



*We've Got
Something to Say!*



*Promoting Child
and Youth Agency*

A Facilitator's Manual

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Using this Publication

Aims...

This publication aims to:

- **Provide Key Information** regarding child and youth agency, the foundations of CCF's work on children and poverty, and the importance of children's perspectives and involvement.
- **Provide practical guidance** to help program staff, children, youth and adults in the community to engage children and youth during the all stages of programming and to build youth and child governing structures.
- **Improve the knowledge, skills and values of staff**, other adults and young leaders to promote child and youth agency in genuine and meaningful ways, and to establish partnerships with children and youth in the development process.

Audience...

This manual is intended to be helpful to anyone who plans, manages, implements, evaluates or funds any CCF programs where children and youth are partners in the development process. In particular, the manual is intended for use by CCF and Federation staff, community leaders, adults, children and youth to strengthen child and youth agency in the following ways:

CCF and Federation staff will be partnering with children and youth in all aspects of community development work and will promote their voice and role through a variety of activities. Staff members are therefore encouraged to follow the recommendations outlined in this document to ensure the voice of children and youth are heard and valued throughout the process.

Community leaders and adults will learn how to value and encourage the perspectives of girls and boys (of different ages and abilities) to be heard. Adult Federation and Association members will work in greater partnership with children and youth to respond to their concerns and suggestions. The Area Strategic Planning (ASP) process will be one key opportunity for community leaders and adults to involve children in information collection and to respond to the priorities identified by children in developing the three-year community development plan.

Children and Youth are encouraged to become more active in the development process through establishing and strengthening governance structures such as children and youth associations and federations, involving children in the ASP process, and supporting child/youth led projects through which children and youth can be involved in project planning, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Children and youth who are actively involved will be encouraged to follow the principles laid out in this guide to ensure inclusive opportunities for expression and representation of girls and boys (especially the most marginalized) and to ensure that children's views and suggestions remain integral to wider planning processes such as ASP. Aspects of the guide may be translated or simplified for the purposes of sharing the key ideas and principles with children and youth.

Structure...

This manual is divided into 7 Sections:

Section 1. The Importance of Child and Youth Agency

describes the concept of Child and Youth Agency that is promoted by CCF and the underlying principles to which CCF is committed. The importance of the UNCRC framework is mentioned and CCF's Standards of Practice in Child and Youth Agency are introduced. Key background information on the Area Strategic Planning (ASP) process is also provided.

Section 2. Preparing a Child Friendly Enabling Environment describes preparations that are needed to encourage adults to work in partnership with children and youth, recognizing and building upon their capabilities, encouraging their safe and meaningful participation. Key organizational implications in promoting child and youth agency are also highlighted, including the need to recruit and/or re-train staff as competent facilitators. Core competencies needed to facilitate children's agency are outlined, and some practical exercises to strengthen adults' knowledge, skills and attitudes in support of child and youth agency are described.

Section 3. Consulting with Children and Young People provides key tips and methods for gathering necessary information with and from girls and boys (of different ages and abilities) in a sensitive and effective way. Efforts to ensure the inclusion of the most marginalized groups of children and methods to identify sensitive issues that may not be easily accessible through traditional methods are described.

Section 4. Planning with Children and Young People discusses the importance of staying true to the intentions of the children involved in planning processes and offers techniques for ensuring that children's voices are influential during program design.

Note: When using the manual local facilitators may need to adapt some of the tools to fit their local context and should work in flexible ways with respect to children and young people's own views, interests and time considerations.

Section 5. Implementing with Children and Young People shares guidance which supports children and youth in implementing their own projects and in working in partnership with adults. It also outlines a process for helping young people develop their own budgets based on the projects that they would like to have implemented and describes CCF recommendations regarding budget allocations for child and youth-led initiatives.

Section 6. Governing with Children and Young People shares information and guidelines to support the establishment and strengthening of children and youth associations, committees, and federations which support children and young people's active involvement in governance structures and development processes.

Section 7. Monitoring and Evaluating with Children and Young People outlines key tools which can be used by children and young people to monitor and evaluate their own projects and initiatives. It also describes some processes, frameworks and tools which can be used to monitor and evaluate the process and impact of promoting child and youth agency.

Symbols are used in this publication to help organize the information provided.



The question-mark symbol identifies key questions that facilitators may have about about how to effectively promote the leading role of children and youth in community development process.



The light-bulb symbol identifies solutions or ideas about how to solve challenges that may be encountered in working with children and youth or in building an enabling environment for working with children and youth, including some good practice case studies.



The tool symbol identifies 'tools' or activities/exercises that will be helpful to use when working with children and youth (or in some cases, adults) on particular aspects of planning, designing, evaluating, budgeting or assessment.

Note: This manual uses many terms to describe young people including children, youth, and adolescents. Generally, all principles, guidance and tools described in this manual can be used with young people of most ages.

1. The Importance of Child and Youth Agency

This introductory section on the importance of child and youth agency includes sub-sections on:

- *Child and youth agency: a key element of CCF development practice*
- *The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*
- *Frameworks that promote child and youth agency*
- *Practice standards for child and youth agency*
- *Key background information on the ASP process*
- *Benefits of child and youth agency*

A. Child and Youth Agency: A Key Element of CCF Development Practice...

CCF is committed to fostering healthy child development by giving children and young people¹ a leading role in program development and implementation. One of the key elements of CCF's development practice is **child and youth agency** – the idea that children and young people are agents of change and are therefore capable of playing leading roles in their lives and in their communities. In the past, the voices of children were often overshadowed by parental and staff thoughts, feelings and insights, which frequently became the basis for program development. Engaging children and young people of different ages and abilities in discussions about **how they experience deprivation, exclusion and vulnerability**, and what they envision for the future is an important shift in CCF thinking and is a central component of the philosophy and methodology employed in CCF's new development practice.

¹ Children and young people (or youth) refer to people under the age of 24 years in keeping with the UN definitions of child (0-18 years) and youth (15-24 years). CCF places particular emphasis on those young people under the age of 18 years.

One of the main findings of the Poverty Study was that “*children are not passive recipients of experience but instead are active contributors to their own well-being and development. They think of themselves as contributors to their families, playing their own part in the care of younger siblings and incapacitated adults and in household maintenance and survival. Indeed, the assumptions of age-appropriate roles and responsibilities within the family and community can be a vital source of self-esteem and motivation for children.*”²

Young people have ideas and opinions about their own poverty, how it affects them, how to solve the problems that arise in their communities due to poverty, and how they can be part of programs that help children improve their quality of life. Moreover, it must be recognized that childhood is not a uniform life phase. Young people’s experience of poverty is continuously changing and is influenced by context, age, gender, dis/ability, ethnicity and other factors. Thus, it is crucial to engage with girls and boys of different ages and backgrounds to better understand their experiences and perspectives in each local context.

As a child-focused agency CCF places key emphasis on **children’s development**. Interventions should be informed by knowledge of child development epochs and pathways, as well as by an understanding of the broader context in which children live . To promote child agency it is important to engage with babies, toddlers and young children in active ways from the earliest age to build upon their evolving capacities to explore, to think, to express their views, to ask questions and listen, and to solve problems – as these qualities will remain with them. Children’s participation starts with close communication with the newborn child, sensitivity for his or her needs and capacity to understand what the infant communicates without words. Thus, efforts to promote child and youth agency should be mainstreamed across all CCF programs, including parenting education, ECD and education programs. Promoting the involvement of young children and furthering efforts which enable a participatory learning environment will enhance child and youth agency in the later years.

The **agency** of children and youth focuses on “*the capacity, condition or state of acting or of exerting power... It refers to process in which the infant, child or youth is an initiating or willful force that drives experiences and his/her own development*”⁴. CCF views agency as a social phenomenon, one that is part and parcel of the child’s natural development as a member of a family, peer group, and community. As children grow up within this social sphere, their capacity develops to cooperate, communicate, and exert influence within groups. Protagonism infers the right and the ability to advocate on one’s own behalf, to be in control and a part of the decision-making processes and interventions.

² *Child and Poverty Study.*

³ *see Dawes and Donald, 2005*

⁴ *see Schwartzman, 2005, p10*

B. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child...

One of the guiding documents for CCF's work with children is the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, 1989). CCF is in an exciting position to help children reach their full potential and to experience their participation rights through the promotion of child and youth agency. A commitment to helping young people express their views is essential to CCF's goal of placing children at the center of development efforts. The duty of adults to take children's views into account is well established in the UNCRC. CCF staff and partners have an obligation to help children fully participate in all aspects of programs and governance.

Children's participation rights:

Article 12 of the CRC states that children have the right to express their view and be heard in all matters affecting them. This article and Articles 13, 14, and 15 establishing the child's right to access to information, freedom of belief, and freedom of association, are some of the important articles that support a child's right to participation in family, community, culture and broader civil society. These rights apply to all children irrespective of age, gender, dis/ability, ethnicity, income etc (article 2 non-discrimination). However, the rights and responsibilities of parents are also respected to ensure guidance for the child that is appropriate to his or her evolving capacity (article 5 parental guidance and child's evolving capacity). Furthermore, the right to special support for children with disabilities (article 23) is articulated to promote self-reliance and facilitate their active participation in the community.

C. Frameworks that promote Child and Youth Agency...

Research and evaluation findings indicate that key quality elements of programming that foster the development of children and youth include⁵:

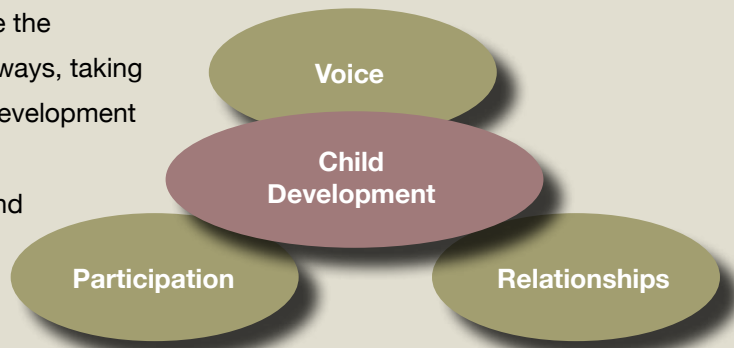
- a holistic approach with developmentally appropriate programs and approaches
- opportunities for young people to contribute in ways that are relevant
- caring and trusting relationships
- engaging activities that set high expectations for young people – focus on their strengths, foster their resiliency, and prepare them for adulthood, while retaining the elements of choice, challenge, fun and friendships.

Drawing upon such findings, CCF has developed a framework that guides program development.

⁵ see Schwartzman, 2005

CCF incorporates four elements into program design:

- Programs will be designed to facilitate the development of each child in holistic ways, taking into account the different phases of development through which each child passes.
- The voices of children will be heard and will shape the direction of programs.
- The participation of children and youth in leading roles in their own development, and in the development of their communities and societies, will be central to program implementation.
- Through program implementation, meaningful relationships will be formed between children, and between children and adults.



CCF is operationalizing this framework in the following ways:

- **Ensuring that children and youth are listened to, and have meaningful and regular opportunities to contribute** to their community's efforts to make life better for both adults and young people. This is achieved through formalizing the roles of children and youth in all aspects of community development (including the ASP process) and building the capacity of staff and community leaders to partner with children and youth.
- **Institutionalizing the voice of young people through the formation of Child and Youth Associations** that are responsible for working with Parent Associations to guide program development and implementation that the community has identified through a participatory planning process. These Associations are formed in each community where CCF works and are part of a multi-community Federation that is the legal entity and grassroots organization with which CCF partners for the purpose of community development.
- **Providing opportunities for children and youth to be directly responsible for the implementation of programs they care about** as part of an overall community development, poverty alleviation initiative. As program initiatives are developed and implemented, committees are formed, composed of representatives from Child, Youth, and Parent Associations. These committees oversee the array of programs that are being implemented. Children and youth take on direct oversight responsibility for a subset of programs, as negotiated among the representatives to the multi-community Federation.

- **Establishing Practice Standards for promoting child and youth agency** out of an understanding that children and youth can work effectively with one another as well as with adults to develop skills and engage in activities that have meaning and value to them and to their communities.

D. Practice Standards for Child and Youth Agency...

CCF promotes several key practices that are encompassed in the Standards of Practice for Child and Youth Agency. The Standards are statements of principles and were developed in order to provide common expectations about how CCF aims to work with and for young people. Primarily, they are to be used as a quality assurance tool throughout the project cycle and the evolution of associative structures. They will continue to be refined as CCF learns more about engaging young people in development.

Standards of Practice in Child and Youth Agency

Standard No. 1: Participation promotes the development of young people

Children and youth are benefiting from participation through developing life skills such as decision-making, relating with others, expressing their views, planning, and reaching consensus.

Standard No. 2: Young people are meaningfully contributing to problem identification, program planning, implementation and evaluation

Young people are participating in program planning through an extensive consultation process and participate in implementation and evaluation in ways that are child friendly and developmentally appropriate. Programs are designed so that opportunities for young people's participation are maximized.

Standard No. 3: Young people, especially those who are marginalized or disadvantaged, have opportunities and resources to act and advocate on their own behalf for their own interests.

Young people are choosing the kinds of activities they want to be a part of and the extent to which they want to be involved. Opportunities to act and advocate are fostered in the home, in the school, in youth organizations, in the church or in the community at large.

Standard No. 4: CCF and partners value, respect, and incorporate young people's ideas and views in program development

Adults are knowledgeable about child development and how children are affected by their environment. Adults are sensitive to and knowledgeable about how to work with young people in community development and adapt schedules, discussions and activities in order to ensure that children are comfortable and able to contribute to the development agenda.

Standard No. 5: Participation promotes the safety and protection of children and youth

Adults and young people understand the importance of child protection practices. Risk reduction is emphasized when working with young people on activities of interest that may present threats to their safety.

E. Key Background Information on the ASP Process...

Area Strategic Planning is a participatory, bottom-up process aimed at enabling an Area Federation to define their own development agenda through the active involvement of children, youth and adults. Through Area Strategic Planning, Area Federations will develop a series of 3-year programs that respond to the root causes of poverty, and build the resources within communities to catalyze long-lasting impact on the lives of poor children.

Figure 1: Program Cycle of Planning, Monitoring and Review



This guide can be used to maximize meaningful opportunities for child and youth involvement and influence in ASP processes. While the strategic planning, project monitoring, and participatory reviews have some distinct goals, they are best viewed as a connected process. They all work together to assist CCF and its partners to design, assess and improve the performance of programs over time. Thus, each section of this manual includes specific guidance which relates to ASP planning, implementation and review processes.

Area Strategic Planning

Area Strategic Planning is aimed at supporting CCF's goal of achieving broader, deeper and more lasting impact on child poverty. To do this, the ASP process is guided by several key principles. These principles can be seen in terms of the goals that ASP will help programs to achieve:

- **Understanding poverty:** Programs will be based on a deep understanding of, and will be responsive to the varied nature of child poverty across the communities where CCF works.
- **Leading role:** Programs will build the capacities of children, youth and parents to lead their own development. Each group will be given the space and support required to take decisions and action to improve the wellbeing of children in their communities and Areas.
- **Linkages:** Programs will be linked to and strengthen the resources that poor people call upon to improve their lives. Efforts will strive to build on the existing energies in communities and on relevant efforts of other development agencies.
- **Accountability:** Programs will be recognized by sponsors and donors for their value in addressing child poverty, and at the same time will be accountable to the partner communities, especially the powerless and marginalized groups.
- **Learning:** Programs will be based on best practices and continuous learning from experiences. Planning, action and review processes will be linked so that lessons from past programs are reapplied to improve future efforts.

Area Strategic Planning (cont.)

The ASP process generally involves:

1. **Community reflections on child poverty:** Initial immersion and reflection in communities to gain a deep understanding of child poverty in each context, including its manifestations (also referred to as ‘faces of poverty’) and causes, as well as the resources poor people rely on, and which can build built upon to address these causes.
2. **Area synthesis and draft program and project planning:** Developing programs and projects which respond to the immediate and structural causes of child poverty in the Area, while building on the existing resources identified.
3. **Community validation, prioritization and visioning:** Validating the proposed programs and projects in communities, prioritizing projects, and developing visions for the future for assessing program performance.
4. **Detailed project planning and ASP finalization:** Designing projects together with partners and technical experts, defining capacity building goals for the Area Federation(s), and developing estimated budgets for programs and obtaining final input on and approval of the ASP.

F. Benefits of Child and Youth Agency...

The advantages of engaging children and youth as agents of change and encouraging them to become actively involved in community development are far-reaching and benefit everyone involved.

Benefits for Young People:

- Increases self-confidence in their abilities to accomplish goals they set
- Increases children’s skills development and knowledge (communication, negotiation skills, conflict resolution, team work)
- Builds upon children’s resilience, resourcefulness and creativity
- Increases children’s understanding of their ability to affect positive change in their own lives and community of others
- Enhances their protection and well-being, and fosters protective mechanisms within the wider environment
- Develops a network of new friends including community role models and resource people
- Increases respect for children and children’s views from adults in the community which contributes to increased protection of children’s rights

Benefits for Adults⁴:

- Interact with young people in positive and helpful ways
- Invest time and energy in the future of the community
- Gain the respect of young people by working in partnership with them
- Opportunity to act upon innovative ideas from young minds in the community that will contribute to the betterment of the lives of adults and young people

By encouraging children to raise their voices, participate in community decisions, and develop relationships with each other and with adults in their community, we are in fact promoting healthy child development and strengthening the realization of children's rights.

⁶ Driskell, D. *Creating Better Cities for Children and Youth: A Manual for Participation, UNESCO Management of Social Transformations Program. 2002.*

2. Preparing a Child Friendly Enabling Environment

This section on preparing a child friendly enabling environment includes sub-sections on:

- Preparing adults in the community to value child and youth agency
- Organizational change to support child and youth agency
- Developing core competencies in adults to facilitate child and youth agency
- A case study on changes in the way adults see, listen to and relate to children and youth since implementation of the Bright Futures program in Uganda is presented.
- Practical tools to prepare adults to value child and youth agency, and to identify the core competencies needed as facilitators are shared.

As part of the development process, children, youth and adults need to learn to work together in a way that will maximize the contributions of all members of a community. All evidence suggests that significant efforts are needed to create a culture of listening and responding to the views of children and young people. Promoting children's agency is a ***time-consuming process of empowering children and preparing adults. It entails a long, gradual process of changing adult attitudes, behavior, institutional practices, approaches, and procedures, as well as enhancing skills and mechanisms, as children's agency is recognized at different levels***⁷. Taking children's agency seriously involves transforming the power relations between adults and children and creating new kinds of adult-child partnerships. In order for children and youth to meaningfully engage in community development, efforts must be made to create a child and youth friendly environment ensuring positive adult support.

⁷ See O'Kane (2003)

A. Preparing Adults in the Community to Value Child and Youth Agency...

In many communities and cultures adults are not used to engaging with children and youth as social actors, as people who have ideas and experiences to contribute to social development processes. Children’s competencies and experiences (even more so for girls, children with disabilities, and younger children) are generally underestimated and undermined. However, it is very important to change adult attitudes, so that they learn to value and to listen to the views of girls and boys of different ages and abilities, to understand their experiences of child poverty, and their ideas to improve their own well-being. Children’s perspectives and ideas are often different from adults, and it is important to value and build upon everyone’s perspective when developing strategies to address child poverty, particularly the views and experiences of the most marginalized children and youth. Therefore, some changes in attitudes and behavior by adults (children’s parents, community and religious elders, teachers, staff) may be required if children and young people are to be given genuine space to meaningfully participate in the development process. As illustrated by the case example below, adults’ perceptions of children and youth, and the way they engage with them can change with positive impact for children, families and for community development.

‘Before/After Body Map’ - Ugandan example of changes in the way adults see, listen to, and relate to children and youth since ‘Bright Futures’ and promotion of Child/ Youth Agency⁸:

Before 2004	After 2004 (Bright Futures)
‘Eyes’: Adult perspective on how they looked at children / youth	
Adults underrated the ability of the children and youth to participate in programs	The perception has changed and adults have realized that youth can perform, are brilliant and sometimes suggest ideas that adults do not think of
Adults planned for youth	Youth involved in the planning process
‘Ears’: Changes in the way adults listen to children and youth	
Tradition that children do not speak when an adult is talking and that children and youth should obey	Though traditions take time to change there is a significant change in efforts to enable children and youth to express their view and to listen to them
C&Y not listened to because there was no structure in place – there were not any committees with or for children and youth	Now structures are in place - the Child Youth Executive Committees - that enable children and youth to air their views and be listened to

⁸ CCF Uganda (2006) Workshop Report on Children and Young People’s Participation and Partnerships with Adults. Jinja 7-9 2006.

Before 2004	After 2004 (Bright Futures)
'Mouth': Changes on how adults or children speak to adults/youth	
Due to cultural background children and youth did not have a say	Youth now have a say and a stake in decision making
Adults dictated what children/youth should do e.g. stopping girls from going to school to get married	Now girls have a right to refuse, they have more choice
'Heart': Changes in way adults feel about children and youth	
Adults felt children and youth could not be in a management committee	Youth people are in management committees because they know the interests of their fellow children
'Hands' and 'feet': Changes in kinds of activities children and youth are involved in	
Children and youth were dictated upon about what to do by adults	Children and adults sit to take decisions together
Lacking the skills	Have the skills to work together with adults
Children and youth were not involved in leadership roles	Children and youth are becoming more creative since they are involved in leadership

B. Organizational change to support child and youth agency...

Support for child and youth agency also has implications for CCF as an organization. As highlighted by Theis (2004)⁹ *'meaningful children's participation requires organizations to change. Agencies have to develop new ways of working with children, build the capacity of staff, and establish an organizational environment, policies, processes and procedures that are conducive to children's participation. It requires a fundamental change in organizational culture and strong support from senior management and from project staff. This requires long-term organizational commitment and a learning approach'* (p.4).

As will be illustrated in various parts of this manual, promotion of and genuine support for child and youth agency may require:

- recruitment of new staff and/or a review of existing staff roles and responsibilities to ensure more emphasis on direct work to empower children and youth and to support genuine adult-child partnerships
- human resource policies which reflect the need for flex-time encouraging staff to work at times when children and youth are more available (including evenings, week-ends, school holidays)

⁹ Theis (2004)

Promoting Child and Youth Agency

- induction and follow up training on child and youth agency, including practical skills to empower children and young people and to support meaningful adult-child partnerships which adhere to CCF practice standards
- adaptation of existing planning and review processes to ensure more space for the genuine and safe involvement of children and youth people, including representation of children in governance structures
- a review of supervision, reporting, monitoring and evaluation processes and procedures to ensure an emphasis on child and youth agency (and children's safe and meaningful participation)
- a review of budgeting allocations and reporting procedures to allocate a portion of program budgets (for example 10%) to a flexible fund designated for child/ youth led program developments (which could be directly managed by children and young people) (see section 5)
- developing and disseminating child friendly information including child friendly versions of the child protection policy, and other relevant policy documents from CCF and/or the national government

C. Developing Core Competencies in Adults to Facilitate Child and Youth Agency...

In order for children and youth to fully realize their leading roles, adults need to understand the contributions that children and youth are capable of offering the development process.

*Note: 'For children's fundamental participation rights to be realized, it is adults, not children, who most urgently need to learn. Children's participation rights demand that adults listen to children, understand them and take action based on what children say. Adults often need to encourage children to participate and provide opportunities for them to do it. Thus, children's right to participate is, for now at least, heavily dependent upon adults. One important and often overlooked fact is that, for an organization to involve children properly, everyone from program managers to finance and personnel officers down to staff in day-to-day contact with children's needs to have at least an understanding of the key practical ethical concerns in facilitating the participation of children.'*¹⁰

¹⁰ Van Beers, H., Trimmer, C., *Adults First! An Organizational Training for Adults on Children's Participation*, 2006

Facilitators who want to ensure that children and young people are active in the development process need to have the following key competencies:

- Ability to discuss issues with children in ways that they can **easily understand**
- Ability to **identify when some children are not able to follow the discussion** or understand what is being said
- Resourcefulness to **utilize a variety of creative participatory methods** to uncover girls and boys' ideas - particularly methods that allow marginalized children (children excluded from school, ethnic minorities, children with disabilities, etc.) to express themselves
- Sensitivity to **probe more deeply** into issues that children allude to but don't describe in detail
- Ability to **allow children to lead a discussion** and to record ideas as they are stated/ sung/ performed/ described/ drawn
- Flexibility to change the direction of the discussion if children are clearly more interested in **discussing a topic that is unexpected** but still contributes to the goal of the activity
- Ability to **recognize power differences** amongst children due to differences in age, ethnicity, economic status, gender, disability, HIV status etc. and to facilitate the activity to **ensure balance** among those who hold more and less power.

Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) techniques are conducive to work with girls and boys of different ages and abilities, as they enable use of visual forms of communication and when used sensitively they can assist in transforming the power relations between adults and children, enabling children to set the agenda and describe their own reality. Thus, as a starting point it can be helpful to make sure that **all Area staff and Federation Executive/Board members have received training in PRA, with special consideration on how PRA processes and tools can be adapted and used with girls and boys of different ages and abilities**. The successful use of PRA techniques lies in the process, rather than simply the techniques used. Good facilitation with a commitment to ongoing processes of information-sharing, dialogue, reflection, and action enable the genuine use of participatory techniques. Particular consideration of the attitudes, behavior, knowledge and skills to facilitate children and young people's expression and participation is required.

Furthermore, adults from the area staff team, federations, community associations and key external actors (e.g., local government officials, teachers, and other NGO representatives) should be sensitized to the benefits of involving children and youth as active agents in the social development process.

Capacity building in the knowledge, skills and attitudes to facilitate and support participatory work with children and young people of different ages and abilities should be undertaken prior to consulting with children, so that adults are more prepared to listen to children and to take their views and suggestions seriously.

The following exercise is one that could be used with adults to help them explore what skills they need to work effectively with young people. *Please see Appendix 1a for more tools to help adults prepare to work with young people.*



Building an ideal facilitator

This activity can be conducted with key CCF or Federation staff, members of parents associations or federation members prior to the ASP process to think about and prepare for the skills, attitudes and knowledge they need to genuinely involve children and youth in the process. Children and youth can also be actively included and involved.

- Stick large sheets of flipchart together.
- Ask for a volunteer to draw around the shape of their body on the flipchart.
- In the body shape the participants have to build a life size ideal 'facilitator'. Through open group discussions, identify and draw (ideally using visual images) what skills (draw or list these on the hands of the body image), knowledge (represented by the head), attitudes (represented by the heart) are needed by a facilitator to enable them to empower children and young people - to express their views, to actively participate in ASP decision-making processes, and to strengthen their own associations.
- Once the facilitator is built you could explore what CCF needs to do to ensure that all its staff members and key federation and association members become such 'ideal facilitators'.

3. Consulting with Children and Young People

This section on consulting with children and young people includes sub-sections on:

- identifying the poorest, most marginalized children to include in consultations
- planning the consultations
- introducing the consultation
- organizing consultations with children on issues affecting them, including child poverty
- ensuring the views of girls and boys (of different ages, abilities and backgrounds) have influence
- Practical tools to consult children and youth on poverty and other issues affecting them
- Key questions, challenges and solutions to consulting girls and boys of different ages and abilities, especially the most marginalized

In order to learn about child poverty and to develop programs which enhance children's healthy development and well-being, it is essential to talk to children themselves, especially girls and boys whose lives are most affected by poverty. Children have unique insight to their own lives, the way poverty impacts upon their choices, their actions, their relationships and the ways in which they are treated. One key finding from the Children and Poverty study was that children had unique experiences of poverty and different perspectives than adults. For example, the social and psychological impacts of poverty were often more significant to children than material deprivation. Thus, it is essential that adults and young leaders need to approach children with a genuine interest and with patience to hear and to act upon what children are saying.

There are a variety of ways to consult with children and youth during the planning phase of community development. In the initial stages of program design and during program monitoring and review, CCF encourages consultation between peers as well as between young people and adults. Peer communication (communication between people who are similar in age and social status) is an effective way to learn more about what children think because children tend to be more relaxed and open around other children. When consulting with children, the quality of the interactions is more important than the number of children consulted. However, sincere efforts must be made to reach out to and to engage those children whose lives are most affected by poverty. These children are often the most excluded and most difficult to reach, as they may not be in school or attending existing community services.

A. Identifying the Poorest, Most Marginalized Children...

CCF is especially interested in learning about the ideas of poor and/or other marginalized groups of children who are not normally heard and whose voices are important to building a strong community development program. Some children in this group may include adolescent girls, very young children, working children, out of school youth and children with disabilities.

Efforts to identify and reach out to the poorest, most vulnerable girls and boys in the community may be undertaken through methods such as social mapping or well-being ranking. Creative outreach efforts may be needed to find marginalized children in their own homes (for example children with disabilities), in other people's homes (for example, girls working as domestic workers), in their workplace, or in their temporary living place (for example nomadic children or children in IDP camps) to inform them about the consultation opportunities and to identify suitable places, times and support that would enable their involvement in consultation processes. Efforts should also be made to engage younger children in the consultation process.

Wherever possible, organize separate consultation exercises with girls and boys of different age and background groups (at least initially) to encourage different perspectives to be heard and to allow for more in depth discussions. The consultations should be organized in an accessible, safe place and the number of adults present should be minimized so that children feel free to express their views.

B. Planning The Consultations...

Important **ethical and logistic issues** need to be considered when preparing for consultations with children.

Time considerations: Planning, implementing or monitoring processes should not interfere with children's study or other important responsibilities. For example ASP consultations and PRA activities should be facilitated at times determined by children, during week-ends, school holidays, or after school hours so that children do not have to miss school to actively participate. Alternatively with permission from school authorities, PRA activities could be conducted with children during school hours. However, if this strategy is chosen, alternative strategies must ensure that non-school going girls and boys (particularly working children) also have alternative opportunities to participate in PRA activities and to express their views - at times and in places that suit them. For example, private, smaller meetings with out of school adolescent girls could be carried out over a longer period through repeated visits to the girls in agreed households within the community.

Informed consent and permission from parents / other key adults: Children and youth should be given clear information about the process so that they can make an informed choice about their involvement. Permission from parents, caregivers (and/or employers) should also be gained in advance, so that children's participation is actively supported by family members or other key adults.

Child Protection Policy: All CCF and Federation staff, federation and association members (including children and young people) should be aware of CCF's child protection policy, and aware of what action may need to be taken if individual concerns are raised during the ASP process. Children's safety should always be a priority and this should be considered when considering transportation, timing of events (do children have to walk long distances alone? do events end after dark?), involvement of adults (are children left alone with appropriate adult supervisors?), selection of program activities (do children want to engage in an activity that may threaten their health or safety?) etc.

Venue: Identify a venue which is accessible (especially to the most marginalized), safe, with good space for creative participatory work.

Materials: Ensure that all necessary materials are prepared in advance (e.g. flipchart paper, pens). Wherever possible make use of local resources.

The following **tips** can be helpful when planning consultations with girls and boys of different ages and abilities:

- **Organize focus group discussions/activities with small groups of children:** Discussions with smaller groups of children (5-8 persons) result in a richer discussion and will hopefully allow even the most shy or quiet children in the group to speak out.
- **Group children of similar ages and experiences together to encourage open discussion:** Separating boys and girls can help alleviate discomfort when discussing sensitive issues such as sexuality, abuse or specific expectations of boys or girls. Children may also may feel more free to speak if they are grouped with those similar in age or experience, for example, teenage girls who are young mothers, young boys who attend school, older working boys, girls who are domestic workers. However, in the later stages of the consultation process it will also be important to allow representatives of different age, gender and background groups to meet and to work together, so that they can better identify, understand and overcome patterns of discrimination and exclusion and work collectively to address child poverty.
- **Use a variety of creative participatory methods to encourage expression among children of different ages and abilities:** Make use of creative methods to explore children's views including: visual PRA techniques, drawing, painting, poetry, stories, and drama. Encourage children to use whatever form of expression they prefer. Creative forms of expression can also encourage inclusion, as children who are blind may choose to express themselves through story-telling or drama, while children who are deaf may make effective use of pictures and poetry. Additional attention to issues of access and/ or efforts to ensure effective communication with children with various disabilities must be made. (See tools shared below and in Appendix 1)
- **Work with young people to teach them how to lead group consultations with other children:** Children need assistance in developing the discussion questions they are interested in discussing with their peers. They will also need facilitation skills training to know how to keep discussions moving, probe further when more needs to be said, and how to encourage (but not force) quiet members of a group to speak out.

C. Introducing the Consultations...

Many girls and boys are not used to being consulted on important matters and may feel unsure about why an adult or another young person is talking to them or asking their opinion. Because of this uncertainty, it's important for the facilitator to explain why he/she is asking them questions. The children should be given clear information about the scope of the consultation and the extent of their influence, so that unrealistic expectations are not to be raised.



Consultation activities with children should be conducted in good faith, and with the aim of benefiting the children or adolescents involved, as well as their communities. Children should only be consulted if their ideas are actually going to be taken into account – and sincere efforts must be made to carefully record the views expressed by different girls and boys, so that different perspectives can be taken into account during the development of activities or programs. Facilitators should inform the young people if someone is going to be taking notes, videotaping or recording information in some way. Generally, it is best to record information in a way that does not interfere with the discussion and does not distract the children or make them feel shy. Taking brief notes during the discussions and then writing more detailed notes soon after the consultation is often a good technique.

D. Consulting with Young People about Child Poverty...

There are many interesting ways to learn from children. Young people enjoy being active, creative and engaged in activities that are new or different. As you begin discussing the effects and causes of poverty with young people, be ready to use a variety of 'tools' to keep the discussion relevant and interesting. CCF has found that pictures and play acting often work very well with young children. When asked to draw what a poor child looks like, young children will often draw not only ripped clothing or dirty faces, but will also draw sad faces or images of isolation. When asked to enact a day in the life of a poor child, children and youth alike will often show both the crushing material effects of poverty and the social and emotional consequences of poverty.

Examples of creative participatory activities to explore girls and boys' experiences, including their experiences and perspectives on child poverty are outlined in Appendix 1b.

One technique, called **Body Mapping**, can be used with children aged 8 and older and is recommended as a useful tool that can be used in groups with high or low literacy as it does not need to involve much writing.

Example of Body Mapping: Exploring 'Faces of Child Poverty'



This is a useful tool for children (over age of 8 years), youth or adults to explore what child poverty 'looks like' or 'feels like', how children facing poverty are perceived and treated, what they do, and what they are not allowed to do etc...

- Stick large sheets of flipchart together
- Ask for a volunteer child to draw around their body shape to make the shape of a child. Explain to the group that this is a poor child, a child who faces poverty. The body will be used to explore all different aspects of child poverty, positive as well as negative.
- Ask the participants to suggest how we can design this 'child body' to show that they are poor. What are the visual signs of their poverty? Also discuss if there are signs about how children sometimes try to disguise or hide their poverty.
- Once the main ideas for the visual signs of child poverty are illustrated on the body, start from the top of the body and explore different body parts to further explore different aspects of child poverty (both negative and positive):
- The head: How does child poverty affect what poor children think about – explore and record both negative and positive aspects? What do people generally think about poor children (explore both +ve and -ve)?
- The eyes: How do poor children see the world/their community/home (+ve/-ve)? Do they see it any differently because they are poor? How do people see / perceive children who are poor? Do they perceive them differently? If so, how (+ve and -ve examples)?
- The ears: what do poor children hear that makes them happy/sad/worried? How do people generally listen to the views of poor children?
- The mouth: Do children who are poor speak or say things differently, if so how (+ve and -ve)? How do people generally talk about poor children (+ve and -ve)?
- The heart: How do poor children generally feel (+ve and -ve)? How do people generally feel about poor children (+ve and -ve)?
- The hands and arms: What activities (e.g. different types of work/study/play) do poor children do with their hands and arms (+ve and -ve)? What are they encouraged to do? What are they discouraged from doing? How do adults use their hands or arms to communicate with poor children (+ve and -ve)?
- The feet and legs: What do poor children do or where do they go with their legs and feet (+ve and -ve)? Where are they encouraged to go? Where are they discouraged from going? How do adults use their legs or feet to communicate with poor children (+ve and -ve)?
- The stomach: What does the stomach of poor children have in it? (+ve and -ve)? What do they eat and drink?
- Discuss the overall body about different 'faces of child poverty'.

We've Got Something to Say!

In addition to understanding how young people perceive poverty, it is also important to understand what they believe causes the child poverty in their communities. When using the following or any tools, the process (e.g. Discussion and reactions) is more important than the product (e.g. community map).

Listening during the consultation process

During a consultation in a CCF Area in West Africa, young people were developing a community resource map and were asked to place happy or sad faces on various locations in the community depending on whether or not they felt that these places were good or bad for young people. There was a lot of emphasis on completing the map, but less emphasis on understanding why young people were placing happy or sad faces on the map.

At the end of the exercise, the map was taken back to the Federation Office as part of the consultation documentation. Staff and Federation members looked at it and discussed their findings. They noted that there was a sad face drawn on the mosque. The facilitators remembered that the children drew the sad face but were not sure why the young people felt that the mosque was not a good place for children. Fortunately, the staff members were able to follow up with the children later and were told that the children are often hit with sticks or yelled at by adults in the mosque and don't consider it a good place to go. Adults found it useful to know whom the young people find 'friendly' and with whom they do not feel comfortable. It was also helpful to find out which adults in the community would benefit from learning how to relate better with children.

This experience taught staff and facilitators that it is important to record what the children say during participatory exercises and to ask questions during the process in order to fully understand what they are trying to express.

E. Challenging Questions - Consulting Younger Children and Being Sensitive to Needs of Different Children...



Is it possible to consult younger children (children under the age of 8 years)?

It is possible to consult children under the age of 8 years. CCF encourages consultation with children and young people of all age groups, including children with disabilities. Due to children's evolving capacities the level and nature of participation of a four year old will be very different to that of a fifteen year old, with 'due-weight' being an important consideration. However, the views of a four year old can also be elicited and should be acted upon¹¹. Thus, adults need to embrace the challenge of finding ways to help even very young children to express their views and feelings.

¹¹ See Miller (1997), Clark (2006), Lansdown (2005)

For very young children, language may be still developing, but even for those children with good verbal skills; 'talking' may not be their favored method of communication, particularly in response to questions from adults. Even older children may find talking hard when adults are asking questions about difficult or upsetting topics.



Solutions: Professionals working with children, such as psychologists, social workers and therapists have, over the years, studied ways in which adults can better understand young children's thoughts, feelings and ideas. 'Play' and participatory tools are useful mediums of communication to help younger children to express their feelings and thoughts. Observing children's play and encouraging children to engage in imaginary play roles can be very insightful. Play is also an important way through which children develop relationships and skills. Below is an example of successful consultation with very young children about their ideas for improving their play environment.

Good Practice Example of Consulting 3-4 year children in UK

In UK a pilot study was carried out to involve children under five years-old in the decision-making processes concerned with changes to an outdoor play space¹². The 'Mosaic approach' was used with 28 three and four years olds (and with adults – practitioners and parents) which combines the *traditional research tools of observation and interviewing with participatory methods, including the use of cameras, map making and child-led tours.*

One of the areas for change **highlighted by children's photographs** was 'the security fence'. The children's photographs and maps emphasized how the security fence dominated the outdoor space. Close observation revealed another dimension. The gaps in the security fence were wide enough for the children to see through. Any solution needed to bear in mind the importance of leaving these gaps, so the people spotting and dog watching that the children enjoyed could continue. Three ideas under consideration include: adding temporary weaving to the fence, placing paint boards on the fence and having binoculars and telescopes available for long-distance viewing.

¹² Carroll, J *Play Therapy: the Children's views in Child and Family Social Work* 2002, 7, pp177-187

¹³ See Clark (2006)



How can we be more sensitive to the evolving needs of children and the specific needs of girls and boys from different backgrounds?

Challenge: There is a tendency to consult older children and larger groups of children who are accessible in school settings. More confident vocal children are often selected by teachers to represent their peers. In such situations the voices of the most vocal, confident children and youth who may be from the better off sectors of the community may give voice to their particular needs and priorities, which may be very different from the priorities of the most marginalized groups of children within the community. For example, children with disabilities and/or girls or boys working as domestic workers may not even be encouraged or allowed to leave the house to attend a group session. If group sessions with children are organized within school settings, groups of out of school children (including some working children, and in some socio-cultural contexts girls and children with disabilities) may not have the chance to participate.

In addition, even if children from different backgrounds may have been involved in consultations, the prioritization and synthesizing that goes on during the Area Strategic Planning process may highlight the issues and needs of the majority children in the community, but often tend to iron over the real differences amongst different groups of children. Children's life experiences are diverse and are influenced by a range of factors, including age, gender, ethnicity, socio-economic background, dis/ability etc. Children's needs change as they grow from early childhood to middle childhood to adolescence. Adolescent girls for instance often need access to reproductive health information and services, and may need interventions that prevent gender-based violence. Adolescent boys and girls also need apprenticeship and safe work opportunities, while very young children need stimulating activities that are less structured than what exists with formal school. The needs and priorities of children from various socio-economic groups or ethnic groups within a community may be different, as may be the needs of specific groups of children, including children with disabilities, children in child headed households, displaced or refugee children. Through the prioritization of responses based on frequency of responses there is a risk that information about the evolving needs of children or the different needs of different groups of girls and boys will be lumped together and this specificity essential for understanding appropriate interventions for various age-groups, gender or context specific suggestions will be lost.



Solutions:

1. Ensure that a wide variety of children and youth are consulted during the planning period, including girls and boys (of different ages and abilities from different socio-economic, ethnic backgrounds). Where necessary, conduct special outreach to vulnerable children. Some groups of children who may require special outreach include:
 - Children with disabilities
 - Out of school children (especially different groups of street or working children)
 - Orphans
 - Girls who have many household responsibilities and are not given much time away from the home
 - Children from minority ethnic groups
 - Children from very poor families
 - Children from child headed households
 - Children whose parents are chronically ill
 - Children affected or infected by HIV
2. Group children and youth by gender (boys and girls separately) and narrow age groups (e.g. 5-8 yrs; 9-12 yrs, 13-15 yrs, 16-18 yrs) in order to ensure that meaningful age appropriate discussions takes place (in small focus groups). It may also be beneficial to enable separate focus group discussions with children from specific socio-economic, ethnic or 'specific context' groups (e.g. children from child headed households, girls working as domestic workers).
3. When discussing child protection issues such as teenage pregnancy, early marriage, abuse, exploitation, female circumcision, child trafficking and child prostitution ensure that the discussions take place in a private location where the children and youth (in separate gender, age groups) feel safe to express their view. Facilitators should have adequate training in child protection and the importance of confidentiality. Furthermore, it may be beneficial for the facilitators to be of the same sex as the participants.
4. Review the findings from all the PRA activities; ensure that common priorities, as well as specific priorities of different groups of children (girls, boys, younger / older children, children from different backgrounds) are identified. These may take the form of problems, constraints, causes or effects. Ensure that these issues are captured and listed in formats that can be taken forward in the ASP planning process.

4. Planning with Children and Young People

This section consists of three sub-sections:

- Children and young people's involvement and influence in planning processes
- Representing children's ideas in Area Strategic Plans
- Support for child/ youth led project planning initiatives
- Practical tools to support planning with children and young people, as well as child led planning processes
- Key questions, challenges and solutions to planning with children and young people to ensure that their views and suggestions have influence

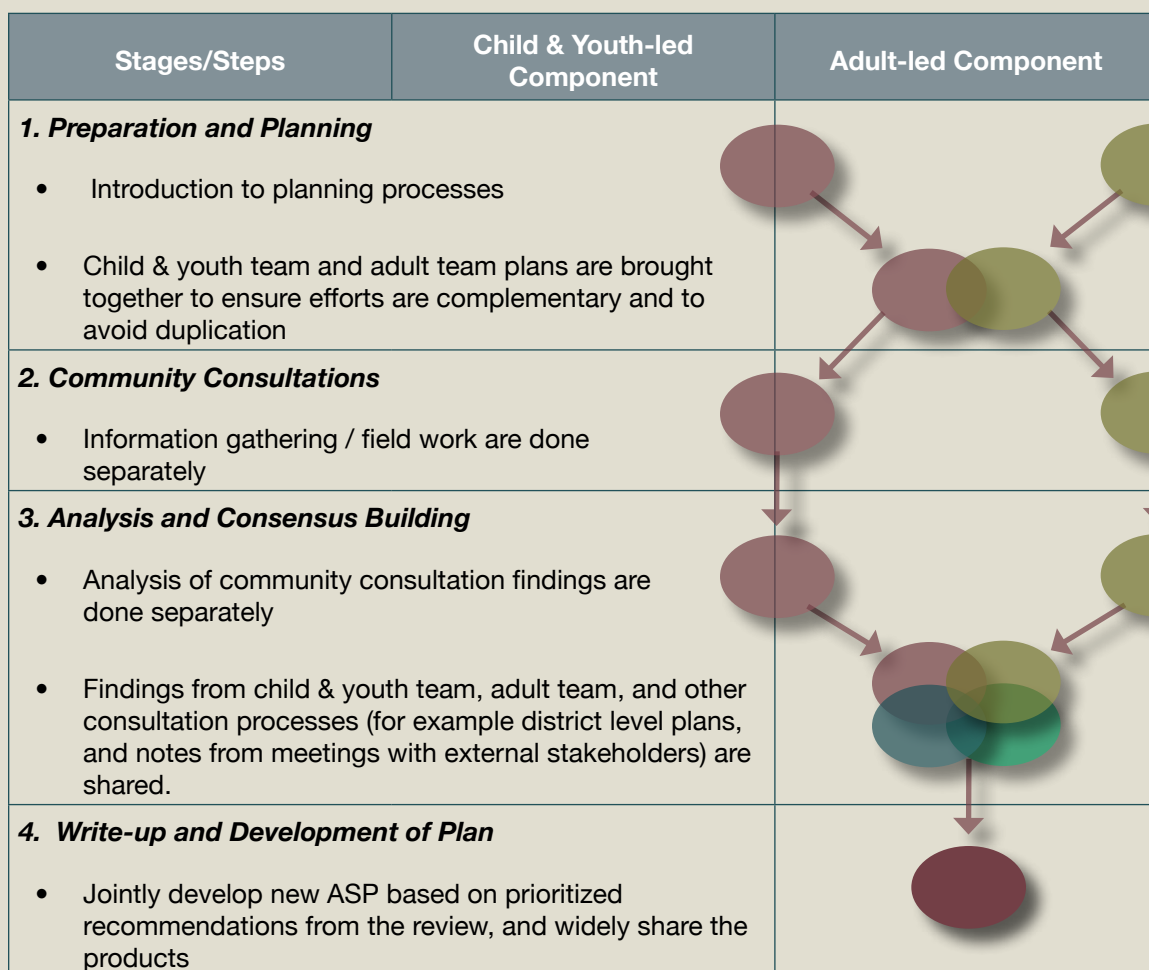
A. Young People's Involvement and Influence in Planning Processes...

One of the most effective ways children and young people can step forth as actors in their own development is to be involved in program planning. Area level teams and partners have developed ways to talk to children and include them in the planning process, but those with experience find it is a considerable challenge to ensure that the ideas and priorities of children are reflected in project design. It is important to consult with children, but it is even more important to move beyond consultation by mobilizing children and young people (especially the most marginalized) to direct and inform project design and plans. Practitioners have discovered that this distinction is one indicator of projects that are designed with and for children and young people.

Based on the experience of CCF, as well as other NGOs working with children and youth, preparations which support children and young people’s involvement and influence in planning processes include:

- **Facilitation of separate and joint meetings among children, young people and adults during the program design period.** One way to ensure that community plans or project plans reflect the voices of children is to facilitate meetings with both child/youth committees and adults committees during the program design period. The child/youth committee and adult committees may decide to follow parallel processes to arrive at a mutually acceptable program design, with each group working separately at some times and meeting at key points during the program design period (see diagram below).

Figure 2: Example of the Connection between the child & youth-led and adult-led consultation and analysis processes:



- Ensure adults are ready to share information and decision-making power work with children and young people: As described in section 2.1, advance preparations with concerned adults (adult association and federation members, parents, teachers, community and religious elders) are crucial to ensure that adults recognize children and young people's capabilities, and are ready to work with children and young people as partners building upon their enthusiasm and creativity. Adults need to learn to share information and power with children and young people – to invite children and young people's representatives to be part of discussions and meetings to design program and project plans. To ensure safe and meaningful involvement of children and young people, adults may need to adapt some of their planning processes to fit the time frame and specific interests of children and youth. For example, many children may only be available during evenings, week-ends or school holidays. There may be differences between the ways adults work and young people work such as the amount of time dedicated to planning processes and the complexity of projects. For example, children and young people might be more interested in participatory action that they can be directly involved in planning and implementing over a shorter time period (for example 6-12 months).
- Consider the 'life cycle approach' which considers the needs and priorities of children of different ages: The Life-cycle approach has been adopted by several CCF offices (e.g. Philippines, Mexico) as one way to ensure that child and youth development remains central to community development. The life cycle approach table in Appendix 2 outlines some vulnerabilities associated with each development epoch and can be a useful tool in reflecting upon strategic plans as a kind of 'checklist' to identify which age groups are addressed by the plan. Please note that in some areas (e.g. war-affected, HIV affected), the vulnerabilities for an age group may be more sensitive to the particular context in which they live. In addition, CCF may not always be the best partner to address each issue but should choose to address vulnerabilities based on a combination of community consultations, available partnerships and internal strengths. Furthermore, at each stage of the life cycle it is crucial to identify, recognize and build upon children's strengths, their positive coping strategies and their resilience – to engage with children as agents for their own and others' protection.
- Support the development of child and youth led projects among girls and boys (of different age groups), especially among the most marginalized groups as they can help build children and young people's skills and confidence in project planning and implementation (see section on support for child/youth led projects below).
- Ensure budgets are allocated for child and youth led initiatives (see section 5 which outlines new recommendations developed by CCF to ensure budget allocations for child/youth led initiatives).

B. Young People Prioritizing Problems and Solutions...

A thorough consultation process can allow young people to speak out about issues that are important to them and help them think through ways to address those issues. Often, participation ends at consultation and young people are left out of the important next step – deciding how to make sense of the information collected. In CCF's Area Strategic Planning process, that task of making sense of the data comes in the form of bringing together (synthesizing) and prioritizing various kinds of information and then selecting key issues to address through projects and programs.

It is essential to continue to work with a group of young people who represent their communities in the prioritization, project selection and design phase to ensure both that young people learn new skills but most importantly, to ensure that the community benefits from their ideas and enthusiasm about their own development. When we stop working with young people after consulting with them, we often lose their voices in the projects and activities that are later developed and also lose the sense of partnership that we've gained during the consultations.

The following exercise can be facilitated with young people to help them understand the information they or others have collected from children and youth. The exercise below challenges young people to make hard decisions about what should be done next, which problems should be tackled, and whose voice is most important. *Please see Appendix 1c for more exercises related to helping young people manage and prioritize information.*

Silent Ranking



This exercise is one that balances power dynamics in a group by silencing all voices and instead asking children to think about and then rank what is most important in their perspective. In order to prepare for this exercise you will need: markers, construction paper or cards, space for children to walk around and view the projects, room on the ground or floor. In this example, the exercise is being used to help select projects. It could also be used to help select key issues or problems that the young people want to work on.

- Prepare by cutting cards in squares at least 10 cm by 10 cm
- Write the names of projects on each square – for a very young group of children (under 12 yrs), draw a picture that represents the project
- Place the cards on the floor
- Explain to the group that without talking, in complete silence, they should read the cards and think about which projects are most important to them
- Ask them to then place the cards in order from top to bottom according to importance with the top being the most important – remind them that this should be done in complete silence
- Tell them that it's okay to move a card after someone has already ranked it
- Allow the activity to go on for about 5-10 minutes as needed
- At the end of the activity, ask a participants to read the cards in order
- Engage the group in a discussion about why the projects were ranked in that way and help them challenge each other about why they moved a project from a high ranking to a lower ranking or vice versa.
- TAKE NOTES - on both the ranking and why – note the kind of group you were talking to – boys, girls, age group, other characteristics

C. Communicating about Projects and Programs...

When a small group of young people (e.g. Community Child/Youth Executive Committee or an Area-level Child and Youth Federation Executive Committee) get involved in the program selection and planning process, they are doing so as representatives of their fellow children and youth whom they represent. Young people need to communicate what they are doing to other young people as well as to the community at large. There are a variety of ways to communicate the projects, activities or programs that young people are planning to carry out in the community or area.

Murals

Murals are a creative and low cost way to share information. Young children and older youth can all contribute to a mural which illustrates the main projects they are planning over the following year. They may also want to develop a mural of their vision for young people in their community (see Appendix 1e for more information about visioning with young people).

Photography

Give young people disposable cameras or access to digital cameras and ask them to take pictures that represent the goals of their planned projects and activities. The pictures can be posted on a poster board and displayed in a central location in each community.

Newsletters (newspaper style or internet based)

Young people can be assisted with the development of a simple newsletter illustrating the major projects. They should be encouraged to creatively depict how the projects will benefit young people. Production of newsletters on a regular basis is an exciting way to for young people to learn new skills, express themselves and share information.

Radio

Radio shows are particularly popular with teenagers and are a great opportunity to talk about what they are doing in the community. An interview, short public announcement, or long running drama can be developed by the young people themselves and can then be broadcast in cooperation with a local radio station or community radio. Staff or other adults can play an important role in these efforts through setting up meetings and advocating on the children's behalf.

D. Child Friendly Project Planning...

Children and youth are often disengaged from planning processes that are too long and they lose interest and identification with the process. Recognize that project planning with children and youth may differ from project planning with adults, and support child/ youth led project planning processes:

Project Focus: The project focus may or may not directly relate to material poverty in the same way that adult oriented projects often do, but may address social issues relating to vulnerability, discrimination and exclusion in that they will probably involve a social component. Opportunities for more inclusive, non-discriminatory interactions with their peers may be one of the motivations for children or youth to get involved in a project. Other motivations may include wanting to learn a new skill, wanting to have fun with their friends, and wanting to take part in something directly meaningful to their lives.

Project Length: Children and young people are generally keen to plan and implement projects which have an impact within shorter time periods than adults. Thus, children and youth should be supported to develop action oriented, realistic projects within a 6-12 month time frame (or even a 3-6 month time frame). It is important that adults support children and youth to develop realistic, achievable plans which will enable girls and boys to develop confidence and skills in planning, implementing and reviewing project initiatives, from which they can build upon their own successes. CCF recognizes that this means that children and youth will not necessarily develop one project over a 3 year period, but rather may plan and implement a series of shorter term projects. CCF is committed to setting aside funds over the three year period to allow for flexibility from one year to the next for child/ youth led project planning through a block budget.

Project Design: Projects designed by children and youth should be readily understandable to a wider group of children and should be comprised of a limited number of major activities. Girls and boys of different age groups or backgrounds could be supported to develop their own action initiatives or 'mini' projects. However, interaction and collective project planning between girls and boys of different ages, abilities and backgrounds within the community should also be actively supported to help promote inclusion, non-discrimination and better understanding of difference. Children and young people may wish to work in partnership with the adult members of the Federation, and/or with other agencies within the community – partnerships should be encouraged, along with efforts to sensitize all concerned adults to ensure that children continue to play a leading role. Projects can be designed based on simple questions and the implementation and monitoring and evaluation plans should be developed in a way that most young people involved can easily understand. If staff members or adult Federation members need to put the project design into a framework for the sake of consistency or in order to pursue outside funds, this revised document should not replace the one that is more simple and child friendly.

Project Planning Questions



The following questions should provide an easy format for young people to follow and develop a straightforward project. Adult facilitators should help the young people reflect on key questions and ask them to do more research where necessary.

- In a few sentences, describe what kind of project you are planning.
- Who will the project involve or help (which children and young people? how many?)?
- How will you make sure that the most marginalized/poor/disadvantaged children and young people are reached?
- What will be better as a result of this project?
- Where do you plan to implement the project?
- Who will implement the project (children and young people, staff, volunteers?)
- List the major activities you are planning?
- Will you work with any partners and what will the partners do – what will you do?
- How often will you monitor the project and how will you monitor it (visits, participatory monitoring tools, reports forms etc...)?
- How will you know if the project was successful?

E. Challenging Questions - Representing Children's Ideas in Development Plans...



How can children's ideas be better represented in the Area Strategic Plans

Challenge: CCF has learned from experience that without specific guidelines for maintaining the ideas of (different) children and youth through the project design stage (and allocating budgets for child and youth-led initiatives), children's views and suggestions may not be influential. Children and youth who have discussed specific problems and ideas relating to their own well being during planning sessions have found that those ideas are not properly understood and may not be integrated into a broader development program. Information gathered is not always carefully documented and specific ideas suggested by groups of children may be lost during the presentation of ideas from many groups. The more numerous and vocal opinions from adults may dominate. During efforts to come up with a limited number of priority programs or projects – children's ideas often get sifted out due to a sense of having to choose programs that are more directly related to health, education or livelihood, whereas issues that children bring up are sometimes more related to safety, protection and nurturing.



Solutions:

1. Take careful notes of the views, priorities and needs expressed by different groups of children (according to age, gender, background etc) either during or immediately after consultations activities/ discussions with children and young people. Share these notes with the federation and others during program design. These notes should be maintained as part of the work process throughout the planning period (*see Section 4 for ideas on how to maintain key information during synthesis*)
2. When prioritizing responses to identified problems, do not simply add up the number of times a response occurred, but instead analyze the kinds of responses suggested by different groups of children and be thoughtful about how those responses may or may not address the issue.
3. During the selection of projects and programs, review your progress against the priorities highlighted by specific age, gender or 'context'¹⁴ groups and discuss whether there are programs designed to meet the needs and vulnerabilities of children from a variety of age groups and backgrounds.
4. Include children and youth representatives (particularly from the most marginalized groups) in processes which determine the selection and design of projects – don't exclude young people during the important meetings where the final programs are decided upon.

¹⁴ Where a 'context' group may include the specific needs of domestic workers, children from child headed households, children from a minority ethnic group etc.

5. Implementing with Children and Young People

This section on implementing with children and young people consists of three sub-sections:

- Implementation Roles for Young People
- Helping Young People Partner Effectively
- Budgeting with Young People

Involving children and young people in the direct implementation of projects may require flexibility of existing planning, implementation and reporting procedures used by CCF. As highlighted in section 4, projects directly planned and implemented by children and young people may be designed to achieve results quickly and implemented over shorter time frames (6-12 months). Children and young people may also chose to be actively involved in longer term program plans over the 3 year planning period working in partnership with adults. In all situations, it is important that adults from the Federations and CCF Area and National offices are supportive, encouraging children and youth, especially the most marginalized, to play an active, meaningful role, while also ensuring their safety and well-being.

A. Implementation Roles for Young People...

When projects are designed with significant input from children and young people, it is likely that they will be excited about implementation and may want to take on a large share of the responsibility for executing this program. Their enthusiasm is important to support because it will help them move activities forward and contribute to their development as young people and as contributors to community development.

Just as we would not expect adult volunteers from the community to take responsibility for implementing each project that involves them, we do not expect children and youth to take full implementation responsibility for youth and child oriented projects. It is important to note that we as a child development organization ***honor children and young people's decision to say no to projects, opportunities, or responsibilities for which they do not feel prepared, and work in partnership with them to identify what skills and support they need to take on new responsibilities.***

Without hampering enthusiasm, adults should guide children and child/youth associations and federations to take on reasonable responsibilities that they can easily fit into their schedules. Like adults, children and young people are busy with a range of responsibilities including: school, household chores, care of siblings or sick parents, work and recreational activities. All the planning considerations identified in section 2 should be followed to ensure that children and youth are involved at times that suit them, that do not interfere with their studies or with other major responsibilities (and that they have parental/ guardian support for their involvement in project activities). Efforts must be made to ensure that children are not over-burdened with too many responsibilities, nor that individual children are over-empowered vis-à-vis their peers. Inclusive opportunities for fair, inclusive rotational representation of children and youth should be encouraged, and life skills training for a large group should be supported, rather than a focus on leadership training for a few individuals.

A PRA tool such as a daily schedule (see description in Appendix 1a)) might be one helpful tool to use with children and young people during the development of implementation plans so that they can think through how much time they will actually be able to commit. Reasonable volunteerism (e.g. 1-3 hours per week) that can be maintained over a prolonged period is a better goal than fulltime voluntary commitment for a short time. Most children and young people are not available to devote many hours per week to a project but many will be interested in devoting a reasonable amount of time, especially if they feel the project is relevant, interesting and appreciated by others.

Some examples of child/youth involvement in implementation may include:



- peer counseling or peer support
- monitoring and reporting on child abuse cases
- promoting awareness of child rights, HIV/AIDS, or non-discrimination through drama, dance, radio programs, newsletters or other child friendly materials
- co-writing dramas and performing them to raise awareness and action on issues affecting children and youth (for example, early marriage, violence against children, HIV, discrimination faced by children with disabilities, need for access to quality education)
- visiting disadvantaged children to promote their access to support and their involvement in child/ youth projects
- leading craft, play or sports activities for other children
- mentoring younger children in sports, school subjects, health issues
- taking part in income generation activities

As the UNCRC reminds us, children and youth are evolving and therefore young people of differing ages have differing abilities. No matter what the age, it is likely that children and young people will need and appreciate some adult support as they move from project planning to project implementation. Adults should work in partnership with children and youth, actively listening to them and wherever possible responding to their learning and support needs. Technical advisers should also be encouraged to share their technical expertise in empowering ways with children and youth.

B. Helping Young People Partner Effectively...

Young people can benefit from partnerships that help them learn new skills, move their ideas forward, expand their reach or access more funding. There are a variety of ways for young people to learn about partnership.

- ***Attend meetings with existing partners***

One great way to learn about partnering is to listen in and learn from staff or adult federation members as they meet with district councils, local government, or other NGOs or CBOs.

- ***Invite potential partners to hear about projects***

Invite some representatives from youth organizations, NGOs, principals, teachers, and religious leaders to listen to the children and youth present on what they have learned about child poverty and what they plan to do. Young people can then ask how the invited partners might be able to get involved with the projects. Staff and other adults can also help with this process and help the young people negotiate a partnership.

Sarah, 18 years old

“The CCF Area Manager always invited me to meetings with people like the District Health Officer and I learned how to negotiate and how to present information. When I first started going to meetings with her, I was quiet and just listened, but later, I was able to participate and became a more effective member of the Federation.

Recently, I had to report a case of child neglect by a stepmother to my local authorities but they didn't do much about it. After some time, the child continued to be neglected and was becoming malnourished and cried all the time. Finally I met with the local authorities at the district level to discuss the case. I was able to push for what we needed from the police because of what I learned watching those early meetings between CCF staff and District Officers. As a result of those negotiation skills, that child is doing much better, she is fat, and is living with her grandmother who loves her.”

C. Developing Budgets with Young People...

In order to help Area Federations and CCF Area and National Offices structure their support to child and youth-led initiatives, CCF is introducing guidelines that specify the need to prioritize and allocate budgets for child and youth-led project initiatives. While all CCF programs will benefit young people, it is recommended that particular project ideas that come from young people themselves are included in the mix of programs and projects in an Area Strategic Plan and are carried out in communities with the help of young people.

In addition to prioritizing those projects that are of particular interest to young people, it's important that funds are set aside to support such projects. CCF is recommending that at least 10% of funds are also allocated to child and youth-led initiatives, that is, projects that are designed and developed by children and youth, not programs that are designed and developed FOR youth. It is possible that the 10% dedicated to the projects may also include some funds to build capacity in planning and implementing their projects and/or may include exchange visits with other high-quality child and youth-led programs in the district/country for learning purposes. CCF has learned that without the funding commitment, the ideas of children and youth are often left out of final program plans and as a result, children and youth become discouraged about their part in the planning process.

Efforts to ensure children and youth's access to and effective use of budgets include:

- **Ensuring Funding is Available to support Child and Youth-led Programs:** During the three year ASP planning process, federations conduct planning sessions with key stakeholders including community groups, other NGOs, and government departments. As a result of those processes, programs and projects are developed for a three year period. For example, under a health program, there may be 2 smaller projects including projects to provide nutrition education to young mothers, and a project supporting peer education on reproductive health. In the past, the projects have primarily been planned by adults and while the funds that went into the projects ultimately benefited children in many cases, children and youth were not involved in the process of choosing and designing projects.

As highlighted above, while planning with adults will involve looking ahead over a three year period, planning with children and youth may involve 6 month – 12 month planning periods. Adults should understand this difference in order to accept that unspecified youth project funds will need to be set aside over a three year period.

- **Preparing Adults to Allocate Funds to Child and Youth-Led Projects:** Adults may need some time to understand why it's important to provide funds to child and youth-led initiatives. Adults will need to support children and youth in gaining the skills for developing, managing and monitoring basic budgets. Budget reporting formats in the community may need to be adapted and simplified. In some contexts, legal barriers may provide young people under the age of 18 years from managing funds – in such situations creative solutions should be found where-by adults ('patrons') work in partnership with children and youth for them to access, manage and use funds. In all contexts adults will need to support and trust children and youth in managing funds and resources. It is likely that trust and confidence among and between children, youth and adults will develop over time as children demonstrate their competency in managing realistic budgets.

At the point where budgets are being developed in the planning process, federation members and staff should have undertaken some of the exercises in building adult-child partnerships (shared in section 2) and should have been working with the children and youth federations or associations at key points in the planning process. The budgeting process should not be the first time that adults get a clear sense of what it means to be working in genuine partnership with children and youth.

- **Provide mentoring, capacity building and support to children and youth in developing realistic budgets for child/youth led initiatives:** Budgeting can be a difficult task even for adults who have some familiarity with project need and related costs. It can be an even more difficult task for children and young people who may have very little understanding of the activities that go into a project, the costs of those activities and when those costs are likely to occur. ***Before budgeting begins, the child/youth federation or association needs to prioritize and design 1 – 2 projects that are of interest to them and that are relevant to children and youth (especially the most marginalized) in the communities they represent. Project selection and design should follow the guidelines discussed in Section 4.***

Summary of key steps to help youth and children, and the adults who will work with them in planning their budget:



1. Set aside adequate time for the budgeting process

At least one-two weeks will be required during child friendly hours to complete the preparatory exercises and finalize a simple budget. Negotiate this time with the planning group and set meeting times ahead of time.

2. Determine a staff person and 2-3 adults 'patrons' (preferably from the federation) to work through the budget process with the children

It's not necessary for children to be experts on budgeting in order to develop a project budget, it is expected that adults will help where appropriate and will provide guidance. It is preferred that the budgeting process remain simple enough that younger children (under age of 16) can actively participate in the process.

3. Start with a very clear and simple project idea

Please see section 4 to review the key elements in helping children and youth plan projects. Before you begin talking about costs, ensure that all key children and youth involved understand exactly what the project will entail.

4. Ask the planning group to explore how other projects budget their costs

Identify a similar project or a small local activity and have the children and youth visit the project manager or youth leaders and ask questions about how they planned the budget. This can be 'homework' for some of the group so that they can come back and share with the others.

5. Develop a budget

Prepare a simple table with large categories based on earlier discussions and estimate the major costs based on the description of the planned project. If the whole project is too large to budget, consider working on one major activity as a learning exercise (e.g. Instead of budgeting the entire youth recreation project, budget the drama group costs initially).

6. Prepare the planning group for presentation to the larger federation group

It's important for the young people to be regularly interacting with their adult counterparts either at the Area or Community level. It's useful give young people the opportunity to show what they can do and to give adults the opportunity to see the skills that the young people have learned.

6. Governing with Children and Young People

This section on governing with children and young people consists of two sub-sections:

- Supporting governance structures for children and young people
- Getting started: forming child/ youth representative groups
- Case study examples of action taken by children's committees and federations are shared to inspire others.
- Practical tools to encourage fair, inclusive election processes by children and young people are shared.

A. Supporting Governance Structures for Children and Young People...

Young people are too often excluded from the governing process, even on issues that most concern them.¹⁵ By creating committees, councils or other governing bodies that regularly engage young people in the decision-making process, CCF is creating a civil society that is more child and youth friendly. Involving young people in decision making can empower them and build their strengths, help adult decision makers see them as a resource and a partner in community development, and result in a community that is better for children and youth.

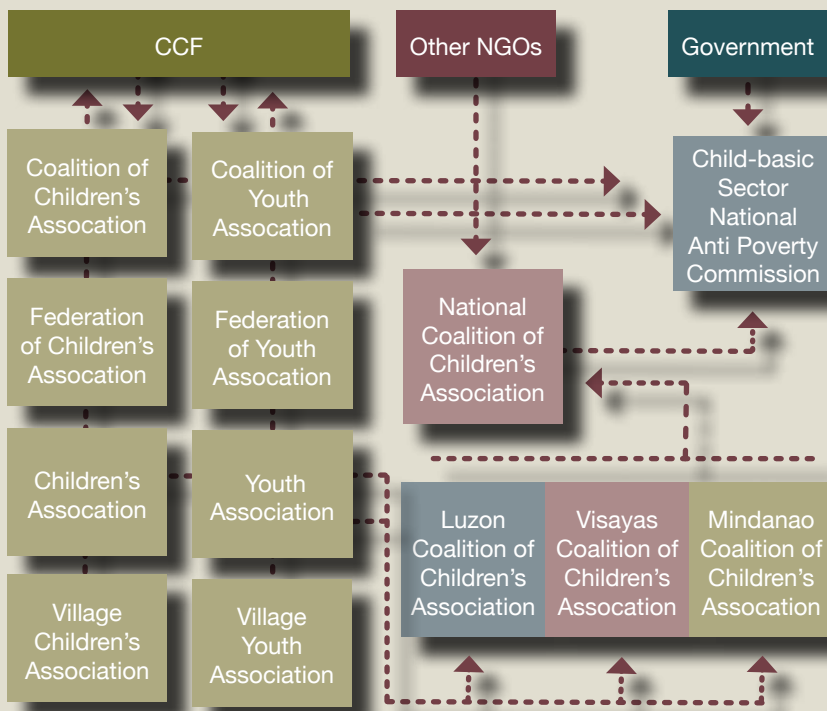
Child and Youth Associations and Federations and their related executive committees are part of the formal governance structure within CCF's development practice and in different countries these are described with various terms such as councils, forums, and committees. For the sake of consistency, the terms Association, Federation and Executive Committees will be used in this section. At the community level, children and youth form Associations and elect a Child and Youth Executive Committee (CYEC) to represent that Association. At the Area level (CCF Areas often overlap rural districts and in some cases, municipalities), several community Associations are federated to act as one force and form a Children and Youth Federation.

¹⁵ Martin et al, (2007, April). *Building Effective Youth Councils: A Practical guide to Engaging Youth in Policy Making*. Washington, D.C: The Forum for Youth Investment, Impact Strategies, Inc.

In most cases, the Child and Youth Federation is actually a sub group of the larger Federation (which includes parents) although in some countries, it does exist as a separate Federation. The Children and Youth Federation also has an elected Federation Executive Committee (sometimes referred to as the Federation Board) made up of representatives from the Child and Youth Associations.

While most Associations and Federations for young people are made up of both children and youth, in some countries, for example the Philippines, there are two separate Associations at each community, one for children and one for youth. Similarly, at the Area level in the Philippines, there are two Federations, a Children's Federation and a Youth Federation.

Figure 3: Structure of village children's associations



The development and support of Child/Youth Associations and Child/Youth Federations is an integral part of promoting the agency of children and young people. Having regular spaces and opportunities for meeting, discussion and planning helps ensure that child and youth voice 'evolves' in the community. Through the establishment and development of these associative structures, children and youth can play in leading role in community development, contributing to selecting, planning, implementing, and evaluating programs and projects that most interest them.

By supporting and mentoring children's Associations and Federations, CCF programs are helping create spaces for children and youth to express their views, listen to others, analyse their situation and plan actions on issues affecting them. Associations provide space and opportunity for empowerment, inclusion and unity that can be developed over a period of time. Children can learn about democracy, they can develop friendships, gain confidence, develop life skills and challenge different forms of discrimination. Children are more able to protect and promote their rights through their collective efforts. For example, the inclusion of the most marginalised groups of children in associations, can give them a stronger collective voice to their concerns (for example, working children, children with disabilities, children who have been sexually exploited) and can lead to a change in their status whereby they are recognised as social actors.

A Child/ Youth Association is formed at the community level by children/youth in that community. In some cases, the association is comprised of members who are enrolled in CCF programs, and in others, any young person is automatically a member of the association and can be elected to a representative executive committee.

Due to their 'organised' nature, children and young people who are members of an Association can be more effectively involved in project and program developments over a longer period of time. They provide a base for representative election processes for formation of Children and Youth Executive Committees (CYEC).

A Child/Youth Executive Committee is a group of children and youth elected to represent their peers within the community Association. These representatives participate in decisions around what happens locally on behalf of the other children in that community. A Child/ Youth Executive Committee (CYEC) may meet on a monthly basis to discuss important issues, plan a special event, organize special interest groups, review the progress of a program, or to talk about how to help vulnerable or marginalized children in their community.



The executive committee of a village children's club in India

A strong CYEC abides by the following principals:

- It is a democratic body that encourages participation and representation of children and young people from different backgrounds and ages (especially the most marginalized girls and boys). Efforts must be made to ensure that some of the most marginalized girls and boys are included, not just young people who have the loudest or most confident voices (who may be from better off sectors of the community).
- In order to ensure that a larger number of young people get a chance to learn leadership skills, **leadership on the CYECs should be rotated at least annually.**
- There should be an emphasis on developing the life skills of all children and young people within the community, rather than on emphasis the development of leadership skills of a few. Particular efforts to empower the most marginalized children to give them the confidence to speak up and represent others, and efforts to tackle discrimination of other children and youth (for example that children without formal education can still be effective and skilled representatives) may be required.

A Child/Youth Federation is formed by the associations in an Area and may either exist separately from parents or as part of the same Federation of parents. By bringing together the membership of several associations, it can be a powerful force that unites the voices of young people across many communities through a District or Area-level structure. The Federation is represented by an elected group of children and young people who are from several communities in a district or other administrative area.

Roldan, 15 years old

“My first experience to participate was when I was eight years old, during a team-building activity for the children in our community. At first I was surprised to see children and not adults who were the ones in front and facilitating the sessions. That was the time when I realized that children like me can do many things too. I continued to attend every session I was invited to until today. This time however, I am the one in front and facilitating just like the kids I saw when I was 8.”

The **Child and Youth Federation Executive Committee** represents the children and youth from the entire Area in decisions that affect the communities where they live. The Child/Youth Federation Executive Committee (CYFEC) makes decisions in partnership with the Adult Federation (usually made of up parents) and makes sure that the voice of represented children is heard. A formal executive structure such as the Community or Federation level Executive Committees is a key part of the way CCF works with communities to build stronger partnerships between adults and young people. Federations with adults, youth and children will help to normalize regular communication and joint action planning on important issues affecting children and young people.

The CYFEC may meet once every three months to discuss issues that arise in their collective communities. Child/Youth Federation Executive Committees may discuss recommended changes in a development project, plan advocacy initiatives, or organize child/youth-led monitoring/evaluation of projects.

Like with the community level CYEC, the Federation Executive Committee offers opportunities for elected members to learn a variety of skills. Leadership should consequently be rotated at least annually so that a variety of children and young people have a chance for skills development.

Roldan, 15 years old

“When invited to talk during a meeting of the village council, we told the adults that one of the major problems that we see in our village is the frequent flooding even with little rain. That was the time when I discovered that children can actually participate in community affairs. A few months after that dialogue, canals and drainage were set up in our village.”

Through their involvement in associations, **federations and executive committees or other committees**, children and young people will have the opportunity to develop the following skills:

- Ability to engage with their peers, younger children, adults, government representatives, youth organizations and other agencies
- Active listening and representation
- Communication, negotiation and conflict resolution
- Reporting and recording
- Community research and analysis
- Project planning and action

B. Getting Started - Forming Child/Youth Representative Groups...

One of the challenges of working with children and young people is enabling them to come together in a regular group to discuss ideas and move plans forward. The formation of children's associations and executive committees can be challenging if there is no sense of a broader child and youth constituency. However, in each context it is important to build upon existing structures or informal groups of children and young people.

- **Meeting with children and youth**

In some communities where CCF works, children and youth are already active in their communities through youth clubs, church groups, children's committees, school groups or other activities. Some of these activities may already be supported by CCF programs, whereas others may be supported by other organizations. When we call a meeting of all young people in a community, these active young people can help by spreading the word of the meeting throughout their groups and clubs. They can also be instrumental in helping to facilitate such a meeting.

The purpose of the first meeting or the first set of meetings is to introduce the idea of associations and representative committees of children and young people, and how children and youth associations and committees can be supported by CCF to play a role of change agents within the community. Children could be supported to participate in consultation activities to identify and discuss issues affecting them in their local community (see *consultation activities in section 3*). The facilitator can explain that CCF seeks to support children and young people to play an active role in identifying, prioritizing, analyzing and developing action initiatives on issues that affect them to contribute to community development which further their well-being and protection of their rights.

Through forming regular groups, associations and elected executive committees the children and young people will be more effective in playing an active and leading role to address the needs and interests of young people. Some case examples of action initiatives organized by children's associations and their representative committees in other communities can be presented. Children and young people can be encouraged to share their ideas about they can establish their own associations and executive committees.

- **Exchange Visits Among Children and Youth**

An exchange visit is one of the best ways for people to learn about and become motivated to try something new. If there is another CCF Area within driving distance of an Area

where you are trying to establish a new Association or Federation, arrange for a 1-3 day visit where young people from the new Area visit with elected members of a neighboring Federation or Association and present on their projects and activities. The visit should give the young people who have not yet developed their own Committees a real sense of what such an Association or Federation can accomplish. While 'training' young people on the roles of an Association or Federation and its committee members can be useful, there is simply nothing that can replace the experience of actually seeing or hearing about it firsthand.

During an exchange visit between Ethiopia and Uganda, two youth Federation Executive Committee members from Uganda presented and discussed issues with adults and young people alike at an Area meeting in Ethiopia. Following the presentation, a 17 year old young man stood up and read a statement he had written in thanks to the Uganda visitors. He read, 'I would especially like to thank Sarah and Philip for their work for children in Uganda. After hearing them speak and learning about their work in their own communities, I believe that I could be an advocate for children in my village.'

Case Example of Action organized by Children's Committees: Potable Water for the School

The children of MAKA Elementary School in the Philippines were not as bothered by the lack of potable water in their school as they were to the danger of crossing the street to get the safe drinking water. In the first consultation children listed the speeding vehicles as the main threat as they would have to cross the street during break time to get water to drink.

It was when a few children got sick by drinking the water available inside the school that brought them to realize that there is in fact that threat inside the school which was to be part of the child friendly school and community project. As a result, the children's association proposed that safe drinking water be available inside the school premises. CCF-SLA, together with the Parent - Teacher - Community Association began planning and with the help of volunteers from the local government was able to set up a water purification system inside the school for every child to enjoy.

- **Supporting Elections of Representatives with and by Children and Youth**

In order to work effectively with other adult federations and other concerned groups, it can be helpful for children and young people (from different associations within the community) to elect a smaller group of children and youth, an executive committee to represent them. The elected Executive Committee members can represent their peers and have a voice in wider governance structures. Some of these representatives will meet with other representatives at the District or Area level during meetings and will bring the unique perspective of the concerns from their communities to these meetings. The major role of this committee will be communication with others and honest representation of the interests of their constituents (other children and young people – especially the most marginalized in their community).

Children and young people should be supported to conduct their own election process, ensuring inclusive and fair opportunities for girls and boys of different ages and abilities, especially the most marginalized (see box below). As part of this process they should identify the qualities that they are looking in their representatives, so that elections can be based on suitable criteria. It is important to remember that the best elected committees are not necessarily those that would traditionally be chosen based on academic achievement and or the ability to present themselves well. CCF is interested in helping all kinds of children become leaders in their communities, children that many adults or even other children may think of as 'average' or 'not bright' may actually be very well connected to groups of young people and may become very passionate advocates for change.



Young people in Sri Lanka campaign to be elected as representatives of the Child Advisory Team

In the UK, a researcher was asking some teenagers about the local Youth Forum that was started by the Town Council. The teenagers seemed to be unaware of it and said that the adults would probably choose 'the people who do all the best in school, and everything, and they're not average people are they?'¹⁶ The exercise below helps young people think about electing children and youth from all kinds of backgrounds to represent themselves and other groups of children who may be different from what most of them think of as 'leaders.'

¹⁶ Morrows, 2006 from Beers et al., 2006, *Beyond Article 12: Essential Readings in children's participation, Thailand, Black on White Publications.*

Preparing for inclusive, fair election processes with special consideration of the needs to involve the most marginalized children and young people:



There is often a tendency for children to elect the most vocal, confident children who may be from more privileged, school going children. Thus, it is important to encourage children and young people to think about and prepare for fair election processes. It may be helpful for children and young people to reflect on existing power relations, considering which children and young people have more or less opportunities.

A **sweet game** can be used to encourage children to reflect on power relations and opportunities for a fairer election process:

- In the first round encourage all the children and young people to sit in a circle, explain that you are going to place some sweets (about 10) in the middle of the circle. There will not be enough for everyone, so who-ever gets the sweets first gets them.
- Place the sweets in the middle of the circle and observe who gets the sweets (and how many). Encourage the children and young people to reflect on who got the sweets and why? Was this process fair? [Note: it is interesting to observe that in some cultural context the boys rush forwards to get the sweets, while the girls sit back and observe].
- In the second round ask the children and young people who live close to the community centre to remain in a circle in the middle of the room. Ask all the children and young people who live in more isolated parts of the community (e.g. further away from schools, health centre or community centre) to sit further away (outside of the inner circle).
- Again place 10 sweets in the middle and observe who gets them. Ask children whether this distribution of sweets is fair? Ask them whether it represents any truth in their experiences within the community (do some children have more or less access to schools, health centre, community centre) – if so which children and why? List children's answers.
- For the final round explain that there are only 'X' sweets (where 'X' is the number of places for elected representatives). Explain that for an election process to be fair, children and young people from different backgrounds and ages, including girls and boys should have the opportunity to represent their peers. In particular children and young people from the most marginalized groups (including non-school going children, children with disabilities) should be given a fair chance to be elected. Thus, encourage the children to decide which 'categories' of children (e.g. girls and boys; younger and older children; school going and 'non-school going children'; children with disabilities) should be represented.

Children, young people and adults (CCF staff) may work together to develop guidelines for a fair election process, taking into consideration the need to have representatives from diverse groups of children and youth within the community (for example including representatives from girls and boys, from different age groups, from different caste/ ethnic/ religious groups, from out of school and school going groups, from children with disabilities/other marginalized groups etc). Some examples of committee member guidelines may include:

- At least 4/10 committee members are female
- At least 1/10 committee members should be disabled if there are disabled children living in the community who can serve on the committee
- At least 3/10 committee members should be under the age of 14
- At least 2/10 committee members should be working children
- At least 2/10 members should be non-enrolled (in CCF) children

Staff can work with children and young people in the community to prepare for the elections.

Children and young people from the associations who would like to represent their peers could nominate themselves (and/or be nominated by others). A meeting can then be organized bringing together as many children and young people as possible from the community to undertake an election process among their peers.

- **Supporting the Committee to Develop an Action Plan**

Children and young people's Executive Committees can help co-ordinate (and with some training help facilitate) consultations with children and young people on child poverty and/ or other issues affecting them in their local communities (see section 3). Action plans can be developed by the children and young people's associations and committees to address priority concerns and to build upon children's suggestions and skills. The executive committee may play a role in coordinating involvement in one action plan or a series of action initiatives. Often, there are other committees developed for specific areas of interest such as a health committee, a newsletter or communication committee, a youth club committee or an education committee. These committees often learn details about programs and then help monitor those programs or implement those programs.

CCF staff should dedicate weekly monitoring visits with the Committee or its members to help ensure that the time between planning and project implementation is short. Action plans may be developed in coordination with other Children's Committees in the Area.

- **Support Quick Start Child/ Youth Led Projects**

To build upon children and young people's enthusiasm and to help them in developing their skills and confidence in organizing action initiatives on issues affecting them, it is important to support quick start child/ youth led projects (see section 4). One of the challenges faced within CCF is that the time between consultation, planning, project design and actual implementation may be long. Children and young people need to see that the issues they raised are being taken seriously and that they will have an opportunity to contribute to their community in a timely fashion. For this reason, staff may want to dedicate extra time at the beginning of the Child and Youth Committee's formation to ensure that they are able to quickly implement simple, visible activities or projects. Some simple projects to begin soon after a plan is approved include:

- Recreational activities
- Communication projects such as newsletters, drama or radio shows
- A conference, workshop, training or retreat on a topic of interest to youth
- School gardens

Quick start projects are those projects that require little training, limited technical staff, limited networking with other organizations. Instead, they are characterized by high interest, take advantage of natural talents of children and can be implemented easily with existing human, material and technical resources.

- **Strengthening Children's Association/ Committees/ Federations**

Children and young people's associations, committees and federations will be strengthened when they are actively supported by adults, especially in the initial phases of their development. Ongoing efforts to sensitize parents, teachers, community and religious elders, local and national government officials and media to ensure their support for child and youth agency and children's organizations is required.

Outline for a one year community level action plan:

- Development of a simple constitution (who are we, what will we do, how often will we meet, when will our next election take place)
- Project implementation plan (Who will do what in the project, how much time can young people commit to the project?)
- Project monitoring (Who will visit the project and talk to implementers, participants, and others?)
- Meeting schedule (Which days and times will we meet?)
- Communication strategy (How will we let other children and youth know what's going on and how will we get their feedback on projects?)

In some cultures additional sensitization may be required to convince parents and community elders about the importance of encouraging girls, younger children, children with disabilities and other marginalized groups to actively participate and be included in governance structures.

Children may require practical support from adults to meet and work together (including access to basic materials, space to meet, local transport). Individual children and children / youth organizations may also be strengthened by capacity building on children's rights (and responsibilities), life skills, project planning/ management/ budgeting/ monitoring and evaluation/ reporting, and other aspects of organizational development including mobilization of local resources which help sustain their children's associations and committees.

Children's associative structures need access to decision makers in order to make change happen, and without change, the associations, federations and related committees will lose motivation. Adults can help arrange meetings with policy makers, advocate for young people to sit on other important community, municipal or district committees and facilitate regular opportunities for young people to advice top officials.

***What factors enable children's associations and committees to develop and strengthen?*¹⁷**

- When there is good preparation with key adults in the community (parents, teachers, religious and community elders etc) and other duty bearers (for example, government officials) in order to gain their support for girls and boys participation and to positively respond to issues raised by children;
- When children are able to organise themselves in their local context (where they can meet easily and regularly);
- When children have a physical 'space' to meet (for example, their own room) that is easily accessible to them (for example, in the locality in which they live and organise);
- When work is undertaken with children as well as with key support adults to allow for the inclusion of girls, children with disabilities and other discriminated against groups;
- When the children's association addresses urgent and immediate rights issues of importance and relevant to the children involved;

¹⁷ Adapted from Save the Children (2005) Discussion Document on Supporting Child Led Initiatives and Organizations. Save the Children's Virtual Interest Group on Supporting CLI/Os.

Promoting Child and Youth Agency

- When space is given for ongoing capacity building of both children and adults. Enabling adults and empowering children is key to the development and strengthening of children's associations and committees. For example, models which empower all children to gain life skills and play an active role in the organisation rather than those which encourage and promote the emergence of a few 'leaders';
- When work is undertaken to create access to and prepare key decision-makers to involve children/child representatives in governance (for examples in schools or in local and national government structures);
- When children are supported to mobilise local resources, support and information;
- When 'graduation' strategies are in place whereby the older (over 18 year olds) have opportunities to engage in meaningful youth and adult initiatives, and younger children are continuously encouraged to join and play an active role in the existing children's associations/ committees.

After at least 1-2 years of operation, CCF encourages child/youth organizations together with adult partners to assess their organizations and determine a plan for growth. Similar to adult Committees and Federations, child/youth Associations, Committees and Federations need to build their capacity over time, to strengthen in order to become better representatives of the communities they serve and in order to improve their effectiveness as a contributing partner in community development.

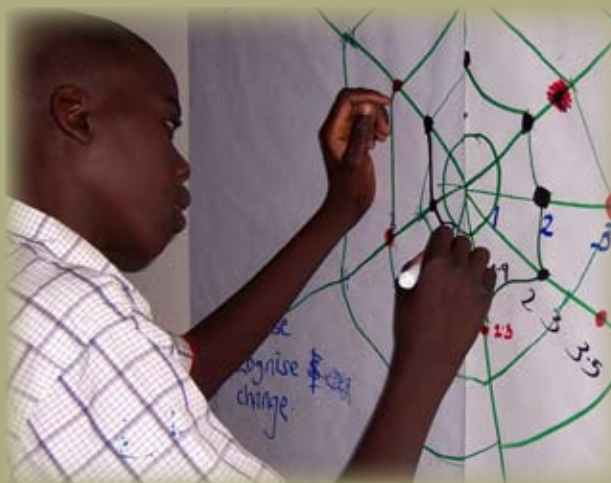
One tool that is particularly useful for assessing child and youth-led initiatives and enabling children and youth to plan improvements is Save the Children's Spider Tool (*see box on following page*).

Spider Tool: Self Assessment and Planning Tool for Child Led Initiatives and Organizations



In late 2005 Save the Children published a set of three publications which are intended to help strengthen child led initiatives and organizations: “*The Spider Tool: Self assessment and planning tool for child led initiatives and organizations.*” In a colorful and reader-friendly format, these three publications provide a complete guide to using the Spider Tool with and by children and young people who are part of children’s organizations or initiatives. The Spider Tool has been adapted to help child led initiatives and organizations to assess their strengths and weaknesses, and thus to plan what they need to improve to strengthen their organizations. The Spider Tool process involves participants working together to assess the strength of the organization according to a number of core dimensions (key quality elements). The results of the assessment are transferred to a spider web diagram that illustrates how the participants see the organization. This helps to focus the participants on the areas that need addressing.

The publications are based on a piloting of the tool by child led groups supported by Save the Children and partner organizations in seven countries and two regions during 2004-2005. The 3 publications combine a Lessons Learnt from the piloting, the Spider Tool and an accompanying Facilitators Guide. A list of key resources are contained at the end of each publication.



A member of the child and youth federation works on the spider tool during a federation assessment exercise.

Available for download from:

www.crin.org/docs/resources/publications/hrbap/promoting.pdf

7. Monitoring and Evaluating with Children and Young People

This section includes guidance and tools to support two inter-related areas of monitoring and evaluation with children and young people:

- processes and tools to support children and young people to monitor and evaluation their own projects and initiatives
- processes, tools and systems for monitoring and evaluating child and youth agency, including participatory processes which directly involve children and young people.

A. Supporting Children and Youth to Monitor and Evaluate their Own Projects and Initiatives...

Why engage young people in monitoring and evaluation? To ensure meaningful opportunities for children to monitor and evaluate their own projects and initiatives it is essential that children are involved in the planning stage to set appropriate objectives and indicators. Involvement of children and young people in monitoring their own participatory processes is also advantageous as it can empower children with further skills and knowledge, and provide additional opportunities to have a voice and an influence.

Youth Forum Member, Ramallah, West Bank¹⁸

“Who better will understand the impacts of this project on young people, and who will be more interested in addressing any obstacles that might be encountered, than youth themselves? Having us participate in monitoring and evaluation is not just a good idea, it is an essential ingredient for success.”

¹⁸ EQ Review, Vol 4. No.1, January 2001. http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNADF054.pdf

We've Got Something to Say!

One of the advantages of helping children organize in the communities where they live and helping them form Associations in those communities is that those children can then be active in monitoring local projects that are meant to benefit children. In some community-level Child and Youth Associations, young people form committees in order to track particular projects or activities. For example, the children's Health Committee might be made up of 5-6 young people who are interested in the Peer Education project in their community and may monitor the activities of that project and report back to the Child and Youth Executive Committee on the progress of that project. Another group of young people may make up the 'Education' committee and monitor the educational activities that are most relevant to children in their communities. In the example below, children on one such Education committee regularly monitor the budget and related expenditures of their local school.

Case Study: Child-led Monitoring in Action, Uganda

In Uganda, CCF is training primary school children in how to monitor the public funds coming into their school. CCF works with 30 schools across the district, helping children to hold their teachers to account. Although the project is new, it is already having an impact: the District Education Officer is taking up the findings of the children and school inspections are improving. Where head teachers are not co-operating, parents are demanding to know what has happened to the funds. Children are learning more about what accountability means in practice, and are using their knowledge to teach other children and their parents.

A group of child monitors in Chamwente Primary School said: 'It is important to do UPE (Universal Primary Education) monitoring so that children can learn better. Every fortnight, we go and see the head teacher and ask him questions. We ask for the receipts for what has been spent and also check the physical amount of things bought. If something is wrong, we report this to the head teacher. If the head teacher does not accept what we say, we call the teachers and tell them. We also talk to the Christian Children's Fund.'

In the example above, children and adults work together to monitor progress on educational programs. When monitoring can lead children into conflict with adults or powerful persons in the community, it's important for staff members and other adults in the community to work with young people so that they remain safe and are not placed in a difficult or dangerous position.

Hints for Effective Youth and Child-led Monitoring and Evaluation

Young people may not be familiar with terms like ‘Monitoring and Evaluation’ but are capable of being effective monitors and evaluators with a little guidance. The tips below can help ensure true youth and child participation in the monitoring and evaluating process.

- **Learn why monitoring and evaluation is important**

Young people may be very excited about implementing programs and may not understand the need for regular monitoring during project implementation or for evaluation after a project has been completed. Demonstrating the role of monitoring and evaluating in an existing project might be one helpful way to help young people understand why it’s important. Another way to demonstrate its usefulness is to visit another Youth or Children’s group to learn how and why they monitor and evaluate their projects

- **Select the projects that young people are most interested in monitoring and evaluating**

Interest is an important part of the motivation to participate. Initially, encourage young people to choose 1-3 activities that they would like to be involved in and let them learn ‘hands on’ as monitors for those activities or projects. It is not important that young people be involved in the monitoring of every project in their community but they should be involved in those they are most connected to and they are most likely to stay involved if the task is manageable, interesting and relevant to them.

- **Encourage young people develop their own questions and monitoring methods**

When young people ask their own questions rather than those formulated by adults, develop their own methods for collecting information, and formulate their own strategies for action, it benefits them and the young people in their communities. Involvement in project planning, implementation and monitoring/evaluating should be a learning experience. Adults can help guide and support but should not lead the process.

- **Use the knowledge gained from monitoring and evaluation to take action**

The reason we monitor and evaluation is in order to learn and take action based on what we’ve learned. Adults should support young people to take action soon after a monitoring and evaluation exercise so that they link their new knowledge with action. If there is no opportunity to respond to the knowledge they’ve learned or to improve the problems they’ve discovered, young people will quickly stop monitoring and evaluating their activities.

Simple Tools for Monitoring and Evaluating

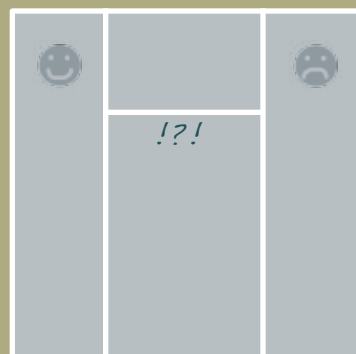
A range of participatory tools can be developed and/or used by children and young people to monitor and evaluate their own projects, initiatives and participatory processes. A range of tools are outlined in Appendix 1d and 1e including:

- the 'Time line' illustrating significant milestones, successes and challenges in their project over a time period.
- the 'H' assessment to assess strengths, weaknesses and suggestions to improve their project, initiative and/or child and youth agency (see description of how to do an 'H' assessment below')
- the 'circle analysis' to explore patterns of inclusion and exclusion
- the 'body map' to explore differences in children or adults before and after their projects and/or projects which promote child and youth agency
- 'stories of most significant change' – using stories, poetry, drama or photography to illustrate the most significant change (planned or unexpected) that has come about as a result of their project initiatives.
- the 'spider tool' for self assessment and planning of child led initiatives or organizations

"H" Assessment



The 'H' assessment is a simple tool that can be easily used to assess strengths, weaknesses and suggestions to improve their children and youth associations/ committees/ projects/ initiative and/or child and youth agency.



- Make a "H" shape on large flipchart paper (as per diagram above)
- In the left hand column draw a happy face ☺, in the right hand column a sad face ☹ and below the middle "H" bar draw a light-bulb (to represent 'bright ideas').
- Children and young people can use the 'H' assessment to explore and record:
 - ☺ *What are the strengths of the child/ youth participation/ association/ initiatives in your locality?*
 - ☹ *What are the weaknesses of the child/ youth participation/ association/ initiatives in your locality? (inc. problems/ challenges faced!)*
- !?! *What ideas/ suggestions do you have to improve child/ youth participation/ association/ initiatives in your locality?*
- Each group is encouraged to present back their findings
- Overall group discussion could then be facilitated on the findings



Case Study: Use of participatory monitoring and evaluation tools with children and youth associations in Uganda:

In June / July 2006 members of children and youth associations who were part of the CCF Bright Futures program in Jinja and Mbale in Uganda made use of the time line, H assessment and circle analysis to assess the strengths and weaknesses of their associations and their partnerships with adults. Children and youth representatives brought the results of their participatory tools to a 2-day residential workshop. The tools enabled significant reflection, information sharing, analysis of findings, and identification of recommendations to strengthen their associations, federations and partnerships with adults.

Action planning focused on:

- *Proper timing of activities to suit the youth and children (after school or during school holidays)*
- *The need for increased trust and respect between children, youth and adults through the development of an agreed code of conduct, increased opportunities for joint agenda setting and increased negotiation, more open and transparent sharing of information, increased life skills training for children, and building trust in children and youth to manage their budgets.*
- *Increased opportunities for the voices of children and youth (of different ages and abilities) to be heard and integrated in planning and implementation at all levels – including opportunities for children and youth to be actively involved in DIP development and review.*
- *Ensuring equal opportunities and treatment for adults, children and youth (training, funds, transport). Need for affirmative action for children and youth, including involvement of children and youth in budgeting, monitoring and evaluation, and changes in resource allocations towards programs which have direct benefits to children and youth. The need for capacity building of children, youth and adults, especially in the areas of finance, budgeting, and M &E was highlighted.*
- *Direct more funds towards provision social services*
- *Strengthening networks among children's associations both with CCF programs and with other like minded organisations – including support for exchange visits and peer reviews to exchange ideas (on challenges, successes), best practices and how to work better with young people.*

A meeting with adults also allowed use of the 'before- after Body Map' highlighting important changes in adult attitude and behavior towards children and young people in support of their active participation and agency (see box in Section 3).

B. Processes, Tools and Systems for Monitoring and Evaluating Child and Youth Agency...

There have been very few efforts to actually measure child and youth agency in community development. Monitoring and evaluating the process and impact of child and youth agency is crucial to efforts to learn from and build upon the strengths and weaknesses of promoting child and youth agency in various settings and contexts. Staff, young leaders and other adults are encouraged to choose simple indicators of child and youth participation or agency and track those indicators over time. Two frameworks for measuring participation are provided below and should be used as guidelines when choosing which measures will best help to understand and learn about child and youth agency in a community, district or national program setting. Once measures are selected, many of the participatory tools described in the first sub-section can also be directly used or adapted to monitor and evaluate the process and impact of child and youth agency.

Measuring Participation / Agency, Lansdown (2005)

Lansdown (2005) provides a broad framework to measure effective participation in a range of processes or programs. This framework can be adapted for use by CCF to measure child and youth agency. The framework includes a focus on the measurement of three distinct dimensions of participation (child agency) which would contribute to effective monitoring and evaluation, namely: scope, quality and impact.

- **Scope** - what degree of participation has been achieved and at what stages of program development - in other words – What is being done?
- **Quality** - to what extent have participatory processes complied with the agreed standards for effective practice – in other words – How is it being done?
- **Impact** - what has been the impact – on children and young people themselves, on families, on the supporting agency, and on the wider realization of young people's rights within families, local communities and at local and national governmental level – in other words – Why is it being done?

Domains and Measure of the Effects of Youth Participation

Another way to measure youth participation is to explore its effects on Program Effectiveness, Individual Adolescents, the Community or the Environment and on Organizational Structure or Process¹⁹ (see table on following page). Many youth and child-led efforts to plan, implement, and govern through community development are already showing positive results in some of the measures listed below but those positive results are not being captured systematically and so there is still relatively little 'evidence' about the effects of child and youth participation.

¹⁹ *Domains and Measures of the Effects of Youth Participation* (see Vatsia, L. 2008)

Domains and Measure of the Effects of Youth Participation

1. On Organizational Structure and Process	2. On the Community/ Environment	3. On Individual Adolescents	4. On Programme Effectiveness i.e., achievement of stated objectives
1.1. Committed seats for youth on governing bodies 1.2. Qualitative changes in organizational principles/perspectives/priorities in defining the youth program agenda 1.3. Increasing recognition of youth needs by implementing organizations 1.4. Increased recognition of youth credibility and competence in playing a role in programming 1.5. Increased capability of reaching youth through youth staff and volunteers 1.6. Influence on funding decisions in support of youth programs, both private and public sector 1.7. Demonstrated youth-led models adopted by other groups, entities	2.1 Improved adult-youth interactions (parents, teachers, other important adults) 2.2 Engagement of established community institutions (e.g., churches, local government, etc.) as partners in youth programming 2.3. Change in attitudes of community leaders toward youth credibility and competence 2.4 Change in attitudes in community norms (general adult perceptions) of youth credibility and competence 2.5 Shift in gender norms through observed competencies of young women participating 2.6 Passage of national youth policies and laws	3.1 Increased self-esteem, self-efficacy, stronger ego-identity status, emotional learning, perception of responsibility toward others, altruism 3.2 Increased healthy behaviors - exercise, nutrition 3.3 Increased connection to peers, parents, teachers/school, other adults in community; development of prosocial norms, increased teamwork skills 3.4 Increased academic achievement, educational expectancy 3.5 Decreased alcohol and marijuana use 3.6 Decreased depressive symptoms emotional distress, suicidal behavior, engaging in violent behaviour 3.7 Decreased unplanned pregnancies 3.8 Lower rates of criminal arrest, vandalism 3.9 Increased participation in other civic activities/ community involvement, increased political participation	4.1 Improved programme outcomes as a result of youth-designed, youth-managed, or youth-implemented activities Relevant to the other three domains, the evidence was weakest in this domain but the hypotheses are that: a) Child and youth participation will improve program outcomes and b) More child and youth participation (and more representative participation) will have stronger effects on program outcomes.

Working with and for young people is an exciting opportunity to make our communities more responsive to the needs of young people and to build the confidence and skills of young people. Measuring child and youth agency helps not only our own organizations learn how to work more effectively, but passes those lessons along to others by providing ‘evidence’ that in addition to respecting children’s rights, supporting child and youth participation actually improves outcomes for the organization, the community, the young person and for all people benefiting from community development programs.

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Appendices

Appendix 1A: Tools for Helping Adults Prepare to Work with Young People

Exploring Proverbs about Children



This activity can be useful to conduct with CCF staff, parents, federation members and community elders to think about cultural values associated with children, childhood and changing ideas in relation to listening to the views of girls and boys.

- Share proverbs about children. What do these proverbs mean? Where do they come from? How much do people still believe them?
- What attitudes may need to change if we wish to involve girls and boys (of different ages and abilities) in development processes and to take their views seriously?
- Discuss and Feedback.

The Sticker Game': Exploring Discrimination



This activity can be facilitated with adults, youth and/or children to enable exploration of discrimination and exclusion and to think about how the most marginalized, excluded groups of girls and boys can be included in development process.

- Explain that this is a 'greeting game'. Each participant will have a sticker with a color on it placed on their forehead. They will not see what color they have. People will go round the room greeting each other. However, they greet people differently according to the color of their sticker (like traffic lights!):
- If you see someone with a 'green' sticker greet them enthusiastically, You are really very happy and honored to see this person, they are a very important person to you.
- If you see someone with a 'yellow' sticker you should greet them normally, like you greet a person whom you see every day.
- If you see someone with a 'red' sticker you do not want to greet this person. You want to avoid them.
- Participants are asked to close their eyes whilst a sticker is placed on their forehead. Once stickers are placed, ask the participants to open their eyes and to move around the room (for about 3 minutes) greeting people in the room according to the color of their sticker.

- Facilitator can observe the response. After 3 minutes stop participants and facilitate a discussion about how people felt regarding their color and the way people treated them. Discuss the following:
 - If you were a green how did people treat you? how did it make you feel?
 - If you were a red how did people treat you? how did it make you feel?
 - If you were a yellow how did people treat you? how did it make you feel?
- Does this difference of status represent any reality in your community/ society? If so, which groups of children (people) are: green, red, yellow? What examples of discrimination against girls, boys, men or women and women in this society?'
- Why are certain groups of children discriminated against?
- What effect does this have on children? On society?'
- Discuss who we can ensure that the development process addresses discrimination and involves the most marginalized groups of girls, boys, youth, men and women?
- Sum up key points.



Reflecting on the role of children and youth in community development

This activity allows the participants to share and reflect on their understanding and experiences of child and youth agency (including factors which help and hinder children's participation in their community's development) and to reflect on the ideal role of children and youth in community development. For CCF areas where child and youth associations do not yet exist, this exercise will consist of discussing programs or other activities where children have played a role. In areas where child and youth associations or clubs do exist, this discussion will review the role of those associations and the progress of child-led projects. This kind of exercise can be done many times over the life of a community development program. It can be done during planning, mid-term reviews, or evaluations and can contribute to a growing appreciation for the role of children and youth in community development.

Divide the participants into small mixed groups (inc. men, women, youth and children) for discussion on key questions relating to changes in child and youth agency over the past three years:


- *What has been the purpose of children's involvement?*
- *What activities have been undertaken to involve children and youth?*
- *How have children and youth been involved?*

We've Got Something to Say!

- Which children or youth have been involved? Have the most marginalized girls and boys been involved? If not, how could they be more effectively involved?
- What benefits have come from involvement of children and youth?
- What constraints and challenges have been encountered in involving children or youth?

Plenary discussion on how to build upon the benefits and overcome the constraints. What is the vision of the ideal role of the role of children and youth in the coming three years (to be better supported in the new program planning process).

Appendix 1B: Tools for Consulting with Young People

Creative Participatory Activities	Useful to Explore:	Summary of the activity:
 <p style="text-align: center;">Body of Needs and Rights</p>	<p>Children's Needs Children's Rights Girls and boys current situation</p>	<p><i>On large flipchart draw the shape of the child.</i></p> <p><i>Ask the children what the children need to grow and to develop well. Encourage them to think about girls and boys of different ages and abilities.</i></p> <p><i>List children's suggestions.</i></p> <p><i>Ask children what rights they have – write these on post it notes/cards and stick next to similar needs (for example right to education by the need to study)</i></p> <p><i>Clarify that according to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child all children have the same rights. All children should be treated equally. No child should be discriminated against.</i></p> <p><i>Discuss whether girls and boys experience these rights, whether the needs of all girls and boys (of different ages and abilities) are met in the community.</i></p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Body Mapping: Faces of Child Poverty</p>	<p>Girls and boys experiences of poverty – how it affects the way they think, feel, do, how they are perceived and treated by others.</p>	<p><i>See detailed description of tool below</i></p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Daily Activity Chart: Day in the life of...</p>	<p>The roles and responsibilities of girls and boys Children's positive coping skills</p>	<p><i>Ask individual child to draw a daily activity chart, illustrating what activities they do on a typical day in their life – starting from when they wake up in the morning to when they go to sleep.</i></p> <p><i>Discuss the roles and responsibilities taken on by girls and boys whose lives are affected by poverty.</i></p> <p><i>Discuss the positive coping skills and strategies developed by children to survive</i></p> <p><i>Discuss what children like and do not like about their day.</i></p>

Creative Participatory Activities	Useful to Explore:	Summary of the activity:
Risk Mapping	Risks and protection issues affecting girls and boys in communities	<p>Give a group of children a large piece of paper and pencils or chalk. Ask them to build a map of their community highlighting all the important places in their community.</p> <p>Ask the children to highlight/ draw the places they like and/or feel safe in their community (e.g. each child could put a happy face by the places they like/feel safe). Enable group discussion on the issues raised.</p> <p>Ask the children to draw/ highlight the dangerous places in their community, places where they don't feel safe / they are scared/ or places where accidents happen (e.g. each child could place a sad face by these places). Enable group discussion on the issues raised.</p> <p>Ask children to indicate 3 things in their community that they would most like to change (e.g. each child could place a star by three things they would like to change). Enable group discussion on the issues raised.</p>
Drama	Children's positive or negative experiences	<p>Children can use drama to illustrate positive or negative experiences, <u>see example below of using drama to demonstrate children's experiences of poverty</u></p>
Transect Walk	Life in the community as experienced by children Community resources	<p>Ask the children to take on the role of 'tour guides' to lead you through the community and describe to you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - what they know about life in the village for girls and boys (of different ages and abilities) - places where children feel happy or sad; - what resources the community and how the benefit all/ some children.
Drawing	Children's happy or sad experiences	<p>Draw pictures of yourself in a situation that makes you feel happy or sad. Ask children to describe that situation and explain what is good / bad about it. As they describe, take note of key words that they use to describe their situation.</p>
Puppets	Children's likes and dislikes	<p>Introduce a girl and boy child puppets to the children.</p> <p>Ask the girls and boys to share their views about what things make this girl or boy puppet happy/ sad/ worried? List the issues raised.</p> <p>Break the children into small groups and ask them if they can develop a small drama or puppet show to illustrate some of the issues that make them sad.</p> <p>Encourage discussion on the puppet shows/ dramas on the issues raised.</p>

Creative Participatory Activities	Useful to Explore:	Summary of the activity:
Story Board	Children's stories and experiences	<i>Ask children to draw a picture of a sick child (or any other face that was identified during 'faces of child poverty body mapping exercise) and ask them to draw the story of why that child is sick. This could be one large picture that many children contribute to, or several pictures that together tell a story. After the children have completed their picture, have them explain the story to the group.</i>
Tree Analysis (Root Cause and Impact)	Exploring the root causes and impact of an issue	<i>Draw a tree – write the issue/problem to be explored in the trunk. Draw the roots and ask children to identify and list the root causes of the problem. Draw the branches and leaves – ask children to identify and list the impact of the problem on girls, boys, families and communities.</i>
Child Friendly Community	Children's vision and ideas about what a child friendly community looks like	<i>On large sheets of paper ask children to design a child friendly community Explore children's ideas about what makes a child friendly community.</i>
Community Resource Mapping	Explore what resources a community has and how they are used to address child poverty	<i>See detailed description of community resource mapping below.</i>



Drama or Role Play: Exploring the life of the poor child

Many children may not be able to express themselves verbally but may have very good knowledge (possibly firsthand knowledge) of how it feels to be poor. A drama is one good way of having children show what it's like to be poor.

- Ask children to think about what it is like to be poor in their community. How do poor children spend their day - what things does he/she do differently compared to other children who are not poor?
- Ask the children to get into small groups of 3 or 4 and act out a day in the life of a poor child showing what they do, how they are treated by others, and how they feel
- At the end of the drama, ask the children to talk about what they saw during the drama and to identify how poverty affects children.

Tree Analysis: Exploring the Root Causes and Impact of Child Poverty



This tool can be useful to explore children and youth's understanding of the root causes of child poverty, and how poverty affects girls, boys, families and the wider community and nation.

- Draw the shape of a tree – write the 'child poverty' in the trunk of the tree.
- Draw the roots and ask children to identify and list the root causes of child poverty
- Draw the branches and leaves – ask children to identify and list the impact of child poverty on girls and boys (the different 'faces of poverty'), families and the wider community and nation.
- Discuss the findings among children and youth. Which root causes do they think they can try to address within their communities?

Community Resource Mapping and efforts to address child poverty



A community resource mapping exercise can be used to identify the existing resources and efforts being made in the community that are currently, or can be used to address child poverty.

- Identify and list (on separate cards) all community resources (including people) that could be used to address child poverty within the community.
- Identify which people in the community are good at helping children. List them on cards. Who are they and what do they do? Why are they good at helping children?
- Identify what skills children and youth have which help them cope with or overcome child poverty. List them on cards.
- Discuss what actions are currently being taken (by children, youth, women, men) to address some of the root causes or impact of child poverty.
- Discuss and identify realistic actions that could be taken by children, youth, women and men in the community to make better use of existing resources and skills to address child poverty.

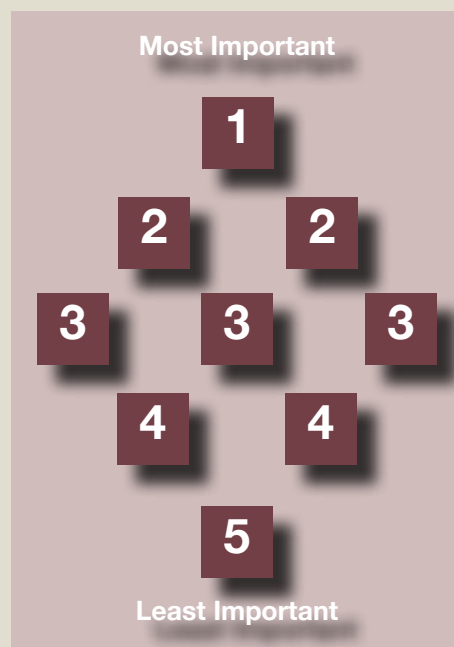
Appendix 1C: Tools for Helping Young People Prioritize Ideas



Diamond Ranking: Prioritizing 'faces of poverty'

This activity can be useful to enable discussions and prioritization among groups of children, youth or adults regarding the most significant 'faces of poverty'.

- Build upon earlier discussions on the different 'faces of poverty' and enable children to develop a list of 9 important 'faces of poverty' that they would want to try and address through their development activities.
- Draw or write each of these priority 'faces of poverty' on a piece of card (or post-it)
- Make the shape of the diamond ranking and ask the girls and boys to place the cards according to their highest and lowest priority of which issue they want to address. Ensure that all the children get to express their view and that all play a role in determining the final agreement of the placement of cards.
- Discuss the layout of the cards and the reasons for the priorities.



Dot Voting:

This activity could build upon the earlier 'Problem Tree Analysis' conducted with children during which children identified and listed various root causes of child poverty

- Girls and boys could be given 3 stickers each (e.g. red for girls, blue for boys) and encouraged to place a sticker by each of the three root causes they think are most significant.
- The root causes with the most stickers could be discussed further to determine priorities among girls and boys.

Something that surprised me was....



This exercise helps young people think more deeply about the kind of information they learn and particularly, about who the information is coming from. It should be facilitated with a group of young people who will be involved in later stages of program planning such as prioritization and project selection and design.

- Prepare by bringing together a group or committee of young people who have been helping with the consultations and data collection
- Have the group members list on a flip chart the different kinds of young people they talked to (e.g. Out of school children, children living in the village, children living in town, older girls, children going to school, teenage mothers etc..) during a brainstorm session
- Divide the committee into small groups and ask them to discuss what they learned about child poverty and its causes, noting which groups of young people were most likely to provide which information (e.g. Older boys talked about lack of land etc..).
- Ask the participants to report back in the form of a short flip chart presentation or verbal presentation – focusing on the major causes of poverty that they learned about from their consultations.
- Now ask them to get back into their groups and this time to discuss something that they learned that they were surprised to hear or something unique that was mentioned by primarily one group of young people.
- In plenary, ask each group to create a drama, draw a picture, or to verbally discuss what they learned during the consultation which was surprising or unique
- After the plenary, ask the group collectively to come up with 3-5 priority issues (these may be causes of poverty) that reflect BOTH what was most commonly reported and that also reflect at least one or two issues that were surprising, unique or difficult to understand.

Your end result may look like this:

- No jobs for parents (mentioned most by young children)
- Children not encouraged to go to school (mentioned most by girls)
- No hope for future (mentioned by disabled, married teenagers)
- Uninteresting school subjects (mentioned most by older boys)

After the discussion, document the results and ensure that this information continues to be carried into the next steps such as project selection and project design.

Appendix D: Tools for Monitoring and Evaluating



Time Line

A 'Time line' can be built to document and explore significant milestones, successes and challenges in their child association/ committee/ federation/ project over a time period.

- Introduce the time-line activity which provides an opportunity to elicit and discuss significant events or processes over time.
- Draw a vertical line up (or horizontal line along) the length of flipcharts (2-3 stuck together).
- Using time as a reference point, children and young people are encouraged to document key events/ initiatives that have occurred over a time period in their associations/ projects. For example, the time line may begin when they were first consulted, or when they first formed their own child association/ committee.
- Children and young people are encouraged to build their time line highlighting key milestones/ successful initiatives/events/processes over time. Also highlight key challenges faced at different points or periods in time.
- They can also highlight any initiatives/ issues taken up by your child/ youth associations or through child - youth - adult partnerships at different points in time.
- Further dialogue and discussion can be facilitated during and following the production of the time line.



Body Map Before/ After and Stories of Most Significant Change:

The before and after Body Map can be used to explore changes in individual (knowledge, values and skills) – children or adults - as a result of their involvement associations/ initiatives or projects. Stories of Most Significant Change can be used for individuals to share stories which illustrate individual changes.

- Introduce this 'body map – before /after exercise' – Taking part in participatory initiatives or projects is like travelling together with other children, young people and adults on a journey. We may have learnt new knowledge, gained new skills and strengthened values or attitudes through our involvement in the participatory initiative.

- Give participants (children/ young people/ adults) who have been actively involved in the participatory initiative/ association a sheet of paper with the shape of a body outline on it.
- Each individual should think about any changes in them – any differences before and after their involvement in the participatory initiative/ association in terms of their knowledge, skills or attitudes/ values. They should make a note of such changes on their body map – either through images, words or a combination of both.
- Children, young people and adults are then encouraged to think about ‘stories of most significant change’ that illustrate some of the changes recorded on their body map.
- Once participants have made their individual body maps and thought of their stories divide them into groups – for example: a girls group, a boys group, a men/ women’s group. In their groups they should share their stories of most significant change (and their body maps). Each group should also identify one story to share with the wider group.
- All sit in a circle for sharing of stories. One story is shared from each group.
- Discuss and identify key lessons learnt.

Note: Creative use of Stories of Most Significant Change:

Use of ‘Stories of most significant change’ can also be adapted and used in other creative ways making use of stories, poetry, drama or photography to illustrate the most significant change (planned or unexpected) that has come about as a result of their project or participation initiatives.

Appendix 1E: Other Tools



Visioning and Drawing:

This activity can be useful with groups of girls, boys, youth or adults to enable them to envision what they are trying to achieve and to think about the kinds of programs or projects that will be effective in addressing some of the root causes of child poverty.

- Find a quiet clean space where groups of children and/or youth can have individual space to sit or lie down. Encourage them to close their eyes and to breathe deeply.
- Encourage them to dream about what their community would look like if the priority root causes of child poverty were addressed. Dream about what the changes in children, families, communities, schools etc would look like.

We've Got Something to Say!

- Now encourage the children and youth to think about what kinds of projects would help to achieve this vision by addressing some of the root causes of child poverty. Think about what children, youth and adults can do to address the root causes of child poverty. Think about what practical steps are needed, how local resources can be mobilized and/or people's behavior changed to bring about positive change. Think about other people or agencies who could work as partners to help. Encourage children and youth to keep their eyes closed and to think about these project ideas for a few minutes.
- Ask children and youth to open their eyes. Give each of them two pieces of paper and ask them to draw their vision of a better community on one piece of paper, and their project ideas on the second paper. Give them some time to draw.
- Enable the children and youth to form groups of 4-6 people. Within their group they should share their vision of the community and their project ideas. They can identify common aspects of their vision of an improved community, and they can discuss and agree on 2-3 best project ideas within each small group for sharing with the larger group.
- Enable each group to share key aspects of their vision and 2-3 good project ideas. Record these ideas (e.g. visually on big chart paper on the wall).
- Enable the children and youth to prioritize project ideas that they would like to develop further – ideas that are realistic and creative.
- Encourage these priority project ideas to be shared and documented to inform more in-depth planning processes.



Circle Analysis: Which Children and Young People

The 'circle analysis' is a useful tool to explore patterns of inclusion and exclusion in terms of which children and young people are actively involved and who is excluded.

Note:

Inner Circle: *Very actively involved in the child and youth associations/ participation initiatives*

Middle Circle: *Sometimes actively involved in the child and youth associations/ participation initiatives*

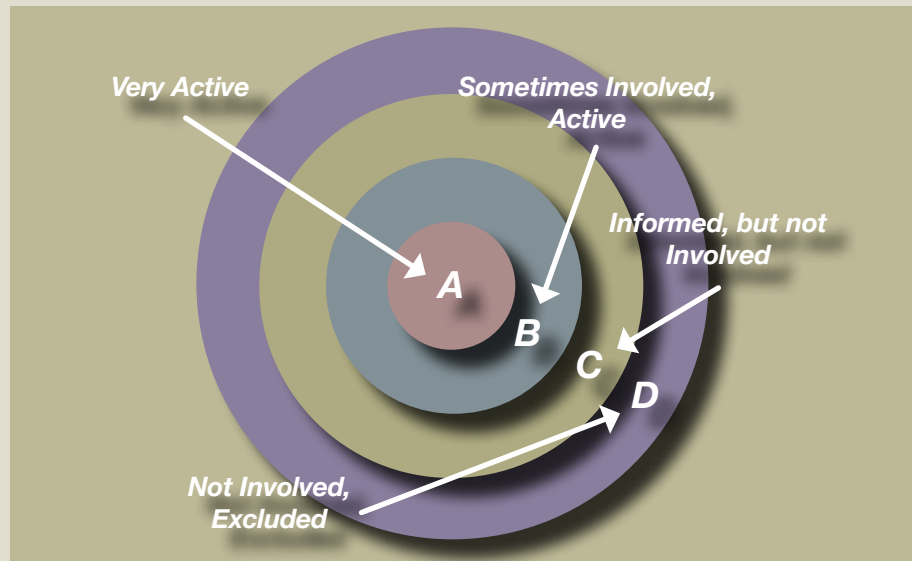
Outer circle: *Informed but not involved in the child and youth associations/ participation initiatives*

Outside the outer circle: *Not involved in the child and youth associations/ participation initiatives*

- The activity and the meaning of the different layers of circle are introduced to children and young people in a local area. The meaning of each circle is checked out with the children/ youth to ensure understanding.
- Develop color coding different age groups of male and female and/or children from different backgrounds (e.g. school going/ out of school; different ethnic groups etc).

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- Each girl and boy is given use of a color pen according to their gender, age or background.
- The children/youth are asked to place an 'X' in which ever circle they think represents them.
- Once everyone has placed their 'X' they are encouraged to reflect upon the patterns of distribution:
- Facilitate discussion about the patterns of inclusion and exclusion:



- Which children/ youth are in the inner circle? What does it mean to be active? How are they active?
- Which children/ youth are in the middle circle? What does it mean? Why are they only sometimes active? What prevents them very being very active?
- Which children/ youth are in the outer circle? Why? What prevents them from being active?
- Are any other children/youth excluded? Why? What can be done?
- Can you observe any main gender, age, or background differences? What other factors make a difference to who is active in the participation initiatives? What can be done to be more inclusive?



Paper Chain Game: Developing inclusive children's associations

This is a useful experiential game which encourages children, young people (and adults) to reflect on team work and inclusion.

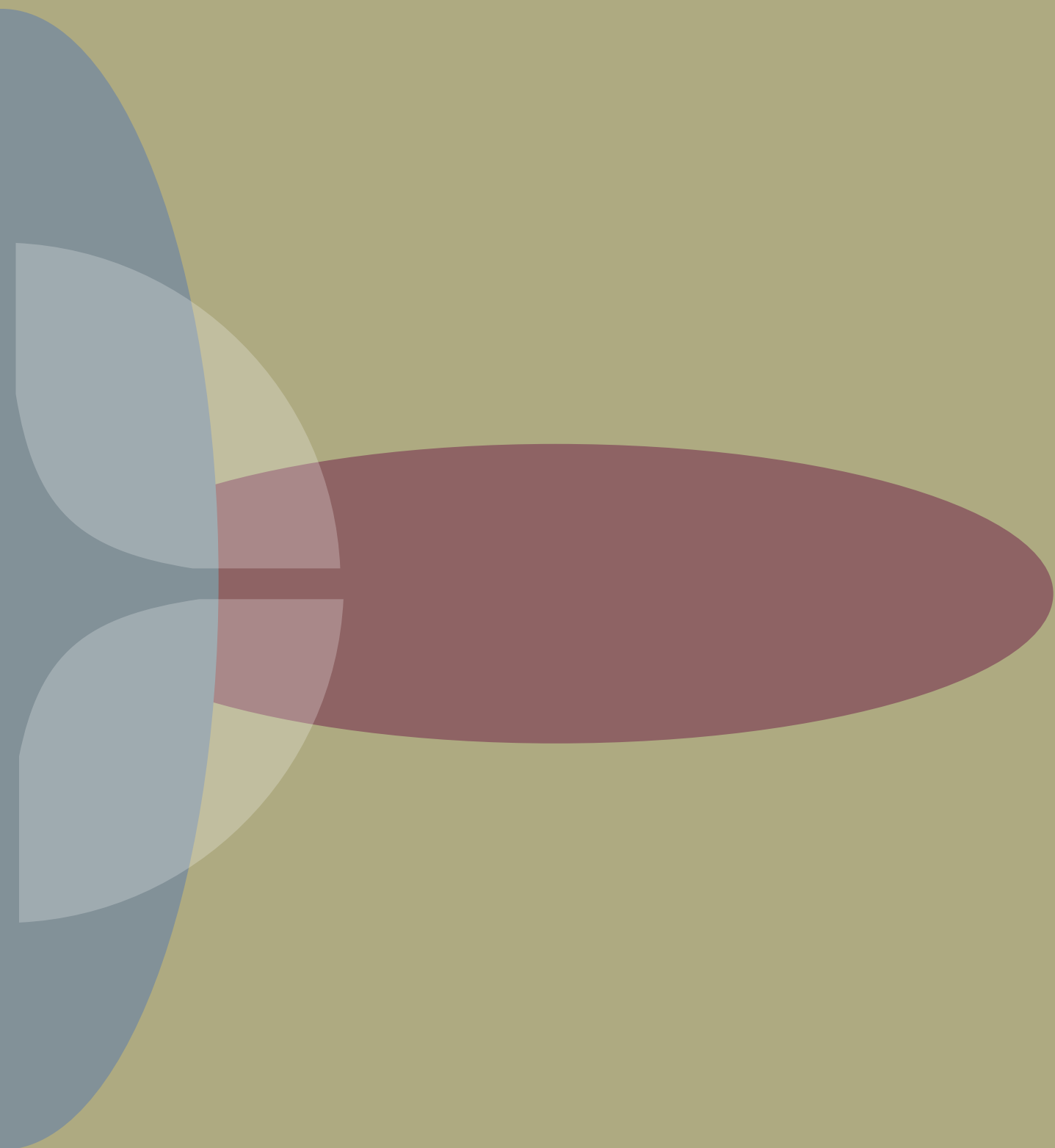
- Divide the participants into equal groups (6-8 in a group). Assign an observer to each group. Explain that each team will be given an equal number of old newspapers and glue. There tasks is to make paper chains. Before they are given the materials, each group is asked to name their team and to set their target for the number of paper chains they think they can make within a 10 minute period.

Group Name	1	2	3	4
Target				
Actual				

- The game is started. An observer with each group carefully observed how they work together. After 5 minutes the observers explain that there has been an unfortunate accident and they tie the hands of the fastest member in the group. After another 3 minutes ask the observers to blind fold the eyes of another member in the group. They continuing observing the group activity until the time is up. Start counting the knots in the chain. Facilitate a discussion on – experiences by those disabled and lessons learnt from the game:
 - *How did you feel when you lost use of your arms/ eyes? How did your role change? Were you able to contribute to your team?*
 - *What lessons did you learn from this game?*
 - *Did you meet/not meet your target? Why?*
- Sum up learning from this game and encourage children and young people to think about how they can apply them to strengthening their child led associations and committees.
[lesson learnt usually reflect: *planning, team work, cooperation, communication, inclusion, disability is not inability, importance of setting realistic targets.***]**

Appendix 2: Main Vulnerabilities and Their Impact Over the Life-Cycle

Age Group	Vulnerabilities	Short-term Outcomes	Long-term Outcomes
In utero and at birth	In utero exposure to maternal infections, nutritional deficiencies, and environmental toxins, as well as poor care around birth, may lead to severe and irreversible damage to brain and other organs	Increased risk of maternal mortality, premature births, low birth weight, neonatal death. Low birth weight is most important determinant of infant mortality	Majority of permanent disabilities have their origin in neonatal disease.
Early Childhood	Since development of basic cognitive and social abilities takes place in the first few years of life, adverse factors-especially poor diets, infection and lack of cognitive stimulation have great potential for causing poor physical and intellectual growth.	Increased risk of infant and child morbidity and mortality. Stunting, slow physical growth, and other manifestations of early childhood malnutrition. Lack of socialization or acquisition of psychosocial skills.	Irreversible effects on physical and cognitive growth and development. Increased likelihood of learning disabilities, delayed school entry, poorer school performance, and increased likelihood of early drop out and lower grade attainment.
School Age Children 6-12 years	Family resource constraints, gender bias, and poor infrastructure and public services prevent school attendance and may lead to increased child labor.	Failure to enroll, delayed enrollment, grade repetition, reduced school performance, early dropout.	Loss of human capital and human capacities. Persistence of gender inequalities. Social exclusion.
Adolescence and Youth (12 – 24 years)	Lack of opportunity to access and complete primary and/or secondary schooling; lack of access to relevant formal education, life and livelihood skills development, and peer education; lack of information and poor access to health services. Poor job market opportunities. Lack of participation in decisions and policies that affect their lives.	Exposure to risky behaviors: early pregnancies, drug abuse, sexually transmitted infection including HIV/AIDs, violence and premature death. Unemployment, hazardous or exploitive labor. Exclusion from decision making of key components of civil society.	Intra-and inter-generational transmission of poor health and its consequences (low birth weight, vertical transmission of HIV). Reduced productivity. Inter-generational transmission of household and community violence. High economic costs of risk behaviors and forgone assets for development Lost opportunities for involving youth as agents of better governance, accountability, and development of democracy.



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