they work and how they can be improved; this is called “piloting” the questionnaire.

If you are planning to survey a large number of people, it is worth thinking in advance about how you are going to compile and analyse the data. The following types of question will enable you to do a quantitative analysis which will save time:

- “YES/NO” questions. In this case, the basic analysis is just to calculate what percentage of respondents said “Yes” and what percentage said “No”;
- Statements where respondents have to say whether they “strongly agree”, “agree”, “neither agree nor disagree”, “disagree”, or “strongly disagree”;
- Questions with a number of possible replies, where respondents have to say which of the replies is closest to their own opinion;
- Asking whether people believe a statement is true or false.

You can include open questions, where the respondent gives an answer in their own words, but this kind of question provides data that needs a qualitative analysis, which may be more complicated and time-consuming.



## TOOL 4: PERSONAL TESTIMONY AND CASE STUDIES

Personal testimony and case studies can be valuable sources of additional evidence for monitoring and evaluation.

Children and young people can tell their own stories about events in their lives related to their involvement in participatory projects or processes. A personal testimony can become a case study if the evaluator collects additional information to frame the testimony in its socio-political and cultural context in relation to the project or programme being evaluated. A case study can also be extended with testimony from other people who were involved. For example, children and young people's testimony can be complemented by that of their parents or teachers. Collecting a number of different accounts of the same event also helps you to "triangulate" the data; that is, to prove the authenticity of the information.

A good way to collect personal stories from children and young people is through an activity to make and share drawings of their experiences. This technique is discussed in Tool No. 9 in this toolkit.

Children and young people's stories also provide ideas and themes for drama and role-play. This is described in Tool No. 10.

**Note:** The "*Stories of most significant change*" technique (Tool no. 23) is a specialised method for working with personal testimonies in project evaluation.





## TOOL 5: DIRECT OBSERVATION

Direct observation is one of the most important techniques in any monitoring and evaluation process, so it is important that the staff responsible have good observation skills.

By observing, you can identify which children speak more or less, which are more confident, whether disabled children participate, how adults (for example teachers) listen to and take account of children and young people, and much more.

Observation provides a set of data that you can “triangulate” with information from other sources to support the findings of your monitoring and evaluation process.

To ensure that your direct observation provides good data for your evaluation, it is recommended that you draw up an “observation schedule” or “observation checklist” which helps you identify those aspects of an activity or situation that you need to observe and take notes of: see the example below.

*Example of an observation Schedule for a community meeting*

Activity				
Place				
Date		Start and finish times:		
<i>Participants</i>	Female	Male	Total	Age-range of children and young people participating:
Children				
Adolescents				
Adults				
Total				
Objectives/purpose of the meeting:				
Main activities:				
Examples of children and young people's participation during the meeting (consulted/collaborating/taking initiative)				
Questions asked by children and young people during the meeting:				
Suggestions or proposals put forward by children and young people during the meeting:				
Adults' responses to the questions and proposals put by the children and young people:				
Positive outcomes observed:				
Difficulties observed:				
Other observations:				



## TOOL 6: ANALYSIS OF EXISTING REPORTS AND STATISTICS

When you evaluate a project or process, it is unlikely that you will be starting from zero. It is almost certain that a large amount of relevant data already exists in reports, minutes, records and other documents. These are called “secondary sources”.

For example, look for:

- Reports of any appraisals, consultations or base-line studies that were previously carried out;
- Project plans, annual plans or strategic plans;
- Minutes of coordinating or planning group meetings;
- Research reports, particularly reports of any research carried out with the participation of children and young people;
- Policy documents or guidelines;
- Progress reports, periodic reports or final reports of projects, reports of monitoring visits, case studies (but be careful with documents prepared for funding agencies, because these have a tendency to exaggerate achievements and minimise problems);
- Articles or reportage about the work published in the media.

Information from these secondary sources can (a) help with planning the new evaluation process, (b) reduce the burden of collecting new data, and (c) triangulate with other data sources to validate and strengthen the findings of the evaluation.



### 3.3 Specific tools to use during the monitoring and evaluation process



#### TOOL 7: THE SPACEOGRAM: HOW DO I PARTICIPATE?

This is a useful activity for introducing the topic of participation with children and young people – and equally with adults. It helps participants recognise how they are participating in different aspects of their lives, and encourages them to reflect on the different types and levels of participation they have in different areas. It also helps children and young people to recognise factors that limit their participation and provides a “snapshot” of who is participating and what they are participating in at the start of a project or process.



40 - 60 minutes (depending on how much time you want for discussion)



#### Resources:

- Signs “I don’t participate”, and “I participate fully”.
- Cards prepared with phrases that represent different aspects of participation in the community, such as the following examples: *Cultural activities in my neighbourhood / Sporting activities / Religious activities / Decision-making in my school or college / Environmental conservation activities / Adult committees / In a political party / Decision-making in the district council / Decision-making in my home / In an organisation of children and young people / In the media (radio, TV, newspapers) / In an NGO (non-governmental organisation) / In municipal lobbies or public meetings / In a national campaign or social movement.*
- Flip-chart paper, felt-tips, masking tape.



#### Steps

1. Put up the signs “I don’t participate”, and “I participate fully” at opposite ends of the space, and ask participants to gather in the centre between them.
2. Explain how the “spaceogram” works: We have to imagine a line between these two extremes, with zero participation at one end, then an increasing level of participation along the line, till you get to the most active participation at the other end. As each card is read out, each person must think about how much they personally participate in that particular aspect of life and then stand in a position along the line that indicates this. If people haven’t done this before, it’s easiest to read out the first card, and walk through the various options people have in deciding where to stand; for example, “If you never do this, you’d stand here by the wall. If you participate occasionally you might stand here a bit further from the wall. If you sometimes do and sometimes don’t, you might stand somewhere near the middle” etc.
3. Read the first card out loud again. Everyone decides where they should stand and moves to their chosen position on the continuum between “I don’t participate” and “I participate fully”.
4. Ask the group to observe how they have distributed themselves, and then ask one or two people to comment on why they are standing at a certain point (maybe one person who participates very little and another who has identified themselves as being very active). Encourage others to listen to these comments and add their own if they wish.
5. Read out the next card and repeat the process (Note: Instead of the facilitator reading out all the cards, you can place them in a pile face down on a chair or table near the centre, and invite a volunteer from the group to pick up and read out each card).

6. Keep things moving, to try and get through most of the cards in the time available.
7. At the end, sit down for a general discussion. Questions to think about include:

- Overall, what did we find out about our participation in society?
- Do we participate more in some areas than others? Which areas and why?
- Did we observe any difference in men's and women's participation?
- How does this help us to understand the meaning of "participation"?



**Notes:**

1. If children are new to this kind of activity they may prefer to copy their neighbour. Encourage everyone to think for themselves and not do the same as everyone else.
2. If you are using this activity to get a snapshot of the current state of participation in a particular group, you need to turn each space diagram into a paper diagram. One way is to have a co-facilitator draw a diagram as each card is read out, with the people represented as dots; but you must make sure the diagrams are correctly labelled.





## TOOL 8: TOURS LED BY CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Child-led tours can generate lots of useful information for monitoring and evaluating participation.

Children are asked to take the adult facilitators on a tour around their community to show and explain where and how they have been participating and the results they have achieved.



3-4 hours, depending on the length of the route chosen, and how facilitators control the rate of progress.



### Resources:

- Flip-chart paper, felt-tips, masking tape.
- Each participant needs a notebook and pen.



### Steps

1. Explain to the children and young people that you want them to share with the facilitation team what they know about their community or neighbourhood. To do this, suggest that they become tour guides, and lead a walking tour around the community, pointing out, observing and commenting on everything they see.
2. Do an idea storm with the children and young people to list the different aspects of the community that they could look at. The list will depend on what kinds of projects have been run in the community and how children and young people have participated in these to date. It may include, for example:
  - Houses (who owns them and what condition are they in?);
  - Crops (for consumption, for trading, or for export? Do children and young people work at cultivating and harvesting them?);
  - Infrastructure (roads, electricity, water supply, drainage and sewers, cable TV, mobile phone coverage);
  - Public services (school, health centre);
  - Other community resources such as a community centre, churches, sports pitches;
  - Presence of NGOs and other organisations (what do they do?);
  - Woodland (protected or exploited? Deforestation?);
  - Water sources: rivers, ponds, lakes, wells.
3. Plan a route for the tour, taking account of the time available. Make sure everyone has a notebook and pen to note their observations.
4. Set out on the tour, keeping everyone together (Note: There must be at least two adults accompanying each group; one to keep an eye on the children and young people, and another to write everything down in a notebook). As well as observing and commenting on the aspects mentioned above, facilitators can ask questions about other things like:
  - Places where children play;
  - Places where they feel happy and places where they feel sad;
  - Places where they can participate;
  - Places where they are not allowed to participate;
  - Things that have changed in the community, and whether the children and young people played any part in the changes;
  - Things they are unhappy with, but haven't been able to change (yet);

...and more.

5. When you have completed the tour, go back to base for reflection. Ask questions like:

- How was it?
- How much do we know about our community?
- Were there any surprises? Did we learn anything new?
- How can we make use of the information we collected during the tour?
- How are we going to organise, analyse and present this information?
- What information is missing? What do we still need to find out about our community?



**Notes:**

1. This kind of activity needs to be carefully thought through in relation to your child protection policy. You may have to modify the activity to comply with your organisation's guidelines and established best practice.
2. An option worth considering is for girls and boys to go in separate groups (each group with a facilitator of the same sex), in order to find out about their different perceptions and perspectives on their own communities.





## TOOL 9: CREATIVE EXPRESSION: DRAWING AND PAINTING

Although it is often presented as a tool suitable for working with younger children, the truth is that almost all children and young people like drawing and painting, whatever their age. Activities that encourage creative expression can thus be used to introduce many topics and, in combination with other tools and techniques, to elicit stories from experience, and encourage sharing of thoughts and feelings. Don't forget other kinds of visual art such as sculpture, collage, mural-painting and photography.

Although children's drawings contain information that adults can study and interpret as part of an evaluation, creative activities produce richer, more compelling information when the children and young people themselves share their drawings and talk about their meaning and significance.

The following are some suggested topics to encourage children and young people to draw or paint images that contribute valuable information to monitoring and evaluation processes (but note that it is important to present themes for drawing or painting in language appropriate to the age of the children and the context of the activity):

- An experience of when my right to participate was respected (or a day when I felt happy because I was listened to and my ideas were taken account of);
- An experience of when my right to participate was violated or denied (or a day when I felt sad because I wasn't listened to and my ideas were ignored);
- The place where they listen to me and respect my ideas (or a place where they don't listen to me and ignore my ideas);
- People who listen, and others who don't listen;
- The group or project I participate in and the benefits this brings;
- Children and young people defending their right to participate;
- The world of tomorrow, where all children and young people participate and are treated with respect.





## TOOL 10: CREATIVE EXPRESSION: DRAMA AND PUPPETS

Acting, whether in live performance or mediated through puppets, enables children and young people to express themselves about many aspects of their lives, in situations where it may be hard to find other means of expression. Through drama, children and young people can:

- Share experiences and express feelings they don't want to talk about directly, by giving them to characters in a play;
- Draw attention to problems they are facing in their lives, and also put forward possible solutions and changes they want to see;
- Dramatise situations of human rights violations, and show how rights can be claimed and defended;
- Imagine other worlds where things are different.

Although dramatisations provide information on children and young people's experiences and perspectives which can contribute to monitoring and evaluation, their greatest impact is when children and young people use them as a way of raising awareness of human rights issues in their communities.

### ***How puppets can encourage children to talk***

Another use of puppets is to encourage younger children to talk about their participation in projects and processes.

To start with, a facilitator manipulates a puppet, giving it a name, voice and character. Once it has been presented in this way the puppet can talk directly to the children and encourage them to talk about their participation in the project. Questions the puppet might ask include:

- Which activities do you like best? Why?
- Are there activities you don't like? Why?
- Who decides what activities you're going to do here?
- Do the adults ask you about what you want to do?
- How do you feel when the adults listen to you and take account of your views?
- How do you feel when the adults don't listen to you and ignore your views?
- Do you have a message for the adults about the importance of listening to children?

Children can then use puppets themselves and have the puppets discuss these issues between them.





## TOOL 11: GAMES AND PLAYFUL TECHNIQUES

It is not difficult to invent games to encourage children and young people to share experiences, thoughts and opinions about the nature and quality of their participation in a project (or in general). It is not necessary to invent a new game, as you can easily adapt existing games you already know.

One option is to design a board game like the example below, which is played with a dice. If there are a lot of players they can form teams to play. The path around the board is made up of different coloured squares, and in advance you need to prepare a set of cards of each colour. When players throw the dice and land on a square of a certain colour, they have to take a card of that colour and follow the instructions written on it.

- The green cards have questions to answer about their experiences.
- The red cards describe real-life situations and ask, "What would you do in this situation?"
- The yellow cards ask for their advice on various aspects of the project.
- The pink cards contain statements and ask if they are true or false.
- The purple cards contain words related to the right to participate (e.g. "consultation") and ask what they mean.
- The blue cards contain instructions that have nothing to do with the topic to add an extra fun element, like asking them to sing or dance.





## TOOL 12: PROJECT VISUAL TIME-LINE

This tool is useful at the start of a monitoring and evaluation process to get a general view of the project or programme you are going to evaluate. The time-line gives you a visual summary of the history of the project. It helps you identify the main events, different stages in children and young people's participation, successes and failures at different stages, and how the objectives were achieved



45 – 60 minutes



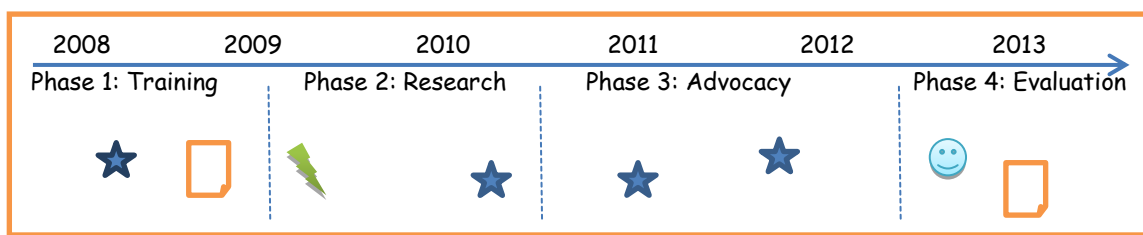
### Resources:

- Flip-chart paper, felt-tips, masking tape.
- Coloured paper, coloured felt-tips or crayons to add a creative touch.



### Steps

1. Present the time-line activity to the group. Explain how making a visual time-line will help them share the story of the project, successes and challenges at different stages, and reflect on how children and young people have participated at each stage and what they have achieved.
2. Join 3, 4 or 5 flip-chart sheets to make a large mural. Draw a horizontal line the length of the paper and write the years in the life of the project along this line. If the project has had a number of clearly defined phases, identify these as well.



3. Using the time-line as a reference point, get the children and young people to reflect on the key moments, events and processes year by year or phase by phase. They themselves can decide on how to represent these elements on the time-line sheet. They can use words, drawings, symbols or any combination.
4. When you have completed the visual time-line, have a collective reflection on:

- How the style of children and young people's participation has changed over time, or the way children and adults have worked together.
- The extent to which the project objectives have been achieved, or not.
- The outcomes of the process, and how these are related to the participation of children and young people at different stages.
- How children and young people have benefitted from their participation in these processes.
- Their ideas for the future. How do they think they can increase the scope, quality and outcomes of their participation?



## TOOL 13: COMAL AND TORTILLAS

This activity comes from Guatemala, where it is used to create a simple mapping of children and young people's organisations and their membership, emphasising the scope, quality and results of their participation.



30 minutes



### Resources:

- A comal (flat round cooking plate for making tortillas) – or something that can represent a comal.
- Some cut-out paper tortillas.
- Flip-chart paper, felt-tips, masking tape.



### Steps

1. Explain that the comal represents the whole community, and all the children and young people are like a big lump of maize dough. When a group of children and young people get organised, we have a tortilla.
2. Participants try to identify the organised children and young people's groups that exist in their community. For every group they identify, they write the name of the group on a tortilla and place it on the comal.
3. Once they have identified all the groups, do a collective analysis of what you have found: Who are the members of each group? Is anyone excluded? What does the group do? What other groups are they linked with? How do you make contact with them?





## TOOL 14: SELF-EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE

This technique helps you do a self-evaluation (individually or as a group) of the level of compliance with the basic requirements for ethical and effective participation in an organisation or project. You can use it at the beginning of a project to help create a base-line, or repeat it at intervals (e.g. at the end of every year) to monitor changes in the quality of participation.



1 - 2 hours.



### Resources:

- Questionnaires prepared and copied. There is a template for this in the Appendix. However, to help children and young people understand it, it has to be customised to fit your organisation or project. Where you see the word “organisation” in brackets, replace this with the name of the organisation or project you are evaluating.
- Flip-chart paper, felt-tips, masking tape.



### Steps

1. Tell the group about the nine basic requirements established by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child to guarantee quality participation.
2. Introduce the questionnaire and explain how to use it (the way you explain it depends on the age and educational level of the group).
3. If you are working with adolescents, you can form small groups and start work on the questionnaire straight away. With children it is recommended that (a) an adult or a young volunteer facilitates each group, and/or (b) you complete the questionnaire for Requirement No. 1 in plenary, so everyone learns how to do it, before starting to work in small groups.
4. Depending on the amount of time available and the level of interest and enthusiasm in the group, you can suggest that each group completes the whole questionnaire and then compare results. Alternatively, divide into three groups, and allocate one page of the questionnaire to each group. This gives them more time to think about each indicator before deciding on their response.
5. When the groups have completed the questionnaire, you can make a summary chart on a flip-chart sheet or whiteboard to collate all the results and so get a snapshot of the quality of participation in your organisation or project (see the example on the next page).

Basic Requirements	Number of "X"s in each column:					Total indicators
	This has not been thought about	We are aware of this, but it isn't put into practice	This is applied partially, but not in a systematic way	This is fully understood, implemented and monitored	Don't know	
Requirement 1: Participation is transparent and informative						3
Requirement 2: Participation is voluntary						3
Requirement 3: Participation is respectful						3
Requirement 4: Participation is relevant						3
Requirement 5: Participation is child friendly						4
Requirement 6: Participation is inclusive						3
Requirement 7: Participation is supported by training for adults						3
Requirement 8: Participation is safe and sensitive to risk						3
Requirement 9: Participation is accountable						3
<b>Total per column</b>						<b>28</b>

6. Facilitate reflection on the results:

- In which aspects do we see good quality participation?
- Which aspects are unsatisfactory?
- What ideas do you have to improve the quality of participation in these aspects?

The children and young people can also draw up an action plan to improve the unsatisfactory aspects.



**Notes:**

Although this tool is a useful way to get a quick snapshot of the quality of participation in an organisation, its greatest value is when it is re-applied every year to highlight the changes that are taking place, especially if there has been an action plan in place to improve the quality of participation in the organisation.



## TOOL 15: POTS AND BEANS

This technique can be used in many different situations to help children and young people prioritise, evaluate or choose between a number of options. Here we show how to use it to evaluate and reflect on the quality of participation by assessing the level of compliance with the nine basic requirements. This activity also encourages sharing of ideas about what needs to be done to improve the quality of participation.



60 – 90 minutes



### Resources:

- At least nine pots (yogurt pots are good, but whatever is available will do. It's best if they have lids; make a small bean-sized hole in the centre of each lid).
- Paper, felt-tip and masking-tape to put labels on the pots.
- Beans: About 30 per participant (if you don't want to use beans, small stones, buttons or anything similar can be used – except sweets, as the children will eat them).



### Steps

1. Introduce the activity and explain how the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child has defined 9 Basic Requirements for quality participation (see section 1.3 above).
2. Show the group the nine pots, each one labelled to represent one of the nine basic requirements.
3. Start with the first pot representing Requirement No. 1, "*Participation is transparent and informative*". Encourage the group to reflect briefly on what these words mean.
4. Give each participant three beans. Explain that they are going to put some of these beans in the pot according to these instructions:
 

▪ If the requirement is not even known or understood:	0 beans
▪ If the requirement is known about but not put into practice:	1 bean
▪ If it is partly met, but not completely:	2 beans
▪ If it is fully met all the time:	3 beans.
5. Encourage the children and young people to discuss how many beans they think they should put in the pot. How well is this requirement being met in their project? Help them reflect critically, recognising both strengths and weaknesses. It is important that they feel they can talk freely about their experiences and express their opinions. Someone should take notes and try to capture the main points of the discussion.
6. Then get each person to put 0, 1, 2 or 3 beans in the pot as they think appropriate. Each person should make up their own mind.
7. Go on to the second pot and repeat the process until you have completed all nine pots.
8. Give each pot to a pair or group of three participants and ask them to count the number of beans in it; first one person counts and then the other. If they don't get the same total, have a recount.
9. Write up the results on a flip-chart sheet or whiteboard, so everyone can see the final scores for each requirement.
10. Facilitate reflection on which requirements are more fully met and which less so, and why. Encourage participants to share ideas on how to improve the quality of participation so as to fully comply with the requirements. Make notes of all suggestions.



## TOOL 16: BODY-MAPPING

There are two ways to use Body-mapping. You can use it at the beginning of a project to find out about children and young people's current attitudes and practices, or you can use it during or at the end of a project to identify what has changed for the children and young people as a result of their participation. This can provide important information to help you measure the outcomes of participation.



60-90 minutes.



### Resources:

- A number of flip-chart sheets joined together to make a single sheet big enough to trace the outline of a person.
- Flip-chart paper, felt-tips, masking tape.



### Steps

#### "Before" mode

1. Introduce the Body-mapping activity. If you are at the beginning of a project, explain that this will help the participants explore their current attitudes and practices, what they like and what they don't like.
2. Place the large sheet of paper on the floor and ask the participants to sit in a circle around it.
3. Ask for a volunteer to lie down on the paper, and draw the silhouette of their body.
4. Draw a vertical line through the centre of the body. Explain that the left hand side represents the children and young people of the community NOW, at the beginning of their participation in the project. For the time being we will leave the right hand side blank, so we can use it later to represent the children and young people AFTER they have participated in the project.
5. Use the different parts of the body to explore the children and young people's current attitudes and practices, what they like and what they don't like:

- *Head:* Knowledge: What they know (related to the topic of the project);
- *Eyes:* How do the adults in the community see the children and young people? Or alternatively, what do the children and young people see in the community that they like or don't like?
- *Ears:* How do the adults in the community listen to and take account of the children and young people? Or alternatively, what do the children and young people hear that they like or don't like?
- *Mouth:* How do children and young people communicate with other people? How do adults communicate with them? How do adults scold them and tell them off?
- *Shoulders:* What responsibilities do children and young people take on at different ages. How do they feel about this?
- *Heart:* How is the children and young people's self-esteem? How are they valued, cared for and protected by adults?

- *Stomach:* What do children and young people eat in a typical day?
  - *Arms and hands:* What activities do girls and boys of different ages do each day? Which of these do they like to do and which do they not like?
  - *Body:* Do they feel protected? What punishments do they receive?
  - *Legs and feet:* Where do girls and boys of different ages go to, and what activities do they do there? Where do they like to go and where do they not like to go?
6. Write (or draw) the answers next to the corresponding parts of the body on the left hand side of the sheet (if you are not intending to keep this sheet for an "AFTER" Body-mapping activity at a later date, you can use all of the sheet).
  7. Have a shared reflection on what you have seen, which may include the following points:
    - Can you identify children and young people who face discrimination because they are different in some way?
    - Are there some children and young people who are listened to or allowed to participate more than others? Why?
    - What changes would you hope to see on the right hand side of the sheet by the end of the project?

#### "After" mode

1. Introduce the "Before and after" Body-mapping activity. Now that the project is in progress, or is coming to an end, explain how this will help the participants explore what has changed for them as a result of their participation.
2. There are two options for the next step:
  - (a) If you have kept a "BEFORE" body map from the beginning of the process, place it on the floor and ask the participants to sit in a circle around it. In this activity they are going to complete the right hand side of the map with their perceptions of how they are now, which will help them to identify what has changed.
  - (b) If you don't have a "BEFORE" body map saved, prepare a new large sheet made up of several flip-chart sheets and ask for a volunteer to lie down on the paper so you can draw the silhouette of their body. Explain to the participants that they are going to think about how they have changed, and are going to put their memories of how they were before the project on the left hand side, and their perceptions of how they are now on the right hand side.
3. Use the different parts of the body to explore how they are now, making comparisons with how they used to be in order to highlight the changes.
  - *Head:* What new knowledge or abilities do they have? Do they have new ways of thinking, or new attitudes to life?
  - *Eyes:* Has there been a change in how they see themselves, their family, school or community? Has there been a change in how the adults in the community see the children and young people?
  - *Ears:* Has there been a change in how they are listened to? Has there been a change in how they listen to other people, or what they hear?
  - *Mouth:* Has there been a change in how they talk, or the way they communicate with other children and young people, with their parents, teachers or other adults? Has there been a change in the way adults talk to them?

- *Shoulders:* Has there been a change in the responsibilities that girls and boys take on?
- *Heart:* Has there been a change in their self-esteem? Has there been a change in how they are valued, cared for or protected by adults?
- *Stomach:* Has there been any change in what they eat?
- *Arms and hands:* Has there been any change in the activities they do?
- *Body:* Do they feel better protected than before? Has there been any change in the punishments they receive?
- *Legs and feet:* Has there been any change in the places they go to and the activities they do in those places?

4. Write (or draw) the answers next to the corresponding parts of the body on the right hand side of the sheet (or both sides, if you are completing both sides at once).
5. Have a shared reflection on what you have seen, which may include the following points:
  - Which do you think are the most important changes? Why?
  - Are the changes the same for girls and boys, or can you see differences due to gender?
  - Which of the changes do you think are permanent or long-lasting? Are some of them just temporary changes? Why?





## TOOL 17: DECISION-MAKING CHART

This tool can be used to provide information on the influence children and young people have on decision-making. It can be used at the beginning of a project to gather information for the base-line, or later on to evaluate how children and young people's involvement in decision-making has changed, and what difference this has made in the community. It thus contributes to the measurement of outcomes.



40-60 minutes.



### Resources:

- Flip-chart paper, felt-tips, masking tape.
- Cards, about 10 x 15 cm (at least 20).
- Coloured pencils or felt-tips
- Different coloured sticky labels (ideally red, yellow and green circles).



### Steps

1. Explain to the participants that they are going to create a chart to show the different kinds of decisions they might want to influence, and who is currently dominating the decision-making.
2. Have an idea-storm to make a list of all the different kinds of decisions they would like to have a say in.
3. Help them to choose about ten decisions that they feel are the most important to be able to influence, and write each one on a card.
4. Now have another idea-storm to identify the different people (social actors) who currently influence decision-making in their community (thinking about all the decisions they have previously mentioned).
5. Write the name of each of these actors on a separate card. Don't forget to include a card for children and another for adolescents.
6. Join two flip-chart sheets and draw a chart like the one shown on the next page.
7. Stick the cards that represent "decisions" horizontally in the header row of the chart, and the cards representing the different actors vertically in the left-hand column (see the example).
8. Facilitate the participants in analysing each type of decision to determine which of the actors has most influence. If an actor has a lot of influence over the decision, place a green sticker in the corresponding square on the chart. If they have a little influence, place a yellow sticker, and if they have no influence, a red sticker (if they are familiar with traffic-lights, this will help them remember the significance of the colours). Ask the children and young people why they have chosen a certain colour of sticker and note their replies on another flip-chart sheet.
9. Have a final reflection to think about the following questions:

- In what kinds of decisions do children and young people's opinions carry most weight, and in which ones do they carry less weight? In which decisions are they ignored completely?
- Are there differences in how much girls and boys are given a say in decision-making?
- Are there any particular kinds of decisions where the participants would like to have greater influence? Why?
- What could help them achieve greater influence in these decisions?

Example of a decision-making chart:

Decisions → ↓ People involved	When can we go out to play	Staying in school	What work we do	When we get married
Child	●	●	●	●
Adolescent	●	●	●	●
Father	●	●	●	●
Mother	●	●	●	●
Grandparents	●	●	●	●
School teacher	●	●	●	●
Community leader	●	●	●	●
Priest or religious leader	●	●	●	●





## TOOL 18: SELF-ESTEEM RATING

This tool can be used to gather information on the level of self-esteem of children and young people involved in a project or process. You can use it at the beginning of a project to provide base-line data, and also during or at the end of a process to help identify changes. It thus helps to measure the outcomes of children and young people's participation.



40 - 80 minutes.



### Resources:

- Flip-chart paper, felt-tips, masking tape.



### Steps

1. If the participants are not familiar with the concept of self-esteem, the first step must be to introduce the concept and help them to reflect on what it means for a child or adolescent to have a high, medium or low level of self-esteem. If this topic is new to them, it may be helpful to use a role-play activity to help them explore the concept before continuing with this activity.
2. Suggest a scale of five levels of self-esteem: Level 1 = very low; level 2 = low; level 3 = medium; level 4 = high; and level 5 = very high. Get everyone to estimate their own level of self-esteem using this scale, and note down their replies.
3. Facilitate a discussion about:

- The importance of self-esteem for personal development.
- What helps to increase self-esteem or keep it high?
- Self-esteem as a factor that contributes to a person's empowerment, and therefore to their ability to influence political decisions.
- How to help people who have low self-esteem.



### Note:

If possible, it is a good idea to compile the self-esteem scores of a large number of children and young people, so they can be analysed in terms of age, sex, school level etc. (disaggregated). This will give more interesting data for your evaluation. Another option is to do a comparison between the self-esteem scores of children and young people who have been participating in a project and those who haven't.



## TOOL 19: FOOTSTEPS

This activity helps children and young people analyse the different steps or stages of participation in a project from beginning to end. This is particularly useful in measuring the scope of participation.



40-60 minutes.



### Resources:

- About a dozen footprints cut out of paper.
- Sheets of paper and pens.
- Flip-chart paper, felt-tips, masking tape.



### Steps

1. Introduce the activity, making sure everyone is clear about which project or process they are going to analyse.
2. Remind everyone what was the overall aim or purpose of this project, and write this on a sheet of paper. Put this paper on the floor at some distance from the starting point where the participants are.
3. Explain that they are going to identify the steps they have taken since the beginning of the project. Ask them what was the first step.
4. When they identify the first step, place a footprint on the floor to represent the beginning of the path. Encourage the participants to explain what they did and how they participated in this first step. Write this down on a piece of paper and place it next to the first step.
5. Repeat this process until they have identified and described all the steps that were taken to reach the goal.
6. Facilitate a discussion about:

- How did they participate throughout the different stages of the project? For example, did they decide the topic to work on and participate in the situation analysis; or had adults already completed these steps before letting children and young people get involved?
- Which children and young people participated (age, sex etc.)? How were they chosen to participate?
- Which steps were most difficult? Which were easy?
- What difficulties did they have to overcome?



### Note:

This technique can easily be adapted for use as a *planning* tool. Instead of analysing participation in a project already carried out, put forward the aim of a new project to be planned, and facilitate the children and young people in identifying, and putting in order, the steps required to achieve the aim.



## TOOL 20: WALKING THROUGH THE PROJECT CYCLE

This activity enables children and young people to analyse the different types of participation they have had at each stage in the NGO project cycle. It helps them to see if there are stages in which they don't participate and ask, "Why not?" It also encourages them to ask about who is participating more, and who has been excluded from participating. It is a key activity for measuring the scope of participation.



50-80 minutes.



### Resources:

- 5 flip-chart sheets prepared in advance like the example on the right. Put one of the stages of the project cycle at the top of each sheet.
- A large diagram of the project cycle on a flip-chart sheet or whiteboard.
- Cards: 2 per person.
- Flip-chart paper, felt-tips, masking tape.

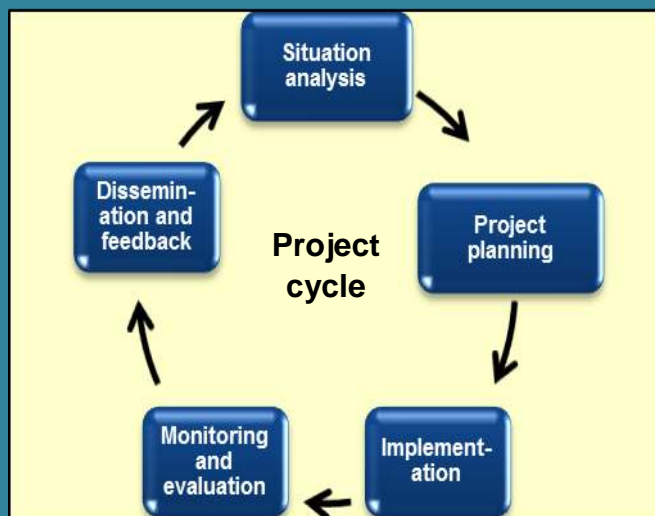
1. How have children and young people participated in <b>situation analysis</b>			
<i>(Put one of the stages of the project cycle at the top of each sheet.)</i>			
Children and young people do not participate	Consulted by adults	Collaborate with adults	Take the initiative, lead or manage.



### Steps

1. Beforehand, place the five prepared flip-chart sheets on the walls so you can walk a path from the first to the last in order.
2. Explain to all the participants that we are going to look into how children and young people participate in the different stages of the projects that your organisation runs in their communities.
3. Introduce the idea of the "Project cycle" using a large diagram and giving examples from current projects in the community to help people understand the five stages:

1. Finding out what the problems are ("situation analysis")
2. Deciding what to do about the problem and how to go about it (project planning).
3. Taking action (implementation).
4. Measuring and analysing what happened (monitoring and evaluation).
5. Acting on findings (dissemination and feedback).



4. Form small groups (about 3 people per group) and give five cards to each group, representing the five stages of the cycle.
5. Ask the groups to number the cards 1 to 5 and write on them how children and young people (themselves or others they know) have participated at each stage.
6. Lead the whole group to the first flip-chart sheet on the wall. Ask them to look at the four columns and take a while to think about the four kinds of participation mentioned:
  - a) Children and young people do not participate.
  - b) Children and young people consulted by adults (asked for their opinions).
  - c) Children and young people and adults collaborate or work together.
  - d) Children and young people take the initiative, lead or manage activities (that is, children and young people exercise *protagonism*).

Ask participants if they can suggest examples of each kind of participation to make sure they fully understand the idea.

7. Ask participants to stick their first card in the place on the chart where they think it should go; that is, to decide which type of participation the statement on their card represents.
8. Continue the walk to the second chart and repeat this procedure.
9. Continue until each group has placed their cards on all five charts.
10. Bring the five charts to the front of the space and place them together to make one large table, so everyone can see where the cards have been placed, and compare the kinds of participation that predominate (or are missing) at the different stages of the cycle.
11. Facilitate a discussion about:

- The different ways children and young people participate throughout the project cycle.
- In what stages of the cycle are they more involved and in what stages less involved? What might be the reasons for this?
- Which children and young people are more involved: Girls or boys? What ages? Do children and young people with disabilities participate?
- What type of participation predominates at each stage of the cycle? Why?
- What have we learnt about participation from this activity and looking at the final chart?
- What ideas do they have on how to strengthen children and young people's participation during the different stages of the cycle?



**Note:**

None of the three types of participation is “correct” or better. Each of them may be the most appropriate in different situations or contexts. It is also important to find out how children and young people want to participate, and not assume that they always want to be leading the way. However, although no type of participation is always “correct”, we should be aware that certain kinds of participation can lead to greater levels of **empowerment**.



## TOOL 21: H EVALUATION

This is a simplified version of the well-known “SWOT analysis” (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats). It is a simple way to explore the strengths and weaknesses of a participatory project, and generate ideas on how to improve the quality of participation. It provides information that can be helpful in measuring the scope and quality of participation



20 – 40 minutes






### Resources:

- Flip-chart paper, felt-tips, masking tape.



### Steps

1. Draw a large “H” on a flip-chart sheet and write the following titles in the four sections: *Project or programme name* / *Strengths and achievements* / *Weaknesses, challenges and threats* / *Suggestions for improving it*.

 <p><b>Strengths and achievements</b></p>	<p><b>Project/programme name</b></p>	 <p><b>Weaknesses, challenges and threats</b></p>
	 <p><b>Suggestions for improving it</b></p>	

2. Facilitate the participants in identifying strengths and achievements in relation to their participation in the project and write these in the left hand section. Encourage them to share examples of successes, and say why they see them as successes.
3. In the same way, in the right-hand section identify the weaknesses, challenges or threats to their participation in the project, giving examples and explaining why these are weaknesses etc.
4. In the “Suggestions” box, participants can share their ideas on how to improve the scope or quality of participation in the different stages of the project.



## TOOL 22: CIRCLE ANALYSIS OF INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION

This tool is used to analyse which children and young people are and are not involved in a project or programme. It helps to identify by gender, age, origin or other criteria which groups participate more actively in processes and which groups don't participate. It can contribute to the measurement of the scope and quality of participation.



45 – 60 minutes



### Resources:

- A large copy of the circle analysis diagram (can be drawn on two flip-chart sheets joined together).
- Cards: about 4 cards per person.
- Flip-chart paper, felt-tips, masking tape.



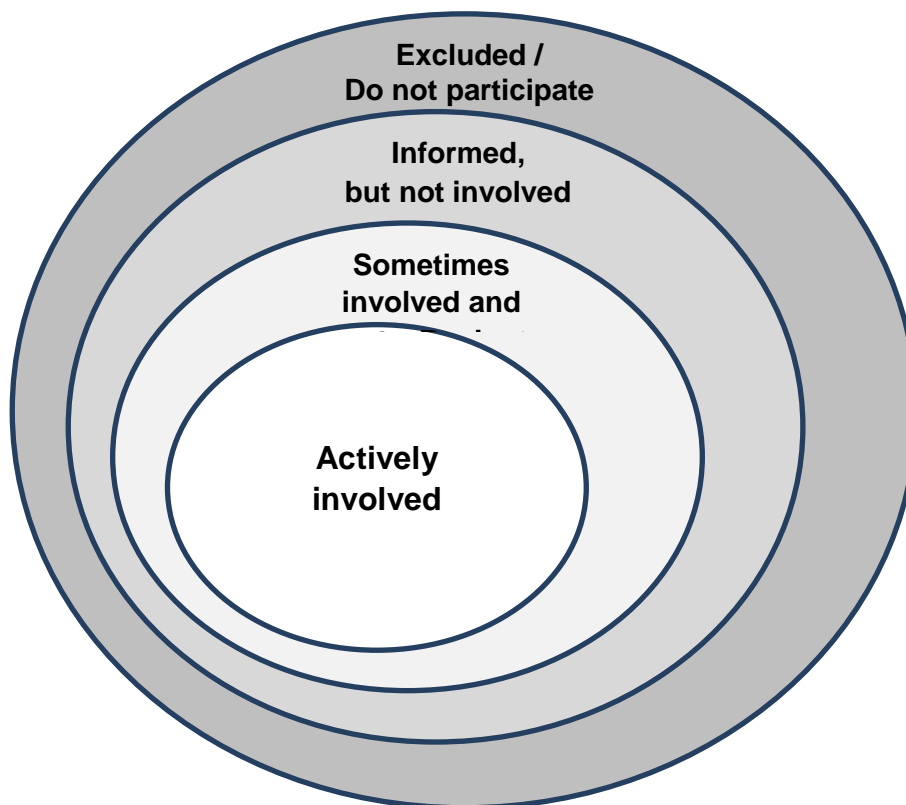
### Steps

1. Introduce the activity as a way to explore patterns of inclusion and exclusion in participation processes.
2. With suggestions from the participants, identify different groups of children and young people to include in the analysis. You can use the following list as a reference, but should adapt it to your work and cultural context.

*Girls under 6*  
*Boys under 6*  
*Girls aged 7-12*  
*Boys aged 7-12*  
*Adolescent girls*  
*Adolescent boys*  
*Urban children and young people*  
*Rural children and young people*  
*Children and young people who go to school*  
*Children and young people who are not in school*  
*Disabled children and young people*  
*Child workers*  
*Teenage mothers*  
*etc.*

3. With suggestions from the participants, agree on a symbol to represent each of these groups. Draw all the symbols on a flip-chart sheet or whiteboard for reference.

4. Introduce the circle analysis diagram, explaining the meaning of each of the circles.



5. Form small groups (could be three people per group) and give each group a number of cards. Ask them to draw the symbols for the different groups of children and young people that were previously agreed on; one symbol on each card.
6. Ask them to decide which circle of the diagram each of their cards should go in. For example, if they have noticed that there are no children with disabilities participating in their project, they should place the symbol representing children with disabilities in the outermost circle where it says "Excluded / do not participate".
7. Get each group to place their cards on the diagram in the circle they think is most appropriate.
8. Once all the cards are placed on the diagram, facilitate a discussion about:

- Which children and young people are in the innermost circle?
- What is stopping those groups of children and young people in the outer circles from participating more?
- Are there any groups of children and young people who have chosen not to participate? If so, what are their reasons?
- Are there other groups of children and young people who may be excluded who are not on our list?
- Can you identify some of the factors which encourage a greater level of participation?
- Can you identify some of the factors which lead to exclusion? Are these forms of discrimination?
- What can we do to make participation processes more inclusive, so that no-one is excluded?



## TOOL 23: STORIES OF MOST SIGNIFICANT CHANGE

This technique involves collecting stories from participants about what has been, for them, the most significant or important change that has occurred during a specified period of their involvement with a project or programme. It encourages collective reflection about the significance of the stories, and is therefore often used in conjunction with Tool No. 1 “Focus group discussion”. This combination of personal stories and shared reflection generates information that can contribute to all aspects of monitoring and evaluation, particularly if the activity is repeated at fixed intervals; for example every six months.



Needs to be flexible, depending on the procedure used to collect and share the stories.



### Resources:

- Paper and pens, if people are going to write down their stories.
- A digital voice recorder if people prefer to record their stories.
- Crayons or felt-tips for drawing, if children are going to share their stories through drawings (see Tool No. 9).
- Flip-chart paper, felt-tips, masking tape (for sharing reflection about the stories).



### Steps

1. Suggest to the participants that each person should decide what has been the most significant change that has occurred in relation to their involvement in the project or programme being evaluated. If this is the first time the group has done this activity, the relevant time period is from the beginning of their involvement in the project. If it is not the first time, define the period as the interval since the last time they did this activity; for example the past six months.
2. It is important to decide how the stories will be collected and shared:
  - If all the children and young people involved are competent readers and writers, they can agree to write down their stories, and time should be allowed for this.
  - If it is not appropriate for participants to write down their stories, an alternative is to give them a few minutes to think about what has been “the most significant change” for them, and then each person tells their story verbally. You can record the stories with a digital recorder (with the participants’ agreement) and/or an adult can write down the details.
  - Each person can do a drawing of the experience they want to share. In this case, when they subsequently share the drawings and tell the stories behind them, an adult can note down the details that cannot be seen in the drawing itself.
3. After listening to the stories, facilitate reflection in the group on what you have heard, so as to locate it all in the context of the project or process that you are evaluating.
4. Children and young people may want to tell their stories of change in creative forms, individually or collectively. For example they could compose songs or poems, make paintings or murals, adapt the stories in the style of folk-tales or fables, or devise and perform plays or puppet-shows.

 **Notes:**

1. It is important to document the details of the stories as they contribute important evidence to your evaluation: What happened? When? Who was involved? What was the change that resulted and how did this manifest itself in practice (evidence)? Note also each participant's reasons for choosing this as the most significant change that had occurred.
2. Encouraging children and young people to tell personal stories can bring to light a variety of child protection issues. When this happens, the adult responsible must take the necessary steps to understand the situation revealed in the story and respond in a way that is sensitive to the individual and the group, complying fully with the organisation's child protection guidelines.





## TOOL 24: THE MAGIC CARPET

This activity enables younger children to think about how they want to express their views, and be listened to and taken into account by adults. It also encourages reflection on how they are or are not listened to and taken into account at present.



30-45 minutes.



### Resources:

- A carpet, or something that can stand in for a magic carpet.
- A disguise for a co-facilitator.
- Flip-chart paper, felt-tips, masking tape.



### Steps

1. Get all the children to sit together on the carpet. Tell them that it is a magic carpet which can take them to a faraway land where all the children express what they think, even the youngest, and adults always listen to them.
2. Encourage everyone to act out the flight of the magic carpet. You can use music or sound effects to stimulate their imagination.
3. Welcome them to the new land they have arrived in. Introduce one of the inhabitants of this land (a co-facilitator in disguise). Invent a name for this person; for example "Mrs. O'Listen" (use a local equivalent).
4. "Mrs. O'Listen" asks the children questions and shows a genuine interest in listening to their views. Her questions might include the following:
  - How do you feel when adults really listen to you?
  - How do you feel when you have something important to say and adults won't listen to you?
  - What kinds of decisions do you think children your age should be able to make for themselves?
  - On what kinds of decisions should adults consult children and take their views into account: in the family, in school, in the community?
  - What should adults do so you know they are really listening to you?
  - Do you have any more ideas on how adults could learn to listen better and take account of younger children's views?
5. When the visit is over, explain that the magic carpet is going to take them back to their own country. Everyone acts out the flight of the carpet again.
6. Once you are back in your own world, have a reflection on the difference between that world and your own. Encourage the children to continue expressing their opinions as freely as they did in the magic world of Mrs. O'Listen.



## TOOL 25: SCRAPBOOKS

This activity lets children and young people document the activities and experiences of a project in a creative way. The product itself provides information that contributes to the evaluation of the children and young people's participation. The process also generates opportunities for children and young people to reflect on their experiences.



This activity can continue for the duration of a project. Children and young people can return to work on it every now and then, depending on their level of interest.



### Resources:

- A scrapbook. This could be a single collective scrapbook or a small group activity, which will require one scrapbook per group.
- Magazines or newspapers, scissors, glue.
- Other sources of material for the scrapbooks such as photographs or drawings.



### Steps

1. Introduce the idea that the children and young people should make and keep a scrapbook about the project. If it is to be a group activity, form the groups and give an empty scrapbook to each group.
2. Have an idea-storm about the different kinds of things that could be included in the scrapbooks.
3. They can start by designing the front cover of their scrapbook.
4. Encourage the group to make an agreement about how they will develop and maintain their scrapbooks. This might include:
  - Collect different kinds of materials relevant to the project to stick in the scrapbooks.
  - Do drawings of activities or topics relevant to the project.
  - Have a scrapbook session to add new material to their scrapbooks every two weeks, or every month.
5. Also the adult facilitator(s) should make a commitment to the group; for example:
  - Allow time for regular scrapbook sessions in the group's activity programme.
  - Provide materials such as old newspapers and magazines, scissors and glue, crayons, felt-tips and paper for drawing.
  - Print off copies of photographs of project activities.
6. From time to time have a sharing session. Use this session to encourage reflection on the participation process, the changes that are occurring, and the results achieved.



### Note:

The opportunity to include **photographs** of their participation in the project is a strong incentive for the children and young people to spend time developing their scrapbooks. If the adult facilitators can take on the responsibility of printing off copies of photographs for the children and young people, this will contribute to the success of the activity.



## TOOL 26: TRAFFIC LIGHT

This is a simple activity to enable children and young people to evaluate all aspects of a project or programme. It contributes particularly to measuring the outcomes of participation.



45-60 minutes.



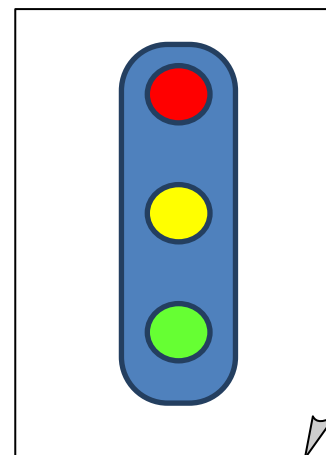
### Resources:

- Large traffic light diagram (see example).
- Cards (1 per person)
- Flip-chart paper, felt-tips, masking tape.



### Steps

1. Introduce the traffic light diagram (see example) and explain what each colour means:
  - Red: Something unsatisfactory, something that is not going well.
  - Yellow: Something that is OK but could be improved.
  - Green: Something satisfactory, something that is going well.
2. Form groups of 3 or 4 people. Give three cards to each group.
3. Ask them to write on one card an aspect of the project or programme that is not going well, or is causing problems; on another card, something that is OK but could be improved; and on the third, something they think is going really well.
4. Then each group places their cards on the traffic light diagram next to the light that it relates to. As they do so they should read out the card to the other participants and explain why it relates to that particular light.
5. When all the groups have placed their cards on the diagram, re-read all the cards that relate to each light.
6. Have a group reflection on the results:
  - How can we make sure the things that are going well continue, and get the maximum benefit from them?
  - How can we improve the things that need improving (yellow light)?
  - Can the unsatisfactory things (red light) be fixed, or is there a need for more serious changes in our project?





## TOOL 27: CHANGE ANALYSIS

This activity helps children and young people analyse the different kinds of changes that have occurred as a result of their participation process. It is a key activity for identifying and measuring the outcomes of participation.







1 - 2 hours.



### Resources:

- Cards which state the objectives of the project or programme being evaluated (prepare these in advance, referring to original project documents).
- A large chart like the diagram below, drawn on two or three flip-chart sheets joined together.
- Cards for describing the changes: several dozen.
- Flip-chart paper, felt-tips, masking tape.

Type of change that occurred → Objectives of the project ↓	 Negative change: caused harm	 No change	 Limited, temporary change, not sustained	 Significant and sustainable change
Objective 1:				
Objective 2:				
Objective 3:				
Objective 4:				
Unexpected changes →				
Unexpected changes →				



### Steps

1. Explain to participants that in this activity they are going to analyse the changes that happen as a result of children and young people's participation. To start the analysis, they are going to look at the changes in relation to the objectives (which are set out in the original project documents for the project we are evaluating). Later we will look at unexpected changes.
2. Present the project objectives, each one written on a card. Make sure the participants understand the meaning of each objective.

3. Introduce the change analysis chart and place the project objective cards in the left-hand column. Explain to participants that they are going to look at what has changed in relation to each of these objectives. Introduce the remaining four columns of the chart headed by the four faces.

1. The crying face means a negative change; that is, something happened which harmed the children and young people or their community.
2. The sad face means nothing changed. Everything stayed the same as before.
3. The face with a little smile means there was a positive change, but it was of limited scope and not likely to last long.
4. The face with a big smile means a significant, sustained and far-reaching positive change.

4. Read the first objective again and ask participants to think about what results they have seen related to this objective. Help them to express these results in terms of changes they have noticed, and write them on cards; one change per card.
5. Facilitate debate so the participants can decide which column of the chart each card fits in; that is, whether the change was negative, a bit positive or very positive. Place the cards in the appropriate column on the chart.
6. Repeat this process for the remaining project objectives.
7. When all the changes relating to the project objectives have been analysed, ask participants to think about any unexpected changes which have occurred; that is, changes which came about as a result of the children and young people's participation, but are not directly related to any of the project objectives. Help them put these changes on cards.
8. Complete the chart by placing these "unexpected change" cards in the appropriate column.
9. Have a final reflection, which could include the following points:

- Who has benefitted from the changes you identified?
- Are there any groups who have not benefitted? Have they been marginalised or excluded? How?
- Which of the original objectives has been most difficult to achieve? What is needed to help achieve it fully?
- Did you identify any negative changes? How did they happen? What can be done to avoid negative changes in the future?



**Note:**





Another dimension to analyse is the different levels at which the changes take effect. Some changes are seen mainly in individual children and young people. Others affect the family, the school or the whole community. There can also be changes in the attitudes of local or national government officials, the media, or the NGOs. There can be changes in government institutions, laws or public policies. If you are working with adolescents, it is worth allowing more time for this activity so as to include this level of change analysis. Another option is to do a separate activity to explore the different levels at which children and young people's participation can influence change.

## APPENDIX

### Self-evaluation questionnaire to evaluate the quality of children and young people's participation (for use with Tool No. 14)

This questionnaire is based on the 9 Basic Requirements established by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child.

**How to use the questionnaire:** Put an **X** in the column that best matches your view of how each indicator is fulfilled in the activities of (**Organisation**) – **based on your own experience**. In the right hand column you can add any comments.

Requirement 1: Participation is transparent and informative.	In the activities organised by ( <b>Organisation</b> ):				Comments (or "Don't know")
	Hasn't been thought about 	Talked about but not put into practice 	Sometimes applied, sometimes not. 	Fully complied with. 	
1.1 We have enough information to decide if we want to participate.					
1.2 We are given the information in a simple form that is easy to understand.					
1.3 We understand what everyone's roles and responsibilities are.					
<b>Number of "X" in each column</b>					<b>3</b>

Requirement 2: Participation is voluntary.	In the activities organised by ( <b>Organisation</b> ):				Comments (or "Don't know")
	Hasn't been thought about	Talked about but not put into practice	Sometimes applied, sometimes not.	Fully complied with.	
2.1 We agree to participate voluntarily.					
2.2 We have plenty of time to decide whether we want to participate or not.					
2.3 We can withdraw (stop participating) any time we want to.					
<b>Number of "X" in each column</b>					<b>3</b>

Requirement 3: Participation is respectful.	In the activities organised by ( <b>Organisation</b> ):				Comments (or "Don't know")
	Hasn't been thought about	Talked about but not put into practice	Sometimes applied, sometimes not.	Fully complied with.	
3.1 Our other commitments and the other things we have to do are respected and taken into account.					
3.2 The social and cultural values and practices of our community are taken into account in participation activities.					
3.3 ( <b>Organisation</b> ) seeks the support of our parents and other adults in the community for our participation activities.					
<b>Number of "X" in each column</b>					<b>3</b>

Requirement 4: Participation is relevant.	In the activities organised by (Organisation):				Comments (or "Don't know")
	Hasn't been thought about	Talked about but not put into practice	Sometimes applied, sometimes not.	Fully complied with.	
4.1 The topics we work on are relevant to our lives.					
4.2 Adults don't pressure us to participate in activities we don't think are relevant or interesting.					
4.3 The activities are appropriate to our ages, interests and abilities.					
<b>Number of "X" in each column</b>					<b>3</b>

Requirement 5: Participation is child friendly.	In the activities organised by (Organisation):				Comments (or "Don't know")
	Hasn't been thought about	Talked about but not put into practice	Sometimes applied, sometimes not.	Fully complied with.	
5.1 (Organisation) works in a child-friendly way.					
5.2 (Organisation) works in a way that increases the self-esteem and confidence of children and young people of different ages and abilities.					
5.3 The places where we meet are suitable for us and child-friendly.					
5.4 The places where we meet are accessible to children and young people with disabilities (for example wheelchair users).					
<b>Number of "X" in each column</b>					<b>4</b>

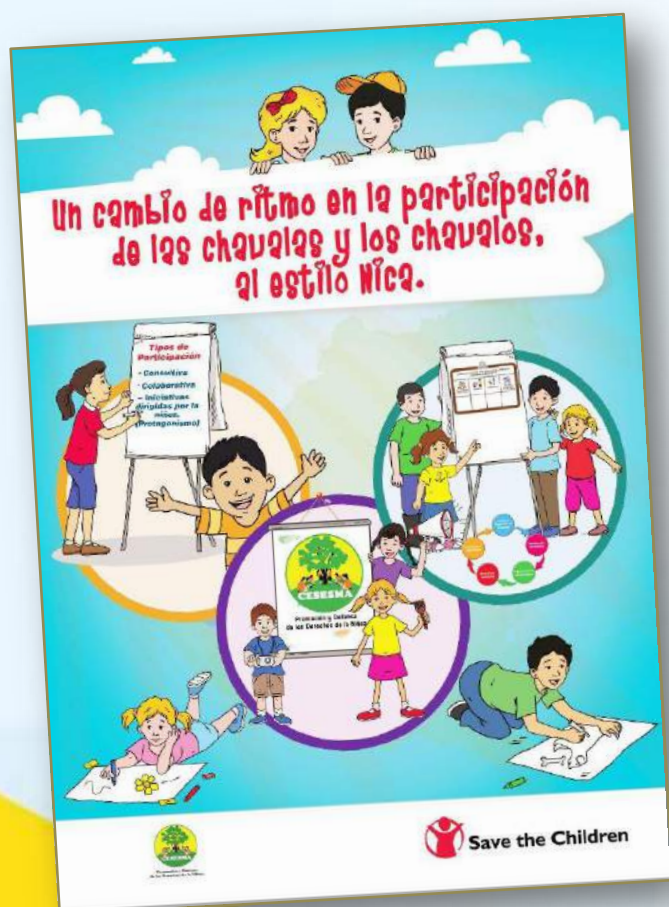
Requirement 6: Participation is inclusive.	In the activities organised by (Organisation):				Comments (or "Don't know")
	Hasn't been thought about	Talked about but not put into practice	Sometimes applied, sometimes not.	Fully complied with.	
6.1 All children and young people have the same opportunities to participate without discrimination due to age, colour, sex, language, disability or any other factor.					
6.2 In activities organised by (Organisation) everyone feels included and no-one suffers discrimination.					
6.3 (Organisation) supports us in promoting equality and preventing discrimination through our participation.					
<b>Number of "X" in each column</b>					<b>3</b>

Requirement 7: Participation is supported by training for adults.	In the activities organised by (Organisation):				Comments (or "Don't know")
	Hasn't been thought about	Talked about but not put into practice	Sometimes applied, sometimes not.	Fully complied with.	
6.1 The adults who work in (Organisation) are child-friendly.					
6.2 The adults who work in (Organisation) are capable and confident to facilitate our participation.					
6.3 The adults who work in (Organisation) are able to support our participation in the community.					
<b>Number of "X" in each column</b>					<b>3</b>

Requirement 8: Participation is safe and sensitive to risk.	In the activities organised by (Organisation):				Comments (or "Don't know")
	Hasn't been thought about	Talked about but not put into practice	Sometimes applied, sometimes not.	Fully complied with.	
8.1 We feel safe and secure when we participate with (Organisation).					
8.2 (Organisation) identifies any risks, and they know how to keep us safe.					
8.3 We know where to go for help if we don't feel safe.					
<b>Number of "X" in each column</b>					<b>3</b>

Requirement 9: Participation is accountable.	In the activities organised by (Organisation):				Comments (or "Don't know")
	Hasn't been thought about	Talked about but not put into practice	Sometimes applied, sometimes not.	Fully complied with.	
9.1 (Organisation) supports us to participate in evaluation and follow-up activities.					
9.2 The adults who work in (Organisation) take our suggestions seriously and put them into practice, or if they can't, they explain why not.					
9.3 When we ask (Organisation) for help, they respond and tell us what they can do.					
<b>Number of "X" in each column</b>					<b>3</b>

# A change of rhythm, Nicaraguan style, in children and young people's participation



Save the Children's "Toolkit for monitoring and evaluating children's participation" was the result of an international collaboration involving partners in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Hundreds of children and adolescents participated in the pilot process, validating the new framework and testing the tools in real-life situations.

CESESMA in Nicaragua was one of the partner organisations in this pilot process.

Save the Children Nicaragua commissioned Harry Shier of CESESMA to prepare a "Nicaraguan-friendly" version of the toolkit – that is, a shorter, accessible version attuned to the Nicaraguan context, and to the language and life-experience of Nicaraguan children and those who work with them. As well as Nicaraguan versions of the framework and toolkit, the book contains a new section sharing CESESMA's experience of the piloting process, and the lessons learned and new thinking developed along the way. The resulting book, "Un cambio de ritmo en la participación de las chavalas y los chavalos al estilo nica", was published by Save the Children in Managua in September 2014.

This is an English translation by the author.



Save the Children

