

***“We are not the sources
of problems;
we are the resources
that are needed to
solve them”.***

– A World Fit for Us, 2002

March 2009

The participation of children and young people in UNICEF country programme and national committee activities

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1. Introduction

Participation is a basic human right, and as such, it is not a gift or privilege bestowed by adults on children, but the right of every child capable of expressing a view. In other words, it is a fundamental right for all children – especially the most marginalized and vulnerable in society.¹

The right of children to express their views and participate in making decisions on all matters that affect them was first formally recognized and encoded by the international community in 1989 in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 12, which states:

State Parties shall ensure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.

For this purpose, the child shall in particular be provided the opportunity to be heard, in any judicial and administrative proceedings affecting the child, either directly or through a representative or an appropriate body, in a manner consistent with the procedural rules of national law.²

The Millennium Declaration reaffirms the commitment to work collectively for more inclusive political processes, allowing genuine participation by all citizens (including children and young people) in all countries. The World Fit for Children outcome document, adopted at the 2002 General Assembly Special Session on Children, also made a strong commitment towards increasing the participation of children.

Based on this mandate, UNICEF has for many years supported the active participation of children and young people in policy advocacy and programming in its country programmes, as well as through its national committees in industrialized countries. The strategic objectives of UNICEF to protect and uphold children's right to participation are delineated in the 'Midterm Strategic Plan, 2006-2009, Investing in Children: the UNICEF contribution to poverty reduction and the millennium strategy.' Under Focus Area 5, Key Result Area 4, the following objective is defined:

UNICEF will support partners to enable the views of girls and boys to be taken into account in the design and implementation of policies and programmes that affect their lives, and in accordance with their evolving capacities, including during conflict and crisis.

¹ Karunan, Victor P, *Concept Note on Child Participation*

² Convention on the Rights of the Child, Adopted by General Assembly, 20 November 1989.

As suggested by its name, increased youth participation is a core objective of the UNICEF Adolescent Development and Participation unit. This fundamental right provides significant developmental benefits for children and adolescents as well as their families and communities, increasing opportunities for interaction and allowing them to develop the competencies and confidence they need to play an active role in society. Young people can contribute important insights into their needs and the problems that affect them. They also bring fresh ideas, creativity and energy to solving problems and building a healthy society.

Active participation also protects children and adolescents from violence and exploitation by ensuring that they are aware of their rights and empowered with the skills and knowledge to engage effectively with adults and institutions that can protect them.

Participation guarantees the developmental rights of children and young people – a principle that was adopted as a “common understanding” within the United Nations system. It is important for personal development and also fundamental to a human rights based approach to programming. In order to build capacities to protect and promote human rights, children must be able to actively participate in all parts of family, school and community life. Participation is central to the developmental approach, defined as “a process of expanding the real freedoms that people enjoy.” A community can only be considered developed to the extent that it ensures all its people, including children, are in a position to participate in and shape a life of dignity.

In industrialized countries, recent demographic changes such as increased life expectancy, a diminishing working age population and lower birth rates have transformed the nature of adolescence and youth. These young people are viewed as consumer icons and objects of economic investment, but limited efforts are made to empower them through institutionalized opportunities for participation and exercising citizenship.

The definition and understanding of participation still varies considerably among advocates and practitioners. The following working definition offers a useful foundation for the summary and analysis undertaken in this report:

Children’s participation is an ongoing process of 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, based on mutual respect and power sharing. Genuine participation gives children the power to shape both the process and outcome. When promoting children’s participation, issues relating to children’s own evolving capacity, experience and interest play a key role in determining the nature of their participation.³

³ O’Kane, Claire, *Children and Young People as Citizens: Partners in Social Change*, Save the Children South and Central Asia Region, 2003. Cited in United Nations Children’s Fund, *Wheel of Change, Young People’s Participation in South Asia*, UNICEF, 2004, p. 2.

A variety of factors determine whether – and to what extent – an activity is truly participatory. Several of these intersect with the ethical considerations specific to promoting children’s participation that are outlined in the UNICEF Programme Policy and Procedure Manual. Most importantly, children and young people must be free to form their own opinions, decide whether or not to express them and decide whether or not to participate in activities or events. Their participation must be voluntary and they must feel free not to participate or to leave a project or activity at any time.⁴ They must also be fully informed of the context in which they are participating and the parameters of their roles, so that they are empowered to make choices about their participation that they feel are appropriate.

Most practitioners and theorists agree that “participation activities” exist on a spectrum, with some activities reflecting a higher level of participation than others. Roger Hart, in his book, ‘Children’s Participation: from Tokenism to Citizenship,’ proposed a framework for an eight-step “ladder” of participation, with manipulation and tokenism at the lowest rungs and child-initiated, shared decision-making with adults at the highest.

Activities at the bottom, in which children’s roles are compulsory, or in which they are charged with expressing opinions or ideas that are not their own or in which they are present merely as decoration, are framed as “models of non-participation.” Hart argues that four characteristics are the minimum standards to determine whether an activity is truly participatory:

1. The children understand the intentions of the project;
2. They know who made the decisions concerning their involvement and why;
3. They have a meaningful (rather than “decorative”) role; and,
4. They volunteer for the project after the project was made clear to them.⁵

In practice, creating projects, institutions and practices that reflect the highest order of participation is challenging in almost all contexts and settings. Moreover, implementing activities at the lower rungs of the ladder may be necessary steps in the long-term process of building conditions and capacity to support sustained, higher order children’s participation. Children need not participate at the highest rung, but those trying to involve them should always be conscious about the degree of participation desired by children or possible under the circumstances.

This desk study aims to document a range of UNICEF-supported programmes and interventions to promote meaningful and sustainable participation of children and young people. The study was carried out by Juliet Young, a consultant in the Adolescent Development and Participation Unit in New York, and Heather Jarvis, a consultant in the Private Fundraising and Partnerships Section in Geneva, over a 10-

⁴ United Nations Children’s Fund, *Programme Policy and Procedure Manual*, UNICEF New York, Revised February 2007, p. 245.

⁵ Hart, Roger, *Children’s Participation: From Tokenism to Citizenship*, United Nations Children’s Fund, 1992, p. 11.

month period. The study is based on a review of UNICEF country office annual reports and regional analysis reports from 2007, as well as an online survey conducted among national committees in 2008. Special thanks for their collaboration go to Dagny Fosen, Child Rights Education Officer, Zahra Sethna, copy-editor, and James Elrington, UNICEF Studio. The process in National Committees was coordinated by Frederike Seidel, Programme Manager, Child Rights Education in Geneva.

*Victor P. Karunan, Chief of Adolescent Development and Participation
Gender, Rights and Civic Engagement Section, UNICEF New York*

*Jens Matthes, Chief of Child Rights Advocacy and Education Section,
Private Fundraising and Partnerships Section, UNICEF Geneva*

2. Context and Background

At the regional, country and national committee levels, UNICEF has developed strategies and implemented programmes to facilitate and support the active participation of children and young people. An increased understanding of children's development, evolving capacities and positive contributions to society further stimulates this interest in children's active involvement. There is greater recognition of the need to implement Article 12 and related child participation articles of the Convention on the Rights of Children in policies and programmes and to promote children's citizenship and their right to expression, information, decision-making and association.

Since 2004, the Adolescent Development and Participation Unit of UNICEF has undertaken a review of country office annual reports to evaluate and analyze information on child participation and other key programme priorities. A 2007 questionnaire provided an additional assessment of child participation programmes and activities undertaken by national committees. This report is based on those two studies, serving as a summary and analysis of participation activities at the country office and national committee level. It takes stock of the work being undertaken and draws out the lessons learned in order to inform and develop the programming and advocacy work of UNICEF.

3. Purpose and Objectives

The overarching purpose of this analysis is to inform future programming as well as provide feedback to country offices, regional offices and national committees for potential replication or scaling up of successful models. This report is also intended to support improved coordination and integration of the work of national committees with the programmatic work of UNICEF at the country and regional level, and may also serve as a tool for sharing ideas and experiences.

The specific objectives of this report are:

- To provide a summary and overview of participation activities undertaken by UNICEF country offices and national committees in four categories:
 - Influencing policies;
 - Programme planning and implementation;
 - Media and arts;
 - Advocacy and capacity building;
- To offer highlights from each of the seven regions where UNICEF works and in countries with national committees;
- To identify and share innovative practices;
- To present common challenges and effective strategies for overcoming them;
- To analyze lessons learned that could inform future planning and programmes.

4. Programmes and Activities at Country Level

4.1 Country Programmes

In programme countries, UNICEF has an obligation to promote the participation of children, adolescents, young people and women as an agency that champions the rights of children to survival, development, protection and participation. UNICEF supports young people's participation in programs and projects in all sectors, ranging from communications to education to water and sanitation. Young people may also participate in various levels of UNICEF's program cycle in some program countries, including program design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

UNICEF also plays an important role in helping to develop a framework of participation for governments, civil society and all other partners. The framework ensures that children and young people are enabled and empowered to effectively demand fulfilment of their rights within their families, communities and nations. It further allows them to participate in the design, management and monitoring of policies relevant to their lives.

The operational framework aims to ensure that the participation of children is authentic, meaningful, culturally-sensitive and beneficial both for their personal development and the development of their communities. It aims to encourage participation through the development of 'participation spaces' for children and young people within their families, schools and communities, as well as through opening opportunities for their influence on national policies and planning – especially those that directly relate to children and young people. First and foremost, children should be invited to participate on issues relevant to their own environment, such as home, school, community and family.

Participation in local institutions and structures related to basic services is likely to increase the user-friendliness and effectiveness of the services. The participation and contribution of children and young people in the reporting process on the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and on the implementation and monitoring of instruments such as national programmes of action and poverty reduction strategies, enables them to develop their capacities to engage in high-level policy and programmes. The importance of young people's involvement at the national level becomes even more relevant in situations of conflict or post-conflict, when young people can actively contribute to building a peaceful and democratic society.

4.2 Industrialized countries

UNICEF national committees play an important role in promoting youth participation in industrialized countries through advocacy and Education for Development activities. While Education for Development activities have been ongoing since the 1960s, advocacy has emerged in UNICEF as a new area of work over the last decade.

Education for Development programmes are coordinated through a network of practitioners in national committees organized in a taskforce facilitated by the Child Rights Advocacy and Education Section at UNICEF Geneva. This section was established in late 2006 to provide coordinated support to national committees in their child rights engagement and is now part of the Private Fundraising and Partnership Division.

As set out in UNICEF Executive Board Document E/ICEF/1992/L.8, Education for Development refers to UNICEF activities that promote the development of attitudes and values such as global solidarity, peace, tolerance, social justice and environmental awareness amongst children and young people and equip them with the knowledge and skills to empower them to promote these values and bring about change in their own lives and communities.

In practice, Education for Development activities have centred on raising awareness about child rights, promoting child participation and civic engagement, informing children about the importance of development in a globalized world and encouraging involvement in global solidarity initiatives.

Education for Development programmes vary widely in scope and orientation, depending on the national context, priorities and resources. Activities are undertaken primarily with schools and youth groups, which are provided with child-friendly resources and training materials on child rights and development issues. Many national committees promote 'Youth Ambassadors' who conduct peer-to-peer education about child rights and the work of UNICEF. Others organize 'UNICEF walks,' where young people learn about child rights and raise funds for UNICEF. Many national committees promote youth participation through partnerships with other organizations, municipalities and civil society.

To give renewed strategic guidance to this work, the Child Rights Advocacy and Education Section, together with national committees and in close consultation with the Adolescent Development and Participation Unit, developed a 'Guidance Framework for National Committees on Education for Development.' The framework, which was endorsed by the Standing Group for National Committees in March 2008, builds on E/ICEF/1992/L.8 and serves as a reference for scaling up activities and enhancing consistency in approaches. The framework lays out three key objectives for Education for Development activities at national committees:

1. Raise awareness about children's rights

Support and strengthen the dissemination of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its use and application in educational and civic institutions to promote children's rights as enduring ethical principles and standards of behaviour.

2. Promote civic engagement and participation

Promote opportunities for children and young people to participate in decisions affecting them and their communities and inspire them to actively engage and strengthen their capacities to act as advocates for children's rights.

3. Promote commitment to global solidarity

Increase children's and young people's awareness about global development and the work of UNICEF and provide opportunities to exercise solidarity and contribute to the realization of child rights globally.

5. Methodology of Study

A desk review was conducted in September 2007 in which all descriptions of child and youth participation activities were compiled from the previous year's country office annual reports. Additional information was drawn from regional analysis reports from 2007. Due to constraints of time and human resources, French-language reports were not consulted for this study.

Information about national committees was drawn from a survey conducted specifically for this study. National committees were sent an online questionnaire in November 2007 and were asked to present up to three examples of their work with young people as well as information on their successes, lessons and constraints. About 75 per cent of national committees responded, with varying degrees of detail. Other data on national committee activities (no more than one year old) were used as a reference.

5.1 Summarizing and categorizing activities

In its summary and analysis, this research refers to descriptions from reports and surveys that included a specific mention of programmes or activities that clearly fell under the rubric of participation. Programmes in which young people are identified only as beneficiaries or programmes with a youth focus (for example, a general reference to a youth radio programme) but with no relevant description of whether or how young people participated were not included. It is important to note that these and other programmes may have included children's and young people's participation, however because there was insufficient information to describe them as such, they are not reflected in the report.

Additionally, in describing the participants and/or beneficiaries of UNICEF-supported activities, specific information about the age of the participants was often not included. The mandate of UNICEF is to focus on children up to age 18; the official United Nations definition of adolescence is the period between ages 10 and 19. While the adolescent participation unit deals with adolescents aged 10–18, national committees also carry out activities with younger children, mainly in kindergarten and primary schools. Evidence shows that while special emphasis is needed to focus on adolescents in UNICEF's work, it is also important to partner with other agencies to address the needs of youth between 15 to 24 years more generally.

Often, the annual reports consulted for this review referred interchangeably to "children," "adolescents," "young people" or "youth." This report takes as its reference the participation of all children below 18 years of age, in keeping with

UNICEF's mandate. At the same time, it pays special attention to the participation of adolescents and young people as relevant in particular country situations.

Descriptions of UNICEF policies, priorities and initiatives in programme countries are taken directly from country office and regional reports and in many instances are excerpted directly from those reports. The purpose of this approach is to ensure that the information provided by the authors of those reports is not distorted.

5.2 Identifying good practices

Assessing the number of young people reached by an activity is an important measure in identifying good practices, but can be challenging to accomplish. The number of young people who directly participate in an activity may be one indicator of the breadth and extent of impact. However, mechanisms that, when appropriate to the activity, ensure that young people represent the views of their peers or share and disseminate their experiences with them afterwards also expand the reach of an activity. Equitable opportunities for girls, boys and children from marginalized groups to participate are also a measure of the extent of impact.

Another measure is the depth of the impact on the young people who participate. This may include such outcomes as improved knowledge of civic institutions or enhanced public speaking or negotiation skills. Successful programmes may also have positive developmental and psychosocial effects such as improved self-esteem and self-confidence.

A third measure is the impact on communities and societies. The presence of key adult actors when young people voice their opinions is one indicator, as is the effect of the demands made by young people on the decisions made by adults. Another indicator is improved effectiveness of policies and programmes as a result of young people's contribution. Increased recognition of children's rights, including participation, and improved public attitudes towards young people may be direct or indirect results of effective programmes.

An interesting and potentially important point of inquiry about any participation activity is the level of participation achieved, as defined, for example, in Roger Hart's framework. As noted above, contextual factors are significant in determining what level of participation may be achieved or appropriate in a given context. Thus, the level alone should not be considered the sole indicator of good practice. Readers may find it useful to keep in mind the question of what level of participation may have been achieved in the examples presented in this report.

Often, the descriptions of activities related to participation in policymaking did not include important details that might be relevant for a deeper analysis. The length and detail of programme and activity descriptions varies considerably between each report and description. The purpose of this study is not to draw conclusions about programme design or effectiveness in the absence of sufficient information, nor to assess the relative quality of several activities when the information about them

varies. Rather, it is to use the information that is available to gather ideas about innovative approaches and lessons learned and to identify questions for consideration in the ongoing effort to design, implement and scale up effective practices.

Finally, this is not intended as an exhaustive report documenting all participation activities and all examples of good practices. References to many specific activities are included to provide examples of successful projects and good practices. If activities are not documented, this is not intended as a reflection on their relevance or quality.

6. Taxonomy

Adolescents can engage in a variety of roles with many different institutions and sectors of their communities, ranging from family to school to government. The UNICEF Programme Policy and Procedure Manual identifies five roles for children and young people within a participation framework:

- **Identifying unfulfilled rights:** participating in establishing the existence and magnitude of a problem and analyzing its causes; participating in research;
- **Claiming of rights:** demanding the attention of decision makers; advocating; petitioning;
- **Identifying solutions and duties:** negotiating; making or improving plans;
- **Participating in implementing the solution:** fulfilling a role; becoming an actor;
- **Monitoring, evaluating and reporting** on the implementation of plans and commitments.⁶

Some participation programmes within UNICEF are primarily designed to expand young people's opportunities to express their views publicly and to participate in governmental decision-making. Many activities also intersect with other programme areas and address strategic objectives such as education, health care and disease prevention.

For the purposes of this study, participation activities will be described and analyzed in four main categories:

Participation in policymaking

Including: participating in global, regional or national meetings, summits or public awareness events; serving as representatives in any governing body, including children's parliaments or councils; addressing or petitioning government leaders and participating in the evaluation of an existing public policy or programme.

⁶ Programme Policy and Procedure Manual, UNICEF New York

Participation in programme planning, delivery and evaluation

Including: the formation of youth organizations; initiatives designed and/or led by young people; consultations with young people during programme design; research or evaluations conducted by adolescents; peer education or counselling programmes; and fundraising for UNICEF programmes.

Participation in media and arts

Activities include: giving public statements or sharing personal accounts in any medium: written materials, photographs or other art work created by young people and exhibited publicly; theatre and musical performances by young people; news articles and newspapers produced by young people; and radio or television programmes, videos or films produced by young people.

Advocacy and capacity building for an enabling environment for participation

This category includes advocacy and strategic support to governments for the creation of policies and programmes to facilitate young people's participation; promoting positive attitudes towards young people's participation; conducting trainings and developing materials to build capacity for good participation practices; and conducting research to support the improvement of participation opportunities and practices. This category is distinct from the others, as activities in this category do not include those in which young people are currently participants, but rather, for which a long-term objective is young people's participation.

Many activities do not fit neatly into one category and those representing innovative and holistic approaches often include integrated activities across two or more categories. The purpose of this taxonomy is not to create artificial distinctions, nor to distract from the value of holistic design, but rather to provide structure for a readable summary and analysis of activities undertaken.

7. Analysis

7.1 Successful outcomes

In addition to the varied and specific outcomes of each project, a few broader patterns emerged.

- 1) Children's participation in policymaking contributed to **a significant increase in awareness of children's and young people's rights**. Indeed, this was one of most commonly reported outcomes of children's participation initiatives across all sectors described in this report. Children's participation also resulted in commitments from governmental leaders and other actors at every level to **take action with children to uphold their rights**. For example, in many countries, children participated in the development or monitoring of national plans of action to achieve the time-bound goals set out in 'A World Fit For

Children.’ It is important to note that these plans were also the outgrowth of a global summit in which participation of children was a key feature.

- The voices and stories of children and young people at the **Vietnam-China** children's forum on prevention of human trafficking served as a stark reminder to adult decision-makers that the rights of children have no borders and that countries have a duty to effectively address the issue of cross-border trafficking in a collaborative manner.
- In **Peru**, visits by children and adolescents to presidential candidates heightened public awareness of the importance of children's issues during the election campaign.
- **UNICEF Belgium's** project "What do you think?" – ongoing since 1999 – aims to involve vulnerable children in the reporting process to the Committee on the Rights of the Child. As part of the project, more than 50 debates concerning the rights of vulnerable children to be involved in decision-making have been held, along with a children's march in Brussels.
- **UNICEF Iceland's** Youth Council projects have resulted in increased recognition and respect for UNICEF among young people and adults.

2) **The participation of children and young people in policymaking yielded self-perpetuating or self-replicating outcomes.** When children and young people contributed to policymaking through children's parliaments, summits or other channels, adults gained first-hand experience with their capacities for participation and with the potential impact of children on policies and programmes. As a result, there was a renewed commitment among adult decision-makers to strengthen and expand those channels.

- Some global, regional and national forums in which young people engage directly with leaders have become regular and institutionalized events. **The Junior 8 Summit** is now convened as a parallel event to the annual meeting of the Group of eight industrialized countries (G-8) and opportunities for participants to share their recommendations directly with G-8 leaders are now a regular part of that forum.
- In **Belarus**, following recommendations developed by children and adults at the national children's forum, further support was provided to the Ministry of Information to support youth journalism initiatives.
- Children presented policy recommendations to the Prime Minister of **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, based on a participatory action research project they carried out. Media coverage of this event led to increased public interest for child-centred activities at a high policy level and established a precedent for similar child-centred participatory advocacy efforts.
- Following a national conference for children and youth in **Yemen**, a national strategy was launched in which participation was included as a priority area for the first time.

- As a result of a children's summit in **Rwanda**, the government realized the potential that children have in decision-making at all levels of society and has shown a willingness to institutionalize a Children's Parliament to provide opportunities for children to engage in national democratic and development processes.

3) Some advocacy initiatives undertaken by children and young people yielded the specific policy results they sought. Children who had the opportunity to engage in discussions with decision-makers often advocated for specific policies or programmes, such as laws to uphold children's rights, increased opportunities for participation or programmes to benefit children in their community. In a few cases, those decision-makers accepted and implemented their suggestions. This is a noteworthy outcome, as a high-level objective of children's and young people's participation is that they not only are included in discussions with decision-makers, but also that the input they offer influences decisions.

- In **Argentina**, bills developed by adolescents through two national debates were included in the text of a new national educational law, with support from the Minister of Education.
- After young people in one district of **Somalia** were given a platform to share their priorities and advocate for services with local government leaders, the district council contributed funds to the construction of a sports ground for youth.

4) Some policies or programmes were made more effective as a result of the input of young people. Adolescents have valuable insights regarding their own needs as well as the effectiveness of programmes intended to support them. Their recommendations for interventions and strategies and their feedback about their experiences with activities provided critical information for the development and improvement of effective programmes.

- Young people were involved in a legal reform initiative in **Tajikistan**, resulting in lower rates of recidivism among juvenile offenders.
- In **Uruguay**, the limitations observed with a traditional 'risk prevention' approach to fighting HIV/AIDS were overcome by having adolescents participate in health promotion activities as peer educators and through involvement in youth organizations.
- The **UNICEF UK** Champions Project involves a group of 17- and 18-year-olds whose role is to develop and deliver youth-friendly information, activities and campaign actions. Members influenced the national committee to explore the use of online social networking, resulting in a partnership with MySpace.com, which is now the top referral site to the UNICEF Voices of Youth site.

5) Engaging young people as service providers (e.g. as researchers or peer educators) expands the human resource base for a programme so that

more young people can be provided with services. Since adolescents are experts on their own needs, they are well positioned to reach and positively influence their peers and children of other ages. They regularly interact with other young people through school, home, sport and other community activities and also know of communication channels and strategies that may be more effective in sharing information with others of the same age. Younger children often look up to adolescents as role models and are therefore likely to follow their positive examples.

- In **Morocco**, 10,000 children who were trained in census techniques by teachers were able to identify a further 80,000 children not enrolled in school. Results of that survey were used to identify the obstacles to and solutions for enrolment, seen from the perspective of children themselves.
- A peer education ‘road show’ in **Lesotho** enabled 31 trained peer educators to share information about human rights, life skills and HIV/AIDS with 1,000 young people.
- Young members of **UNICEF Denmark’s** child expert panel were trained as spokespersons and can give statements and interviews to the media when there is a need for UNICEF to provide an expert opinion.
- As part of a programme organized by **UNICEF Korea**, children from that country travel to Mongolia and Cambodia to learn about cultural differences, the problems of climate change and interventions for under-privileged children. The teenagers then act as ‘cyber-volunteers,’ distributing the stories of disadvantaged children through the UNICEF website to more than 50 friends every month, thus promoting public awareness of children’s issues and the work of UNICEF.

6) Through their participation, young people developed higher self-esteem and leadership skills. Participation programmes provided children and young people with opportunities to engage with adults in positive and productive roles and relationships. They gained new skills, such as speaking in public, earning the acknowledgement or respect of adults and positively influencing younger children. The result was a positive impact on their emotional and cognitive development.

- In **Guatemala**, leadership skills and self-esteem were strengthened for boys and girls through constant participation in decision-making in the classroom and school.
- In **Tanzania**, participatory planning processes encouraged confidence and self-reliance in communities, and the participation of young people and children as well as men and women facilitated a sense of community ownership.
- In **Nepal**, children’s involvement in child clubs enhanced their self-esteem and self-confidence, increased their knowledge and awareness on a range of issues and increased their ability to voice opinions.

- In **Hong Kong**, young envoys were given training in participation and social service and then took part in field visits to China and Southeast Asian countries. The young people reported that they had gained useful experience in understanding children's needs and in promoting children's rights.

7.2 Challenges

Several common challenges were encountered in both programme and industrialized countries in activities aimed at expanding and supporting the right to participate.

- 1) Negative **attitudes towards children and young people and their capacities** were cited as the most common challenge. In many cases, traditional customs made it inappropriate or disrespectful for a young person to challenge the position taken by an adult or even to voice an opinion. In some countries, children are not seen as the bearers of rights, but rather as the property of adults. Related to this was the attitude that children are insufficiently capable to take on the responsibility of contributing to important decisions. In some countries, children were viewed as a potentially threatening, negative influence on society or as holding interests that might conflict with those of adults.
 - A youth profile study conducted in 2004 in **Mozambique** found that concern over moral decline and a perception that children have low capabilities are barriers to children's participation in decision-making.
 - UNICEF national committees in **Italy, Slovakia and the United Kingdom** are attempting to build national child-friendly school programmes, but have encountered institutional cynicism and concern among adults that participation will lead to anarchy or that children and young people will be taken "too seriously."
 - Commenting on the challenge of engaging their own youth council, **UNICEF Spain** observed that even within UNICEF it is not easy to accept the role and contribution of young people in the process of decision-making.
- 2) **In some countries, the current political climate or recent political history is not conducive to young people's participation.** In countries in which political institutions are less democratic and less inclusive, significant barriers exist for children to participate meaningfully in decision-making. In countries with a recent tradition of authoritarian rule, the attitudes of adults towards government sometimes negatively influenced children's interest in participation. Political conflicts and polarization within countries also created climates that were not conducive to participation programmes.
 - In **Bosnia-Herzegovina**, the tradition of socialism, coupled with negative attitudes among adults towards participation in government, were cited as barriers.

- UNICEF staff in **El Salvador** noted that policymaking in general is not participatory in that country, contributing to a climate that is not conducive to children's and young people's participation.
- In **Vietnam**, the continuing tradition of government control, along with cultural unfamiliarity, creates a climate of resistance to children's participation.
- A children's municipal council in the **Occupied Palestinian Territories** did not expand due to the politicization and polarization of youth following elections.
- In **Venezuela**, information generated or disseminated by UNICEF regarding women and children is at times taken out of context or used inaccurately by the media due to political polarization.

3) **Structural barriers within some potential implementing or partner institutions also posed a challenge.** In organizations or institutions in which hierarchical management or instructor-centred training methods were the norm, it was challenging to implement participatory practices. A lack of resources or capacity also limited the ability to support meaningful participation.

- In **Barbados**, the traditional curricula and teaching approaches, in schools such as teacher-centered instruction, lecturing and a focus on memorization do not favour the development of skills and capacities for participation.
- In **Tanzania**, the reliance of media broadcasters on commercial programmes leaves very limited air space for children's programmes. Limited technical capacity is also a barrier to programming for children.

4) **A lack of data and research about adolescents, and expertise in working adolescents, was encountered in several countries.** While many countries and regions are actively working to expand the knowledge base about adolescents, there still remains a dearth of disaggregated data about people aged 10-18 in all regions. As a result, policy advocates and programme officers lack basic information about the conditions, needs and capacities of adolescents, which would support the development of appropriate programmes and practices. On a related note, some country offices had difficulty finding professional consultants and others with expertise in working with adolescents.

- In **Turkey**, a lack of appropriately qualified consultants caused delays in programme development, partly due to the fact that working with adolescents is considered a new area in which knowledge and experience has not yet accumulated.
- Limited expertise in adolescent programming throughout the **Middle East and North Africa** region, and limited capacity of partners to

implement adolescent programmes in **Djibouti, Egypt and Tunisia**, were reported as constraints.

- A lack of national data about adolescents in **Egypt** is a barrier to adolescent development and participation.
- In **Cameroon**, insufficient quantitative and qualitative human resources at the management levels slowed programme execution.

- 5) **The absence of a regional adolescent development and participation framework** can result in a multiplicity of unaligned interventions.
- 6) **Adults are often reluctant to attend forums for dialogue with children and young people or capacity-building workshops.** A key objective of such events is that adults hear the views and ideas of young people and gain direct experience with their capacities as advocates and decision-makers. When adults are reluctant to engage, the immediate impact of those activities on policymaking or on improving attitudes towards children is limited. Moreover, young people may be discouraged from further participation in the long term if they believe that their contributions are not acknowledged and have no impact on decision-making.
- When children in **Swaziland** are provided with opportunities to discuss the issues that concern them, it is common that the appropriate legislators, community leaders and other critical players who influence policy decisions are not present.
 - UNICEF offices in **Jordan and Bosnia and Herzegovina** also encountered challenges in encouraging adults to attend activities related to young people's participation.
- 7) **Ensuring the equitable participation of girls was a challenge in several countries.** A number of obstacles seem to contribute to this inequity, including many of the same ones that inhibit girls in other key areas, such as education. For example, the responsibilities of girls for household chores may leave them with insufficient time to engage in activities outside school and home. Girls may also encounter challenges travelling to and from activity sites such as youth centres, due to cultural norms or safety concerns.
- In **Burundi** there was a low level of participation of girls in youth centre activities.
 - Limitations to mobility for girls in **Egypt** are a challenge to programme delivery.
- 8) **Available human resources and funds for participation activities are limited and insufficient for sustaining activities after large events have finished. Sustaining the involvement of young people is a related challenge.** National committees in particular reported that working with children is very expensive and time-intensive, presenting an ongoing

challenge. The success of the Junior 8 Summit has raised expectations that are hard for national committees to meet on an ongoing basis.

UNICEF **Canada** made a concerted effort to continue to engage young people who entered the competition to be participants in the J-8 but who were not chosen. This was done through regional Education for Development managers, who provided information on ongoing campaigns and other related activities. UNICEF **Germany** has also encountered challenges in developing concrete ideas to maintain the interest and engagement of J-8 participants and other young people.

Many other national committees reported difficulties in maintaining activities for young people who were involved in projects and wish to remain active. Financial resources and additional personnel for a given event are often no longer available after the event is finished. Regular staff members have not only their full portfolio of ongoing activities, but also new ones to prepare.

Putting further strain on already stretched human resources, child protection laws in many industrialized countries require that at least two adults be present with a group of children or young people and/or that adults who work directly with children be screened for criminal records. There may also be added expenses for special transportation arrangements and chaperones.

9) **Finding meaningful activities for young people is a challenge.** Involving young people means responding to their expectations that they will be respected, consulted and included as an integral part of the organization. They become aware of key decisions, are consulted on them and speak on behalf of the organization. Since the Convention on the Rights of the Child promotes fairness and egalitarianism, they expect to experience this in the organization that promotes it.

- UNICEF **Denmark** and other national committees reported that young people want to do important work, not just “silly little things.”

7.3 *Lessons Learned*

1) **Engaging adult decision-makers in the development of participation mechanisms and programmes increased their investment in the success of those programmes.** As noted above, ensuring adult attendance at participatory events or workshops with children presents a challenge. Some UNICEF offices found that when all stakeholders were involved in the planning of participatory processes or the development of participation tools, the result was an increased sense of ownership and more engagement from key adult actors.

- UNICEF at first found it difficult to engage local community officials in training workshops on participation in **Bosnia and Herzegovina**.

Organizing field visits to municipalities and convening meetings of UNICEF project staff, representatives from implementing non-governmental organizations (NGOs), mayors and heads of social affairs departments proved to be an effective strategy for advocacy.

- In **Swaziland**, UNICEF found that it was essential for all significant stakeholders to be involved in the planning of participatory meetings in order to increase ownership of events and ensure the presence of key actors.
- The participation of governmental organizations and NGOs in the development and testing of resource manuals related to adolescents in **Jordan** ensured that interest in relevant issues was increased. As a result, there was national utilization of the manuals, duplication was avoided and there was a larger pool of trainers.

2) A holistic, integrated approach characterized many of the most innovative and successful practices documented. When adolescents engage in participation activities they use and develop many core capacities, including cognitive, social, emotional and cultural skills. Many of the most successful practices engage and support an array of adolescent developmental needs. Long-term initiatives, which began with capacity-building and small-scale activities, were also found to be a way to build towards sustainable, wider scale, more meaningful participation programmes and practices.

- In **Uruguay**, an effective innovation combined several strategies for an HIV/AIDS prevention programme, including involvement of youth organizations, peer education and the use of new communication technologies. Child and adolescent participation based on the child rights approach proved to be an effective strategy in overcoming the limitations observed with traditional risk prevention approaches.
- Forming “listener clubs” in **Tanzania** effectively complemented informational radio programmes produced by children and young people.
- In **France**, to involve schools in fundraising activities, they have to be included in a global pedagogical process.

3) Long term approaches with an emphasis on sustainability and follow up have the most beneficial and significant effects.

- The **Hong Kong** committee has learned from more than 10 years experience that it is important for new and old members of the Young Envoys Club to form bonds. Involvement in planning and decision-making phases of the programme can help the young people increase a sense of belonging and exercise their right to participation.
- In **Nicaragua**, real child participation, experience and capacity grew out of initiatives that UNICEF has been supporting and expanding since 2003. For example, leaders of a National Consultation of

Adolescents formed in 2004 are now implementing a work plan through adolescent networks throughout the country.

- 4) In some cases, **participation programmes became productive venues for reaching and promoting the voices of the most vulnerable children.** By the same token, taking specific measures such as supporting access for children with disabilities had a positive effect on and increased the participation of vulnerable or socially excluded groups.
 - In **Tanzania**, participatory planning processes were found to be an effective strategy to encourage confidence, self-reliance and ownership, and promoted the voices of the most vulnerable.
 - The UNICEF office in **Malawi** found that youth programmes should be driven by demand and should reach girls, orphans and vulnerable children.
 - The ‘What do you think?’ project run by **UNICEF Belgium** since 1999 aims to involve more vulnerable children in the reporting process to the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

- 5) In industrialized countries, **the endorsement and support of local governments for child participation in schools** has been effective in promoting and embedding the principles of children’s rights into the culture and society of those countries. Moreover, national committees have found that local governments are especially receptive to resources or training related to child participation, due to their own limited funds and high demand for service delivery.
 - **Italy, Slovakia** and the **United Kingdom** have major national programmes promoting children’s rights and increased participation of students as central to the ethos of schools. These are programmes with strong frameworks and rigour that involve schools in self-assessment of their progress.

- 6) **Allowing young people to partake in decision-making and planning processes provides opportunities for them to more effectively reach their peers.**
 - Young people in **industrialized countries** are often actively involved in campaigns such as Unite for Children, Unite Against AIDS. However, it is vital that their input is sought while the planning is at an early stage so that they can identify themes and messages that will be of particular interest to a young audience and assist in preparing campaign materials for that audience.
 - Conducting joint workshops for adolescents and youth workers at adolescent-friendly youth centres in **Jordan** enhanced the level of communication and common understanding between both groups and ensured that the services provided met the actual needs of adolescents.

7) **Monitoring and evaluating youth events** ensures that the success of national committee initiatives can be assessed, but it **requires different criteria and methods than those traditionally used to evaluate activities.**

- Evaluation methods for **national committees** usually focus on income. Those working with children and young people have to find methods of recording attendance, interest and support.
- Many **national committees** report failure to provide evaluation forms or to measure participation levels, unless web technology has made this automatically possible. Youth participation is a new area of work and finding the necessary programme monitoring systems is still evolving.

8. Regional Trends and Highlights

8.1 Central and Eastern Europe and Commonwealth of Independent States

A priority area of concern in the region is that children have largely been left out of the policy process and the gap between policies and outcomes for children represents a major challenge for governments. UNICEF country offices have been actively moving into this space, with the result that demand for technical support and analysis tools has been high. These shifts were a central part of the debate that took place in 2007 on the role of UNICEF in middle-income countries.

The regional office has focused efforts on research, advocacy and policy analysis in their activities to promote children's rights and this upstream response is also reflected in its key activities to support participation.

(a) National Policymaking

In **Azerbaijan**, the United Nations country team contributed to the preparation of a state programme on poverty reduction and sustainable development. UNICEF successfully advocated for the plan to be child-focused, rights-based, results-oriented and linked to international commitments such as the Millennium Development Goals and A World Fit for Children.

Recommendations were developed at a conference on building a brighter future for **Azerbaijan's** children, at which children aged 14-17 participated. The recommendations led to the drafting of a chapter devoted to youth policies in the poverty reduction strategy. A national children's parliament was also established in Azerbaijan with the support of UNICEF. It will be linked to the national parliament and will have a regular mechanism for including the opinions of children in the work of the federal government.

Building on experiences and partnerships established in a community-based participatory action project in **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, UNICEF gave children an opportunity to present a letter with recommendations for policy improvements to the Prime Minister at the 2006 Annual Review Conference. This event yielded good media coverage and public interest for child-centred activities. In addition to the short-term impact, this event established a precedent for similar child-centred participatory advocacy efforts for children.

A national children's forum was held in **Belarus** in May 2006. UNICEF provided technical assistance to the Ministry of Education to ensure the rights of children to meaningful participation in decision-making. The forum involved discussions on innovative approaches to social initiatives for children at national and local levels and recommendations were approved for further development of the children's movement. Further support was provided to the Ministry of Information to expand a network of youth information centres, to develop youth journalism and to provide opportunities for young people to design and conduct information campaigns and develop the knowledge and skills needed for participation.

The participation of children in **Tajikistan's** 'Global Consultation on Violence against Children's Report,' encouraged further interest among young people in mobile groups to promote child rights. With support from an NGO, child-friendly modules were developed to complement government modules on minimizing violence against children.

The second national children's forum took place in **Turkmenistan**, organized by the National Youth Union and supported by UNICEF. Seventy children aged 12-18 attended the forum, at which they discussed and debated child-related laws and programmes with members of parliament and representatives from the justice and education ministries. Topics of discussion included involving young people in implementing reforms as well as future activities that would support the goals of A World Fit for Children. In addition, during the regular December session of parliament, 40 students were invited to observe the function of the main legislative body.

In **Uzbekistan**, 189 children and young people took part in a children's parliament, discussing issues concerning their lives, especially education. Volunteer groups of 5-10 children established school government boards in 1,000 schools. Around 100,000 children were sensitized on the Convention on the Rights of the Child and informed of the child-friendly school concept.

Using a child-friendly school questionnaire, the young parliamentarians assessed the situation in a number of schools and developed school improvement work plans, which are now being implemented. These include activities aimed at strengthening children's participation in school life through expression of their opinions and active involvement in the school improvement process, as well as enhancement of teaching practices and of hygiene and sanitation conditions in schools.

Children in **Uzbekistan** participated in that country's third National Child Protection Forum in 2006. Recommendations of the Forum were developed to feed into the National Plan of Action for Children to be finalized in 2007.

The active role of UNICEF in convening the Junior 8 summit, which took place in **Russia**, was among the highlights of the activities in the region in 2006.

(b) Capacity building and advocacy

To build understanding and awareness of participation in **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, UNICEF conducted field visits to municipalities and organized multi-disciplinary advocacy workshops involving UNICEF project staff, representatives from implementing organization, mayors and heads of social affairs departments. Discussions included the implementation of children's rights, child-friendly budgeting and the development of databases containing child rights indicators in support of better monitoring. These workshops helped to build support for the implementation of participatory projects in local communities and interest among local officials in attending training workshops.

In **Macedonia**, a new initiative was developed with the objective of developing structures and mechanisms for youth consultative bodies to work with municipal councils in three pilot communities. The "Youth Participation in Local Self-Governance" initiative was developed in response to a study carried out by the National Agency for Youth and Sports in 2004 as a baseline for the development of a national youth strategy.

8.2 East Asia and the Pacific

(a) Regional policymaking

A high point in the overall enhanced bilateral cooperation between **Vietnam** and **China** was the children's forum on the prevention of trafficking, organized in Hanoi on 28 August 2006. This was the first joint children's forum on cross-border trafficking between those countries, implemented collaboratively by the Viet Nam Women's Union and All China Women's Federation, with technical assistance and support from UNICEF in both countries.

The forum provided an opportunity for 120 children from border provinces in Vietnam and China to express their views and concerns and provide recommendations on prevention and protection of child victims of cross-border trafficking. Government officials from both countries, UNICEF officials, international organizations and media representatives were in attendance. Prior to the forum, children participated in a two-day workshop where they were given the opportunity to share experiences and discuss the impact of trafficking on their lives.

The event concluded with the presentation of key messages from children to Vietnamese and Chinese officials. These will directly feed into the development of

national strategies, policies and programmes, as well as bilateral Vietnam–China cooperation plans and programmes on prevention and protection of child victims of trafficking. The forum made a significant contribution to establishing Vietnamese and Chinese children as participants and actors in the fight against trafficking of children and women.

The **Philippines** also supported a children's forum related to the summit of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in December 2007. This initiative was aimed at building a stronger commitment for children's participation and establishing mechanisms for upholding children's rights.

(b) National policymaking

UNICEF introduced innovative new systems for young people's participation in national policymaking and implemented projects to support the development and improvement of existing structures.

In **Cambodia**, discussions on youth with the World Health Organization and the United Nations Population Fund led to the establishment of a youth advisory panel to the United Nations. The panel will provide a new and more structured forum for youth participation and feedback on current cooperation. Several other countries, including the **Philippines, Mongolia** and **Timor-Leste**, are also exploring mechanisms for youth panels, councils and advisory boards. This accomplishment is an outgrowth of strengthened partnerships with other United Nations organizations.

Also in the **Philippines**, an evaluation of youth councils provided a good example of how lessons learned should be documented. Following the evaluation, UNICEF and key partner agencies initiated a campaign to protect the youth councils from being abolished.

Institutions and channels for children's participation in policymaking were expanded in **Indonesia**, where 35 child committees were established to mainstream children's participation in local policies and initiatives. A provincial congress, with members from the village-based committees, was formally established to provide overall support.

(c) Media and arts

Several novel media projects provide models of holistic, integrated planning and lessons for future programmes based on evidence from evaluations. In **Thailand**, a one-year youth participation project focused on building the leadership and media skills of young people affected by the tsunami in Phang Nga province. Approximately 60 young people from diverse backgrounds were trained to shoot digital photographs of post-tsunami life in their local communities and to write journals about their experiences. Their creative efforts won wide praise and were covered by leading international media outlets, including CNN and Asian Wall Street Journal.

In **Indonesia**, a national plan of action was finalized with meaningful participation from children. The plan included integrated strategies across several categories, including media and direct dialogue with parents and other adults. Six hundred children joined media campaign activities at children's centres and raised awareness among parents and other community members on abuse and exploitation of children. In West Java province, 115 children increased their skills and knowledge on child protection, including violence, abuse, exploitation and trafficking, through a process of peer education and communication. In selected districts in the provinces of East Java and West Nusa Tenggara, more than 2,000 children, parents and community members participated in discussions on protecting children from abuse, violence and exploitation.

UNICEF supported the launch of **Cambodia's** first nationwide youth radio programme to improve the civic participation and life skills of Cambodian youth by providing information and education through locally-produced and targeted content.

The youth radio initiative begun in 2004 in the **Lao People's Democratic Republic** continued to make progress in strengthening young people's ability to advocate for their rights through the media. During 2007, youth reporters in six provinces produced and broadcasted nearly 200 programmes on child rights issues. Discussions with Lao National Radio on a national programme for youth have continued, with various models in other countries now under consideration.

In the **Philippines**, an external evaluation of the experience of 'Project Kaleidoscope' evaluated the Kabataan News Network experience, assessing the impact of the production on the young people involved in the project and the handling of the Probe Media Foundation as an overall coordinator, producer and facilitator.

(d) Capacity building and advocacy

Two regional studies supported the expansion of a knowledge base about children's and young people's participation. A study and mapping exercise on young people's civic engagement was carried out by Innovations in Civic Participation. Findings of the study were summarized in a report suggesting a typology for youth civic engagement and highlighting the need to place civic engagement in the broad political and social context. One recommendation was to provide more support for service learning (civic engagement as part of the school curriculum) to strengthen the practical and experience-based part of education, especially as part of life skills development. A detailed database of youth civic engagement initiatives was also compiled based on study results.

The Inter-Agency Working Group on Children's Participation produced a regional programme and policy guide on children's citizenship, civil rights and civic engagement. The guide offers a new vision and practical guidance for promoting children's civil rights and civic engagement and for moving beyond current practices in children's participation. The document has attracted wide interest, especially

among agencies and colleagues working in child protection, education and communication.

8.3 Eastern and Southern Africa

(a) Regional and national policymaking

The regional office, with assistance from the Adolescent Development and Participation Unit in New York, supported children and young people from several countries – including **Botswana, Namibia, Uganda, Ethiopia, Somalia, Zimbabwe and Lesotho** – to participate in major international and regional conferences. Through intense advocacy at the Commonwealth Youth Forum, issues affecting young people in the region were highlighted in the final declaration.

(b) Capacity building and advocacy

UNICEF established relationships at the regional level with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, United Nations Population Fund, United Nations Human Settlements Programme and United Nations Environment Programme to promote adolescent participation. Other programme communication partners included the G-8 secretariat and the Commonwealth secretariat.

A preliminary review of the participation of children and adolescents in policy formulation revealed the need for countries to adopt more appropriate measures to achieve effective participation in decision-making. The concept of children's parliaments and youth assemblies needs to be evaluated to determine effectiveness.

8.4 Middle East and North Africa

Country programmes in the region undertook several initiatives that promoted and expanded opportunities for young people's participation. Programmes supported young people in contributing to research and knowledge management, planning and carrying out programmes and sharing their views through the media.

(a) Media and arts

A year-long partnership between **country offices, the regional office and media across the region** helped promote the monitoring of youth rights and participation. Young people were involved in the production of a series of short videos representing their perception of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. This was one of the activities marking the CRC@18 campaign, which celebrated the 18th anniversary of the convention. The **regional office** also succeeded in involving youth in all regional and national communication and advocacy events. A proliferation of media outlets presents opportunities for UNICEF to establish fruitful new partnerships and to find multiple new spaces for expression.

(b) Programme planning and delivery

Children and adolescents participated in several successful efforts to strengthen information knowledge management, an important focus in the region. In **Egypt**, a desk review on young people was complemented by a youth consultation. That study identifies key gaps in knowledge and were developed to inform the design of a national survey on young people in 2008. In **Jordan**, a situation analysis was developed with the participation of adolescents and in **Syria** a situation analysis focused on and was developed through consultations with adolescents across the country.

An initiative on ‘action research’ was an ongoing regional focus: adolescents in the **Occupied Palestinian Territory** and in Palestinian refugee camps in **Lebanon, Syria** and **Jordan** conducted research on school drop outs, intergenerational dialogue, tobacco use, substance abuse and other topics. Results were shared with decision-makers and were the basis for launching adolescent-led initiatives in schools and communities. In **Morocco**, the findings of action research conducted by young people were disseminated and a follow-up plan has been developed by young people to ensure that policy responses to their recommendations promote their participation.

UNICEF also supported young people in delivering important services to their peers. A regional life skills initiative was undertaken with young people engaged as peer educators in several countries. In **Yemen**, life skills peer education in secondary schools in Aden reached 5,000 students. In **Syria**, 40 young trainers provided training on life skills and healthy lifestyles. In Palestinian camps in **Lebanon**, 70 adolescents received training as peer educators. In the **Occupied Palestinian Territory**, 450 peer-to-peer support sessions on child rights were conducted in remote villages for around 1,700 adolescents. In **Jordan, Syria, Lebanon** and the **Occupied Palestinian Territory**, UNICEF also supported the involvement of adolescents in the management of youth centres.

8.5 West and Central Africa

Note: A significant proportion of country offices in this region submit annual reports in French, which were not consulted for this study due to the constraints of translation. As a result, there was less available information from this region than for others.

UNICEF activities in **West and Central Africa** included participation in the preparation and development of poverty reduction strategies and new country programmes. Activities focused on upstream advocacy to strengthen decentralized planning, protect children’s rights through legislative reform and strengthen strategic planning, coordination and resource allocation, particularly in the social sectors. Among the highlights of youth participation initiatives was the creation and strengthening of children’s governing bodies, the successful promotion of models of youth participation in HIV/AIDS prevention and education and the creation of channels for children’s and young people’s participation in media.

(a) National policymaking

In **Cameroon**, a national youth policy and the status and regulations of a national youth council were validated. Five institutions were formed to support adolescent expression, including a municipal youth council, health clubs, youth network, children's parliament and national youth council. At the national level, a system of participation for young people living with HIV has been identified.

Adolescents participated in decision-making at councils at the provincial and national levels. About 10 councils integrated young people's concerns in decision-making processes. Children's governments were also set up in UNICEF-supported schools and 800 junior parliamentarians were trained to interact with adults in addressing children's issues. In one council, young people and peer educators shared information with the local population on how to reduce risky behaviour that causes the spread of HIV.

(b) Planning and implementation of programmes

A model of youth participation in the fight against HIV/AIDS that was developed in **Central African Republic** was accepted by the national government. The head of state and members of government visited the youth-friendly information and counselling centre in one urban council and the Ministry of Youth Affairs promised to extend the model countrywide through its decentralized structures. UNICEF provided continued advocacy for the implementation as well as technical assistance for the elaboration of the national youth action plan.

(c) Media and arts

A new programme supporting young people's participation in adult media channels represents a breakthrough in **São Tome and Principe**, a country where it is traditionally taken as a lack of respect when children contribute to the conversations of adults. Despite the skepticism of newspaper editors, a page of stories and articles created by and for young people in the *Correio da Semana* has become a bi-monthly feature of the newspaper.

8.6 South Asia

In **Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives and Sri Lanka**, UNICEF worked with partners to institutionalize the participation of children and young people in decision-making that affects their lives and in policy development and programme implementation at all levels.

(a) National policymaking

The office in **Afghanistan**, in partnership with eight United Nations organizations and seven government ministries, is developing a national youth development plan to

facilitate participation. The purpose of the programme is to increase the participation of youth in governance, recovery, development and peace building, while providing young women and men with enhanced capacities, education, recreation and employment opportunities.

In **Bhutan**, the National Commission for Women and Children and the Youth Development Fund is establishing district-level networks for youth participation.

(b) Programme planning and delivery

Maldives received support from a partnership of United Nations organizations (including UNICEF) to create a model for participation among adolescents and youth through a “partnership to help young people prevent drug misuse and recover from heroin addiction.” To ensure that these good practices continue, are expanded and are complemented by new creative models in the years ahead, UNICEF has identified a need for increased attention by government and development agencies for adolescent participation, as well as a need for more staff and other resources.

UNICEF and the United Nations system jointly supported the Youth Development Fund, a youth-focussed NGO, to train approximately 60 out-of-school youths in **Bhutan** as trainers on HIV/AIDS sensitization. This group worked with celebrities from the Bhutanese film industry to form a troupe that travelled to each district of the country, entertaining and raising awareness on HIV/AIDS and other relevant issues. There were plans to expand the initiative to other districts to empower even more young people.

8.7 Latin America and the Caribbean

In Latin America and the Caribbean there has been a major shift from a project approach to a public policy approach. As a result, all country and multi-country programmes (with the exception of Cuba) have a full component on public policy. A major focus of the public policy work has been bringing the Millennium Development Goals to sub-national levels, often the municipal level, through enhancing local capacity, monitoring and development plans. This emphasis is reflected in several programmes to support and enable youth participation in the region.

(a) Programme planning and delivery

A youth-led movement of children, adolescents and young people in **Belize** established core groups in different districts. With the support of UNICEF and an advisory committee composed of 20 public and private organizations, a pilot grants programme resulted in nine mini-projects focused on the areas of preventing teenage pregnancy, community mediation on crime and violence, sports for development, peer-to-peer education for HIV/AIDS, promoting enabling environments, literacy and entrepreneurship. In 2007, the movement continued to expand with the recruitment of new “Xchangers” from schools. Using the peer-to-peer technique, the young leaders promote messages about leading positive lives.

(b) Capacity building and advocacy

The **regional office** supported the first study on the impact of small arms on children and adolescents in Central America and the Caribbean. This four-country study defines the significant impact on children and their families, friends and communities, as well as the ensuing threat this poses to sustainable development and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

Guatemala, Chile, Brazil and Argentina conducted opinion polls amongst adolescents in 2007, giving them a voice and making them more visible while contributing to advocacy in favour of fulfilment of their rights. A sub-regional conference on a culture of peace and prevention of juvenile violence was held in **Costa Rica**, which put adolescent development at the centre of violence prevention strategies.

National policymaking presented an opportunity to build support for children's participation in some countries. In the **Dominican Republic**, the right to meaningful participation of adolescents was made visible to high-level government authorities, for the first time, in the context of a constitutional reform process.

In **Colombia**, child and youth participation was adopted as a priority in 2007. With a focus on sub-national implementation, governors were held accountable for commitments and progress on child rights. As part of the establishment of a system of national and territorial public policies for adolescents, some 20,000 adolescents participated in a process resulting in four new departments adopting public policies to address adolescent rights.

Brazil is strategically positioning its work around urban centres, focusing on the impact of poverty on urban children and adolescents to shape targeted policies and programmes.

8.8 Industrialized countries

The Convention on the Rights of the Child is central to the work of Education for Development officers at national committees, providing opportunities to leverage partnerships with governments, universities, schools and teachers, the media, youth workers and other NGOs to promote greater participation of young people. In many countries, NGOs exist that are almost totally devoted to building youth participation; national committees, with their limited resources, have to be selective in what they do, but reports show that there have been a number of valuable partnerships.

(a) Programme planning and delivery

National committees are not mandated to be service deliverers but rather, through advocacy and partnerships, promote best practices in order to involve young people in decision-making processes and disseminate tools for participation that appeal to

young audiences. Committees also take on active roles in promoting awareness of children's issues through the media.

Input into identifying planning priorities

UNICEF Denmark has a panel of six children/young people and four adult experts, which meets every two months. The objective of the panel is to support the committee's work in protecting the rights of children and also to monitor the follow-up to A World Fit for Children. The panel arranges events and projects, is available to give statements and interviews to the media when there is a need for UNICEF to provide an expert opinion, and is also consulted when the views of children and young people are required. The spokespersons have been trained and the panel receives a lot of press coverage. Activities with the panel are integrated into the national committee's annual work plans.

UNICEF Iceland has a youth council of up to 15 youths (currently there are nine) who meet every week with the Education for Development Officer to plan, develop and execute awareness and fundraising projects. The chairperson of the council attends board meetings as an observer, communicating advice and information about the council to the board and vice versa. Youth council projects have helped shape the national committee's youth outreach strategy, including recruiting secondary schools to participate in a new youth project, the 'UNICEF uprising,' and increasing recognition and respect for UNICEF among adolescents and young adults.

UNICEF Slovenia has created a national board for child and youth participation, supported by the European Commission's Youth in Action programme. The board, which currently has seven youth representatives, three experts and a secretary, aims to encourage the views of children and young people in decision-making processes on issues that affect them. The board organized a camp for youth participation and created a web forum about youth participation.

UNICEF UK has organized a group of 16 youth advisers, aged 12-18, whose role it is to advise the national committee on the best strategies to reach young people with information about rights and relevant issues. The advisers are chosen through an application and interview process, and selection is based on candidates' demonstrated interest and experience. Youth advisers meet with UNICEF officers several times a year to strategize and plan events and provide feedback as requested. Activities include writing articles or columns for local newspapers and websites, acting as spokespersons for UNICEF on rights-related issues, delivering presentations to schools or groups and encouraging their peers to raise awareness and/or funds for UNICEF-related campaigns or initiatives.

One key activity is the running of annual 'road shows' attended by about 200 young people each year. Youth advisers plan and deliver these one-day events, which cover rights-based themes. They take place outside of school hours and are intended to reach young people who have an interest in development and related issues. In July 2007, seven youth advisers visited UNICEF-supported HIV/AIDS prevention projects

in **Jamaica**. Advisers produced daily blogs and will use their experience as input for the prevention phase of the Unite for Children campaign. Peer education materials will be available via the Voices of Youth website.

Youth advisers are involved in the recruitment and selection of Youth Team staff members and are consulted on desirable skills and attributes for Youth Officers. Whenever possible, young people are also involved in the interview process.

The UNICEF UK Champions Project involves a group of 17- and 18-year-olds whose role is to develop and deliver youth-friendly information, activities and campaign actions for the 'Born Free' campaign. They meet with the campaign manager to learn about preventing mother-to-child transmission of HIV and design youth specific/relevant campaign action and related activities for people under the age of 18. Activities have included presentations at schools, town centre stalls and making collections at other organizations' events. Members influenced UNICEF UK to explore the use of online social networking, resulting in a partnership with MySpace.com, which is now the top referral site for the UNICEF Voices of Youth site.

Peer education and advocacy

Schools are the main venue for UNICEF Education for Development activities in industrialized countries. Improving the opportunities for children and young people to be heard and have a voice in schools is one of the greatest challenges and opportunities. UNICEF national committees are increasingly promoting national child friendly school programmes, as evidenced in **Italy, the United Kingdom, Slovakia, Slovenia** and **Israel**. In some cases, these initiatives face institutional cynicism and concern among adults at the prospect of children and young people being taken 'too seriously' or threatening the authority of adults.

Nonetheless, many national committees can indicate schools where children and young people now know their rights thanks to the promotion of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. They provide students with print and web information and education materials linked to national curricula. Several committees promote public speaking opportunities where young people themselves become advocates of the rights of children to their peers.

On 20 November – the anniversary of the convention – events were organized by many national committees, including **Belgium, the Netherlands, Denmark, Hong Kong** and **Korea**, for people to hear about children's rights from young people themselves.

Since 1998, **UNICEF Netherlands** has been holding "National Presentation Day on Child Rights" every 20 November. Children from primary schools give presentations in front of classmates, teachers, parents and the media about children's rights and UNICEF. The activity attracts a lot of media attention, providing exposure to UNICEF and presenting an opportunity for UNICEF to classify itself as the main organization on children's rights. The event reaches the entire country through local,

regional and national media. In 2007, 25 per cent of schools in the Netherlands were involved (about 135,000 students).

A "young ambassadors" scheme in **Denmark** is aimed at high-school students aged 15- 18. Young people work with UNICEF to raise awareness about children's rights and their situation around the world, as well as the work of UNICEF. Each ambassador has a mentor in their regional committee who supports their work. The programme is one of the main outcomes of a framework agreement signed with the Ministry of Education in February 2006. Young ambassadors attend national meetings and six of them go on a field visit each year. Others have participated in the Junior 8 Summit.

Since 1996, the "Young Envoys" programme in Hong Kong has provided young people with opportunities to exercise their rights to participation and personal development. Every year, about 60 envoys aged 12-19, are given professional training in participation and social service programmes. By the end of the programme, those with outstanding performance are selected to join field visits to China or Southeast Asian countries, after which publications are printed summarizing their experiences. This programme has helped the Hong Kong national committee establish stronger links with secondary schools. Most participants reported positive experiences in understanding the needs of children and promoting children's rights.

Field visits were also organized by **UNICEF Korea**, which sent children aged 10-14 to a summer camp in Mongolia and adolescents aged 15-17 to a winter camp in Cambodia. The young people explored cultural differences, the problems of climate change and possible interventions for under-privileged children. To date, the visits have not been directly linked to UNICEF projects.

After the winter camp, the adolescents acted as 'cyber-volunteers,' distributing stories of disadvantaged children through the UNICEF website to more than 50 friends every month and promoting public awareness of children's issues and the work of UNICEF. In 2007, 177 children and young people were involved along with their parents, teachers and friends.

UNICEF Spain has formed youth councils near some of their regional committees to work on fundraising, HIV/AIDS campaigns and peer education activities.

(b) Global and national events

Many national committees have been very successful in organizing events that specifically promote youth participation in UNICEF-led initiatives. An example is the annual selection, preparation and ongoing support for young people wishing to be involved in the Junior 8 Summit. The youth committees, panels and advisers described above have also advised national committees on how best to involve children and young people in campaigns like Unite for Children and in some cases have linked fundraising and advocacy, like in the annual "Junior Ambassadors for Children's Rights" competition in **Germany**.

The Children's 8 and Junior 8 Summits

The first 'Children's 8 Forum' was organized by **UNICEF UK** as a parallel to the meeting of the Group of eight industrialized countries (G-8) in 2005. Eight young people from developing countries, four from G-8 countries and five from the United Kingdom met to debate, discuss and firmly place their issues on the agenda of the meeting at Gleneagles, Scotland.

Given the success of the 2005 event, UNICEF decided to convene a yearly junior summit (now renamed the J-8) to coincide with the G-8 summit. Each year, national committees participate in organizing the selection process for young people who wish to represent their countries and help prepare, accompany and support them at the event.

Selecting and preparing the young people has in itself helped develop methodologies and practices for youth participation. For the 2007 J-8, **UNICEF Canada** organized a competition promoted through schools and a panel that included four young people to assess applicants. UNICEF Canada, like other national committees, supported those young people during the summit and has tried to maintain the momentum created by this event through other campaigns at schools and in communities.

To select representatives for the 2006 and 2007 J-8 summits, **UNICEF Germany** involved former participants as members of the jury. However, the number of teams who participated in the J8-contest was very small (32). The national committee is now looking for cost-effective ways to encourage young people aged 13-17 to submit applications.

The UNICEF country office in the **Russian Federation** played an instrumental supporting role to the government in designing and implementing J-8 meetings and events in 2006. Eight children from Russia participated in the forum, as well as children from **South Africa, Thailand, Mexico** and **Egypt**, who participated via teleconference.

Other Meetings and Events

UNICEF has helped organize national events for young people to discuss topics of immediate interest and concern. **UNICEF Belgium**, for example, has been running a project called "What do you think?" since 1999. The project aims to involve vulnerable children in the reporting process to the Committee on the Rights of the Child. Vulnerable children include asylum seekers, children involved in legal difficulties, children with disabilities or those who are disadvantaged, sick, hospitalized or institutionalized.

UNICEF Belgium coordinates the project in partnership with governmental institutions and NGOs, as well as young people themselves. The goal is to establish a social debate about the rights of vulnerable children to be involved in decision-making, and to permanently implement processes involving children at all levels that

lead to changes in legislation. To date, more than 50 debates have been held with decision-makers, as well as a children's march in Brussels.

In **Australia**, UNICEF organized a one-day forum on development and climate change, which included a range of youth-related projects and involved students from Australian high schools in discussions on policy direction in the Asia-Pacific region. Participants created a set of recommendations that were presented to the Development Research Group of the World Bank and the Australian Agency for International Development. Some of the students will further advise the national committee in its plans to make the forum an annual event. A report was also produced after the event and distributed to participants and key speakers.

In **Israel**, students researched the Millennium Development Goals and monitored whether Israel was on track. In December 2006, three students made presentations at the president's mansion and at the Ministry of Education's special session on UNICEF. One student was also interviewed on the radio.

ANNEX: Mapping of Programmes and Activities

(a) Influencing policies

Many of the channels through which young people may have a voice in policymaking fall under the rubric of the “participation roles” outlined in the UNICEF Programme Policy and Procedure Manual, such as claiming rights by demanding the attention of decision-makers and monitoring, evaluating and reporting progress in the implementation of government plans and commitments.

High-profile international events, such as the United Nations Special Session on Children in 2002 and the Junior 8 Summit, may be among the most widely recognized examples of UNICEF work in the area of children’s participation in global advocacy and policy influence. However, UNICEF programmes and activities include support for young people’s participation at all levels, including global, regional, national and local policymaking. While some activities in this category are public events with wide audiences others, such as participation in budget negotiations or monitoring and assessment, may receive less attention but may also lead to significant outcomes.

Global level

Many people remember the role played by children at the United Nations World Summit for Children in 1990, in which they ushered heads of states to their seats. At the time, some called this involvement “decorative” or “tokenistic.” It was, however, a positive first step and participation has subsequently developed to become an important part of major events and conferences. Young people from around the world are now brought together for parallel conferences and, after several days of working together, are provided with opportunities to address audiences of international decision-makers.

Regional level

UNICEF supported the participation of young people in several regional events, some of which paralleled regional summits of governmental leaders. Others focused on particular themes, such as HIV/AIDS. Activities included seminars and workshops in which children and young people learned about and deliberated on key issues, developed and delivered public statements and shared ideas directly with governmental leaders. Some conferences also included opportunities for participants to give theatrical, dance or music concerts and publicly exhibit their art.

The Fifth Annual African Development Forum in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, organized by the United Nations Economic and Social Council and development partners, was dedicated to African youth and leadership in the twenty-first century. At the event, UNICEF facilitated the participation of young people from **Botswana, Burundi, Comoros and Madagascar.**

The Southeast Asian Children's Conference, convened by the government of the **Philippines** and funded by UNICEF, was organized to coincide with the twelfth summit of heads of state from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations to facilitate greater participation of children in that event.

In partnership with NGOs based in **Vietnam** and **China**, UNICEF organized the first joint Vietnam-China children's forum on the prevention of human trafficking. At the forum, 120 children aged 11-18 from border territories of both countries interacted directly with government officials, representatives from civil society and the media, sharing their stories, opinions and experience of human trafficking.

UNICEF in **Burundi** and **Madagascar** supported the participation of children in the 'Speak Africa Challenge,' a regional media competition in which young people from African Union countries submitted photographs, stories and audio/video pieces about their experiences and ideas. Six young journalists and 11 drummers made up the team from Burundi.

In **Guinea Bissau**, 200 young people participated in the first youth forum of the conference of Lusophone countries, at which a common declaration to address HIV prevention among adolescents was adopted. Young people from **Madagascar** participated in the 'Indian Ocean Youth Consultative Commission' on Reunion Island.

In **Jamaica**, students in grades 11-13 participated in the first Caribbean Child Research Conference, which was organized by UNICEF, the University of the West Indies and the Jamaican government. The conference aimed to disseminate the findings of contemporary research in order to improve awareness of the situation of children in the Caribbean. Other goals included developing effective mechanisms to improve the status of children, encouraging more research and informing further programming and interventions to benefit children.

National level

Rwanda held its second annual youth summit, while in **Turkmenistan**, 70 children aged 12-18 discussed child-related laws and programmes and the involvement of young people in reforms and activities to support the goals of A World Fit for Children. Leaders from parliament and various ministries also participated in the forum.

The **Philippines** held its first national children's conference, with more than 150 participants including representatives of children's associations, government agencies and NGOs. Another first-ever youth summit in **Papua New Guinea** brought representatives together from across the country to discuss development plans, issues affecting youth and the role of youth in advocating for the Millennium Development Goals. Participants committed to strengthening the existing National Youth Commission network.

At a forum in the **Republic of Belarus**, innovative experiences stemming from a children's social initiative at national and local levels were discussed and recommendations for further development of a national children's movement were approved.

In **Yemen**, young people participated in the first national conference for children and youth, at which a national youth strategy was finalized. The strategy was subsequently launched by the president and endorsed by the government.

In **Tanzania**, 28 boys and girls participated in a conference on issues facing girls from marginalized and vulnerable groups. In **Vietnam**, children participated in forums on the role of lawyers in protecting the rights of children. At a meeting in **Brazil** on indigenous groups, adolescent representatives from 11 indigenous groups participated. Children in **Uzbekistan** took part in the third national child protection forum, at which each wrote a letter to adult participants about their wishes, problems or experiences. Those letters were used by forum working groups to better understand the desires of children as they discussed reform of the childcare system. In **Venezuela**, 60 adolescents represented 11 indigenous groups at a national meeting.

Public awareness events

Young people also participated in national and international events to promote awareness of specific issues through music, theatre, art and other activities. In **Nicaragua**, **Nepal** and **Yemen**, young people participated in events to launch The State of the World's Children report, which is produced every year by UNICEF. The launch in **Nepal** was designed and orchestrated by girls and boys from children's clubs in remote western districts.

Thousands of adolescents and youth participated in a walk for peace in **El Salvador**, which was also attended by the president, UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador Shakira Mebarak, and several other high-ranking officials and diplomats. Observances of World AIDS Day and the Unite for Children, Unite against AIDS campaign were often cited by country offices: in **Belize**, the day's celebration featured a youth-led concert and in **Azerbaijan**, young people held a candlelight vigil.

(Note: Some national meetings and public awareness events with a heavy focus on young people's participation in the media are also described below in the section on participation in media.)

Children's parliaments

UNICEF supported the establishment of children's parliaments or congresses to promote the institutionalized participation of children in national policymaking in **Mexico**, **Djibouti**, **Tanzania** and **Azerbaijan**. Members of the children's parliament in **Tanzania** were trained specifically in methods of interacting with adults, and child parliamentarians were also trained in **Guatemala**. The **Burundi** country office initiated a meeting with representatives from youth organizations, NGOs, media, government ministries and members of parliament to discuss the possibility of setting

up a children's parliament. Participants discussed preliminary steps such as sensitization campaigns to ensure full representation and participation of children in such a process. In **Cameroon**, five entities were created for the benefit of young people, including a national and municipal youth council, health clubs, a youth network and a children's parliament. Also at the national level, a system was established for the participation of young people living with HIV.

Children's parliaments or similar bodies are already functioning in other countries, often with the support of UNICEF, and some country offices promoted opportunities for those groups to systemically engage with national governments and other decision-making bodies. The annual report from **Nigeria**, for example, notes that the children's parliament initiates and conducts regular parliamentary sessions and advocacy with ministries. In **Belize**, the national youth parliament and the national youth council were integrated into the youth governance system through UNICEF advocacy. The children's parliament in **Guinea Bissau** held sessions at the regional and national level, with the participation of 100 children and young people from across the country, and was provided with an office, equipment and an annual budget, with the support of the government and UNICEF.

Young people's inputs in national policies and laws

In some countries, children gave direct inputs into specific policies or laws concerning their rights through children's parliaments, national youth summits or other channels. Children in **Algeria, Armenia, Belarus, China, Ecuador, Lesotho, Tanzania, Thailand** and **Yemen** participated in the development or mid-term review of their governments' national plans of action for achieving the time-bound goals established in A World Fit for Children.

In other countries, young people contributed to the development of national youth policies. For example in the **Dominican Republic**, a national policy document on children, youth and HIV/AIDS was developed at an NGO forum for young people. Children's clubs supported by UNICEF in **Nepal** contributed to an interim constitution. Child representatives from **Jordan's** children's parliament participated in several meetings and workshops to discuss the draft childhood act and the national plan of action for children. They also contributed to a situation analysis of children and adolescents.

In **Kosovo**, 500 young people, including ethnic minorities, economically disadvantaged youth and young people living with disabilities, participated in the development of a youth action plan. The plan will serve as a platform for government and civil society to improve the lives of young people through a set of interventions in thematic areas, which include participation as a priority.

Young people in **Timor-Leste** were surveyed as part of the development of a national youth policy and participated in meetings to discuss the findings and their implications on policy options. In **Iraq**, workshops were held at both the national and local level to generate feedback from young people about a national youth strategy,

resulting in the formation of a youth communication team in the Ministry of Youth and Sports. Young people in **Cameroon** gathered data for a national youth policy..

In **Azerbaijan**, young people contributed to the development of a chapter on youth in the national programme on poverty reduction and sustainable development. Children in four counties in **Mozambique** participated in “poverty observatories” for a poverty reduction action plan, supported by the national youth council. In **Rwanda**, children participated in the elaboration of an economic development and poverty reduction strategy. Thirty-two adolescents and young people informed the development of a national HIV/AIDS plan in **Jamaica**. In **Guinea Bissau**, more than 200 children participated in regional and national meetings and their recommendations, especially those related to access to treatment and care of HIV/AIDS, were submitted and discussed at the highest national levels and on the radio.

Five hundred adolescents from **Argentina**’s public schools participated in debates and seminars about that country’s new national law on education at two congressional events. A plan of action for the elimination of violence in **Indonesia** was finalized with the meaningful participation of children, emphasizing participation as a core component in the prevention of and response to violence and abuse. In **Uzbekistan**, members of the children’s parliament received training on the benefits of fortified flour then visited over 7,000 bakers to brief them on nutrition.

Young people also gathered data to inform policy development as well as to monitor and evaluate national policies. In **Morocco**, a far-reaching participatory project was implemented through schools in which 10,000 students identified 80,000 adolescents who were not enrolled in school, 57 per cent of whom were girls. In **Tajikistan**, youth who were former offenders participated in developing national legislation to implement international justice standards. Children from marginalized groups participated in workshops with the department of social welfare in **Malaysia**. In **Brazil**, a network of youth organizations joined to form a child friendly monitoring network to monitor public policies.

Local level

UNICEF supported young people in forming their own governing bodies at the local level, helping them to provide input to policy decisions. In **Indonesia**, 35 child committees were formally established in villages to mainstream child participation in local policy and initiatives, and a provincial children’s congress was formally established to provide overall support to the village-based committees.

In **Somalia**, 531 young people from 16 districts were trained in good local governance and successfully advocated for space in local council deliberations in two districts. As a complementary training activity, members of district councils were trained on their obligation toward youth and the role of youth in local governance issues. Young people were given a platform to share their priorities with local governments and advocate for services targeting youth. As a result, one district council contributed 30 per cent of the cost of building a sports ground for youth.

In **Brazil**, 170 children's rights councils were created. The annual report also referenced an achievement from 2005: the creation of a network of 100 adolescents and youths from civil associations throughout the country for developing and monitoring public policy.

In **Colombia**, as part of an integrated national strategy, UNICEF organized two meetings between young people and governors, each with approximately 500 participants. Other activities included a mass media campaign, entitled "Facts and Rights," and preliminary training for the establishment of 450 community radio stations to promote awareness and respect for children's and adolescents' rights. UNICEF also supported capacity-building activities for youth networks, authorities and technical teams, to contribute to the design and implementation of municipal plans for the reduction of pregnancies in girls and adolescent women.

Support was provided for the creation and development of municipal youth councils through the child-friendly municipalities initiative in **Guatemala**. Municipal organizations representing children and adolescents were elected in 33 municipalities to facilitate their participation in policy formation. More than 350 children and adolescents are part of these organizations, elected at meetings attended by 15,000 boys and girls from schools and adolescent networks.

In **Nicaragua**, the leaders of the 2004 national consultation of adolescents implemented a work plan through adolescent networks across the country, and adolescent clubs proposed their own agendas in 153 municipal child and adolescent committees.

A partnership was formed in **Jordan** for a children's municipal council to create a dialogue with the adult municipal council and put children's priorities on the agenda. Following an awareness-raising campaign on children's rights and democracy, approximately 29,000 children participated in the process of elections led by young people themselves. The council is in the process of developing its mandate and mechanisms of dialogue with policymakers. Members were also involved in developing the public parks and libraries in their districts, promoting traffic awareness and establishing pedestrian walkway areas in front of their schools.

An initiative in **Macedonia** on youth participation in local self-governance developed in response to a study carried out by the national agency for youth and sports in 2004 as a baseline for the development of a national youth strategy. Youth consultative bodies were established in three pilot municipal councils, resulting in opportunities for young people to influence the decision-making process.

Many **national committees** promote the 'child-friendly cities' concept, which now exists in several countries in western Europe. Child friendly cities take into consideration the needs of children and young people, such as safe drinking water and sanitation, play and recreation areas and free or nearly free travel on public transport. A critical element to their success is the involvement of young citizens in decision-making about their cities. Information as to the degree of involvement of each national committee is limited. (*Note: The Innocenti Research Centre acts as a*

Secretariat on Child Friendly Cities and maintains a website www.childfriendlycities.org that provides guidance and other resources⁷.)

School governance

In **Jordan**, UNICEF is increasing the level of participation of adolescents in local government and schools. This approach stemmed from a UNICEF study about the status of students' councils and parent-teacher associations and an analysis of their potential roles in improving the quality of life and education at school. The Ministry of Education also adopted and implemented children's councils at the municipal level, which enhanced the chances of students participating in decision-making processes in schools.

A student government committee was formed to defend student rights in schools in one district in **Costa Rica**. Boys and girls who are members of school governments were also trained to build their capacity in **Mexico**, and 200 children, along with 200 teachers and 100 parents, participated in regional meetings to improve education equality and adopt the child friendly schools concept. Some children's clubs formed in **Nepal** with the support of UNICEF have negotiated a place in school management committees.

Several industrialized countries have ambitious programmes to improve participation in schools, their models owing much to the child friendly schools initiative now under way in many programme countries. The **United Kingdom, Italy, Slovakia, Slovenia** and **Israel** have major national programmes promoting the Convention on the Rights of the Child and increased participation of students. These are programmes with strong frameworks and involving schools in self-assessment of their progress. Although some of these programmes have received financial support from their national governments, they do not necessarily have their whole-hearted endorsement. Thus, local government support is vital. This has proven to be an effective way of promoting and embedding children's rights in the culture and society of a country.

Juvenile justice

A juvenile justice programme was piloted in **Tajikistan**, with an alternative sentencing and diversion component to prevent unnecessary institutionalization of children in closed institutions. The project sought to encourage participation of youth offenders as well as to reduce the rate of youth offences, examine implementation of international juvenile justice standards and reintegrate children with their families. Children participated in all levels of the diversion project, resulting in higher awareness of the consequences of their behaviour and in lower levels of recidivism.

⁷ *The Child Friendly Cities website contains very useful information, but currently it has not been updated since the end of 2006 although plans for updating it is under way.*

Enfranchisement and electoral participation

In a few countries, UNICEF implemented programmes to support young people's direct participation in the electoral process. In **Brazil**, where voting is mandatory for adults but optional for adolescents ages 16-17, UNICEF supported a voter registration campaign resulting in 700,000 newly registered voters in that age group. More than 16 percent of adolescents participated in the elections. In **Jordan**, adolescents were also supported in voting for representatives at the local level. In **Peru**, adolescents shared their concerns with presidential candidates during public events leading up to the election, thus bringing attention to their ideas and needs.

(b) Programme planning and implementation

Including adolescents in the process of planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating programmes that serve them is another channel by which their right to participation may be promoted. Identifying problems, designing solutions and working actively to carry them out supports the intellectual and emotional growth of young people and prepares them for social and civic responsibilities as adults.

Programmes are more effective when adolescents participate, as noted in the UNICEF Programme Policy and Procedure Manual: "Children and young people are often much better placed than external duty-bearers to take the lead in assessing and analyzing their own situation, and coming up with possible solutions." Children may also be more effective than adults in influencing behaviour and attitude change among their peers and younger children.

Youth organizations and adolescent-led programmes

Youth organizations, when they are convened and led by young people to address their concerns and design and execute solutions, constitute one of the highest levels of participation. When young people participate in adult-led organizations to support young people, or when adults support youth organizations, this may reflect a lower level of participation. However, these activities can play an important role in developing the capacities of young people for participation and provide valuable opportunities for input into decision-making. UNICEF activities in programme countries include several supporting youth organizations or civil society organizations focused on youth issues.

Supporting the formation of new youth organizations

In several programme countries, UNICEF supported the establishment of new organizations or clubs, through which young people designed and implemented activities on their own behalf. UNICEF supported the formation of child rights clubs in **Vietnam**, which are now replicated by the Young Pioneer Council in 2,000 clubs across the country.

In **Syria**, active spaces in clubs, groups, schools and homes were established for and run by adolescents. “Girl child education clubs” were formed in **Uganda**. Child clubs to support community development and rights advocacy were formed in **Nepal**. In **Nicaragua**, clubs were formed for adolescents aged 10-19 interested in reflecting and acting on self-defined challenges, through which 470 adolescent promoters implemented education, communication and organization activities with the support of adult facilitators from government institutions and NGOs. Some major cities in **Madagascar** have also set up municipal youth councils and youth clubs.

Networking and capacity-building for youth-led organizations

In **Somalia**, UNICEF supported 5,600 members of youth groups, including 160 marginalized youth in camps for internally displaced people, in acquiring leadership and organizational development skills. Youth who participated in that project demonstrated increased capacity for active participation in community development activities in a wide variety of sectors, including education, health, hygiene and sanitation.

In **Jamaica**, the 4H Club ‘Junior Leaders Programme’ strengthened the leadership capacities of 93 adolescents in rural parishes through training in the prevention of drug abuse, HIV/AIDS and child abuse.

UNICEF also supported networks of youth organizations to strengthen their capacity to share lessons and coordinate efforts. In the **Occupied Palestinian Territory**, UNICEF supported the formation of 12 youth clubs and formed a local management committee comprised of six adults and two adolescents in each club. The members of the local management committees were also provided training in managerial skills. In **Jordan**, adolescent groups in six sites launched a website to strengthen their network and facilitate communication between them. In **Burundi**, UNICEF supported the capacity of 35 youth centres to share their knowledge and beliefs about the impact of HIV/AIDS by providing audio-visual and recreational equipment.

Leadership and adolescent-led initiatives

UNICEF supported training for adolescents to design and implement programmes to address their own needs. In **Jordan**, adolescents who attended programmes at youth centres were provided the chance to initiate and lead projects to benefit their peers. In **Egypt**, UNICEF partnered with the National Council for Youth to establish 22 youth centres throughout the country, offering an integrated programme of activities including initiatives that are planned and implemented by young volunteers.

In **Syria**, 25 young Palestinian trainers and adolescents from four camps participated in a training workshop on action research to identify critical issues. They then designed and led initiatives based on their findings. Adolescent-led activities included research on the causes of school drop-outs, computer training and training on how to create and run student parliaments at child rights clubs. Adolescents also contributed to the summer camps for Palestinian orphans and, during the crisis in Lebanon, organized recreational activities for refugees.

In **Jamaica**, adolescents in 20 schools received training in leadership, research, planning and management, giving them the necessary skills to identify and address areas of needs within their school environments. As a result, 100 adolescents implemented 15 transformation projects within their schools, in cooperation with the Red Cross.

Young people manage an HIV/AIDS programme in **Barbados**, with the national technical review committee chaired by the country's youth ambassador. The country office has found that while the collaborative process has significant potential for youth participation and ownership, the process is being driven by national youth ambassadors and requires stronger local support.

Input into identifying planning priorities

Young people provided input into UNICEF programmes through a variety of channels. In **Iraq**, they were consulted as part of the development of an online discussion forum, Voices of Youth. Young people in **Kazakhstan** were consulted in the planning of the Child Friendly Cities initiative. In **Turkey**, boys and girls provided feedback to programme developers about their action plans for street children. In **Nicaragua**, adolescents assisted with the design of play-therapy strategies for victims of trafficking.

In **Malaysia**, the country office hosted a youth dialogue in which 50 young participants discussed the right to education, the right to meaningful participation in decisions that affect them and the right to access adolescent-friendly health services. The event was hosted by UNICEF Malaysia Goodwill Ambassadors, Rafidah Abdullah and Celina Khor.

Country offices also supported workshops, seminars and other events for young people to explore and share ideas with each other and with adults and key actors in their communities, generating information that could eventually inform planning and programmatic priorities.

“Intergenerational dialogues” were held in seven camps in **Lebanon** housing Palestinian refugees. In **Indonesia**, more than 2,000 children, parents, community leaders and others participated in village-level discussions on the appropriate age of marriage and on protecting children from abuse, violence and exploitation. A community debate on issues affecting children and families was also convened in **Gabon**: one idea that emerged as a result was to establish a community-based radio station to acquire and exchange information on issues of common interest.

Participatory research

In **Brazil**, more than 30,000 adolescents carried out a cultural mapping exercise to identify the artistic and cultural expressions that form the identity of a community. The goal was to preserve the history, values and ethnic diversity of each region as part of a ‘Municipal Seal of Approval’ initiative undertaken by UNICEF in Brazil’s semi-

arid regions. In **Moldova**, young people carried out a qualitative survey on the impact of migration on child development.

The regional office in the Middle East and North Africa conducted a training workshop on action research for adolescents and service providers from **Jordan** and the **Occupied Palestinian Territory**. This training enabled adolescents in Jordan to lead the research process in three refugee camps and provide baseline data on the situation of adolescents. Following the action research, adolescents planned to address the key issues they identified by launching adolescent-led initiatives, including drama and filmmaking.

Peer counselling and education

Many country offices reported activities designed to engage young people as peer educators or counsellors. Such activities may play an important role in building the capacities of young people to understand and advocate on behalf of their peers. Moreover, these projects reflect one of the core elements of participation – that young people themselves often drive social change, including behavioural change.⁸ In **Lesotho**, UNICEF supported activities to train girls and boys as peer educators on human rights, life skills and HIV/AIDS prevention, testing and counselling. Peer educators performed in road shows, reaching 10,000 young people through entertainment. In **Indonesia**, children in West Java received training on child protection, including violence, abuse, exploitation and trafficking, through a participatory process of peer education.

In the Brazilian municipalities that participated in the UNICEF ‘Municipal Seal of Approval’ initiative, more than one million adolescents developed environmental education projects to learn about, and to preserve, the natural resources of their municipalities.

An innovative variation on peer education was implemented in **Myanmar**, where out-of-school youth were involved in the development of a children's book based on their own life experiences. This activity was part of a national initiative to produce books for children up to 15 years old that would act as catalysts to motivate young people to read in order to improve their literacy skills.

In **Maldives**, school children were engaged in the planning and preparation of a school-based initiative on water, sanitation and hygiene. Students and teachers participated in the design and development of active learning kits based on four key conservation principles: water supplies, waste minimization, renewable energy and biodiversity.

In **Somalia**, 55 peer educators provided life skills training in HIV/AIDS to their colleagues in youth organizations. A programme to expand youth-friendly, gender-sensitive health and social services in **Iran** emphasized peer outreach education as well as confidential counselling to reduce the risk of HIV infection among at-risk

⁸ PPP, section 13

children, youth and women. In **Belize**, new peer educators were certified as part of an HIV/AIDS prevention project implemented by the Red Cross. High school counsellors were trained as national trainers, with responsibility to certify peer educators in their respective institutions.

Through the **Jamaica** 4H Club leadership programme, adolescents were trained to engage their peers in discussion and impart life skills regarding HIV/AIDS prevention, drug and child abuse. Informal peer education activities were implemented within communities in **Macedonia** that are already part of a UNICEF-supported social development project. Training activities to support peer education reached 400 young people in 25 local communities.

For their rights-based approach to preventing HIV/AIDS amongst adolescents, UNICEF **Uruguay** implemented several strategies in combination, including a child and adolescent participatory process, adolescent empowerment, communication on HIV/AIDS prevention and a healthy lifestyle, peer education, involvement of youth organizations, use of new communication technologies and development of child-adult negotiation skills. As a result, more adolescents were involved in the planning, organization and implementation of activities targeting HIV/AIDS prevention and the promotion of healthy lifestyles and groups were empowered to ensure the sustainability of the process.

National committees promoted peer education on UNICEF and its work, global interdependence and children's rights. Projects that encourage young people to conduct research and prepare presentations are well regarded by teachers and education experts and often feature in curricula. This illustrates how national committees must monitor developments in education within their countries to find opportunities for intervention and engagement.

In **Belgium**, UNICEF has designated "Speak Up Day" as part of an annual school campaign on children's rights. Children give presentations in class on rights issues and are given diplomas. Students aged 10-12 can also organize their class as "Responsible World Citizens" who advocate for children's rights and raise money, an initiative supported by the national committee and volunteer network.

UNICEF Luxembourg built a peer-to-peer education initiative at the request of high school students who wanted to do something for UNICEF as part of a study unit in which students were asked to choose and implement a project over a period of six months. The national committee suggested an HIV/AIDS campaign and students received training, information and other materials. They subsequently acted as guides for a UNICEF exhibition and also worked at UNICEF stalls and participated in charity events, conferences and other activities.

Wherever they can national committees work with the media, and a few, like **Austria's** programmes on HIV/AIDS for ICDB and **Norway's** web-based teaching package, have been able to involve young people in meaningful programmes about the work of UNICEF. The **US Fund** is part of a consortium trying to bring about

ratification of the CRC, and, through an essay competition, is giving a voice to young people who have learnt about their rights, so they can be part of the leverage.

Programme monitoring and evaluation

By contributing to monitoring and evaluating activities, young people have an opportunity to share valuable insights concerning the effectiveness of programmes and policies in serving their needs. Participating in monitoring and evaluation also provides young people with a mechanism through which they can hold programme providers and policymakers accountable, while helping them to learn about the complexities of programme design and implementation.

In **China**, children were trained to monitor the protection of their own rights in child-friendly schools. In **Myanmar**, 6,784 children participated in a study to monitor learning achievement in schools and life skills programmes. Children in **Turkey** participated in an evaluation of training programmes for wardens in detention centres. In **Moldova**, young people participated in a review of a programme for young people's health development and participation.

Fundraising

UNICEF Australia's "Day for Change" campaign, modelled on an annual fundraiser started in the United Kingdom in 1988, engages school students from around the country in education and fundraising in support of specific UNICEF country programmes. Schools can register through a website created in conjunction with the New South Wales Department of Education and Training (www.unicefdayforchange.org.au) that provides teaching resources and games and activities for students. It includes information on the Convention on the Rights of the Child, key UNICEF priority areas and country-specific projects. The campaign has been running for two years and currently partners with nearly all state and territory departments of education. The national committee feels that through increased support to schools and students, youth participation could be increased.

In the **Czech Republic**, UNICEF implements an initiative originally started in Italy known as the 'Pigotta Project' in which primary-school children produce rag dolls, to be sold by UNICEF to support immunization projects, and are also educated about children's rights. **UNICEF Korea** has created a variation of the doll project with the purpose of promoting cultural diversity, recycling and child survival. The project is called 'Ttiat,' a word meaning 'friendly feeling among siblings' in Korean. Though the project is still in its pilot phase, many teachers and parents have expressed great interest since November 2007.

In a successful project started by **UNICEF Germany** secondary school students donate their salary from one day of work (usually about €10-20). **UNICEF Finland** nominates 17 schools annually as UNICEF schools. The committee reports good examples of peer-to-peer communication, as students advocate for UNICEF and organize at least one fundraising event each year.

UNICEF **Finland** also sponsors an annual walk for primary school students, which is complemented by the distribution of child-friendly material on children's rights and the Millennium Development Goals. In **Norway** the national committee also holds a sponsored walk for primary schools. A teacher's guide provides suggestions for preparation activities focusing on children's rights and the Millennium Development Goals and information about the project that will benefit from the fundraising activity. Feedback from teachers has been very positive.

In **France**, an award-winning UNICEF project called 'Brikkado' aims to heighten awareness by linking recycling and children's rights. Participating schools collect beverage cartons to be recycled into UNICEF gift paper and students learn about children's rights in class. The paper is sold at Christmas with proceeds benefitting polio vaccination campaigns. Teachers are interested in the programme because it fits into the school curricula and schools have set up innovative approaches that go beyond what is proposed in the teacher's kit. The national committee is trying to work more closely with the Ministry of Education to improve how teachers get information on the programme.

UNICEF Germany has a unique activity that directly links participation and fundraising. Since 2004, their 'Junior Ambassadors for Children's Rights' contest has been held for young people between ages 8 and 17. In the 2005-2006 academic year 12,000 children participated in activities to raise funds and awareness about global children's rights issues. Posters, leaflets and badges were produced to instruct children on how to participate in the contest and a newsletter was sent out to children already enrolled. A 16-member jury made up of eight former Junior Ambassadors and eight adults, including children's rights activists, evaluated the documentation from hundreds of projects. The competition, featured www.juniorbotschafter.de, has two new children's rights themes every year and materials are provided for children, young people and parents.

Some examples of innovative prize winners in 2006 included the Coro Bambini choir, which raised funds to build and open a school in Africa; a high school class that worked together to create a captivating and informative game about children's rights; a group of individuals who created a child rights calendar; and another group that compiled a book called 'Kids for Kids,' in which each chapter was written by a young person and focused on one of the articles from the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

National committees must continually explore new ways of linking fundraising and education programmes. Most have budgets for the production of resources that are provided free to schools for fundraising, where production funds are deducted from income. Competition for the school audience is fierce, with other charities and NGOs also sending materials and organizing events. Some schools like to vary their collaboration as a way of ensuring impartiality. Sometimes, young people themselves have to 'sell' their favourite charity to a selection panel of their peers; other times the school council or forum makes a decision after researching organizations through the Internet.

The **Iceland** national committee started a new, youth-centred fundraising project in high schools in early 2008. The name of the project, 'UNICEF-uppreisnin,' translates as 'the UNICEF uprising or rebellion.' This refers both to the rebellious attitude of teenagers and the desires of people who want to change the world.

An online fundraising tool kit (http://www.unicef.is/UNICEF_uppreisnin) includes: facts about the work of UNICEF; creative fundraising suggestions; videos with UNICEF messages and public service announcements; and hosting templates for designing banners, posters and flyers. Schools can design their own campaigns using materials from the website and ideally students will take on that role. Once the design is complete, they are sent to a printing press that has become a partner in the project. They will print a certain number of materials for each school free of charge.

The **Colombia** country office also reported on fundraising activities conducted by young people. Concerts and a 'Change for UNICEF' project, implemented with the participation of 200 schools, generated income and promoted UNICEF programmes.

Less well documented, but an important measure of the profile and respect for UNICEF within a given country, is the amount of unsolicited funds that are donated. A survey in **Italy** on UNICEF recognition and understanding amongst 23 million Italians aged 15-44 clearly demonstrated several interesting points:

- UNICEF is best known among 15-35 year olds;
- People who have had contact with Education for Development material demonstrated a better understanding of UNICEF, more accurate knowledge of UNICEF activities and held UNICEF in higher esteem than those who had no contact with this material;
- Those children and young people that have had contact with education materials and programmes are more likely to become not just donors, but important donors (providing regular and significant donations).

UNICEF Italy does not deliberately promote fundraising through schools but provides support and resources for schools that decide to do so on their own. The committee's main programme involves working with primary and secondary schools to promote children's rights and peace education. Teachers and students are asked to analyze whether the Convention on the Rights of the Child is promoted and respected within the school system, thereby encouraging student participation. The 'nine steps towards child-friendly schools' are used as a framework to develop educational activities and teachers and students measure their outcomes using a set of quantitative and qualitative indicators.

(c) Media and arts

Opportunities for young people to share their perspectives and opinions through the media are a critical form of participation. When young people participate in public awareness campaigns about topics such as healthy lifestyles, disease prevention and children's rights – either as spokespeople or by creating promotional materials – they

may be more effective than adults in influencing the attitudes or behaviour of their peers. Producing media materials about their own stories, experiences and ideas promotes consideration of the concerns and perspectives of young people and the recognition of their rights.

Regional media events and performances

Programme Countries

To mark the twentieth anniversary of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster, country offices in **Russia, Belarus and Ukraine** organized a regional event in which children participated in photographic workshops on the theme of 'Chechnya Through the Eyes of Children.' Exhibitions of their work were produced in Minsk, Grozny and Moscow.

As part of the celebration of the sixtieth anniversary of UNICEF, children in **Croatia** gave presentations based on the 2006 State of the World's Children report. Their presentations were recorded and broadcast by local media. The stories were also published in a book, entitled 'A Life Like Mine,' distributed to primary schools and children's libraries as part of the Education for Development efforts in that country.

In **Costa Rica**, five film producers were invited to present films on children's rights during a festival sponsored by UNICEF and the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports. A project in one province of **Indonesia** provided children with opportunities to express their feelings and emotions through art. In **Nicaragua**, 4,000 children participated in a song festival on HIV/AIDS prevention, during which 106 children were trained in theatrical, musical, photographic and radio expression. A contest on drawing, story writing and poetry was held in **Cuba** in honour of the Inter-American Day of Water, in which 1,138 children participated.

More than 30,000 children in **Swaziland** participated in a national theatre festival on the theme of child abuse, thereby voicing their concerns on this issue and also promoting child participation. Dramatic productions by children also strengthened children's platforms for discussing HIV and AIDS.

Industrialized countries

An annual art competition held by **UNICEF Greece** in collaboration with the Ministry of Education promotes awareness of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and focuses specifically on children in kindergarten and the fifth grade of primary school. Schools participating in the programme tend to undertake it as a class activity and do so in response to material promoting the competition. Children are required to create their own booklets and posters expressing their opinions about issues that affect their lives or their views about their rights. The programme includes an exhibition of the children's work, and prizes are awarded to the winners at a ceremony attended by government and United Nations representatives, NGOs, participating schools and friends of UNICEF.

UNICEF Norway holds an art competition every year on United Nations Day. Grade 5 students are invited to take part in a drawing competition focusing on different articles in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Primary schools are given posters with details about the competition and a teacher's guide on the back. Brochures about the convention are available to be used in preparing the activity, as well as information on the national committee's website.

Children are included in the jury to select the winners and the selected drawing is produced as a UNICEF greeting card. A Norwegian painter creates a collage from the entries that is given to the Minister of Children and Equality to hang in her office for the next year.

UNICEF Greece holds an annual multicultural festival that aims to promote interdependence, volunteerism and social justice. Children from different ethnic groups, including refugee children, children with special needs and children from disadvantaged groups, all have the chance to participate in organized educational activities, games and entertainment. Educators, animators and artists promote children's participation and encourage the exchange of experiences between children. About 500 children and 50 educators participate each year.

The **U.S. Fund for UNICEF** is unusual in that it is situated in a country that has not ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The fund is therefore part of a consortium working to raise awareness of the convention and build support for its ratification. An essay competition will involve young people making the argument for their country to ratify the convention.

Youth journalism and media projects

UNICEF supported opportunities for young people in several countries to develop their skills as journalists and photographers. Young people were also supported to produce and broadcast radio or video programmes and write articles or publish newspapers about issues of concern to them.

Programme Countries

In **Armenia**, in cooperation with the NGO InterNews, 10 children were trained in computer graphics, design and scenario development and contributed to the production of 15 television programmes for children and youth. In **Haiti**, 80 children were trained on media techniques and produced approximately 20 radio shows on child rights and HIV/AIDS in a project carried out in partnership with the PANOS Institute.

UNICEF strengthened a youth radio programme in **Costa Rica** by supporting production of 20 programmes on topics such as trafficking, social vulnerability, football gangs and mass media, among others. The production team took four recording tours, during which they also trained local youth on the use of radio equipment and produced and aired a local radio show with young people. In **Papua New Guinea**, at a national youth summit convened by the National Youth Council,

youth groups produced radio programmes in a local language to disseminate information about HIV/AIDS. UNICEF continued its support to communication initiatives created by, for and about young people in **Kosovo**, including a multi-ethnic radio programme broadcast on 40 stations and in three languages.

In **Namibia**, a radio programme by and for 10-14 year olds was implemented through schools, along with the development of a youth paper. In **Timor-Leste**, UNICEF trained 88 high school students from six schools and a journalism club on the Convention of the Rights of the Child and ethical reporting on children and women. The journalism club also produced an exhibition on the theme of child rights. A project in **Thailand** promotes a child-friendly media environment and youth participation in the media through the establishment of bureaus in 42 schools and training for students and teachers.

In **São Tome and Principe**, five young journalists produce bi-monthly articles in the country's national newspaper. An NGO, in partnership with UNICEF, oversees their work and the country office notes that this is a significant achievement in a country where the dominant mindset is that children are not capable of producing something credible by themselves.

A child-to-child training programme was implemented in **Eritrea** to facilitate interaction between six school clubs created through the Sara Communication Initiative. Those visits provided an opportunity for children in various geographic areas to be heard and achieve national coverage. In **Burundi**, 19 children and young people were trained in radio journalism and produced radio broadcasts. The programmes included interviews with the commander of United Nations operations in Burundi as well as the President of Burundi.

In **Moldova**, UNICEF and a public radio organization inaugurated the first national youth studio, while four regional radio studios and one youth television studio were created to produce original programming by and for young people. In addition, young people conducted a photo mission to six villages to record the conditions of children. In **Brazil**, adolescents produced radio programmes about their rights that were broadcast via community and commercial radio stations.

In **Tanzania**, UNICEF supported the establishment of youth-led community radio stations in two districts and helped to set up four media institutions that have now started producing child-to-child radio and television programmes. One hundred and twenty-five children and youth were trained in radio and television programming. Radio listening clubs were established in youth centres in three districts and a youth magazine was distributed across the country.

In **Mozambique**, more than 350 young people were involved as presenters and producers of radio and TV programmes by and for young people. Recognizing that radio reaches more people than print media, UNICEF and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization created the country's first community radio network, encompassing 49 community radio stations.

A community-based radio station was established in **Gabon** as the outgrowth of an idea generated by adolescents during a community debate on children's rights attended by government officials, local authorities and UNICEF. The adolescents felt that an FM community radio station would enable them to acquire information, exchange experiences and communicate freely on issues of common interest.

Additional references to programmes to train young people and support their production of radio and TV programmes were cited in annual reports from **Uganda, Madagascar, Sri Lanka, Belize and the Dominican Republic.**

Young people in **Belize** and **Moldova** produced videos and television programmes about HIV/AIDS and healthy lifestyles. In **Yemen**, young people produced a video representing children's opinions on the environment. A project in Aceh, **Indonesia**, consisted of a mobile cinema, children's filmmaking workshops and video diaries. Thirty children attended the workshops and the 14 video diaries were broadcast on national television and screened at the Jakarta Film Festival.

Two projects in Latin America promoted cultural participation and pride through youth media. With the support of the government in **Costa Rica**, young people produced short films about cultural participation that were aired on national and cable channels. The series included 20 programmes focusing on the experiences and rights of marginalized and vulnerable young people. In **Belize**, 15 adolescents aged 12-17 researched and documented Mayan oral histories and created a film to preserve and deepen Mayan cultural identity.

Young people from the tsunami-affected province of Phang Nga in **Thailand** participated in a year-long project to build leadership and media skills. Representing Buddhist, Muslim, Moken (or sea gypsy) and migrant backgrounds, the 60 young people were trained in digital photography and documented life after the tsunami through photos and by writing journals about their experiences. Their work was covered by international media outlets and was displayed in Asia, the United States and Europe. UNICEF plans to extend the project to focus on young people as peacemakers and emphasize cross-cultural youth leadership.

Industrialized countries

In many countries, children and young people have limited opportunities to directly interact with the media to influence decision-making and participate in production.

The International Children's Day of Broadcasting (ICDB) is an annual opportunity for young people to present their own work. In 2006, young people in **Austria** were involved in the production of programming about that year's theme, children and HIV/AIDS, on two of the country's main television stations.

For a children's programme on the public television station, four children conducted interviews on the status of HIV in Austria and raised awareness about the situation of children in developing countries. Media professionals helped them complete their

report. Young people also produced a report on children and HIV/AIDS for a youth magazine programme aired on OKTO TV.

Forming long-term relationships with producers and presenters of children's television programmes must be an important element of a media strategy for national committees. The national committee in **Finland** has forged such a relationship with a television channel, Nelonen, and together they hold an annual event for second grade students in which the children produce videos in conjunction with ICDB.

Newspapers and online publications

Relationships with newspapers are also valuable. In **Australia** and **Germany**, regular columns provide information that students can use for discussion. In **Germany**, an agreement between UNICEF and a newspaper publisher provides opportunities for young people to write articles that appear in local newspapers across one state.

Many national committees have their own youth websites and also provide material for the websites of media partners. The national committee in **France** has created a website to inform young people of the rights of children. The site (www.defensedenepasagir.fr) posts information about current events and the situation of children around the world and gives examples of concrete actions that can be taken to support UNICEF. Young people also have opportunities to express themselves through articles, photographs and videos and are offered forums where they can react to and discuss the content, thereby creating a truly interactive network. The site also allows them to create links between their own experiences and those of young people elsewhere.

The national committee has found that the website enables them to reach a target audience that is otherwise difficult to serve through the traditional channels of communication. The committee is working to develop further opportunities to link young people to UNICEF campaigns and to seek their reactions online to a greater extent.

Many national committees have online teaching resources, but UNICEF **Norway** has created an innovative web-based teaching resource for grades 5-7 (www.unicef.no/verdensbarn). In eight short videos, 10-year-olds from Nepal, Swaziland and Norway present messages on children's rights. The videos, along with information about the children, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Millennium Development Goals, make up an education programme that challenges students to reflect on their own lives and place in the world, using these new 'friends' as a mirror. They are invited to create their own responses to the material through videos, photography, drama or other means.

(d) Advocacy and capacity building

For young people to successfully participate in making decisions that affect their lives, peers and adults must recognize their capacities and uphold their rights. Also,

practices, policies, institutions and other mechanisms must be in place to facilitate their participation. Young people must also be aware of their own rights and have an opportunity to develop their capacities to participate.

Several of the programmes reviewed included a capacity-building component such as research or training, as well as opportunities for direct participation by children and young people. Often, an improvement is seen in the attitudes of adults and their commitment to adolescent participation as a result of young people's participation in activities such as children's parliaments or summits. Indeed, when adults and young people engage in productive dialogue or work together on policymaking, media activities, or programme design, the skills and capacities of both parties to expand participation is likely to grow.

Building young people's capacity to participate

A small number of country offices implemented training activities specifically to help young people develop the skills they needed to participate in identifying, expressing and advocating for their own needs. These training projects were not immediately integrated with other participatory activities referenced.

Adolescents at youth centres in a rural community in **Syria** received life skills training via role-play and interactive games, addressing topics such as self-awareness, critical thinking, communication and dealing with diversity and differences. As an indicator of success, many young people from that programme showed willingness to speak in public about their own problems and needs. In **Uganda**, part of the preliminary work of UNICEF in the conflict-affected northern region includes a strategy to build the self-confidence of vulnerable children and promote resilience and a sense of self-control. In **Barbados**, an objective for 2007 was to incorporate 'health and family life' education into the national core curriculum to increase the abilities of young people to actively participate in societal development.

Public awareness campaigns

In many countries and regions, traditional and cultural attitudes present a challenge to youth participation. Such beliefs include the idea that young people should not voice their opinions, that they lack the capacity to make a valuable contribution to decision-making, or that they tend to be delinquents or criminals. A few country offices are working to combat this by initiating public information campaigns to promote positive attitudes towards the participation of young people.

In **Peru**, a campaign was conducted to promote the participation of children and adolescents and generate favourable public opinion at the national and regional levels. The campaign also included an opinion poll on the perceptions of voters toward candidates' proposals for children.

In **Belarus**, media partners broadcast a set of television and radio programmes about UNICEF, its mandate and positions and about programmes promoting youth participation, as well as other issues. An advocacy plan in **Morocco** to promote child

and youth participation will include a communication component targeting the public and involving the media as well as Goodwill Ambassadors, intellectuals, artists and young people. A child-friendly version of the Convention on the Rights of the Child will be used in **Mozambique** to support partners working to mobilize and raise awareness among children and young people on their rights to survival, development and participation; 20,000 copies of the booklet will be disseminated.

In **Argentina**, the country office issues bi-monthly electronic bulletins that appear in the press and on radio, focusing on the participation of young people and adolescents as well as other issues related to children's rights. The bulletin includes opinions from national public officials, life stories, photos and other materials to promote awareness of the rights of children. A similar programme was implemented in **Venezuela**, in which bulletins for the general public and for targeted audiences are produced and disseminated at least once a month. Participation of the voice of children according to their age and capacity was a priority theme.

Building capacity and channels for children's participation in national policy

An important aspect of UNICEF work in all sectors is "upstream" advocacy to governments, donors and other policymakers. In several countries in 2006, UNICEF advocated for the development of national policies and programmes to enable, institutionalize and mainstream children's participation.

Some countries developed new policies or national frameworks focused specifically on support for the participation of children and young people. In the **Philippines**, the Council for the Welfare of Children board adopted a national framework for children's participation, which defines the principles for children's participation in different arenas and provides recommendations for its promotion. In **Mongolia**, the cabinet approved a national policy on participation. In **Nepal**, UNICEF revived an existing network with the objective of developing a national framework for participation. A law on youth empowerment and participation was delivered to the National Assembly for approval in **Kosovo**. The aim of that law is to ensure genuine participation of young people in decision-making at the municipal and national level and to create mechanisms for its realization.

Provisions to support participation were key components of national youth policies or plans in **Ecuador** and **Madagascar**. In **Malawi**, UNICEF supported a review of the national youth policy to promote a framework for youth development and participation. In **Azerbaijan**, the country office advised the poverty reduction strategy development secretariat on how to develop a new programme that would be more child-focused and include provisions for child and youth participation. A project in **Vietnam** included a focus on the right to participation for young people in national and global processes. UNICEF worked with the government and United Nations country team in **Afghanistan** to formulate a programme to increase youth participation in governance, recovery, development and peace building.

UNICEF also supported the right to participate through legal frameworks. A forum in Central America on caring for child and adolescent survivors of sexual exploitation, undertaken by the UNICEF regional office, stressed the need for adolescent involvement and focused on the promotion of public policies and actions that targeted populations most at risk. Laws for the protection of children's rights in **Mexico** and the harmonization of national legislation in **Madagascar** included provisions to protect children's rights to participate.

Provisions for participation were also incorporated into national plans and policies for other sectors, such as school governance. A new school decentralization process in **Georgia** is anticipated to lead to the increased participation of children, young people and parents in planning and decision-making processes.

A national baseline assessment on the nature and extent of child participation in **Kenya** was completed to identify current strengths and key participation gaps. Based on the results, education officials conducted their own assessment of children's participation in schools and a programme was designed to advocate for increased participation. The long-term objective is to provide opportunities for children to elect representatives to area advisory councils and school governance. Also in Kenya, UNICEF advocated for the strengthening of child participation in water and sanitation programmes.

In **Central African Republic**, UNICEF arranged for the head of state and members of government to visit youth-friendly information and counselling centres, resulting in a promise from the Ministry of Youth Affairs to extend the model using a decentralized process throughout the country. UNICEF provided continued advocacy for the implementation as well as technical assistance for the elaboration of a national youth action plan.

Promotion of children's participation in local policy

Through UNICEF advocacy, municipal governments in **Nicaragua** committed to facilitating child participation in local development. In **Peru**, UNICEF provided technical assistance to encourage children and adolescents to take part in discussions on the municipal budget. Children's participation forums in **Swaziland** were decentralized to the local level, with an emphasis on providing those in rural areas with opportunities to voice their opinions. In **Jordan**, a study was conducted on the status of student councils and parent-teacher associations. The study formed the basis of a joint action plan to increase the level of participation of adolescents at local governments and schools.

UNICEF **Portugal** has a partnership with the city council of Sintra, a town with a large immigrant population. The national committee is supporting associations that work with those children by providing training and resources for teachers and promoting citizenship and the protection of children's rights.

Creating and strengthening partnerships

In **Russia**, a Child Rights Ombudsperson Institute was strengthened, focusing on independent monitoring of child rights and enhancing the participation of children and young people on issues critical to them. UNICEF established a media and knowledge centre in **Chile** to improve knowledge dissemination and capacities with respect to youth participation. In the **Dominican Republic**, UNICEF formed a partnership with a forum of NGOs working with children and youth to develop a national policy document on children youth and HIV/AIDS. A working group on communication and child participation was formed in **Sri Lanka**, while in **Turkey**, UNICEF created a private-sector partnership for child participation with Algida, a manufacturer of ice cream.

In **Syria**, UNICEF developed new partnerships with civil society and government actors, building capacity through training on adolescent participation and the development of a new model of working with adolescents, empowering them as actors of change. In **Peru**, young people were encouraged to draft proposals for presidential, congressional and gubernatorial candidates at the regional and local levels. The goal was to encourage candidates to include issues of relevance to children and adolescents in their platforms.

Training of key actors

Several training workshops were held with key adult actors in child participation, including government leaders, civil society, teachers, parents and young people themselves. The South Asia regional office introduced a course on Child and Youth Participation and in **Belarus**, government officials participated in a training workshop on youth participation. A workshop on youth policy and participation was conducted in **Egypt** in partnership with other international organizations as well as the Egyptian Youth Consultative Group.

A forum in the Latin America region highlighted the need for strategies and methodologies to prevent commercial sexual exploitation, with an emphasis on adolescent involvement and the promotion of public policies and actions aimed at populations at greatest risk.

In **Myanmar**, UNICEF conducted a workshop for NGOs, community-based organization, artists and journalists on innovative approaches to producing media. Workshop participants developed and pre-tested video and animation spots, radio messages, books and posters. A training workshop for media professionals in **Madagascar** focused on the theme of listening to children.

Several training workshops in **Jordan** targeted diverse populations and sectors, including parents, advocates and service providers in refugee camps. A national workshop focusing on effective participation in schools brought together representatives from governmental and nongovernmental organizations, teachers, parents and adolescents for the purpose of sensitizing policymakers to the importance of students' participation in school life. The workshop was also intended to promote a

dialogue between actors and resulted in recommendations being used by the Ministry of Education to enhance participation in schools.

Through a project in **Thailand** and 17 other countries in the region, 139 participants were trained in seven specific subject areas, including child and youth participation, prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV, children's rights and water supply and environmental sanitation.

Through a joint project in **Morocco** between UNICEF and the United Nations Population Fund, 26 trainers were taught child and youth participation techniques. They then led several training workshops for youth associations and conducted activities for partners on the framework of child and youth participation. A training kit on participation developed by the regional office was adapted to Moroccan needs and a situation analysis on child and youth participation was initiated in pilot sites in three regions.

In **Lesotho**, members of local partner organizations were trained to develop knowledge and skills on child participation. The process was informed by a poll of more than 530 children and youth on the priority issues in their lives.

A project in **Chile** included a training component for key social actors who work with adolescents, on opinion polls involving adolescents, the collection and analysis of information on the situation of adolescents using a rights perspective and the strengthening and publicizing of concrete and innovative experiences working with and for adolescents.

Tools, guidelines, and manuals

UNICEF promoted good practices in youth participation through the development and dissemination of tools, guidelines and manuals. Materials produced in **Ukraine** included a guidebook on the participation of young people in the development of health education materials and a set of life skills education teaching materials.

UNICEF **Jordan** developed and disseminated manuals for parents on strategies to improve communication and facilitate the participation of children in decision making, as well as a manual dealing with the issue of tobacco use among adolescents addressed to peer educators. The two manuals were tested by 260 parents and 240 adolescents and are currently being used in initiatives such as health-promoting schools and adolescent-friendly youth centres. A training manual on child participation techniques for children and facilitators was also finalized in **Vietnam**.

In **Uruguay**, UNICEF developed a toolkit on adolescent participation that included instructive videos and manuals. The materials cover: adult-adolescent relationships in the family and the community; the importance of adolescent participation in making decisions in education and on issues that affect them; relating to police and legal authorities; promoting a healthy lifestyle, with special emphasis on the prevention of HIV; and arts and culture as an effective means of adolescent expression.

Several country offices in the Middle East and North Africa region developed criteria for adolescent-friendly and safe spaces in which young people can meet, network and plan their own activities.

Research

As noted earlier, many of the policies and programmes implemented or developed in 2006 were based on research studies and most studies initiated that year were also intended for use in developing specific programmes or policies.

In **Uganda**, UNICEF facilitated and completed a baseline study on the status of child participation, which gauged understanding, perceptions and practices in 12 sample districts. The findings will inform the development of a national guideline on child participation. Research findings in **Malawi** helped identify the need for improved youth programming, especially for girls, orphans and vulnerable children.

In **Egypt**, a desk review on young people, complemented by a youth consultation, assisted in identifying key gaps in knowledge and informed the design of a national survey on young people in 2008. A study in **Bosnia and Herzegovina** was undertaken to identify obstacles to supporting and enhancing meaningful participation for socially excluded children. Mapping exercises and other studies on child and adolescent social and civic participation were carried out in **Belarus, Uganda, Morocco, Costa Rica, Lesotho and Brazil**.

In **Costa Rica**, participants in the 'State of the Nation' programme deliberated with UNICEF and PANIAMOR about the nature of and obstacles to youth and adolescent citizen participation. They also produced articles and assessments and undertook an investigation related to the topic, which the country office planned to publish in 2007.

The country office in the **Lao People's Democratic Republic** received a contribution in 2005 to support a project to combat violence against children. The aim of the project was to provide specific data and a situation assessment of violence against children, share information and propose recommendations, facilitate and promote child participation in the collection, analysis and presentation of information and guarantee the protection of children through the development of comprehensive legislation.

A second report on adolescent participation was under development in **Comoros** in 2006, which was intended to feed into a larger survey on participation in the Indian Ocean region. The report aimed to help define the profile of adolescents from a geographical and socio-economic point of view, understand their aspirations and visions, examine the constraints with which they cope and consider their expectations, fears and un-met needs, in order to formulate policies and programmes at the national and regional levels.

Capacity building in industrialized countries

Education for Development programmes in industrialized countries promote participation opportunities for children and young people within the very institutions that matter to them.

In three countries with very developed programmes – **Italy, Slovakia and the United Kingdom** – there is some measure of financial support from governments for UNICEF efforts. However, the first challenge for the national committees is to convince teachers and education specialists that teaching students about their rights will not result in anarchy and an undermining of authority.

There is growing evidence of the positive effects of teaching students about their rights and responsibilities within an environment where adults respect them. In the **United Kingdom**, the ability of students to make their voices heard is one of the criteria for achieving the first level of the ‘Rights Respecting School Award’ (RRSA) developed by the national committee. School councils are a common method of achieving this, but many schools have found other ways to ensure the opinions of students are not only sought, but also responded to in a positive manner. The commitment to increasing student input in decision-making has even led to the creation of school councils for children aged 4-7, although many would say that children at this age cannot possibly have the skills and confidence to speak and represent others. Children and staff at RRSA schools report high levels of cooperation, harmony and happiness, increased achievement levels and low levels of bad behaviour.

Adolescent Development and Participation Unit
Gender, Rights and Civic Engagement Section
Division of Policy and Practice
UNICEF New York

Child Rights Advocacy and Education Section
Private Fundraising and Partnerships
UNICEF Geneva