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Children and Young People as Citizens

PARTNERS FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

Exploring Concepts



Save the Children

**Children and Young People
as Citizens**

PARTNERS FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

Exploring Concepts

Claire O' Kane

Edited by: Judith Amtzis

The vision

Save the Children works for:

- a world which respects and values each child
- a world which listens to children and learns
- a world where all children have hope and opportunity

The mission

Save the Children fights for children's rights.

We deliver immediate and lasting improvements to children's lives worldwide.

First published in 2003

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Published by:

Save the Children

South & Central Asia Region

Lalitpur, GPO Box 5850

Kathmandu, Nepal.

Photo credit: Abir Abdullah, Chandrika Khatiwada, Karna Bahadur Mahajan, Mahmud, R.B. Thapa, Sameer Thapliyal, Sujjan, Shehzad Noorani

Photographs collected from: OSCAR, SCN Nepal, SCSD Bangladesh, SC Sri Lanka

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Design, Layout and Printing: Format Printing Press, Kathmandu, Nepal. Tel: 4428572, 4422160

Preface

"We worry what a child will become tomorrow, yet we forget he/she is someone today" (Stacia Staucher). The work of Save the Children is rooted in the principles enshrined in the Convention of the Right of the Child (CRC) and committed to support children claiming their rights. Save the Children in South and Central Asia has a vision for tomorrow grounded in the reality of today, we believe that "Children are not only the future but they are also the citizens of today" (Children's Forum, UN Special Session on Children, 2002)

Girls' and boys' active participation: their right to be heard, have influence on decisions that affect them and become partners in action are fundamental principles for Save the Children. As a consequence it was decided to look at examples of how children, from various backgrounds, in South and Central Asia have actually organised themselves and been able to influence their own daily living situation. This work carried out in 2001 and 2002 by Claire O'Kane on behalf of Save the Children, revealed an immense and impressive richness in what children have achieved.

This resulting set of publications compiles our learning from the study. It provides a wealth of examples of children's participation and citizenship in families, communities, schools, work places, local government bodies and other settings. It highlights the many diverse and creative ways in which children organise themselves, let their voices be heard and create change in their lives, appropriate to their different cultures and situations. These experiences of children are enriched with analysis, reflections and lessons learned that are important for all organisations working to promote children's participation and rights.

The publications indicate that it is easier to motivate children to raise their voices, to organise themselves and to claim their rights than it is for adults to listen with respect and respond constructively. There are clear messages about this major challenge and other ethical issues to be considered in promoting children's participation.

The publications are the collective work of a great many children and staff of partner organisations and Save the Children members in South and Central Asia. Thanks to all of you for your contributions and willingness to get involved in this work. You have made this documentation possible.

Our very special thanks go to Claire O’Kane for her hard work, commitment and dedication, and for her deep respect for the views and rights of children. Thanks also to a core group of Save the Children staff members, Asif Munier, Y.Bhavani, Chandrika Khatiwada, Prakash Koirala, Ranjan Pouldyal and Unni Rustad, who all made substantial and creative contributions. The publications were finalised and edited by Shikha Ghildyal, Ravi Karkara and Judith Amtzis. Our sincere thanks for your contributions and commitment to make this a living, working document.

These publications are dedicated to the children of South and Central Asia. We hope that they will open a great many eyes as to what children can accomplish and what support can help them to improve their lives now and in the future.

The Steering Committee

Save the Children South and Central Asia

(Eiichi Sadamatsu, Girish Godbole, Herluf G. Madsen, Linda Moffat, Ned Olney, Sultan Mahmud, and Valter Tinderholt)

Road Map for Readers

Imagine a scene... a group of girls, boys and young people of different ages sitting together; eyes bright, animated, as they discuss ideas and share their views on issues concerning them in their local communities. Working in creative ways they plan actions to raise awareness and gain adult support in taking action to further the realisation of their rights. **Consider the backdrop to the scene...** a Himalayan mountain village, a congested city, an isolated village in a desert area, a refugee camp, a village in the plains, a beach by the sea... in situations both of peace and of conflict.

In diverse settings across South and Central Asia children and young people are coming together as a positive force for social change. Empowered girls, boys and young people are raising their voices and bringing about positive changes for children and adults in their local and national communities.

Considering the scale of this region and the prevailing social norms that exclude children and young people from decision-making at all levels, these groups of empowered girls and boys may only represent a 'drop in the ocean'. However, these are significant drops, creating ripples of change at local, national and regional levels. In demonstrating their strengths, their unity, and their hope boys and girls are touching the lives of adults surrounding them, and in the process transforming relationships between adults and children. Recognition of the benefits of listening and responding to the views of children and young people is gaining momentum. Through their efforts boys and girls are breaking the silence that has for so long fostered their marginalisation. They are challenging all forms of discrimination, inequality, abuse and exploitation, and are providing powerful illustrations of their role as active citizens.

As a guardian of children's rights, Save the Children is actively supporting such efforts. Save the Children believes that children and young people are active citizens of both today and tomorrow. While taking their evolving capacity into consideration, girls and boys are recognised as human beings with rights to participate in decisions that affect their lives. Save the Children adopts a rights-based approach to development, developing programmes underpinned by the principles of children's rights and human rights. Children's participation is a principle of rights-based programming. Children are right holders who can play an active role in increasing fulfilment of their other rights to survival, protection and development.

Save the Children Alliance in South and Central Asia has focused on 'Children's Citizenship and Governance' (CCG) as a key niche area, recognising children and young people's role as active citizens as well as the benefits of rights-based approaches to development. All agencies concerned with development, good governance or social justice should include girls and boys as active partners in the development process. This publication, which consists of an Overview and three booklets, highlights the richness of experience and positive impacts from Save the Children's innovative work on children's participation and citizenship with NGO partners and Children's Organisations in the South and Central Asia region.

This first booklet in the three-part "Children and Young People as Citizens: Partners for Social Change" series explores the actual vision and concepts relating to children's participation, children's citizenship and governance. The links between work on children's citizenship and governance and child rights programming are also outlined. This booklet introduces Save the Children's work on children's participation and citizenship in the South and Central Asia region. It shares a vision that builds upon a rights-based approach to development and relates experiences of engaging with children and young people as active citizens. Working in strategic and principled ways, Save the Children seeks to change existing social norms to allow the recognition of children and young people as social actors and key partners in decision-making processes which affect them in their families, schools, communities, in local and national governance.

The bibliography and appendices 1, 2, 3,4 and 5 include information regarding other useful resources, practical tools, materials and guidelines to carry children's citizenship work forward.

Acknowledgments

The information, experiences and insights shared in this report are the result of the efforts of a multitude of minds and hearts of children, young people and adults in diverse settings across South and Central Asia and beyond. Without mentioning all of their names (or organisations), I acknowledge each for their enthusiasm and commitment to working for children's rights and social change in very real ways in their local, national and global communities. The resilience, commitment, vision and positive actions of girls and boys living in marginalised communities across Asia continues to be my main source of inspiration for empowering work with children and young people as citizens.

In each Save the Children country office programme directors, staff and administrators have offered support, assisting me to meet with colleagues, with children and young people's groups, and with NGO partners to explore their experiences of children's participation and citizenship, the critical issues and their vision. In drawing the experiences and analysis together in this publication I thank every person who has taken time to bring about such experience and insight sharing.

For providing the opportunity to undertake regional work on children's citizenship and governance I would like to acknowledge the vision and commitment of each of the Steering Committee Members: Herluf Madsen, Peter Dixon, Martin Kelsey, Girish Godbole, Keith D Leslie, Sultan Mahmud, Dewan Sohrab, Mariko Tanaka, Valter Tinderholt, Linda Moffat. The commitment and support of the Alliance Co-ordinator Archana Tamang has also been energising throughout the process.

I want to particularly acknowledge the commitment and ongoing support of Herluf Madsen, Regional Representative of Save the Children Sweden in furthering Save the Children's regional work on Children's Citizenship and Governance, and in providing guidance and encouragement to me in my role as CCG project co-ordinator.

An initial draft of this report was significantly improved through the involvement of the regional working group on children's citizenship and governance including Shikha Ghildyal, Ravi Karkara, Ranjan Poudyal, Asif Munier, Y. Bhavani, Chandrika Khatiwada, Prakash Koirala and Unni Rustad¹. The professional efforts of the editor

¹ Who met together at a regional level to work on the document in April 2003.

Judith Amtzis, and the regional CCG group have all promoted a more reader-friendly production of this publication.

Ravi Karkara merits special thanks for his zeal and encouragement. Ravi has provided invaluable insights and personal support throughout my work on this project, and has played a key role in mobilising action on this publication. Shikha has also played a key role in enabling publication of this document in her role as the new CCG co-ordinator.

All of the regional working group members mentioned above have provided me with significant support, guidance and insights during my work on CCG. Additional individuals whom I wish to acknowledge in this regard include: Shaymol Chaudhery, Lena Karlsson, Anna Grauers-Fisher, Lisa Lundgren, Ruslan Ziganshin, John Parry Williams, Gyani Thapa, Nimal Pereira, Rajiv Adhikari, Els Heinjen, Emmanuelle Abrioux, Samina Sardar, Qais Anwar, Henk Van Beers and Joachim Theis. From further afield I would also like to acknowledge the support and enthusiasm of the global Child Participation Working Group.

I also want to acknowledge the significance of the ongoing support and encouragement of my family and friends in Wales.

Claire O' Kane

CCG Regional Project Co-ordinator, Save the Children (South and Central Asia)

January, 2003

Acronyms

AI	Appreciative Inquiry
CAR	Commissionerate of Afghan Refugees
CCDK	Children's Council for Development of Kargil
CCDL	Children's Council for Development of Ladakh
CCG	Children's Citizenship and Governance
CCVD	Children's Committee for Village Development
CCWB	Central Child Welfare Board
CDO	Chief District Officer
CEDAW	Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
C-EMIS	Community Education Monitoring Information Systems
CERD	Convention on Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination
CGDC	Children Go For Development Committee
CPA	Centre for Performing Arts (Sri Lanka)
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRP	Child Rights Programming
CWC	Concerned for Working Children
CYG	Children and Young People's Group
DCRC	Delhi Child Rights Club
DCWB	District Child Welfare Boards (Nepal)
DCWC	District Child Welfare Committees
ECD	Early Childhood Development
HRD	Human Resource Development
HREP	Human Rights Education Project
GMC	Global Movement for Children
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
IEC	Information Education, and Communication
KAISHAR	Knowledge and Attitude Improvement of Sexual Health for Adolescent's Responsibility
NGO	Non-government Organisation
NNSWA	Nepal National Social Welfare Association
NPA	National Plan of Action
NWFP	North West Frontier Province (Pakistan)
PLA	Participatory Learning and Action
PO	Programme Officer

PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Programme
SoVAA	Social Volunteer Against AIDS
SSoC	Special Session on Children
SWC	Social Welfare Cell
TfD	Theatre for Development
TOF	Training of Facilitators
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VCDC	Village Children's Development Committee (Sri Lanka)
VDC	Village Development Committees (Nepal)
VEC	Village Education Committee
WBL	Working for Better Lives
YIP	Young India Project

Contents

Preface	i
Road Map for Readers	iii
Acknowledgements	v
Acronyms	vii
Introduction and Exploring Concepts on Children's Participation, Citizenship and Governance	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Exploring Concepts: of Children's Participation, Citizenship and Governance	9
1.3 Conclusion	27
Appendices	
Other Useful Materials	28
Appendix 1: Summary Overview of Save the Children's Regional Project on Children's Citizenship and Governance (CCG), 1999 - 2002	37
Appendix 2: The Convention on the Rights of the Child	40
Appendix 3: The Ladder of Children's Participation	46
Appendix 4: 'Guiding Principles' for Facilitating Children's Organisations	48
Appendix 5: Child Protection Policy (Save the Children UK)	53

Introduction and Exploring Concepts on Children's Participation, Citizenship and Governance

1.1 Introduction

Children and young people have traditionally been excluded from decision-making processes in all parts of the world. South and Central Asia is no exception. The prevailing social norm sees children as the property of their parents, who must do as adults tell them. Children are not encouraged to raise their voices or to question adults².

A paradigm shift is occurring, however, about the place and status of children's voices in society. Children and young people are increasingly being recognised as social actors and citizens. The importance of hearing their voices individually and collectively is beginning to be felt within development policy and practice, local governance, education systems and sociological and anthropological studies. The many processes - local to global - leading up to the May 2002 United Nations (UN) Special Session on Children (SSOC) set an example for involving children and young people in policy developments of concern to them.

For Save the Children in South and Central Asia a rights-based approach to fulfilling children's rights and promoting their participation and citizenship rights is fundamental. Through partnerships with local NGOs, government departments, media, and children and young people's own organisations, Save the Children is furthering innovative, dynamic, proactive work in this area. When children's right to participation is realised, their rights to survival, protection and development are also enhanced. Practical work reveals that promoting children's citizenship furthers the development of democratic, inclusive, non-violent societies where good governance enables the rights of all citizens to be respected.

² Colleagues in Nepal say that the god Ram is often used as a model for how children should obey their parents. Ram unquestioningly obeyed his father's decision to send him into the jungle without asking why he should go.

South and Central Asia backdrop

Physical, geographic, political, economic, social and cultural factors impact upon the lives of children and young people. The physical and national environment, the state of the national and local economy, the quality of governance and the civil society all affect the situation of children.

Status of children and young people in South Asia

South Asia also is the poorest, the most illiterate, the most malnourished, and the least gender-sensitive region in the world. The majority of countries in South Asia have entered the 21st century with an enormous backlog of human deprivation. Human poverty remains the most fundamental challenge; countries in the region still cannot secure basic rights for all their citizens or provide them with the means to live with dignity. Some 522 million people in south Asia - 40 percent of the world's population lives on less than a US \$1 a day.

Children under 18 years make up over 40 percent of South Asia's population. This is half a billion children. Children's rights are disregarded everywhere in the region. During the past decade, South Asia has achieved considerable progress in human development of which it can be proud. For example, all South Asian countries have made commendable progress in ensuring access to basic learning opportunities for children.

However, over 150 million South Asia children between 2 - 14 years of age are out of school, and about 70 million children (40 percent of those currently enrolled) will probably drop out before completing their primary education. This is higher than in any other region of the world. Girls, children from poor and marginalised families, and children with disabilities are more vulnerable to non-enrolment, dropping out and poor achievements. At the same time, significant results in reducing child labour, particularly the hazardous form, remain elusive. Government estimates put the number of working girls and boys at 25 million whereas non-governmental estimates range from 40-150 million.

Some 80 million south Asian children - nearly half of all children under the age of 5 - are malnourished. Of the almost 36 million children born every year in South Asia, close to 4 million infants die before completing one year of life. Many of these deaths are due to diseases that could have easily been prevented.

Save the Children in South and Central Asia

Save the Children members in South and Central Asia include Save the Children Australia, Canada, Denmark, Japan, Norway, Sweden, UK, and US. Members have country programmes in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Kyrgyzstan, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. In many countries across the region there is a move towards increased collaboration of programmes as one unified 'Save the Children'.

During the past decade Save the Children has focused on partnerships with local NGOs rather than on projects. Emphasis has been on capacity building and organisation development, strengthening civil society organisations and developing empowering sustainable initiatives to fulfil children's rights. Save the Children members are increasingly implementing Child Rights Programming (CRP) as an overall framework for their programming efforts. Working in the sectors of education, child labour, justice, social protection (including abuse and exploitation), HIV, health, emergencies and early child development increasing focus is put on inter-sectoral collaboration. The vision is to achieve greater benefits for children by operating a coherent program based on children's rights principles and key child rights issues.

Our Vision is a time when³

DUTY BEARERS (at all levels) are aware of their responsibilities and obligations to children and are acting upon them.

- Save the Children, Government, I/NGO partners, and civil society are working together to fulfil their responsibilities to children.
- Duty bearers have capacity and budgets allocated to challenge and change unequal power structures and all forms of discrimination.

RIGHT HOLDERS (girls and boys from all backgrounds: age, ability, ethnicity, class, caste, region, religion, sexual preference, HIV/AIDS status etc) are empowered to raise their voices and to participate in decision-making at various levels.

- All girls and boys assert their rights to survival, protection, development and participation.
- Child friendly and inclusive structures and mechanism (including materials) have been established through which children can influence decision-making.

CIVIL SOCIETY is mobilised to advocate for children's rights and are effective in influencing policy change.

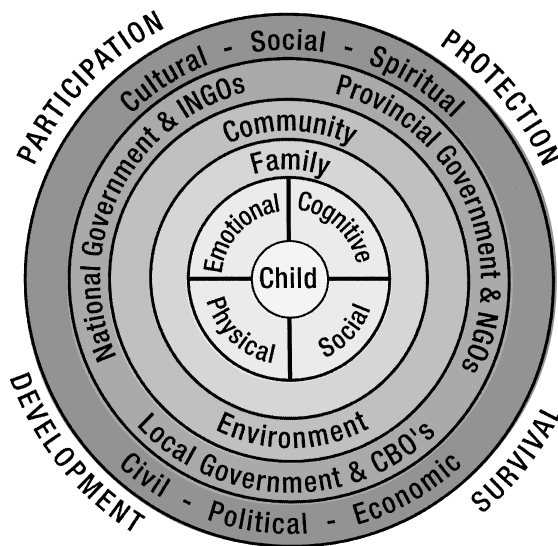
- The overall status of human rights in South and Central Asia is enhanced by interlinking CRC with other human rights mechanisms (CEDAW⁴: CERD, etc).
- A healthy, friendly, peaceful and inclusive environment is created - free from discrimination, exploitation, violence and abuse.

³ Vision of participants representing all Save the Children members from the region during a regional strategy meeting on Child Rights Programming and Children's Citizenship and Governance in September 2002.

⁴ CEDAW: Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women; CERD: Convention on Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination.

Child rights programming draws on many traditions, principles, norms and standards. These include human rights and child rights, development and relief work, sector frameworks, childhood studies, and social and political movements of adults and children (see Theis, 2001). For example, when children are seen in their broader context, within their families and local community, childhood is recognised as a social-construction (see James and Prout, 1990) and the imposition of a global concept of childhood⁵ is questioned. The major impact different policies and the economy have on children and their lives is recognised, as is the impact that children have on their environment. The phenomena of childhood cannot be grasped without understanding the wider context:

Starting from the very right to be born to the perceptions of childhood, socialisation and the transition to adulthood, (all) are context-determined..... The very definition of selfhood, subjecthood and personhood is deeply scripted by the larger context. The impact of the macro-structures and processes operating at a wider societal level affect groups differentially, determining the life-choices of groups and individuals' (Raman, 2000, p. 12).



Children in Context: Social Ecology Model⁶

⁵ In the late twentieth century, the middle and upper classes in modern industrialised societies saw childhood as distinct from adulthood, with children needing protection from an adult world of work, politics, responsibility and sexuality.

⁶ Source: *Children and Partners Project*. University of Victoria, Canada, 2002.

Applying a Rights-Based Approach to Programming

Applying a rights-based approach to programming means⁷:

- Putting children at the centre, recognising them as **right holders** and social actors,
- Recognising governments as primary **duty bearers** accountable to their citizens - including children - and to the international community,
- Recognising parents and families as **primary care-givers**, protectors and guides - and supporting them in these roles,
- Giving priority to children and to a **child friendly environment**,
- Being **gender sensitive** and seeking inclusive solutions which involve a focus on **those boys and girls who are at risk and who are discriminated against**,
- Addressing **unequal power structures** (class, sex, ethnicity, age, caste, religion etc)
- Holding a **holistic vision** of the rights of the child whilst making strategic choices and taking specific actions,
- Setting **goals** in terms of **fulfilment of rights**
- Aiming for sustainable results for children by **focusing** not only on the immediate, but also on the **root causes of problems**,
- Using **participatory and empowering approaches**, in particular regarding children
- Building **partnerships and alliances** for promotion of rights of the child,
- Counting on **international co-operation**,
- Focusing on those who are most at risk and discriminated against,
- Taking a holistic perspective which requires a **multi-sectoral response**
- Providing a long term goal which is clearly set out in **international legal frameworks** that are shared by governments, donors and civil society, and
- Encouraging **legal and other reforms**, such as regular monitoring mechanisms, which create a much greater likelihood of sustainable change.

This Booklet

Save the Children and their NGO partners (including children's groups) have rich experiences and learning in relation to children's participation and citizenship, individually and collectively. This booklet seeks to explore key concepts and to capture some of the experiences and key lessons learnt. Case examples illustrate how children and young people are moving, through active participation, to realise their rights to survival, protection and development. They are also helping develop more democratic, inclusive and accountable societies. Some of the case studies include innovative work carried out by NGOs who may not be current donor partners of Save the Children⁸, but who have been associated as partners of Save the Children over time. Recommendations for ensuring sustainable and quality practice in children's participation and citizenship are emerging.

⁷ Child Rights Programming: How to Apply Rights-Based Approaches in Programming: A Handbook for International Save the Children Alliance Members. Save the Children.

⁸ e.g. Butterflies Programme of Street and Working Children, Divya Disha, Navajeevan Bala Bhawan, APCRAF in India.

The booklet describes the vision of active citizenship shared by children, young people and adults in the region, and shares recommendations to move towards this goal. These insights come largely from workshops and field visits with children, young people and adults undertaken as part of Save the Children's regional initiative on 'Children's Citizenship and Governance' (CCG)⁹.

A Definition of Children's Citizenship and Governance¹⁰

Children's citizenship and governance concerns the active participation of girls, boys and young people in the familial, social, economic, political and cultural arenas. It is an incremental process in which they develop the skills, understanding and values to influence decision-making and outcomes at local, national and international levels in an environment that recognises them as competent social actors.

Citizenship for children and young people empowers them to exercise their rights and responsibilities alongside adults in the interest both of their peers and others. Their participation challenges existing inequalities and the root causes of poverty and positively contributes to a more just and democratic world.

A Brief History of Save the Children's regional initiative on CCG

The Children's Citizenship and Governance project initially developed in 1999 as a regional initiative of Save the Children UK (Office of South and Central Asia). It built upon two key regional processes undertaken by Save the Children in 1998/9: a Children's Citizenship and Environment Conference for and by children and young people in Central Asia and a secondment to undertake a regional study on children's citizenship¹¹.

The regional study of children's citizenship focused on the role children's organisations were playing to further children's rights. Another secondment to the regional office¹² focused on facilitation skills for children's organisations, culminating in the organisation of a ten-day Regional Workshop on Training of Facilitators (TOF) on Children, Citizenship and Governance in Delhi, India in November 2000. Children and adults representing children's organisations, NGO partners or Save the Children members from across the South and Central Asia Region¹³ attended this workshop. Guidelines for facilitating children's organisations, a resource CD on facilitating

⁹ See Appendix 1 for a summary of the CCG initiative.

¹⁰ This definition is based on definitions developed during SC-UK Cross-Regional workshop on Citizenship, 26-27 April 2001, as well as earlier definitions developed by SC UK OSCAR.

¹¹ This secondment with Save the Children UK Office of Central Asia was undertaken by Glenfrey de Mel.

¹² Undertaken by Ravi Karkara

¹³ from Bangladesh, India, Kyrgyzstan, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan.

Children, Citizenship and Governance, a profile of children's organisations¹⁴ and a film documenting the regional workshop were developed.

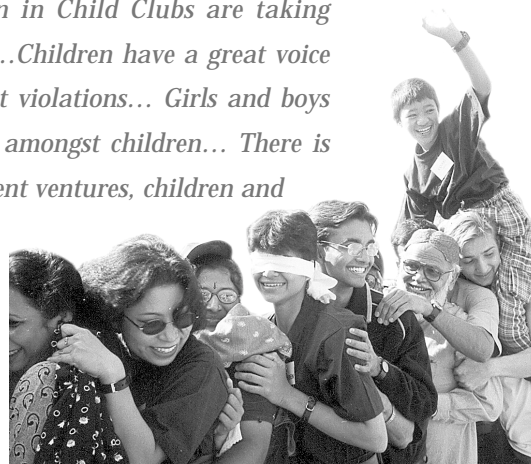
In November 2000 the CCG project was adopted as a key regional initiative of Save the Children Alliance in South and Central Asia. A commitment to the CCG regional initiative represented Save the Children alliance members' core belief in children's participation and in working with children and young people as partners in the development process.

To navigate the best way/s forward, the Steering Committee of Save the Children Alliance recommended a process to engage more Save the Children members, project partners and children's groups in developing the CCG initiative. A CCG project co-ordinator was employed¹⁵ in mid 2001 to undertake a consultative process in each country with Save the Children members, key partners and children's groups. The participatory consultation process enabled exploration of critical issues relating to children's participation and citizenship, visioning and collaborative action planning at local, national and regional levels to take the work on children's participation and citizenship forward.

The vision of children and adults

"Without adult facilitation children in Child Clubs are taking initiative on issues concerning them...Children have a great voice and are united to address child right violations... Girls and boys are together. There is more equality amongst children... There is children's representation in Government ventures, children and adults are working together for children's rights."

(Vision of children's participation expressed by girls and boys who are members of Child Clubs in Sri Lanka)



¹⁴ participating in the TOF from South and Central Asia

¹⁵ Claire O'Kane was employed by Save the Children Sweden to work for Save the Children Alliance in the region for one year; the contract was subsequently extended for an additional 6 months.

Save the Children's vision on child rights programming is shown in Section 1.1 (Box: "Our Vision is a Time When:"). This vision builds upon experiences of working with children and young people and listening to their views. Children and young people who have been engaged in participatory and empowering processes have a clear vision regarding the role they can play in society as pro-active citizens. They will raise their voices against injustice and discrimination, ensuring realisation of their rights to survival, protection, development and participation. They will take the lead in developing their own organisations and networks. Adults will recognise children and young people as competent social actors. They will be given space within governance structures to work in partnership with adults towards the creation of a more equitable world in which all citizens' rights are respected.

Children's Vision regarding their participation and the future development of their organisations, Rural Andhra Pradesh, India¹⁶:

Children should be able to run their clubs without the organiser's help. They will be strong Clubs. All the children, including children with disabilities, will be more active in the clubs and there will be no gender discrimination.

... Girls and boys will have courage to speak up in front of their parents. Parents and other adults' views and attitudes regarding children will have changed and they will recognise children's views and capabilities more.

...There will be a Bal Panchayat (Children's Parliament) in every village... Adults (parents, elders, teachers) will be more interested in and more supportive of the children's clubs and parliaments... Clear linkages will be developed between the children's clubs/sangha/ panchayat and the adult gram panchayat system (local governance). Children will take issues concerning them to the gram panchayat and the adults will take their issues seriously. The gram panchayat and bal panchayat members will sit together face to face to discuss and address issues affecting them. Children will be represented in different village level committees (e.g. village education committee).

The youth will also develop their own youth organisations, and the idea of child clubs, bal panchayat and youth groups will spread to new areas ..Children should organize themselves and then link up at each level (mandal, district, state, and national level).

Adults (facilitators, parents, teachers, journalists and government officials) who have been exposed to children and young people's immense potential and have witnessed their creative role as catalysts for social change have described a similar vision to that expressed by empowered children and youth:

¹⁶ Vision expressed by child representatives of Child Clubs and Sanghas supported by YIP NGO in Andhra Pradesh, India during a participatory review of their project, May 2002.

Vision of adults from Save the Children and NGO partners regarding children's role as active citizens in Afghanistan¹⁷:

'Children play an active role, supported by adults, in re-building Afghanistan, creating child-friendly villages and communities... Children participate in their homes, schools, neighbourhoods, villages and towns. They have increased opportunities; there is security and a child-friendly environment. There is peace - no war.

... The Government will be aware of children's rights and will support children's participation in decision-making. Children will be aware and able to defend their rights... There will be increased accountability and establishment of good governance, adults will be clear about what responsibilities they have to fulfil and children's rights will be respected.

.. Girls and boys, including children with disabilities, are participating in all decision-making meetings along with adults. Girls and boys play an active role in civil society. The country will be civilised and well-developed. All are treated equally. There will be gender equality and respectful relations between all age groups and people.

.. A peaceful society will be created in which no one's rights are violated. Children will be healthy and happy and will be able to access all basic services... teachers will be friendly and schools accessible to all. All children are educated. There will be no school drop-outs, no child labour and no children begging. All the children will play together... The villages will be peaceful and green. In the towns there will be parks, green grass, trees, no rubble, no tanks, no guns, but safe places where children can play.

In working towards a vision where recognising children and young people as citizens with rights becomes a societal norm, and they are involved as social actors and key partners in all decision-making processes that affect them (in families, schools, communities, in local and national governance), we need to work in strategic and principled ways with key allies at a range of levels.



1.2 Exploring Concepts: Children's Participation, Citizenship and Governance

Introduction

The existing social norm in South and Central Asian cultures, like most in the world, views children as property of adults, passive recipients who should listen to their parents, teachers and elders and respect all that they say. Children, particularly girls, children with disabilities and younger children are not encouraged to express their views.

¹⁷ Vision expressed during a workshop on children's participation and citizenship in Kabul in April 2002.

"It is understood that adults know better. It is not expected that children will speak in front of adults. They ask 'Who is big? Who is aged? You or me? Why do you dare speak?'"

(Boy, member of Child Brigade, Bangladesh)

"Adults don't want to listen to children. They say 'who are the parents-you or me?'"

(Children, India)

"There are some families who take children's views into consideration, but they are the minority. Children are seen as helpless and dependent on adults."

(Girl, Tajikistan)

A paradigm shift is taking place, however, as recognition grows within society of the need to listen to children and young people and to involve them in decisions that affect them.

"When the CRC was made 10 years ago, no children were consulted. But the current planning for the UN Special Session for the next 10 years has been done with us. This has been eye opening. In the last 10 years we all slept; now perhaps for the next 10 years we can remain awake.

We will move things forward."

(Boy, Bangladesh)

A crucial factor behind this movement is the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989 (CRC), which recognises children as holders of rights. No longer seen merely as recipients of adults' care and protection, children are recognised as actors in their own lives, as right holders, individuals whose views and opinions should be expressed and taken seriously. With consideration given to their age and maturity, CRC Article 12 clearly establishes children's right to involvement in decisions affecting them. Children's participation is in fact identified as a core principle of the CRC.

Save the Children Alliance members and their partners emphasise children's participation rights (Articles 12-15, 17, 23, 29 and 31). With children's evolving capacity taken into consideration (Article 5), these rights relate to all children, irrespective of gender, disability, ethnicity, religion and so on (Article 2 concerns non-discrimination).

Children's Participation Rights: Essence of relevant CRC articles

Article 12: The child's opinion

The child has the right to express his or her opinion freely in all matters and procedures affecting the child. The child's views will be given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.

Article 13: Freedom of expression

The child has the right to express his or her views in any media of the children's choice. Children also have freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers.

Article 14: Freedom of thought, conscience and religion

The state shall respect the right of the child to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.

Article 15: Freedom of association

Children have a right to meet with others, and to join or form associations.

Article 17: Access to information

The State shall ensure that children have access to information and material from a diversity of sources, and it shall encourage the mass media to disseminate information which enhances the child's social, physical, spiritual and moral well-being.

Article 23: Special support for children with disabilities

A child with learning or physical disabilities should enjoy a full and decent life in conditions which ensure dignity, promote self-reliance and facilitate the child's active participation in the community.

Article 29: Education for responsible life

Education shall aim at developing the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential. Education shall prepare the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, non-discrimination and friendship. Respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language, values, and environment will also be encouraged.

Article 31: Right to play

The child has the right to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.

Article 2: Non-discrimination

All rights apply to all children without exception. It is the State's obligation to protect children from any form of discrimination (due to race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status) and to take positive action to promote their rights.

Article 5: Parental guidance and child's evolving capacities

The State must respect the rights and responsibilities of parents and the extended family to provide guidance for the child that is appropriate to his or her evolving capacities.

The right of children and young people to participate in decisions affecting them extends from decisions affecting them as individuals to decisions which affect them as a body, increasing recognition of children and young people as a social group. The establishment of children's rights to participation represents a fundamental and somewhat controversial social shift, challenging the status quo regarding children's place and power in society.

Against a historical and cultural legacy of 'children being seen and not heard', children's voices globally have been unheard, silenced, ignored, or at best interpreted. In the past decade, evidence of children's 'invisibility' and of the negative impact on individuals and society of practices and policies that ignore their needs, rights and interests has been mounting (Oxfam, 1985; Save the Children, 1995; Johnson, Hill and Ivan-Smith, 1995; Qvortrup, 1994; Shaw, 1996; Alderson, 1995; Morrow and Richards, 1996; Butler and Williamson, 1994).

New paradigms concerning the sociological and anthropological study of childhood (see James and Prout, 1990; Christensen and James, 2000) have highlighted the social construction of childhood and children's role as social actors. Children and young people are active participants in the construction and determination of their own social lives, other people's lives and the societies in which they live. Furthermore, children's experiences of childhood are diverse, so that while childhood is recognised as a variable of social analysis, it can never be entirely separated from other variables such as class, gender or ethnicity (James and Prout, 1990).

The 1995 World Summit on Social Development emphasised the need to foster *'societies that are based on the promotion and protection of all human rights, and on non-discrimination, equality of opportunity... and participation of all'*. As a response, Save the Children UK produced *'Towards a Children's Agenda'*, a policy document recognising children's participation as a new challenge for social development.

A Definition of Children's Participation

Children's participation is an ongoing process of children's expression and active involvement in decision making (at different levels) in matters that concern them. It requires information sharing and dialogue between children and adults, which is based on mutual respect and power sharing. Genuine participation gives children the power to shape both the process and outcome. Participation is proactive.¹⁸

When promoting children's participation - issues related to the local context, perceptions of childhood, children's own evolving capacity, experience and interest play a key role in determining the nature of their participation.

Citizenship and Participation

"Children are citizens now and of the future."

(Child in a regional South and Central Asia workshop)

Rights-based approaches shift the concept of participation in development from emphasising the 'beneficiaries' involvement in creating better programmes to approaches that stress people's rights to citizenship and democratic governance.

"It is our right to be acknowledged as full citizens and given the chance to perform our citizenship role as adults do. At least we should be heard when adults make decisions about us."

(Boy, member of Child Club, Sri Lanka)

Advocating for a rights-based approach, the myriad benefits of children and young people's participation is recognised:

"We have the right to express our views and to be heard."

(Children, India)

"Any problem which affects children is better known by children. Therefore, to understand the nature of the problem you should start by consulting children"

(Boy, Bangladesh)

¹⁸ Definition from SCUUK OSCAR (Office of South and Central Asia Region)

"At a national level when a policy concerning children is made the adult policy makers are likely to make a mistake and have a failed project if they do not listen to children's views. They will not be fully aware of the nature or extent of the problem"

(Children, Bangladesh)

Why do we promote children's participation?¹⁹

It is Children's Right: to express their views, to have freedom of thought, to access information, and to form their own associations.

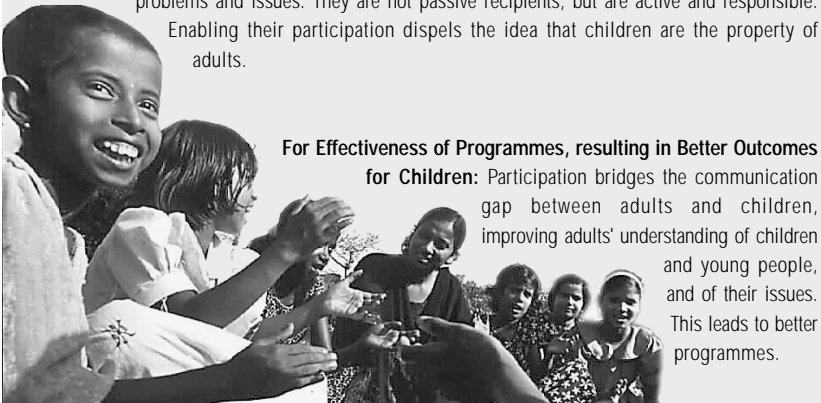
Leads to Increased Fulfilment of other Rights: Children are their own first line of defence. Through speaking up, accessing information and forming associations, children and young people can protect themselves from abuse and exploitation, and can assert their rights to survival and development.

Children and Young People as Citizens - Better Developed Civil Society and Democracy: Children and young people are citizens and members of their society. Their participation increases their visibility in society and gains them experience, enhancing their contributions as active citizens. Boys and girls gain an understanding of and feeling for democracy. Their participation results in a more participatory and inclusive society.

For Child Development: Children's participation improves their communication and negotiation skills, builds self-esteem and confidence, enhances their personality development, and increases their sense of responsibility.

Children are Social Actors and have their Own Perspectives: Children and young people have their own perspectives, differing from those of adults. They better understand their own problems and issues. They are not passive recipients, but are active and responsible.

Enabling their participation dispels the idea that children are the property of adults.



For Effectiveness of Programmes, resulting in Better Outcomes

for Children: Participation bridges the communication gap between adults and children, improving adults' understanding of children and young people, and of their issues. This leads to better programmes.

¹⁹ Views from children, young people and adults from Save the Children and NGO partners expressed during consultation meetings and workshops in South and Central Asia.

Exploring the concept of Citizenship

"Children can become true citizens only when they participate in social, economic, cultural and political fields."

(Boy, member of children's organisation, Bangladesh)

"A citizen is a person who can directly participate in decision-making."

(Boy, Uzbekistan, Central Asia)

The history of citizenship is complex, with several competing views about its meaning. Citizenship basically refers to the rights and responsibilities of citizens. Debates concerning children's citizenship were explored in 'Children and Citizenship', an earlier regional Save the Children publication by Glenfrey de Mel²⁰. Modern discourse on citizenship is largely influenced by T. H. Marshall's (1949) work on 'citizenship and social class'. Marshall defined citizenship as a status conferred upon people with full membership in a community. People with this status were equal in respect to certain rights and duties.

Citizenship, a status conferred upon people with full membership in society, entitles one to:

- a. Civil Rights: *freedom of speech, liberty and justice;*
- b. Political Rights: *participation in political decision-making; and*
- c. Social Rights: *economic and social security, provisions of social welfare.*

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) states that possessing some means of political influence is a human right: *'Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives'*. Although children are not explicitly excepted, the general assumption is that children were not covered by words 'everyone' and 'universal' when the document was drafted (Petren and Hammarberg 2000). This omission grows in significance when considering the large proportion of children in the population - about half in some of today's developing countries. The acceptance of children's political rights must therefore be broadened, and consideration given to children's citizenship in democratic societies, beyond the simple matter of voting age.

²⁰ Glenfrey de Mel (2000) Children and Citizenship: A Regional Study in South Asia. Save the Children, OSCAR, Nepal.

The UNCRC and Children's Citizenship and Governance

The CRC represents a decade of careful thought and compromise to establish a common basis for agreement on what rights children should have. With nearly universal ratification by the world's governments,²¹ the CRC has helped establish the value of children as active members of the society, as citizens of today. Children as right holders lies at the heart of the concept of the CRC.

The CRC contains rights in all three categories of Marshall's definition of citizenship, rights that do not depend on adults' good will and benevolence. Children must be recognised as full members of society in their own right, although needing more care and protection. A child's need for special care and protection does not override the other civic and political rights assured to her or him.

Children's Rights in support of Citizenship (Articles from the CRC)²²:

- Civil Rights: *Articles 2 (non-discrimination), 3 (best interests), 6 (inherent right to life), 7 and 8 (name and nationality), 14 (freedom of thought, conscience and religion), 16 (privacy)*
- Political Rights: *Articles 5 (responsibilities, rights and duty of parents), 12 (express views), 13 (expression), 15 (association), 17 (access to information), 23 (active participation of children with disabilities), 29 (education for a responsible life), 31 (play)*
- Social Rights: *Articles 24 (highest standard of health), 26 (social security), 27 (standard of living), 28 and 29 (education)*

Although the denial of political citizenship to children has continued even after promulgation of the CRC, Article 4 obligates the State to do all it can to implement the rights mentioned in the Convention. It can thus be construed as 'political', particularly considering Article 12's legitimising of children's participation in decision-making.

Article 4: Implementation of rights

State Parties shall undertake all appropriate legislative and other measures to implement the rights in the Convention. With regard to economic, social and cultural rights, the State should undertake maximum efforts with available resources and where needed within the framework of international co-operation.

The CRC has embraced the controversial definition of a child as 'a human being below the age of eighteen years'. This has various implications as children below eighteen include young people who work, raise families, serve in armed forces and occupy responsible positions in a variety of fields. Perhaps

²¹ The United States and Somalia are the only State Government not to have ratified the CRC.

²² The full text of the CRC appears in Appendix 2.

due to its emphasis on protecting children, the Convention does the not emphasise the responsibilities of children or young people. However, children and young people need to learn that responsibilities do come along with the rights of citizenship.

Recognition is growing that people do not suddenly become 'responsible' citizens on reaching a certain age. Citizenship must be learned through the everyday experience of family and community life, education and national awareness. Thus, interest is growing in the development of new tools, methods and processes to enable children and young people to participate as active citizens in their communities and societies.

While the definition of what constitutes citizenship is contested and varies according to context, when we investigate international human rights laws such as the UDHR (Universal Declaration of Human Rights), the ICCPR (International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights), and the ICESCR (International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights) we find that all children are equal to adults when it comes to citizenship rights. In practice, however, power differentials put adults in a better position to exercise their rights and perform their duties. Furthermore, when the power of the vote is added children have less power to influence policies and matters concerning them.

Children's lack of political voice has been seen (by some) as a dilemma for contemporary representative democracies (see Petren and Hammarberg, 2000). It prompts a fundamental question: If children are excluded from political governance, how can and should their views and interests be taken into account?

Feminist literature on citizenship suggests that women have been silenced, marginalised, excluded and thereby denied citizenship by men as the dominant social group. Defining children in terms of prohibition similarly excludes and denies them citizenship. In this view, citizenship requires that the excluded have a voice and the chance to participate in the society. This means more than participation in projects and programmes; it concerns political participation. Children should be seen as political and social actors who need the space and the opportunity to influence the societies in which they live (See Section 1.1, Box: "A Definition of Child's Citizenship and Governance").

Citizenship means that children participate as stakeholders, exercising their rights in their own best interest and that of their peers. Such a notion is integral to Child Rights Programming. Children have the right to actively assert their rights before duty bearers with responsibilities to fulfil. The concept of citizenship in programming also requires focusing on the most excluded. The CRC is as a tool to understand and challenge discrimination within the established system, as well as to promote girls' and boys' participation in our work and in the communities where we work, with a focus on valuing inclusion.

"To overcome discrimination we should develop programmes for adults and children to change attitudes and to enable children to realise themselves. We should also explore the role of the State."

(Girls and Boys from varied backgrounds, Kyrgyzstan)

Across South and Central Asia children and young people are organising themselves to make governments, institutions, and the community take notice of their views in powerful ways. The CRC is being used as a tool for children to raise issues concerning them, to challenge injustice and change attitudes towards children in families, schools, communities, local government, the judiciary, and at the national level - in legislation, policy and budgeting. At all these levels the right of children to express their views and to participate is fundamental and underlines their role as young citizens.

"We can place our demands in front of adults when we are united and explain why our issues are important."

(Girl, member of a child club, India)

"Our policy makers are investing a lot of money, but very little is in the children's sector. We need to advocate for higher investment in the children's sector."

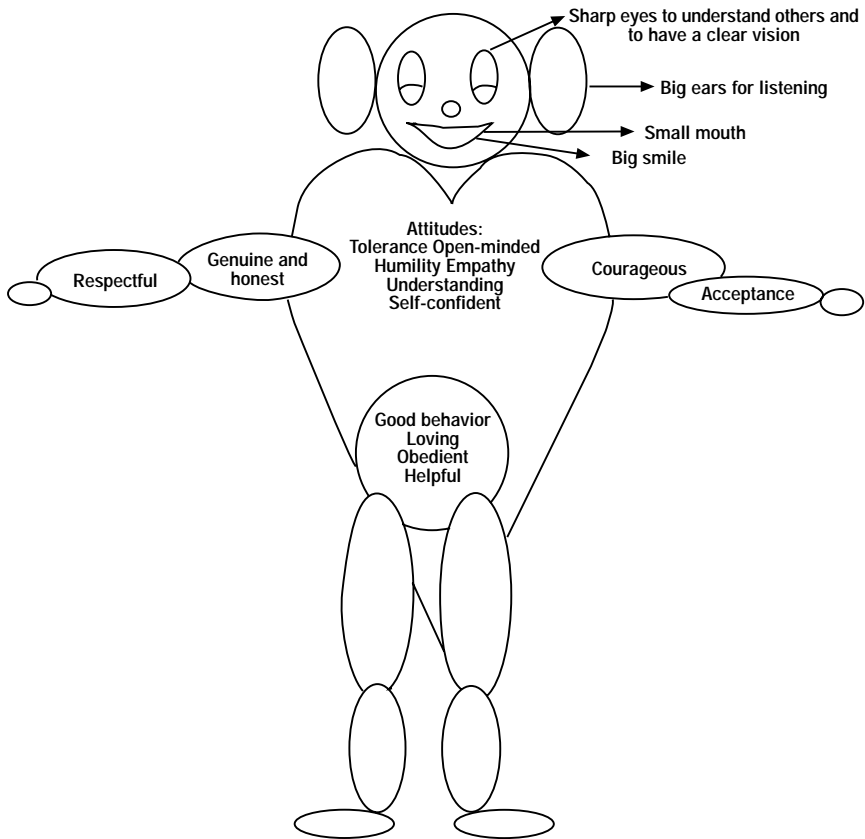
(Boys and Girls, members of a children's organisation, Bangladesh)

"Now adults know they should listen, since we are organised. We have organised rallies and taken up issues with government officials. Unity is our strength. When alone, no one listens. But when in a group they do."

(Girls and boys of a union, India)

'Building a Good Citizen'

by children and adults in Sri Lanka



A Summary of Arguments For and Against Children's Citizenship Rights²³ :

Arguments For Children's Citizenship Rights:

1. Developing social skills leads to better performance of responsibilities.

Children are full citizens from birth, but they take on the responsibilities of citizenship gradually. To make sound decisions at 18 years old, a child should earlier perform the duties of citizenship according to his/her 'evolving capacity'. Parents, adults and teachers should provide guidance and direction to help children and young people take on their full responsibilities.

2. Participation facilitates the flow of child perspectives into social decision-making.

In many developing countries children are close to 50% of the total population. Their views, aspirations and interests, however, are under-represented when decisions are made. Therefore children must be recognised as a social category and taken seriously in decision-making. Participation also enables children to carry out their full responsibilities as citizens.

3. The 'right to participation' should be realised.

Participation is a fundamental citizenship right, closely linked to democracy. It relates to power. Through participation the powerless begin taking charge of their own lives and solving their problems. Children need more opportunities to participate actively in their society. By interacting with each other children learn to understand different viewpoints and to respect the perspectives of others. This helps them develop tolerance and skills for negotiation.

Arguments Against Children's Citizenship Rights:

1. Children lack the competence for rational thought and informed decision-making.

The answer is that children are no more irrational than adults. Competence is also relative, depending on knowledge and skills developed through life experience and maturity. Participatory initiatives allow children of different ages to demonstrate in many ways a greater competence than adults credit them with. Moreover, children and adults both learn from making mistakes.

2. Children are not self sufficient, they always depend on adults.

As an argument made to deny children full membership in society, this is neither honest nor reliable. Throughout South and Central Asia many children contribute significantly to their families' livelihood. They also care for family members and households. While children and adults are inter-dependent, children can address their dependence by asserting their citizenship rights.

3. Extension of citizenship rights to children would give them unnecessary responsibilities and more work, and may expose them to risks of abuse and exploitation.

This is an adult perception. Children participating in a regional study believed that citizenship responsibilities helped them address their issues, present their views and contribute to the development of their own society.

²³ Adapted from De Mel, G. (2000) Children and Citizenship: Regional Study in South Asia. Save the Children UK, Office of South and Central Asia Region.



Children's Participation in Governance

Although discussion of the terms 'governance' and 'good governance' is increasing in the development arena, talk about children and good governance, and children's participation in governance remains uncommon. This results from the notion that governance involves politics, which children should be kept away from. However, recognition is growing that most action concerning child rights and their violation is actually political in nature. Poverty and access to quality education, issues that affect children in the region, are political issues that involve power relations and the distribution of resources. Since children and young people have a right to participate in decision-making that affects them, they must have a voice in the political arena for their rights to be realised.

Bad governance is considered a root cause of poverty, discrimination and exploitation. Major donors and international financial institutions thus more and more often condition aid and loans on reforms to ensure 'good governance'. Adopting rights-based approaches to programming that emphasise accountability, participation and the fulfilment of human rights also strengthens processes, systems and institutions of good governance.



²⁴ From Glenfrey De Mel (2000) Children and Citizenship report.

A Definition of Governance and Good Governance

The concept of 'governance' is as old as human civilization. 'Governance' simply means the process of decision-making and implementation or failure to implement those decisions. Governance concerns how public institutions conduct public affairs, manage public resources and guarantee the realisation of human rights. Key attributes of good governance are that institutions and processes should build on the rule of law, be accountable, open, effective and responsive and give space for equal and meaningful participation.

Governance involves structures and systems. It is concerned with power and resources and opportunities to 'be in charge' of matters that affect one. Regarding children, governance has several contexts: family governance, school governance, local governance, national governance and international governance.

An analysis of governance focuses on formal and informal actors, as well as formal and informal structures and processes established to arrive at and implement decisions. The specific actors involved in governance vary according to the context. For example, actors involved in school governance in a rural setting could be teachers, the head teacher, school administrators, parents, pupils, local and national government officials, and other community members. In urban contexts the situation is often more complex, invariably involving more actors. Moreover, in addressing some issues affecting marginalised groups like street children, influential actors may also include adults from the underworld (e.g. mafia groups or gangs) with whom it may be difficult or unwise to engage.

"We are afraid of the mustangs (gangsters). They may beat us. It is possible for the mustang to be involved in the development process, but if they realise some activities are against them they can react negatively."

(Boys, members of Child Brigade, Bangladesh)

Different parts of South and Central Asia present concrete examples of children and young people transforming power relations and gaining space in local governance structures to raise issues affecting them, to influence and monitor resource allocation, and to act on issues relating to the fulfilment of their rights. In some countries in the region the move towards decentralisation is increasing opportunities for local authorities to actually affect children's lives and to create space for children's participation in local governance.

Children and young people's participation in governance necessitates:

- the creation of structural space for children and young people's participation and representation,
- enabling adults to share power and to listen to girls and boys in genuine and flexible ways,
- empowering children and young people (with knowledge, values and skills) to effectively engage with adults to raise their voices to influence decisions, and
- enabling adults to build meaningful partnerships with children and young people which further implementation and monitoring of their rights.

Initiatives such as the creation of child-friendly cities or communities enable creative and cross-sectoral strategies to build partnerships between civil society, the private sector, and local authorities towards the integration of child-focused programmes and policies in local governance structures. In many countries local governments carry responsibilities in a range of key areas affecting the lives of children. These include: education, health, housing, transport, sports and recreation, and environmental protection. Thus, advocacy and working partnerships with local authorities seek to ensure that policies, resource allocations and actions are made in the best interests of children. Such initiatives build upon the development of sustainable solutions by local people (women, men, youth, girls and boys) to local problems.

At national levels advocacy on government budgets, as well as advocacy for the development and proper implementation of child-friendly laws, also plays a key role in issues relating to governance and the effective delivery of children's services. South Asian budgets have always allocated a major share of their budget to defence and have neglected the social sector. Increased resource allocation to the social sector is therefore required. Moreover, research and monitoring of the nature and pattern of budgeting and spending at micro (e.g. community, district) and macro- levels also provides valuable insights into the situation of children and helps various agencies to plan their interventions accordingly.

In terms of laws and policies children, young people and child rights activists are becoming involved in processes to influence the development, implementation and monitoring of the following: National Plans of Action (NPA) processes; Poverty Reduction Strategy Programmes (PRSPs); specific laws on issues affecting them (e.g. Child Labour, Juvenile Justice); and state and district level planning processes.

Strategies (mostly in working with adults) towards increasing the participatory role of citizens in governance have included:²⁵

- advocacy for new laws for democratic decentralisation
- use of popular education and communication methodologies to strengthen local citizens' awareness of their rights and responsibilities
- capacity building and awareness among elected officials and government staff
- enabling existing government officials to engage with citizens in a more participatory manner
- capacity building in advocacy skills and developing effective alliances and collaborative partnerships
- enabling citizens' participation in local-level decision-making over resource allocation
- promoting accountability of elected officials to citizens (e.g. through 'community based monitoring committees')

All these strategies could be equally effective in increasing children and young people's exemplary role as citizens in governance.

Linking Child Rights Programming, Children's Participation and Children's Citizenship and Governance

Children's organisations, NGO partners and Save the Children members in countries across the region have rich and diverse experiences in promoting children's active participation. They share a clear vision that work to promote children's participation and citizenship enhances efforts to develop democratic, inclusive, non-violent societies where good governance assures that the rights of all citizens are respected. There are clear linkages between programmes that promote Children's Citizenship and Governance (CCG) and Child Rights Programming (CRP).



²⁵ See IDS web-site

"**Child Rights Programming** means using the principles of child rights to plan, manage, implement and monitor programmes with the overall goal of strengthening the rights of the child as defined in international law."²⁶

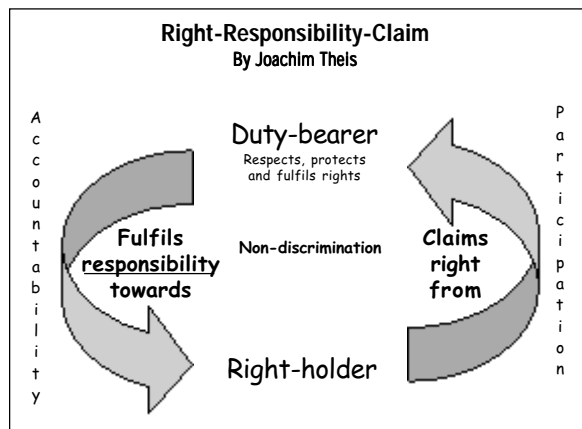
CRP Principles:

The following principles underpin all work on CRP:

- The principle of indivisibility of rights
- The principle of universality of rights
- The four general principles of the Convention of the Rights of the Child:
 - ▶ The right not to be discriminated against
 - ▶ The best interests of the child
 - ▶ The right to survival and development
 - ▶ The right to be heard
- The principle of children as holders of rights
- The principle of duty bearers

CCG is an extremely important focus of CRP, focusing on empowering children as right holders to participate in decisions affecting them. It strengthens partnerships between duty bearers and right holders to further accountability and fulfilment of children's rights. Both CCG and CRP seek to empower children and to make adults and adults' structures become more responsive so they listen to children and take concrete efforts to fulfil their rights. Children's participation in different levels of governance guarantees space for children and young people in decision-making structures. It creates more sustainable opportunities for them to raise their concerns, monitor progress and hold duty bearers accountable.

Both CCG and CRP highlight the importance of early child development work. They recognise the importance of child rearing practices that build on communication between adults and children from the earliest age. Encouraging children to learn in active and creative ways is also significant in creating the foundations for children's participation.



²⁶ Child Rights Programming: How to Apply Rights-Based Approaches in Programming: A Handbook for International Save the Children Alliance Members. Save the Children.

Children's participation helps guide the interpretation of various CRC articles (e.g. best interests, non-discrimination) and is relevant for all aspects of implementation of the CRC. Participation enables children and young people to increase fulfilment of their rights to survival, protection and development. Their participation transforms the power relations with adults and ends their 'silent status', which has for so long led to the marginalisation, exploitation and abuse of girls and boys.

All CRP programming efforts seek to increase opportunities for informing and involving children and young people in all stages of the programme cycle. They also promote realisation of children's participation rights in different settings: family, school, local community, local governance, etc. Furthermore, reflection on CRP principles helps ensure meaningful participation.

Children's Participation Leads to Fulfilment of Other Rights: Some Examples

- Child Club members' initiatives to promote increased birth registration led to increased school enrolment and a reduction in child marriage.
- Children's collective efforts to reduce school-drop out rates and to enrol working children in school have increased school attendance for both girls and boys.
- Children have been able to speak up about and protect themselves from abuse and exploitation. They have prevented early child marriage through negotiations with parents, and they have brought police and legal action against child abusers and child traffickers.
- Girls and boys of different ages and abilities from different religions, castes and ethnic groups have organised to challenge various forms of discrimination.
- Children have undertaken collective efforts in their localities to improve sanitation and health practices and protection of the environment.
- Children's advocacy and participation initiatives have brought about social changes in adults' attitudes and mindsets so they better fulfil their obligations toward children and young people.

Reflection on CRP principles helps ensure a quality focus on meaningful children's participation. For example:

- *Children as right holders (and the right to be heard)*: Are we working with children and young people in ways that respect them as right holders and social actors? Are we providing meaningful opportunities for girls and boys to express their views and for their views to be heard in decision-making processes which affect them?
- *Duty Bearers and Accountability*: Are we preparing adult duty bearers (parents, teachers, local and national government officials) to listen to children and young people and be held accountable to them? Are we supporting duty bearers, enhancing their capacity and strengthening their structures and systems so they can effectively respond to children in fulfilling their rights?

- *Non-discrimination and Universality*: Are both girls and boys, children with disabilities, children from different religions, castes, tribal groups, street children and so on given equal opportunity to participate? Are we reaching the most marginalised? Are children encouraged to reflect on values of inclusion in their own participation initiatives?
- *Best interests of the child*: Are we taking children's evolving capacities into consideration, enabling younger children and children with different kinds of abilities to participate to the best of their ability? Are children given enough information to make informed choices about when and to what extent they want to participate? Are parents (and other relevant adults) involved so that they do not feel threatened by children's participation but rather support children's views and actions?
- *Survival and development*: Are children given clear information so they will not take risks? Do adults create a supportive environment so their participation is conducive to their development? Are we building upon early child development initiatives?
- *Indivisibility*: Are we working with children and young people in a holistic, cross-sectoral way that enables us to be responsive to whichever right violations they raise?

1.3 Conclusion

An ingrained social bias against children's inclusion has traditionally worked against young people's participation throughout South and Central Asia. Gradually we are seeing indications that this situation is beginning to change through initiatives that have been taken at the community level on child focused programmes and policies, as well as at the national level, where advocacy has been utilized to ensure the implementation of child-friendly laws. True citizenship requires children's active and pro-active participation - political participation is the chief element of inclusion and the key to allowing young people to influence the communities around them and to become real stakeholders. This kind of participation gives children access to the issues that concern them most, that is, child rights issues. Children Citizenship and Governance (CCG) needs to be the focus of child rights programming in order to empower children, increase their participation to end marginalisation and to transform power relations with adults.



Other Useful Materials

- Practical Resources for Children's Participation and Citizenship, including videos and CDs
- Bibliography (Useful Reading Materials)
- Links to Relevant Web-Sites
- Links to e-mail discussion/ learning groups

Practical Resources for Children's Participation and Citizenship

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Links to Relevant Web-Sites

Child Rights Information Network (CRIN) www.crin.org

ELDIS development guide and participation sources www.ids.ac.uk/eldis.html

Institute of Development Studies (IDS) Participation group www.ids.ac.uk/ids/participation

National Children's Bureau www.ncb.org.uk/projects/projpart.htm

Resource Centres for Participatory Learning and Action Network (RCPLA) www.nur.edu/rcpla/

Save the Children UK Development Website www.savethechildren.org.uk

Save the Children Alliance website: www.savechildrenalliance.org

Links to e-mail discussion/ learning groups

There are yahoo discussion groups on children's participation in South Asia and South East Asia. To be part of these groups send an email to: ChildParticipationInSouthAsia@yahoogroups.com

Appendix 1

Summary Overview of Save the Children's Regional Project on Children's Citizenship and Governance (CCG), 1999 - 2002

Introduction:

The Children's Citizenship and Governance (CCG) regional initiative of Save the Children was initiated by Save the Children UK OSCAR in 1999. However, in 2000 the CCG initiative was adopted more as a regional Save the Children regional project, as 'Children's Citizenship and Governance' was seen as central to Save the Children's 'niche' in South and Central Asia. The second phase of the CCG regional project from 2001-2002 which was managed by Save the Children Sweden on behalf of Save the Children Alliance involved an exploratory consultation process with Save the Children members, NGO partners and children and young people's groups and organizations.

Phase I (1998-2000): SCUK OSCAR led CCG Initiative - Key Processes and Outcomes

In taking forward its strategic objective, a regional research in 1998/9 on Children and Citizenship was undertaken to understand and define what we mean by 'children and citizenship' and finding out about Children's Organisations and their activities and achievements in South Asia. Subsequently, a report entitled 'Children & Citizenship - a regional study in South Asia' was published.

In the Central Asia region, SCF together with a local NGO organised a Children, Citizenship and Environment Conference involving over 70 children and young people from six Central Asian Countries. The conference was focused around the environmental disaster around the Aral Sea. The conference was preceded by a year of work with children's organisation in the six countries.

Based on the regional research on children's organisation in South Asia and the experience from the Children Citizenship and the environment conference, SC UK/OSCAR launched the Children Citizenship and Governance Project (CC&G Project) with the aim: 'that children, through organising themselves and engaging with adult decision-makers, secure the rights of children, with a particular focus on the most marginalised'.

As part of the CCG Project, a second secondment to OSCAR, enabled a focus on facilitation skills for children's organizations and the organization of a capacity building initiative for adult and child facilitators in CCG. Save the Children OSCAR organised a meeting of resource persons from the South Asia region in July 2000 who had been involved in creative ways of promoting children's citizenship and governance in South Asia. The meeting aimed at engaging with resource persons from the region that have had significant experience in promoting and working with Children's Organisations in order to consolidate guiding principles and best practice in working with Children's organizations.

Subsequently in December 2000, a ten-day Regional Alliance Training of Facilitators (TOF) on Children, Citizenship and Governance Workshop was held in New Delhi with child and adult participants from

across the South and Central Asia Region. Children from children's organisations²⁸ in Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Krygyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan took part in the workshop.

An animated film on children's participation and citizenship, a resource book on facilitating Children, Citizenship and Governance, a profile of children's organisations participating in the TOF from South and Central Asia and a film documenting the workshop are some of the outputs from the TOF. Furthermore, at that time a network of Alliance focal persons on CCG in the region was also established.

Phase II (2000-2002): Save the Children Alliance CCG Initiative managed by Save the Children Sweden - Key Processes and Outcomes

The annual regional Save the Children Alliance meeting of November 2000 articulated the need for Save the Children to identify a niche, to identify areas and issues of engagement that would lead to a unique identity as an institution, in South and Central Asia in 10 years' time. Efforts were made to clarify thinking about what "Save the Children" stands for "institutionally" in relation to a range of core areas of programming around children, children's rights and development. Working together on Children's Citizenship and Governance was identified as a 'niche area' for Save the Children in the region, where-by Save the Children would become a dynamic, proactive, leading entity in taking forward thinking on a "children's/child rights agenda" in South and Central Asia with children as key partners in the development process.

In the South and Central Asia region Save the Children Alliance members have done a great deal of work enabling the active participation of children in their communities and nations, particularly over the last few years. Children's participation is a principle or theme within each Save the Children member (and as an Alliance) - in their country, regional and global strategies. The concept of CCG was seen as challenging and interesting, with a lot of potential to contributing to Save the Children members efforts to establish the rights of children to participate on the issues that affect their lives. Furthermore, many of the activities of different Alliance members were seen to fall under the broad category of CCG.

The CCG regional initiative provided an opportunity for all the Alliance members to share information and experiences regarding examples of children's active participation in decision-making processes at family, school, community and government levels. The rich experience of each Save the Children office could then be tapped and built up, and the network amongst existing and developing children's organisations and child participation facilitators expanded.

Thus, whilst building upon the existing CCG initiative the next crucial step identified by the Save the Children Regional Steering Committee was to navigate the best way/s forward by engaging with more Save the Children members, project partners and children and young people groups/ organizations across the region who have experience of promoting children's participation rights.

²⁸ A 'children's organisation' refers to a club, forum or organisation which is child-led, run by for children with children playing an active role in decision-making processes of the organisation.

Save the Children Sweden took the lead for the Alliance by funding and managing a project co-ordinator from August 2001, initially for a one year period²⁹ to undertake a consultative process in each country with Save the Children members, key partners and children's organizations/ groups of children and young people (and other relevant stakeholders) to collaboratively develop a vision of CCG and a project proposal for a Children Citizenship & Governance project for a 3-5 year period.

During a 15-month period the CCG co-ordinator arranged country level workshops and/or visits to Save the Children members, children's groups and key NGO partners in most countries of the region (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Kyrgyzstan, Sri Lanka Tajikistan, Pakistan³⁰). Considering the nature of the participatory process which sought to be complementary to in-country processes (strengthening existing work at national and local levels which further children's participation and citizenship rights, whilst also enhancing regional exchange) the nature of the consultations and country level visits were of a slightly different nature in each country in the region according to the interests of local colleagues.

Key learnings from the CCG visits and consultation have been incorporated into the text of the main document 'Children and Young People as Citizens for Social Change'. Furthermore, key reports relating to CCG from country visits and regional reports are included on the RAID Save the Children web-site. Furthermore, strategically programme work on Children's Citizenship and Governance has continued to be prioritized by Save the Children members at regional, national and local levels, particularly through strong interlinkages with the overall framework of Child Rights Programming.

²⁹ By Save the Children Sweden to work for Save the Children Alliance in the region for one year, with contract then extended for an additional 5 months.

³⁰ Colleagues from Uzbekistan were consulted in Tajikistan; unfortunately visits to Bhutan have not taken place, or visits to SC Canada's programme in India.)

Appendix 2

The Convention on the Rights of the Child

Adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 20 November 1989
Unofficial summary of main provisions

Preamble

The Preamble recalls the basic principles of the United Nations and specific provisions of certain relevant human rights treaties and proclamations. It reaffirms the fact that children, because of their vulnerability, need special care and protection, and it places special emphasis on the primary caring and protective responsibility of the family. It also reaffirms the need for legal and other protection of the child before and after birth, the importance of respect for cultural values of the child's community, and the vital role of international co-operation in securing children's rights.

Article 1

Definition of a child

A child is recognized as a person under 18, unless national laws recognize the age of majority earlier.

Article 2

Non-discrimination

All rights apply to all children without exception. It is the State's obligation to protect children from any form of discrimination and to take positive action to promote their rights.

Article 3

Best interests of the child

All actions concerning the child shall take full account of his or her best interests. The State shall provide the child with adequate care when parents, or others charged with that responsibility, fail to do so.

Article 4

Implementation of rights

The State must do all it can to implement the rights contained in the Convention. Unofficial summary of main provisions

Article 5

Parental guidance and the child's evolving capacities

The State must respect the rights and responsibilities of parents and the extended family to provide guidance for the child which is appropriate to her or his evolving capacities.

Article 6

Survival and development

Every child has the inherent right to life, and the State has an obligation to ensure the child's survival and development.

Article 7

Name and nationality

The child has the right to a name at birth. The child also has the right to acquire a nationality and, as far as possible, to know his or her parents and be cared for by them.

Article 8

Preservation of identity

The State has an obligation to protect, and if necessary, reestablish basic aspects of the child's identity. This includes name, nationality and family ties.

Article 9

Separation from parents

The child has a right to live with his or her parents unless this is deemed to be incompatible with the child's interests. The child has also the right to maintain contact with both parents if separated from one or both.

Article 10

Family reunification

Children and their parents have the right to leave any country and to enter their own for purposes of reunion or the maintenance of the childparent relationship.

Article 11

Illicit transfer and non-return

The State has an obligation to prevent and remedy the kidnapping or retention of children abroad by a parent or third party.

Article 12

The child's opinion

The child has the right to express his or her opinion freely and to have that opinion taken into account in any manner or procedure affecting the child.

Article 13

Freedom of expression

The child has the right to express his or her views, obtain information, make ideas or information known, regardless of frontiers.

Article 14

Freedom of thought, conscience and religion

The State shall respect the child's right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, subject to appropriate parental guidance.

Article 15

Freedom of association

Children have a right to meet others, and to join or form associations.

Article 16**Protection of privacy**

Children have the right to protection from interference with privacy, family, home and correspondence, and from libel or slander.

Article 17**Access to appropriate information**

The State shall ensure the accessibility to children of information and material from a diversity of sources, and it shall encourage the mass media to disseminate information which is of social and cultural benefit to the child, and to take steps to protect him or her from harmful materials.

Article 18**Parental responsibilities**

Parents have joint primary responsibility for raising the child, and the State shall support them in this. The State shall provide appropriate assistance to parents in childraising.

Article 19**Protect from abuse and neglect**

The State shall protect the child from all forms of maltreatment by parents or others responsible for the care of the child and establish appropriate social programmes for the prevention of abuse and the treatment of victims.

Article 20**Protection of a child without family**

The State is obliged to provide special protection for a child deprived of the family environment and to ensure that appropriate alternative family care or institutional placement is available in such cases. Efforts to meet this obligation shall pay due regard to the child's cultural background.

Article 21**Adoption**

In countries where adoption is recognized and/or allowed, it shall only be carried out in the best interests of the child, and then only with the authorization of competent authorities, and safeguards for the child.

Article 22**Refugee children**

Special protection shall be granted to a refugee child or to a child seeking refugee status. It is the State's obligation to co-operate with competent organizations which provide such protection and assistance.

Article 23**Disabled children**

A disabled child has the right to special care, education and training to help him or her enjoy a full and decent life in dignity and achieve the greatest degree of self-reliance and social integration possible.

Article 24

Health and health services

The child has a right to the highest standard of health and medical care attainable. States shall place special emphasis on the provision of primary and preventative health care, public health education and the reduction of infant mortality. They shall encourage international co-operation in this regard and strive to see that no child is deprived of access to effective health services.

Article 25

Periodic review of placement

A child who is placed by the State for reasons of care, protection or treatment is entitled to have that placement evaluated regularly.

Article 26

Social security

The child has a right to benefit from social security including social insurance.

Article 27

Standard of living

Every child has the right to a standard of living adequate for his or her physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development. Parents have the primary responsibility to ensure that the child has an adequate standard of living. The State's duty is to ensure that this responsibility can be fulfilled, and is. State responsibility can include material assistance to parents and their children.

Article 28

Education

The child has a right to education, and the State's duty is to ensure that primary education is free and compulsory, to encourage different forms of secondary education accessible to every child and to make higher education available to all on the basis of capacity. School discipline shall be consistent with the child's rights and dignity. The State shall engage in international co-operation to implement this right.

Article 29

Aims of education

Education shall aim at developing the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to the fullest extent. Education shall prepare the child for an active adult life in a free society and foster respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values, and for the cultural background and values of others.

Article 30

Children of minorities or indigenous populations

Children of minority communities and indigenous populations have the right to enjoy their own culture and to practise their own religion and language.

Article 31**Leisure, recreation and cultural activities**

The child has the right to leisure, play and participation in cultural and artistic activities.

Article 32**Child labour**

The child has the right to be protected from work that threatens his or her health, education or development. The State shall set minimum ages of employment and regulate working conditions.

Article 33**Drug abuse**

Children have the right to protection from the use of narcotic and psychotropic drugs, and from being involved in their production or distribution.

Article 34**Sexual exploitation**

The State shall protect children from sexual exploitation and abuse, including prostitution and involvement in pornography.

Article 35**Sale, trafficking and abduction**

It is the State's obligation to make every effort to prevent the sale, trafficking and abduction of children.

Article 36**Other forms of exploitation**

The child has a right to protection from all forms of exploitation prejudicial to any aspects of the child's welfare not covered in articles 32, 33, 34 and 35.

Article 37**Torture and deprivation of liberty**

No child shall be subjected to torture, cruel treatment or punishment, unlawful arrest or deprivation of liberty. Both capital punishment and life imprisonment without the possibility of release are prohibited for offences committed by persons below 18 years. Any child deprived of liberty shall be separated from adults unless it is considered in the child's best interest not to do so. A child who is detained shall have legal and other assistance as well as contact with the family.

Article 38**Armed conflicts**

States Parties shall take all feasible measures to ensure that children under 15 years of age have no direct part in hostilities. No child below 15 shall be recruited into the armed forces. States shall also ensure the protection and care of children who are affected by armed conflict as described in relevant international law.

Article 39

Rehabilitative care

The State has an obligation to ensure that child victims of armed conflicts, torture, neglect, maltreatment or exploitation receive appropriate treatment for their recovery and social reintegration.

Article 40

Administration of juvenile justice

A child in conflict with the law has the right to treatment which promotes the child's sense of dignity and who, takes the child's age into account and aims at his or her reintegration into society. The child is entitled to basic guarantees as well as legal or other assistance for his or her defence. Judicial proceedings and institutional placements shall be avoided wherever possible.

Article 41

Respect for higher standards

Wherever standards set in applicable national and international law relevant to the rights of the child are higher than those in this Convention, the higher standard shall always apply.

Article 42/43

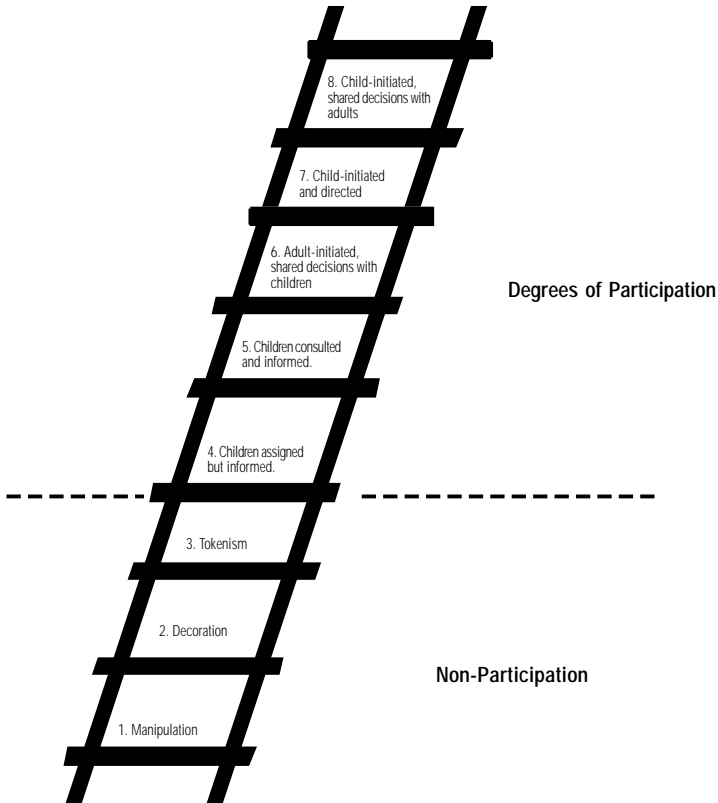
Implementation and entry into force

The provisions of articles 42-54 notably foresee:

- i) *The State's obligation to make the rights* contained in this Convention widely known to both adults and children.
- ii) *The setting up of a Committee on the Rights* of the child composed of 10 experts, which will consider reports that States Parties to the Convention are to submit 2 years after ratification and every 5 years thereafter. The Convention enters into force - and the Committee thereafter should be set up - once 20 countries have ratified it.
- iii) *States Parties are to make their reports* widely available to the general public. iv) *The Committee may propose that special studies* be undertaken on specific issues relating to the rights of the child, and may make its evaluations known to each State Party concerned as well as to the UN General Assembly.
- v) *In order to "foster the effective implementa-tion* of the Convention and to encourage international co-operation", the specialized agencies of the UN - such as the International Labour Organization (ILO), World Health Organization (WHO) and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) - and UNICEF would be able to attend the meet-ings of the Committee. Together with any other body recognized as "competent", including non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in consultative status with the UN and UN organs such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), they can submit pertinent information to the Committee and be asked to advise on the optimal implementation of the Convention.

Appendix 3

The Ladder of Children's Participation



From: 'Children's Participation: from tokenism to citizenship' by Roger A. Hart, Innocenti Essays No 4, UNICEF, 1992.

1. **Manipulation** is the lowest rung on the ladder. Here the adults have complete and unchallenged authority and abuse their authority by failing to use it in the best interests of the children.
2. **Decoration** is the second rung of the ladder. An example might be when a group of children are asked to sing a song about rights for an audience of adults attending an international conference on children's rights.
3. **Tokenism** is used to describe when children are apparently given a voice, but in fact have little or no choice about the subject or the style of communicating it, and little or no opportunity to formulate their own opinions. A child's attendance as a speaker at a predominantly adult

event might be an example unless the following requirements are met.

For participation to be genuine there are a number of important requirements which must be met:

- The children must understand the purpose of the activity.
 - They must know who made the decisions concerning their involvement and why.
 - They should have a meaningful role.
 - They should volunteer for the activity after the activity was made clear to them.
4. **Assigned but informed** means that the children are asked to volunteer for an activity when the above conditions are met. It is the first rung on the ladder of genuine participation.
 5. **Consulted and informed** describes the situation where children's opinions are given genuine weight when they are consulted by adults. It is increasingly built in to child care legislation though it rarely leads to young people having significant influence over the use of resources. This degree of participation is often found in the private sector where children's views may be sought in 'product testing' of consumer goods and services which are targeted specifically at them.
 6. **Adult-initiated, shared decisions with children** is the first 'rung' of effective participation. Although the services, projects or activities are still initiated by adults, children are genuinely involved in the decision-making which shapes the way these are planned, carried out and evaluated.
 7. **Child initiated and directed** activities are those where children establish their own priorities independently of adults. This happens most often in play but the approach can be used in the design and management of services. Genuine direction by children requires control over the allocation and use of resources.
 8. **Child-initiated, shared decisions with adults** means that the initiative comes from the children, and adults may be required to mobilise resources or act as a facilitator but not to 'lead'. The outcome of the children's activity may well be communicated to adults who may be asked to act on their decisions to bring about some change desired by the children (for example, by altering agency policies or priorities or by providing new types of services requested by the children). This is an example of a partnership which could be applied even to the provision of statutory services where the adults are the agents of State service provision for children but may have some control over the nature of these services.

Appendix 4

'GUIDING PRINCIPLES' FOR FACILITATING CHILDREN'S ORGANISATIONS

The following are a set of 'Guiding Principles' for facilitating Children's Organisations (COs). They were developed by the resource³¹ and country focal persons attending the Regional Alliance Workshops on Children, Citizenship & Governance (CC&G) held in Kathmandu in July, 2000. They were further reviewed and revised by OSCAR in November, 2000, prior to the Training of Child & Adult Facilitators workshop in Delhi, in December.

Foundation for Sustainability

The important building blocks in a CO's early development that should enable it to grow and be productive for a long time.

- The need for forming a CO should come primarily from the wish of the children concerned, but will often be catalysed from an interaction between children and adults.
- Encourage children to form their own structures and strategies and to develop their own procedures, tools and support systems.
- Organisations and staff who are working with COs must internalise the fundamental human values of dignity, respect, non-discrimination and participation to enable COs to function fairly and effectively.
- Build sensitivity on all kinds of concerns like gender, casteism, sex education, disability, reproductive health and power structures.
- Principle of 'equity' has to be internalised and practiced.
- Building up the 'resilience' of COs and strengthening them is important.
- Provide information or enable children to access information so that they can make their own informed decisions (e.g. information on formal systems - legal, administrative, policies, procedures and schemes).
- Provide COs with management skills like crisis and conflict management, strategic planning, organisation analysis, financial resources management, personal/group dynamics management, sustainability planning, monitoring & evaluation, information management and documentation, in certain situations adults can play the role of catalysts.
- Provide an enabling and open environment both internal and external. An environment for building up the credibility and recognition of the CO.
- Enable children's organisations to assess risk and develop strategies to avoid and reduce risk.
- Enable COs to be pressure groups on governing structures to bring in changes.
- COs to build up linkages with other organisations and other movements for their sustainability- especially non-controlling local adult resource people.
- COs to be enabled to identify their achievements - both visible and less visible.
- The process of scaling up the "quality" of COs itself leads to the sustainability of the organisation.

³¹ Resource people from Butterflies, CWC, Tilonia (India), TRDP (Pakistan) and colleagues from Save the Children (Nepal, Bangladesh, S.C.Asia region).

- A CO needs to establish a clear ‘identity’.
- A built-in understanding that children will leave the CO at 18. Before they leave, it is essential that these older children build up the capacity of younger members.
- Enable children to enumerate the resources they already have or have easy access to in their communities like community contributions in cash and mobilise local resources (government, business, organisations.)
- Keep financial support to the minimum. Initially not at all and as they progress consider a one time grant but avoid recurring grants.
- Discourage dependency of any kind (financial, employment.)
- Children will need assistance to access resources in kind (free travel, food, accommodation) and money.

Children’s Own Agenda

What children prioritise for action or advocacy.

- The need and decision to work on an agenda should come from children and not from adults.
- COs should be encouraged to prioritise their agenda according to their needs and context.
- COs should be enabled to arrive at an agenda that gives due weightage to the interest of “ALL” its members.
- Enable children to exercise their right to information on various issues and concerns in order to make informed choices.
- COs to sensitise adults about their agenda. Adults should only be involved in this process at the children’s request.
- Need to share their agenda publicly with both adults and children (newsletter, wall-paper, radio, video exchanges, TV, internet.)

Representation

What children need to know to ensure representation is democratic and representative. Also how representation is done fairly and effectively.

- Children should be enabled to form organisations based on the values and the principles of democratic partnership. They should try to avoid reflecting any existing discriminatory socio-political hierarchy in their community.
- Build sensitivity amongst CO members on issues of disability, gender, caste, religion, region, ethnicity, etc.
- Encourage collective decision-making in COs especially for selection of group members.
- Make provision to include all minority groups in the CO committee.
- Explore the wishes of and possibilities for COs to be represented in all relevant decision-making bodies at all levels including adult organisations.
- Inclusion of children in committees should be as equal and active partners not as token representatives.
- For more effective advocacy by a CO it may well be easier if children come from a common background of violation, e.g. exploited working children, however, a heterogeneous background may lead to greater tolerance, understanding of diversity and activism for equality.

- Inviting organisations need to provide COs with enough information to make the appropriate selection of a representative to attend such events.

Peer Facilitation

How children help each other in participation.

- Children need to acquire the necessary attitudes, knowledge and skills so that they can empower other children as well as adults.
- It requires an enabling environment- child facilitators can promote this, e.g. through Child-to-Child.
- Children have a more acute sense of justice than adults do.
- Children should be given the necessary tools to come to their own decisions. These need to take into account the views of minority groups.
- Bottom-up methods and strategies work better for children.
- Children are those best able to comment on the power structures they experience.
- Children are often more aware and more open about the issues and problems that adults and children are facing in their community than adults.
- Children tend not to be cynical.
- Child facilitators are able to train other children as well as adults.

Blocks and Barriers

Blocks and barriers to facilitating a CO.

- Adults taking the initiative on their own and imposing them on the children.
- If participation is taken as a separate project and not as a process.
- Lack of internalisation by adult and child facilitators/NGOs of what children's participation is about.
- COs dependency on adult organisations.
- The over-riding of the minority by the majority vote can be a crude instrument for decision-making and produce dis-empowerment.
- Less marginalized children preventing more marginalized children from joining COs or holding power within the CO.
- Children's lack of knowledge of their rights.
- Preference for working with those children who fit into adult planning needs most easily e.g. the brightest, the most proactive, the abled.
- Adults (as parents/guardians, NGO workers, facilitators etc.) not listening to children and undermining their capacity.
- Facilitators whose prime concern is supporting an NGO's programme of action.
- Establishing and supporting COs just to meet adults and NGOs own agenda.
- Adult and /or NGO support being withdrawn suddenly without giving the CO sufficient time to adjust.
- Not being responsive to context, as all contexts and situations are different.
- Not involving parents and community members, so CO is isolated.

- Parent’s protection and suspicion concerning their children, especially their daughters, attending a CO may be a barrier, which needs to be handled sensitively.
- Setting up of a nominal charge may keep out the poorest.
- Disenchantment, as proposals children make to adults may take a long time to achieve anything, e.g. justice legal reforms/revisions are likely to take years.
- Problems of mobility e.g. for girls, the disabled and sometimes for street and working children who have no permanent base/home.
- Lack of children’s representation in decision-making structures (Government, NGOs, INGO’s), in facilitating COs and in advocacy for Children’s Rights.
- Bringing children together, e.g. for training, at a place that is not real to their context.

Risks

Risks that may occur in facilitating COs.

- Rigidity on the part of adult facilitators or supporting NGOs, from insufficient reflection and open debate concerning the best solutions possible for children, this involves listening and taking notice of children’s views.
- Facilitators not knowing the real context so sustaining/reinforcing injustices within the community.
- Setting up false expectations for the CO.
- Facilitators may lack contextual experience.
- Problems for COs in areas of conflict as a result of speaking out.
- COs need to assess risks of what they are doing as some risks may destroy a CO. Each CO needs to develop strategies to avoid, cope or confront risk after making the best assessment it can.
- Children can become autocratic if the CO is structured wrongly.
- Once COs obtain legitimacy, political parties and others may try to use them for their own advantage.
- Agencies/bureaucrats/adults starting or making use of COs for their own ends.
- Children can be seen as soft and easy targets for manipulation. If they are empowered there are less chances of them being manipulated
- Some child participation is tokenistic and manipulative, which both harms the concept and brings down the credibility of others practising participation.
- Parents may see COs as a chance for their children to obtain a job later.
- If children are from a too varied background they may lack a common unifying concern, have very different aspirations and therefore have problems in agreeing direction.
- Making children (and their families) dependent and so sustainability is made difficult and it also makes it difficult for other COs.
- COs which run savings and credit schemes are likely to find themselves exposed to all the problems that the management of other people’s money can bring.
- Employing children as paid employees of the organisation, can create an ulterior motive for their work and activism. This does not mean that children should not be compensated if they lose wages by representing a CO or through their involvement externally as resource persons.

Cultural Factors

Cultural factors facilitators need to be aware of.

- Respect diversity, religion, cultural context when facilitating COs.
- Be aware and analyse the context of tradition and cultural values of the children and the community where they live.
- Culture / religion / tradition can be used to facilitate COs work. For example, sensitive issues can be discussed and managed by the use of cultural props like puppetry, songs, theatre and reference to religious texts.

Scaling-Up of a Children's Organisation

Scaling up externally means sharing with other children and adults why and how a children's organisation developed and positively influenced adults and children, so they can learn from that experience. Internally it means how a CO becomes more effective in influencing adult fora through establishing institutional links with them.

- Through replication and spread of well functioning children's organisations (scaling up/ spreading wider/ greater coverage) to other geographic areas, and also within other NGOs and civil society organisations.
- Another process of scaling-up is to 'convert' other people, especially adult fora, to your ideas through advocacy.
- Any scaling up has to be sensitive and adapt to the local context.
- Be open to other's ideas.

What Works Best

What do we need to be aware of in assisting COs.

- Organisational structures, systems, processes and norms need to be defined by children. Children can and will develop these if given the space, time, information and knowledge.
- Recognise that organisational culture will differ and that COs working in different areas and sectors will evolve differently.
- Need different strategies for different contexts (time and space), e.g. where COs are already functioning and where they are emerging, but the principles and fundamental non-negotiable values will not change.
- COs should not be seen in isolation, if men's and women's organisations are empowered, they could in their turn encourage the development of children's groups.

Age

- Children who reach 18 should be encouraged to form a youth group that supports a children's organisation.
- Different provision will often need to be made for different aged children.

Appendix 5

Child Protection Policy (Save the Children UK)

Child Protection Policy

Protecting children

Preventing abuse

Child abuse is a global phenomenon. It occurs in all countries and in all societies. It involves the physical, sexual, emotional abuse and neglect of children. It is nearly always preventable.

Save the Children Believes That

- Children have the right to a happy, healthy and secure childhood.
- The abuse of children is an abuse of their rights as set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- Child abuse is never acceptable.

This leaflet is intended primarily for Save the Children staff and volunteers, but may serve generally as an introduction to Save the Children's Child Protection Policy. It describes SC's commitment to prevent abuse and protect children with whom it comes into contact, as well as outlining the main elements of the policy. The aim is to help raise awareness of child abuse and of what is expected of staff and others within Save the Children.

The Problem of Abuse

SC works to secure the rights of children in over 70 countries around the world and so comes into contact with a large number of children in a range of different settings.

Sadly, a significant proportion of these children will have experienced abuse, or will be at risk of abuse in one form or another.

SC's child protection policy recognises this fact and aims to ensure that the problem of child abuse and how to prevent it is addressed in every aspect of its work with and for children.

Save the Children, Children's Rights and Child Abuse

Save the Children's vision is of a world where the lives of all children reflect the international standards set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. This includes the right to freedom from abuse and exploitation.

The child protection policy aims to translate this commitment to children's rights into a practical reality through our work with children.

Safeguarding Children

Through its emphasis on prevention, the policy aims to minimise the risks of children being abused.

Save the Children will also do all it can to ensure that children who are being abused, or who are at risk of abuse, are supported and given protection.

It is also possible that, on occasions, staff and others engaged by Save the Children or its partners to work with children, may pose a risk to children and abuse their position of trust.

The policy demands the highest standards of professional practice in work with children and describes the values and principles that must underpin our approach to children.

SCF's Policy Commitment

Save the Children 's child protection policy covers all contact with children across the world and ensures that staff volunteers, other representatives of Save the Children, and also our partners:

- are aware of the problem of child abuse
- safeguard children from abuse through good practice
- report all concerns about possible abuse
- respond appropriately when abuse is discovered or suspected

To this end, the policy document includes:

- A statement of Commitment to safeguard children from abuse and to ensure that action is taken to support and protect children wherever and whenever abuse is suspected
- A code of Conduct for all Save the Children staff and others in contact with children, describing expectations and standards in working with children
- Procedures for raising and reporting concerns - there is a mandatory requirement to raise any concerns within Save the Children

What are My Responsibilities Under The Policy?

All staff, volunteers and other representatives of Save the Children must be familiar with the policy and be aware of the problem of abuse and the risks to children.

Everyone's prime responsibility is to prevent child abuse.

This means raising any concerns you may have about the safety of children and/or the behaviour of adults.

It also involves making sure contact with children is consistent with the Code of Conduct contained in the policy.

What should I Do If I See or Suspect Possible Abuse?

Concerns for the safety and well being of children can arise in a variety of ways and in the whole range of different settings in which SC work. For example, a child may tell you or display signs that they are being abused; someone may hint that a child is at risk or that a colleague is an abuser; you may witness or hear about abuse in another organisation.

If you have any suspicions or concerns regarding possible child abuse, or if there is anything with which you feel uncomfortable, you should raise these with your line manager or your main contact within Save the Children. If this is not possible, seek out a senior manager.

Consult the Framework for Action contained in the policy. A local reporting process should also be available in every part of the organisation so that it is clear who to go to if you have a concern.

The important thing is to act on your concerns!



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