

**Young People's  
Participation in  
the CEE/CIS and  
the Baltics Region**  
A formative evaluation

For every child  
Health, Education, Equality, Protection  
ADVANCE HUMANITY

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# **Young People's Participation in the CEE/CIS and the Baltics Region**

## **A formative evaluation**

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ISBN 92-806-3919-6

Cover photo: MK035 Concentration Energizer – Meg Gawler / **ARTEMIS Services**

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## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AYC	Albanian Youth Council
CEE	Central and Eastern Europe
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CO	UNICEF Country Office
CP	Country Programme
CRC	UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
EU	European Union
EVYP	Especially Vulnerable Young People
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HERA	Health, Education, Research Association (TFYR of Macedonia)
LSBE	Life Skills Based Education
LYC	Local Youth Council (Moldova)
Moldova	Republic of Moldova
MTR	Mid-Term Review
MTSP	Medium-Term Strategic Plan
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NPA	National Plan of Action (for Children)
PAR	Participatory Action Research
PPMRE	Programme Planning, Monitoring, Research and Evaluation
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Programmes
RAR	Rapid Assessment and Response
RADA	Belarusian Association of Youth and Children's Public Organizations
RtK	Right to Know (initiative)
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infections
TFYR	The former Yugoslav Republic (of Macedonia)
UNGASS	United Nations General Assembly Special Session
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VCCT	Voluntary Confidential Counselling and Testing
VIPP	Visualization in Participatory Planning
WFFC	World Fit for Children
YFS	Youth Friendly Services
YPHD	Young People's Health and Development
YPMN	Young People's Media Network
YV	<i>Young Voices</i> (opinion survey)

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This evaluation of young people's participation was guided and supported by the UNICEF Central and Eastern Europe, the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Baltic States Regional Office in Geneva, in particular Mahesh Patel, Leo Kenny, Diane Widdus, Tony Lisle and Marco Segone. They played a crucial role keeping the process on track and providing sharp insights and helpful advice. Robert Cohen contributed valuable ideas on how to evaluate the *Young Voices* Opinion Survey.

The design of the survey questionnaire benefited from the input of two pilot UNICEF Country Offices: the Republic of Moldova and Azerbaijan. Thanks to the dedication and kind collaboration of all the UNICEF Country Offices who participated, the survey was able to gather an impressive amount of rich data. We would like to extend our warmest thanks to all those who laboured to provide the information requested in the questionnaire, especially the contributors listed below:

- Lenin Guzman, Leon Shestani, Catherine Way, Arlinda Ymeraj and Alketa Zazo from **Albania**;
- Naira Avetisyan, Gohar Khojayan, Emil Sahakyan, Naira Sargsyann and Marine Soukhudyan from **Armenia**;
- Rahimova Shafag and Mahmudov Siraj from **Azerbaijan**;
- Eleonora Gvozdeva, Julia Novichenok and Elena Selchonok from **Belarus**;
- Erna Ribar and Jill Zarchin from **Bosnia and Herzegovina**;
- Marianne Ohlers, Aleksandra Vasilevska, Irina Ivanovska, Elena Misik, and Bridget Blagoevski-Trazoff from **The former Yugoslav Republic (TFYR) of Macedonia**;
- Ingrid Kolb-Hindarmanto and Maya Kurtsikidze from **Georgia**;
- Lucia Elmi and Dren Rexha from **Kosovo**<sup>1</sup>;
- Gulsara Osorova and Smaranda Popa from **Kyrgyzstan**;
- Claudia Coadă, Violeta Cojocar, Iosif Moldovanu, Larisa Lazarescu-Spetetchi and Sergiu Tomsa from the **Republic of Moldova**;
- Amor Almagro, M. Bakhruddinov, Nisso Kasymovan and Murat Sahin from **Tajikistan**;
- Nilgun Cavusoglu and Lila Pieters from **Turkey**;
- Olena Sakovych from **Ukraine**;
- Ziyavuddinova Adiba, Shilakadze Andro, Akhmedov Komiljon, Rakhimjanov Shukhrat and Narolskaya Yulia from **Uzbekistan**.

The field research also benefited greatly from being piloted in the Republic of Moldova, which set a fine example of what can be accomplished through an evaluation carried out by young people. We have great pleasure in thanking all the Country Offices that participated in the field research: Albania, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, and TFYR of Macedonia, and we are especially grateful to the young people who worked on these evaluations. In particular, we would like to thank:

- Alketa Zazo, Leon Shestani, Irida Agolli, Blerta Gjergji, Endri Shabani, Klotilda Tavani, Gledis Bozo, Inva Buzi, Jona Gjini, Irda Hoshafi, Nesa Llapashtica, Krenar Lusha, Alba Mimani, Ermal Nufi, Leon Shestani, and Mariol Spaho from **Albania**;
- Eleonora Gvozdeva, Sergei Sivuha, Alesya Chayko, Denis Ivanov, Elena Kirichuk, Marina Korzh, Tatyana Plisunova, Oleg Shelestov, and Julia Stankevich from **Belarus**;
- Maya Kurtsikidze, Nino Tavadze, Lika Gelashvili, Qeti Arveladze, Zura Dolidze, Zviad Eradze, Eka Giguashvili, Mariam Giorgobiani, Giorgi Gordeladze, Mariam Jeiranashvili, Salome Jioshvili, Eka Kochuashvili, Teona Lominadze, Tamuna Lortkifanidze, Mariam Maisuradze, Irakli Mamaladze, Salome Mdinradze, Tamuna Miruashvili, Giorgi Qatamadze, Bidzina Samniashvili, Kakha Sekhniashvili, Tamta Totibidze, Gotcha Tskitishvili, and Lali Zaalishvili from **Georgia**;

<sup>1</sup> Currently under United Nations Administration (United Nations Interim Mission in Kosovo).

- Larisa Lazarescu, Iosif Moldovanu, Angela Capcelea, Alexandru Caranfil, Claudia Coadă, Sergiu Gaina, Cezar Gavrițiu, Irina Iurcisin, Polina Panainte, Daniela Platon, and Viorel Roman from the **Republic of Moldova**;
- Marianne Ohlers, Ljupco Risteski, Ivica Cekovski, Mile Cvetkov, Dragana Dimitrovska, Oliver Donevski, Mico Dushkov, Zivko Grozdanovski, Aneta Jankovska, Natasha Malijanska, Irena Mitevska, Jagoda Nikolova, Vlatko Panev, Zami Qamili, Emilija Stojakova, and Keti Vitanova from **TFYR of Macedonia**.

This report is dedicated to all the young people in the CEE/CIS and the Baltics Region who are actively engaged in civil society, and who are setting the example of exercising their rights and responsibilities to be involved in shaping their own – and their communities' – futures.

### Context, Purpose and Objectives of the Evaluation

Over the past few years, participation of civil society has taken hold in the Central and Eastern Europe, the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Baltic States Region (henceforth CEE/CIS and the Baltics Region), as a necessary element for sustainable development. Within this context, young people's participation is emerging as a key strategy to achieve the Millennium Development Goals for the year 2015.

This evaluation was commissioned to provide evidence of to what extent UNICEF's current work in promoting young people's participation is systematically applied in all aspects of programming. The findings of the evaluation were expected to provide a better understanding of what strengthens meaningful participation of young people in decision-making. It was also anticipated that the evaluation would assist the efforts of the UN, bilateral partners and governments in fostering good governance processes that include young people's participation.

The participation of young people is still quite new in the region. It was felt that a formative evaluation process was required to guide the refinement of the design and implementation of programmes to support meaningful and sustained participation of young people.

This evaluation covers three main areas: 1) results of the *Young Voices* opinion survey, published in August 2001; 2) participation approaches and entry points; and 3) young people's participation in UNICEF programme planning, monitoring, research and evaluation. Its overarching objectives were to develop more strategic responses to promoting young people's participation in UNICEF's work, and to enhance children's and young people's participation in decision-making processes.

The evaluation findings will inform the efforts of UNICEF and governments to effectively promote young people's participation, and will be used by partners to foster the interaction between young people, government and civil society. The evaluation will also provide a basis for a regional consultation with Country Office (CO) programme staff and partners from selected countries to guide and strengthen programming focusing on young people's participation.

### Summary of Design and Methodology

The evaluation included a comprehensive questionnaire for Country Offices, piloted in the Republic of Moldova (henceforth Moldova) and Azerbaijan, and participatory field research with young people in five countries: Albania, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and TFYR of Macedonia. At the beginning of the process, the methodology was outlined in an evaluation protocol prepared by the Regional Office.

The field research was conducted by young people (including 58 young researchers overall and 1,970 young informants) under the guidance of a Principal Researcher in each country. Preparatory training and planning sessions were held with the research teams in each of the countries involved. Four fundamental principles guided the training workshops: the ethics of evaluations involving young people; experiential learning-by-doing; fun; and reflection, stock-taking and feedback throughout the workshop. The training was highly participatory, and introduced the teams of young researchers to both participatory and classical evaluation methods.

Different methods, including questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, impact drawings, testimonials, card visualization, smiley-face scales, force field analysis and social mapping were used to collect quantitative and qualitative data in a youth-friendly manner. These methods

are described in a tool kit, *Useful Tools for Engaging Young People in Participatory Evaluation*, which was developed especially for this evaluation.

The use of participatory methodologies, with young people as the researchers, allowed certain questions to be investigated that otherwise would have been difficult to evaluate using professional researchers only. For example, the young evaluators in Albania, Belarus, Georgia and TFYR of Macedonia examined what motivates young people to participate

### Key Findings

#### **The *Young Voices* Opinion Poll was considered to be a useful way to make young people's voices heard.**

UNICEF commissioned a polling company to survey the views of over 15,000 children aged 9 to 17 in 35 countries of Europe and Central Asia from late 2000 to early 2001. The purpose of the poll was to gather, analyse and disseminate the views of a representative sample of the children in the region, and to encourage decision makers to take into account the opinions of children and youth.

Although it was felt that the opinion poll fell short of encouraging full and meaningful participation of young people, it was useful in a number of ways. It provided a baseline and strengthened advocacy for the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child; it raised awareness on HIV/AIDS and healthy lifestyles; and it promoted young people's influence on youth policy, such as the adoption of National Plans of Action in Armenia and Moldova, and the introduction of life skills based education in the Moldovan national curriculum. The poll became a reference source for designing Country Programmes and youth-managed projects and activities, and was used by young people themselves to justify project proposals, to prepare advocacy campaigns, to develop peer education, and in training sessions on healthy lifestyles and life skills.

#### **Young people's participation is making gains in the CEE/CIS and the Baltics Region.**

The evaluation analysed a number of strategies for young people's participation currently being implemented with the aim of identifying the most relevant and effective programme approaches. Strengthening young people's voices and promoting their influence in the policy and legislative arena is a new undertaking in the region. Even so, the evaluation demonstrated that, with the right support and opportunities, in some countries young people are directly influencing national and local policies and approaches, especially those related to HIV/AIDS, the right to quality education, and access to quality health services.

One of the most important findings of the evaluation was the striking gender bias in the sample of young informants. Seventy per cent of those sampled were female and 30 per cent were male. COs confirmed that girls tend to be more involved than boys in participation projects. This has profound implications for programming, especially when addressing HIV/AIDS, for which the primary determinant of infection in the region is injecting drug use behaviour, and where the prevalence among young men is higher than young women.

The evaluation found a wide variety of entry points in use for engaging young people. Among them, the most effective were judged to be: "multi-sector" forums (i.e., bringing youth groups together with government and NGOs); media channels; and peer-to-peer approaches – all of which provide good prospects for strengthening young people's voices in decision-making.

Peer-to-peer approaches in particular were seen by UNICEF Country Offices to have the greatest potential in building young people's capacity to participate, and were cited as being the most useful in engaging the participation of especially vulnerable young people.

In TFYR of Macedonia, peer-to-peer interactive theatre activities were effective in involving young people, building their skills and working with attitudes related to HIV/AIDS prevention. Interactive theatre was especially successful with institutionalized youth, thanks to the ability of these creative techniques to enable participants to express themselves more easily.

In Belarus, the work of youth NGOs has contributed to the inclusion of peer education in the National Programme to Prevent HIV/AIDS.

In Ukraine, the *Youth Barometer*, a youth opinion poll based on peer-to-peer interviews, was developed as a vehicle through which young people could make their voices heard. The results were reported through the mass media, at various policy round tables, and to the Deputies of the Kiev City Council. Young people aged 15-20 suggested the research subjects, conducted surveys, compiled materials, interpreted the data, and used the research findings for solving problems at the district and city levels. Today the Youth Barometer has become one of the ongoing programmes of the Kiev City State Administration, and is being replicated in many Ukrainian cities.

Young people's participation through multi-sector forums has made important impacts on national policies and strategies. In Albania, the National Youth Strategy and the National Strategy on HIV/AIDS were finalized reflecting the opinions of young people. In Armenia, students helped draft a national framework for Student Council regulations. In Ukraine, young people's advocacy resulted in the revision of the draft Standards in Education, including the introduction of HIV/AIDS prevention issues into the national curriculum.

Youth Parliaments in some countries provide a space for genuine and influential participation; in others, this entry point requires further work with both adults and young people to increase participation beyond the level of manipulation and tokenism. Although Youth Parliaments are effective in building young people's skills, they often do not have wide representation, particularly of marginalized young people.

Young people's voluntary participation in community development has fostered positive change in adult stereotypes about how young people contribute to their communities. In Moldova, Local Youth Councils (LYC) have been set up in 198 communities to empower youth for conscious participation in community life and to involve them in decision-making. As one example, the LYC in the village of Navarnet took the initiative to clean up the garbage that had been poisoning village life for a long time. As a result adults in the village said that community life changed for the better with the creation of the LYC.

In TFYR of Macedonia, Participatory Action Research (PAR) processes helped to map attitudes and behaviour with regards to youth health issues (HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted infections, drug use). In addition the PAR method created a space for open discussion among young people, and generated valuable inputs to the design and implementation of Right-to-Know interventions.

The influence of young people's participation on the legal and policy environment remains modest in most countries. Thus far the strongest influence of young people is reported in the areas of education policy, health policy, social systems / child rights and state planning.

Evidence of the usefulness of policy interventions at a more decentralized or local level was found in several countries, including Local Youth Councils in the Republic of Moldova and decentralized Youth Parliaments in Ukraine.

A key finding is that marginalized young people in some countries and settings are being heard. In Ukraine, for example, the opinions of especially vulnerable young people were taken into account in sub-national discussions on HIV/AIDS issues relevant to their lives. They are given opportunities to express their views, to build their skills in forging group consensus and to present their ideas to adult decision makers.

A critical lesson is that for young people's voices to be taken seriously, it is essential that adult decision makers are able to appreciate, understand and engage in participatory approaches with them.

### **With young people's participation in UNICEF processes, programmes were more innovative and more successfully implemented.**

Most of the Country Offices participating in the study engaged young people, to varying degrees, in situation analyses, Country Programme design and implementation. COs consider this to be very important to the relevance and effectiveness of their programmes.

In Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova and Uzbekistan, young people were involved in the Country Programme Mid-Term Review processes, enhancing the quality of the review.

Country Offices in Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Tajikistan and TFYR of Macedonia reported the active participation of young people in the development of National Plans of Action, thus enabling young people to influence decision-making processes, and to gain official recognition of programmes important to them.

Country Offices in Albania, Georgia, Moldova and Tajikistan involved young people in UNICEF reporting and evaluation. This, however, remains an underdeveloped participation entry point.

The evaluation found that a number of factors must be in place to effectively promote the participation of young people: commitment to genuine, as opposed to adult-directed participation; a supportive environment, including political commitment; resources to build young people's capacity; and the support of the media. To realize these factors, effective strategies are required to address adult stereotypes regarding young people, cultures and traditions that make promoting real participation a challenge and, in some countries, a constrained national context or tokenistic approaches to participation, are all elements that should be taken into account in the design and implementation of programmes to foster young people's participation.

The evaluation highlights the strong desire and potential among young people to participate, which constitute a powerful opportunity for further developing youth participation.

## **Recommendations**

**Future Surveys Similar to *Young Voices*:** The overall process should retain centralized regional management, but with much stronger involvement of COs. To enhance the credibility of the report, young people should be involved in developing the methodology and the questionnaire,

in analysis and in disseminating the findings. Sampling should also target especially vulnerable young people and ethnic minorities.

Reports should be translated into all languages used in the questionnaire and interviews and widely distributed. A dissemination plan for results of the poll should be developed in each country during the design phase in order to maximize its use to raise awareness, change attitudes and improve policies and budgets in favour of young people and their rights.

**Entry Points:** A major recommendation from this evaluation is the need for stakeholders to understand what motivates young people – and especially boys and young men – to participate, and to develop more effective strategies to get them engaged. Certain participation entry points – such as youth information and resource centres, peer-to-peer approaches and mechanisms to support young people’s participation in schools and health services – should become an integral part of national youth policies and legal frameworks.

Mechanisms at the policy level are necessary to assist young people’s meaningful participation in the decision-making process. One mechanism is young people’s councils that function as policy-making advisory bodies to relevant ministries. Another is mixed decision-making structures that bring together young delegates and local authorities.

The evaluation illustrated that a critical condition for effective participation of young people is the extent to which adults are ready to engage. Investments in sensitization and capacity building are essential. It is important to develop both adults’ and young people’s understanding in child rights and their skills to foster meaningful participation.

**Strengthening Young People’s Participation in UNICEF Processes:** UNICEF COs should explore how young people can participate in all areas of concern to their own health and development, as well as in relevant steps of the programme cycle. Country Programmes need to invest more in training adults to support young people in project planning, management, monitoring and evaluation, in facilitating the involvement of young people, and in training young people in these processes.

**Strategic Recommendations:** This formative evaluation provides guidance towards a more strategic response to promoting young people’s participation in UNICEF’s work. UNICEF must partner with stakeholders (both public and private) to advance the meaningful participation of young people. This means purposeful planning of interventions that build on young people’s unique strengths and evolving competencies, while taking into account whatever situation-specific limitations may exist.

It is essential to increase public awareness of the importance and benefits of young people’s participation. Creating a supportive environment is fundamental. This includes: political commitment and government support; an appropriate legal and policy framework; financial and human resources invested in building young people’s capacity to participate; and the support of the media. Mechanisms such as multi-sector forums, can contribute positively to keeping the lines of communication open between young people, civil society and government, and to giving young people a voice in decision-making.

It is critical to focus on innovative and sustainable mechanisms to allow and encourage marginalized young girls and boys, especially those most at risk for HIV/AIDS and substance use and violence, to participate in: assessing and analyzing local and national situations, articulating their point of view and advocating their positions, planning and implementing solutions and being part of monitoring and reporting.

Efforts to support young people's participation must also address the "gender gap" and foster the participation of boys and young men in order to address the imbalance in participation levels between girls and boys.

It is recommended that a regional consultation of partners focuses on the participation of marginalized and most at risk adolescents, giving attention to gender issues, best practices, useful synergies and existing, as well as new partnerships, all of which to inform programme direction and development.

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## What is Participation?

Young people's participation is defined as: **young people partaking in and influencing processes, decisions and activities** (UNICEF 2001). In the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), participation is a legal right for all children up to age 18, and an end in itself. Participation – through which young people develop skills and competence, form aspirations and gain confidence – is the means to development (Landsdown 2001).

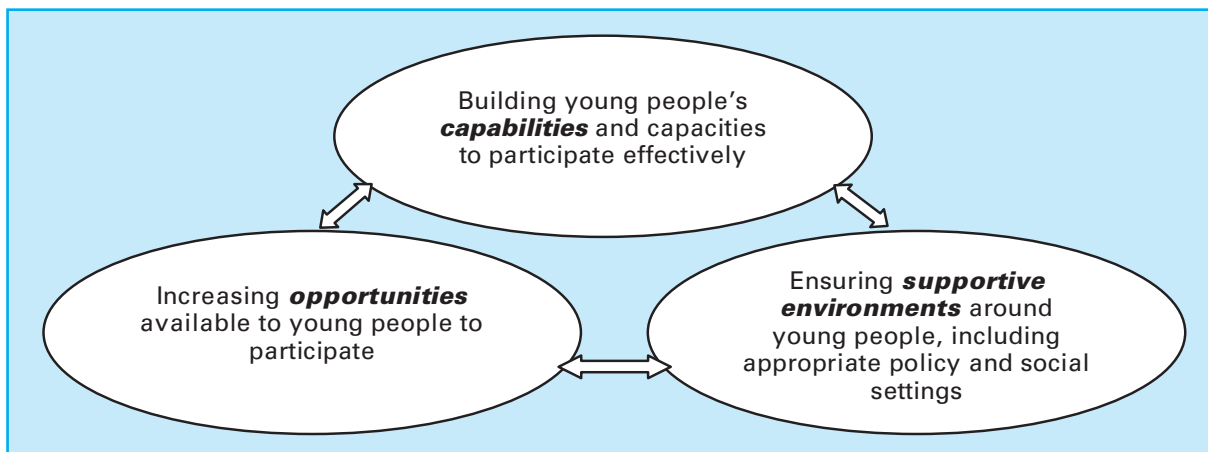
UNICEF emphasizes the importance of young people's participation for three main reasons:

1. Participation is a right protected under the CRC.
2. Participation contributes to young people's health and development.
3. Participation results in more relevant programming and policies, and more effective outcomes.

In addition to the above, young people's participation is important because:

- Seeing young people as assets is more effective than focusing on problems.
- Participation is about development, protective factors and building young people's capacities.
- Young people are well placed to assess and analyse situations and suggest solutions.
- Young people want to participate and can be effective agents of social change.

Fostering **young people's participation** generally requires three types of interrelated actions:



Because in many contexts young people's participation is a relatively new concept, it calls for significant changes in the attitudes and practices of both adults and young people, and in particular for mutual respect and better dialogue.

## The Right to Participate

Building upon the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child – which is the most widely ratified international treaty in history – reflects a sea change in the recognition of children as individual human beings and holders of human rights. The CRC firmly establishes children's **participation** as a human right. CRC Articles 12 and 13 specify children's rights to express their views freely and to be heard in any proceedings affecting them. The CRC constitutes a major advance in the history of young people's relations with adults and the State.

UNICEF is guided by the Convention on the Rights of the Child and strives to establish children's rights as enduring ethical principles and international standards of behaviour towards children.

In adopting the Outcome Document of the UN General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) on Children: *A World Fit for Children* (UNICEF 2002), nations made a strong commitment to increase the participation of children.

*Children, including adolescents, must be enabled to exercise their right to express their views freely, according to their evolving capacity, and build self-esteem, acquire knowledge and skills, such as those for conflict resolution, decision-making and communication, to meet the challenges of life. The right of children, including adolescents, to express themselves freely must be respected and promoted and their views taken into account in all matters affecting them, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child... Disadvantaged and marginalized children, including adolescents in particular, need special attention and support to access basic services, build self-esteem and to prepare them to take responsibility for their own lives. We will strive to develop and implement programmes to promote meaningful participation by children, including adolescents, in decision-making processes, including in families and schools and at the local and national levels.*  
– A World Fit for Children

The UNICEF Guidance Note on Promoting Participation of Children and Young People (UNICEF 2004) stresses that children and young people are often much better placed than external duty-bearers to take the lead in assessing and analysing their situation, and coming up with possible solutions. The Guidance Note goes on to say that children should first and foremost be invited to participate in issues relevant to their own environment (e.g. home, school, community). A particular challenge lies in ensuring genuine participation of children from marginalized groups or families.

A rights-based approach is one that has the CRC as its foundation. It implies the equality of each individual as a human being, the inherent dignity of each person, and the right to self-determination, peace and security. This rights-based approach provides new content to the global concept of citizenship, and advocates that young people should be given the freedom to express themselves and become involved in decisions that affect their lives. It implies a new way of thinking and the development of institutional mechanisms to protect the rights of children and adolescents.

As shown in the diagram in Annex 1 from the UNICEF Programme Policy and Procedure Manual (UNICEF 2004), the human rights-based approach to participation maps different but related participation roles for children and young people. Five broad areas of participation follow:

- *identifying unfulfilled rights*: participation in establishing the existence and magnitude of a problem and analysing its causes; participation in research;
- *claiming of rights*: demanding the attention of decision makers; advocating; petitioning;
- *identifying solutions and duties*: negotiating; making or improving plans;
- *participating in implementing the solution*: fulfilling a role; becoming an actor;
- *monitoring, evaluating and reporting progress* in the implementation of plans and commitments.

According to UNICEF policy (UNICEF 2004), a situation analysis should aim to identify the participation gaps (e.g. major areas along the above continuum where children and young people are not able to exercise their participation rights). Strategies, tactics and initial entry points to get participatory practices off the ground should be considered when developing the programme strategy and in Mid-Term Reviews (MTRs).

## Regional Context

The *Young Voices* (YV) opinion survey (UNICEF 2001) found that the rights of many millions of children are being violated across Europe and Central Asia. Specifically:

- 60 per cent of children report violent or aggressive behaviour in their families;
- 17 per cent feel unsafe to walk around their neighbourhoods;
- 33 per cent know children their age who are addicted to at least one harmful or illegal substance;
- 40 per cent feel that their opinions are ignored by their local government;
- The majority lack the basic information to protect themselves from HIV/AIDS;
- Nearly half have little or no information about their rights.

In many countries in the region girls' participation greatly outnumbers that of boys, and more efforts need to be made to encourage boys to join in. In fact, one of the consistent messages from the *Young Voices* survey is that, in this region, boys are doing worse than girls. They are less informed of their rights, less supportive of others, have less warm relationships with their friends, find it less easy to talk about their problems, are more likely to know friends using harmful substances, and are more likely to think that physical violence is a good solution to problems. One of the most urgent messages from the *Young Voices* poll is the importance in this region of addressing boy's low self-esteem and difficulty in coping.

The conclusion of the *Young Voices* survey is that governments throughout Europe and Central Asia must redouble their efforts to implement the CRC in general, and particularly Article 12 (see box below), which enshrines the participation rights of children and sets the stage to improve consultation with them.

### **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 12**

1. States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.
2. For this purpose, the child shall in particular be provided the opportunity to be heard in any judicial and administrative proceedings affecting the child, either directly, or through a representative or an appropriate body, in a manner consistent with the procedural rules of national law.

UNICEF's regional analysis report for 2004 (UNICEF 2005) highlights the following trends in the region:

- economic growth, but increasing economic and social polarization;
- a disturbing rise in the number of children in public care;
- a rapidly escalating and widening HIV/AIDS epidemic;
- widespread trafficking, especially of young women;
- stagnating indicators of adolescent health related to alcohol, reproductive health, substance use and suicide.

Repercussions from unresolved ethnic conflicts and the collapse of the Former Soviet Union are still widely felt in the region. Nevertheless, countries are moving according to their own unique trajectories, and within countries ethnic balances continue to evolve.

### Young People's Participation in UNICEF's Work in the Region

The UNICEF Medium-term Strategic Plan (MTSP) 2002-2005 established five organizational priorities for UNICEF worldwide. These are:

1. girls' education;
2. integrated early childhood development;
3. immunization "plus";
4. fighting HIV/AIDS;
5. improved protection of children from violence, exploitation, abuse and discrimination.

In the region of Central and Eastern Europe / Commonwealth of Independent States and the Baltic States (CEE/CIS and the Baltics), young people's participation plays an important role in achieving results for priorities 1, 4 and 5. According to the Regional Analysis Report for 2004 (UNICEF 2005):

- In girls' education, most countries in the region have high primary and secondary enrolments and good indicators of gender equity, although in a small number of countries – i.e. Turkey, Albania and Kosovo – equality of access for girls even in primary education is still very much an issue.
- All new Country Programmes (CPs) now have a clear component addressing HIV/AIDS among young people. The challenge of adaptation has been in defining the most appropriate response to an explosive HIV/AIDS epidemic, which is primarily driven by injecting drug users, most of whom are young people. This situation has called for programmatic approaches that can address extremely vulnerable young people in an environment of stigma and discrimination.
- To improve child protection, the region needs to focus on larger system change, reform of juvenile justice, tackling cross-border issues such as child trafficking, and applying human rights-based approaches to child protection programming.
- The 'missing link' in UNICEF's current MTSP has been social and economic policy analysis and advocacy. As the major challenges of transition in the former socialist countries centre on these issues, its absence creates a serious constraint for other UNICEF priorities. With the beginnings of economic recovery, and opportunities for participation of civil society opening up, these areas are becoming a new priority for the region.

In addition to the global MTSP priorities, UNICEF has defined **young people's participation** as an area of regional emphasis. This evaluation of young people's participation thus takes place in a region where UNICEF is putting emphasis on promoting participation because it is convinced that young people's energy, ideas and commitment are essential to shaping policies that will address the Millennium Development Goals more effectively and because participation in itself is critical to young people's positive development.

### Evaluation Purpose

The regional evaluation of young people's participation has been designed to cover three main areas:

- the *Young Voices* opinion survey, published in 2001;
- participation approaches and entry points (e.g., youth parliaments and other national / local youth forums; participation in health services; peer education);

- young people's participation in UNICEF programme planning, monitoring, research and evaluation (PPMRE).

In the interest of synergy and cost-effectiveness, these three issues have been examined concurrently. This approach is intended to move beyond lessons learned about specific activities to give guidance towards a more strategic response to promoting young people's participation in UNICEF's work, and towards building more effective partnerships with children and young people in decision-making processes.

The purpose of this evaluation is to determine to what extent UNICEF is systematically promoting young people's participation in the CEE/CIS and the Baltics Region and to further build capacity of the Country Programmes in promoting participation. An additional purpose of the evaluation is to stimulate thought and reflection among the Country Offices (COs) around the multiple facets of participation – its many possible entry points and the wide variety of opportunities to integrate young people's participation into UNICEF processes.

The users of the evaluation are expected to be: the COs in the region, the Regional Office, governmental and non-governmental civil society partners and other relevant stakeholders at the country level, including youth organizations and the young researchers who contributed to the evaluation. In addition, lessons from this evaluation may be of interest to the wider UNICEF family and relevant stakeholders worldwide.

This evaluation will inform UNICEF's ongoing efforts to effectively promote young people's participation, and the interaction between young people, government and civil society. It will also provide timely input for the planning of a second *Young Voices* opinion poll.

In addition, the evaluation will provide a basis for a regional consultation with Country Office programme staff and partners from selected countries to assess experience on programming around young people's participation. This consultation will:

- include a review of the evaluation by programme staff;
- highlight best practices;
- inform strategic direction and programme development;
- provide the basis for guidelines to improve UNICEF's regional programming with respect to young people's participation;
- identify useful synergies and partnerships;
- establish measurable goals and indicators.

The outputs of this work will include a description of the current status of young people's participation in the region, lessons learned, and clearer guidance on how to work effectively and strategically to promote participation.

## Evaluation Objectives

This evaluation has two components: a regional questionnaire survey (UNICEF 2005), and additional field research in five countries: Albania, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and TFYR of Macedonia.

The UNICEF Regional Office (RO) designed the process of the field research to be conducted by young people under the guidance of a Principal Researcher in each country. The field research addressed seven major questions:

1. What have been the effects in your country of the *Young Voices* survey?
2. How has participation changed the young people involved in the programme?

3. How have the capacities of participating organizations / institutions been strengthened?
4. What has been the effect of young people's participation on the programme's ability to:
  - achieve its objectives?
  - contribute to the goals of the MTSP?
  - contribute to the regional strategy on young people and HIV/AIDS?
5. How has the programme helped to provide an enabling legal and policy environment that encourages young people's participation?
6. What processes / methods have been most effective in promoting young people's participation?
7. What could be done to strengthen young people's participation in UNICEF's Programme in your country?

Questions 1, 4, 5, 6 and 7 were also addressed in the regional questionnaire survey (UNICEF 2005).

The Terms of Reference and timetable for the evaluation are included in

Annex 2 and Annex 3 respectively.

## This Report

This report provides a **synthesis** of six evaluation reports: the regional questionnaire survey of the UNICEF Country Offices (UNICEF 2005) plus the additional field research in the five participating countries (UNICEF Moldova CO 2004, UNICEF Albania CO 2005, UNICEF Belarus CO 2005, UNICEF Georgia CO 2005 and UNICEF TFYR of Macedonia CO 2005). The present report reproduces many of the findings of the survey report. If the reader is interested in more detail on the evidence supporting these findings, s/he should consult the two-volume survey report (UNICEF 2005).

In the present report, the following symbols are used to present the results of the questionnaire survey and the field evaluations:

- ✓ positive findings;
- ↘ negative findings;
- key findings, lessons learned.

Verbatim quotes are given in shaded boxes in italics.

## 2. EVALUATION DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This evaluation of young people's participation focused on children and young people aged 9 to 24. The project began in late 2003 with the development of a Protocol for an Evaluation of Youth Participation (UNICEF 2004), which was developed in collaboration with the UNICEF Regional Office in Geneva and the COs in the region. The protocol for the evaluation, finalized in June 2004, included:

- a discussion of the CRC and rights-based approach;
- the rationale for the evaluation of young people's participation;
- the questionnaire;
- guidelines for the COs planning to engage in field research.

### Questionnaire Survey

The development of the questionnaire targeting the COs was the result of an iterative and rather lengthy process involving several strategy sessions with the UNICEF's CEE/CIS and the Baltics Regional Office, as well as piloting the questionnaire in two countries: the Republic of Moldova (henceforth Moldova) and Azerbaijan. Feedback from these two COs helped greatly in refining the instrument to enhance its clarity and robustness. The questionnaire, included in Vol. 2 of the survey report (UNICEF 2005), was sent out to 20 UNICEF Country Offices<sup>2</sup> in the CEE/CIS and the Baltics Region in June 2004.

Twelve questionnaires were completed and returned by January 2005, representing a response rate of 60 per cent. The Offices that completed the questionnaire were: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kosovo<sup>3</sup>, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, TFYR of Macedonia, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. Two partially completed questionnaires were also returned from Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Turkey.

The comprehensiveness of the questionnaire reflected the importance the Regional Office attaches to participation and its commitment to try to understand young people's participation as thoroughly as possible. However, a major constraint of the survey methodology was, in fact, its very comprehensiveness. Completing the questionnaire required a great deal of time and work from the COs. Keeping in mind that six of the 20 COs did not respond at all and two responded only partially, care must be taken in interpreting the results. The findings cannot be automatically applied to the entire region, and generalizations across the region are difficult in any case, given the high degree of diversity within and among the different countries.

The questionnaire survey was essentially a **self-evaluation** of participation by UNICEF Country Offices. It captured the UNICEF perspective, and these perceptions were then investigated by participatory evaluations in five countries: Albania, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and TFYR of Macedonia.

### Training

Four-day training courses, designed and delivered by the consultant to the Regional Office, were held for the young research teams in each of the countries participating in the field work. The training courses themselves were highly participatory, and the young researchers were introduced to both participatory and classical evaluation methods.

<sup>2</sup> *List of UNICEF Offices contacted: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia and Montenegro, Kosovo, Tajikistan, TFYR of Macedonia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.*

<sup>3</sup> *Currently under United Nations Administration (United Nations Interim Mission in Kosovo), hereafter referred to as Kosovo).*

The number of participants in the training courses (in addition to the Principal Researcher) ranged from 6 to 14, and their ages ranged from 14 to 24. The pace of the training was adapted in response to the group's level of experience.

An important output of the training was a practical tool kit, *Useful Tools for Engaging Young People in Participatory Evaluations* (UNICEF 2004), to help guide the research.

The training workshops were structured as follows:

- **Day 1** focused on presenting the objectives of the regional evaluation and hands-on learning of selected participatory evaluation methods:
  - Group Portrait (for participant introductions)
  - Impact Drawings (creative testimonials)
  - Card Visualization (brainstorming and group consensus on overall ideas)
  - Baseline Data form for evaluating the workshop (self-assessment of group expectations)
  - Smiley-face Scale (quantitative group evaluations of specific research questions)
  - Historical Timeline (evolution of a project from the perspective of small stakeholder groups)
  - Social Mapping (analysis and documentation of the context in which a project is operating)
  - Force Field Analysis (tool to analyse why a project has evolved as it has, or to plan the future of a project)
  - Trend Analysis (to track changes in one or more parameters over time).

Detailed information on these and other methods is available in the tool kit developed for the young researchers (UNICEF 2004).

- **Day 2** was devoted to giving the participants an opportunity to put into practice the participatory tools they had learned on the first day. A three-hour workshop was organized with a group of willing peers in the afternoon. The young researchers spent the morning strategizing and planning their workshop: defining the research questions, and selecting the participatory methods to explore those questions with the respondents. During the afternoon, the young researchers organized and facilitated the entire workshop themselves. The trainer observed the young researchers in action, and provided them with critical feedback at the end of the day. This learning-by-doing exercise was an important step in the participants' mastery of the tools and in building their confidence and critical thinking skills.
- **Day 3** was spent devising a unique research strategy for the field research adapted to the specificities of each country, together with the young researchers. The team identified the stakeholders for the evaluation and then debated and filled in the evaluation framework (see **Annex 4**). For each of the standard questions, they identified specific research questions relevant to the national context, indicators, data sources for each question, and appropriate tools for each data source. In most cases, the evaluation framework was partially filled out during the training workshop and then completed in subsequent sessions with the Principal Researcher. A draft timetable was also agreed for the field research.
- **Day 4** focused on classical evaluation methods, and in particular effective interviewing: how to formulate questions to minimize bias and maximize the information value of the response; how to interpret body language, and put respondents at ease; and exploring interviewing techniques through role play. At the end of the workshop, the process and product were evaluated, and all the participants were given training certificates.

Four fundamental principles guided the training workshops:

- 1) the ethics of evaluations involving young people;
- 2) participation and experiential learning-by-doing, so as to build real evaluation skills, and maximize learning;
- 3) fun – taking frequent time-outs for short ice-breakers, games and energizers, which was critical for maintaining young people’s energy levels and enthusiasm;
- 4) reflection, stock-taking, and feedback throughout the workshop – the participants were given different techniques to evaluate the training as it progressed, which helped keep the workshop responsive to their needs, and provided a good example of the value of seeking critical feedback when facilitating a group process.

The Principal Researchers participated in, and in some cases helped to facilitate the initial training workshops. They then continued the process of training and guiding the young researchers during the studies.

The youth evaluators mastered the entire participatory evaluation process during their training sessions where they learned to apply the tools and techniques. They are currently capable of leading participatory evaluation sessions with minor assistance.  
– Report from TFYR of Macedonia

Observations and lessons on the training are included in Annex 8.

## Field Research

The selection of the countries for the field research was based entirely on whether the COs volunteered to take on the work or not.

Guidelines developed by the Regional Office for the COs engaging in the field research (UNICEF 2004 and Annex 4) provided a common conceptual framework to enhance the comparability five field studies, and included:

- essential elements of a participatory evaluation process;
- an evaluation framework with standard questions for all participating offices;
- guidelines for a country-specific protocol;
- possible indicators for measuring young people’s participation;
- a suggested list of resources for reviewing the *Young Voices* survey;
- draft programme evaluation standards;
- a planned evaluation timeline and outputs;
- an annotated bibliography;
- a list of acronyms and standard abbreviations.

At the request of the participating COs, the RO also suggested some requirements for selecting a Principal Researcher (Annex 5) since his/her approach and skills were seen to be critical to the successful outcomes of the field studies in each country.

The field evaluations were designed to be participatory (i.e. involving young stakeholders who had participated in UNICEF’s work). The COs selected the young people who would receive the training and be involved in the field research. In general, the young researchers had already worked with UNICEF and were familiar with its work. In some cases, however, this meant that they were involved in evaluating projects that they themselves had worked on. It would have likely been difficult to carry out the research with young people who were not familiar with

UNICEF's programmes. On the one hand, it was useful to have young people on the team who were familiar with, and enthusiastic about, UNICEF's work; on the other hand, this ran the risk of introducing bias into the process of data collection and interpretation of the findings. In most of the countries, young people were involved in all stages of the evaluations: design, implementation, data analysis and reporting. They volunteered their time or worked for a very small remuneration because they were interested in the process and enthusiastic about participation.

The composition of the research teams is given in Table 1. The teams included from 7 to 18 young evaluators ranging in age from 14 to 24. The mean age of the young researchers is illustrated in Figure 1, together with the number of younger and older team members.

**Table 1. Composition of the Research Teams (exclusive of Principal Researchers)**

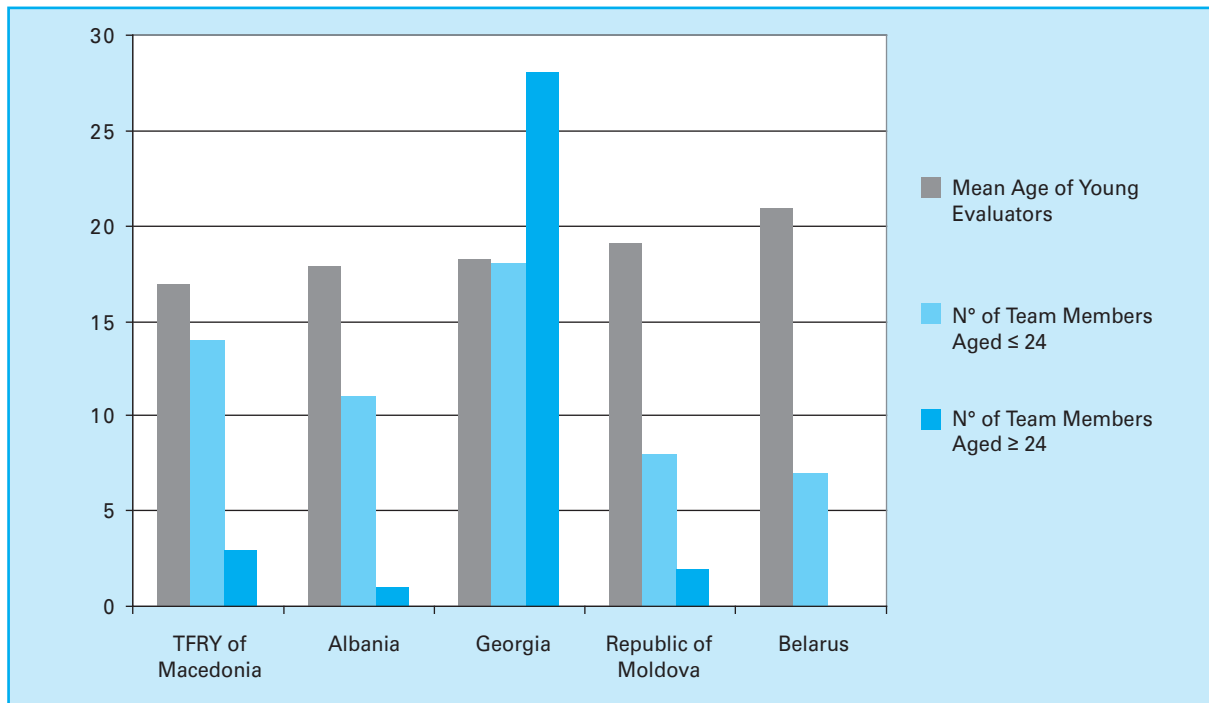
Country	Principal Researcher	N° of Evaluators Aged ≤ 24	Ages of Young Evaluators	Mean Age of Young Evaluators	No of Evaluators Aged ≥ 25	Total Team Size
Albania	Irida Agolli	11	16-19	17.3	1	12
Belarus	Sergei Sivuha	7	18-24	21.0	0	7
Georgia	Gotcha Tskitishvili	18	14-24	18.3	28	46
Moldova	Iosif Moldovanu	8	14-24	19.1	2	10
TFYR of Macedonia	Ljupco Risteski	14	15-18	16.9	3	17

The average age of the young evaluators in the research teams varied from a low of 16.9 in TFYR of Macedonia to a high of 21.0 in Belarus.

The research in Georgia was carried out by a professional polling firm that used many older field coordinators, interviewers, statisticians and technicians from the polling firm, in addition to the young people on the team.

### Figure 1. Evaluation Teams

Mean age of young evaluators and number of young and adult team members (exclusive of Principal Researcher)



In order to enhance the comparability and the quality of the five studies, the CO focal points and Principal Researchers were given an annotated report format (Annex 6), which provided detailed guidance for preparing the evaluation reports. The teams were advised to use the evaluation framework (in Annex 4) and the report format to structure their data collection and analysis. Within the general evaluation framework proposed by the RO, each country used somewhat different methods to answer their specific research questions.

Table 2 presents the major parameters of the data collection in each country. The total number of respondents varied from a low of 116 in Albania to a high of 1,156 in Moldova.

The gender imbalance among the respondents seems to reflect the generally greater involvement of girls in participation projects, and the wide preference among boys for sports.

In each country, the ethical issues involved in researching the views of young people while respecting their rights and dignity were carefully considered, including the ethics of who should be included in (or excluded from) the research, and issues of privacy, confidentiality and informed consent.

The data collection methods used by the research teams also varied from country to country. The methods most used were interviews, focus groups, impact drawings and testimonials, card visualization, force field analysis, smiley-face scales, questionnaires, and social mapping. These methodologies are described in detail in the tool kit (UNICEF 2004), and are summarized in Annex 7.

**Table 2. Major Parameters of Data Collection**

Country	Total Sample	Adults	Young People	Ages of Young Informants	Gender of Young Informants	Primary Methods Used
Albania	116	43	73	15-22	76% F 24% M	Questionnaire, interviews, focus groups.
Belarus	208	21	187	13-23	71% F 29% M	Card visualization, smiley-face scale, impact drawings, force field analysis, interviews, focus groups, case study.
Georgia	509	9	500	14-19	Not provided	Questionnaire, interviews, focus groups.
Moldova	1156	123	1033	10-19	71% F 29% M	Card visualization, impact drawings, social mapping, modified force field analysis, questionnaire, interviews, focus groups.
TFYR of Macedonia	188	11	177	10-23	61% F 39% M	Card visualization, smiley-face scale, testimonials, impact drawings, force field analysis, interviews, focus groups, real/ideal.

Some of the unique aspects of the methodologies used in the five different countries are as follows:

- In **Albania** the sample included young people who had not participated in UNICEF programmes (65 per cent) and those who had (35 per cent), as well as parents and teachers. Research was carried out in three districts by three teams of young researchers. The young researchers organized focus groups with other “adult” networks such as the Albanian Children Alliance and NGO network, to see how these networks promote or foster youth participation. A workshop was held with the entire team to analyse the data.
- Research in **Belarus** covered all regions of the country plus the capital. Here the emphasis was on the quality of understanding and the meaningfulness of the results, as opposed to the quality of the techniques or the quantity of informants. Meetings of the research team were a critical element of the research. An interim progress meeting allowed the team to systematize the data collection, discuss lessons, constraints and gaps, and “condense” the data. A final meeting was devoted to data analysis and the formulation of hypotheses and key concepts for the report.

- In **Georgia**, the research – led by a professional polling firm – focused on the four regions where UNICEF has been active. A quantitative questionnaire was provided by the Principal Researcher, and administered by young interviewers supervised by professional field coordinators. However, the young researchers lacked experience and had difficulty acting as interviewers. Random sampling of youth aged 14-21 was used to ensure representativeness. The questionnaire was designed to find out about young people’s problems and opinions and their perception of government attitudes, and – unlike the research in the other countries – did not target UNICEF activities per se. Focus groups were used to explore various youth participation projects. The experience in Georgia was quite different from that in the other four countries. To begin with, a third of the young researchers did not participate in the initial training workshop. Also, the orientation of the research in Georgia was based primarily on polling techniques (as would be expected from a professional polling firm), and the more participatory evaluation methods were not used. Furthermore, the Principal Researcher was openly sceptical of the ability of young people to carry out research, and this had a profound effect on the whole process.
- Young people were involved in all stages of the evaluation in **Moldova**: design, implementation, analysis and reporting. The team adopted principles of learning by trial and error, and encouraging communication, peer authority, and flexibility in roles and procedures. The sample was based on over 1000 young people who had been involved in participation projects for over five years, and over 100 adults working with young people. The team organized 52 participatory evaluation workshops for young people, using card visualization, impact drawings, force field analysis, social mapping and smiley-face scales. Focus groups and interviews were used for adults. The team had no difficulty with the participatory methods, and found them to be very useful and relevant for the questions they wanted to research. On the other hand, a huge amount of information was collected, and the data analysis was initially quite problematic. In the end, content analysis of the qualitative data was carried out using QSR-N6 software, and quantitative data using SPSS.

*The opinions of young people have helped us – the adult planners – to see the results, the constraints, the opportunities, the strong and the weak points in our work.*  
– Report from Moldova

- In **TFYR of Macedonia**, the *Young Voices* poll could not be evaluated, since it was not used in the country due to political unrest at the time it was published. The Principal Researcher held a second training workshop to help the young evaluators further with the methods, and to complete the evaluation framework with them. The evaluation focused on the levels of participation in the Right-to-Know project, which supports HIV/AIDS prevention. The approach relied heavily on Participatory Action Research. The young evaluators were within the same age group as the young respondents, and could therefore help to create a supportive environment in which the youth participants felt comfortable in talking and expressing their ideas and concerns during the evaluation process. In addition, the young evaluators came from communities where the evaluation was carried out and their insight into the local environment also helped in understanding the situation of young people and local projects. After the field work a third workshop was held with the young evaluators to analyse the results, and outline the conclusions and recommendations. The research benefited from the professional experience of the Principal Researcher and the Department of Ethnology of Sts. Cyril and Methodius University, and their commitment to and familiarity with participatory processes. All focus group discussions, testimonials etc. were taped and transcribed into approximately 500 pages of text, which was then analysed using Atlas.ti qualitative analysis software.

In most countries young people participated actively in the whole process of designing, implementing and discussing the evaluation, and verifying key results, conclusions and recommendations. This fits in very well with a human rights-based approach to programming. In addition, the full participation of young people in the evaluation fostered commitment to, and responsibility for, the process from the young evaluators, and improved the evaluations.

Each of UNICEF's five Country Offices played a very important role in organizing, supervising and supporting the field research, and in ensuring the quality of the consultants' reports.

An analysis of the evaluation process, including limitations and lessons learned is given in Chapter 7 and Annex 9.

### 3. **YOUNG VOICES OPINION SURVEY**

Between December 2000 and February 2001, UNICEF carried out a multi-country survey of children's / youth's views by interviewing over 15,000 girls and boys, urban and rural, rich and poor, representing the views of the region's children between the ages of 9 and 17. It commissioned a polling company to carry out the survey in 26 states in Central and Eastern Europe, Commonwealth of Independent States and the Baltic States and nine countries in Western Europe. The main findings were published as a book entitled *Young Voices* (UNICEF 2001). In addition, a national report and database were provided for each participating country.

The objective of the project was to gather and publish the views of a sample representing the 93 million children in the region. The overriding purpose of the study was to encourage decision makers and duty-bearers to listen to the opinions of children and young people, and to translate their views into "better policies, more effective budgets and changed attitudes towards young people's participation in society" (UNICEF 2001). Furthermore, UNICEF planned to use the results of the poll to guide its own advocacy and programming over the following years.

*Young Voices* provides a picture of the visions, preoccupations, hopes and dreams of children and youth in Europe and Central Asia.

#### **Young Voices – Methodology**

The survey was a quantitative poll of young people's opinions. It used the same methodology and questionnaire in all 35 countries involved to make the results comparable. A sample of 15,200 girls and boys were interviewed privately in their homes by trained pollsters. The respondents were selected according to their age, gender, geographic region and area (urban/rural), and socio-economic status. To ensure the representativeness of the sample, the number of children interviewed for each of these criteria was in direct proportion to the overall distribution of the child population in the country. The sampling error was considered to produce a confidence level of 90 per cent.

The poll systematically compared responses from:

- countries in Western Europe vs. the CEE/CIS and the Baltics Region;
- boys vs. girls;
- children 9-13 vs. youth 14-17;
- urban vs. rural;
- higher vs. middle vs. lower socio-economic groups.

The poll relied on polling companies in the 35 countries where it was implemented, but did not systematically involve the relevant UNICEF Country Offices. Several COs reported that they were not involved in the *Young Voices* survey, and that this hindered the utility and impact of the report in their countries. Some COs had so little knowledge of the YV survey in their countries that were not able to answer any of the questions on *Young Voices* in the questionnaire.

In some countries (e.g. Moldova, where the CO played a strong role), young people were involved in data analysis and dissemination of the main findings, and this increased the credibility of the findings. However, in many countries, the process of carrying out the poll was entirely adult-driven and thus fell short of encouraging the full and meaningful participation of young people.

COs stressed the importance of involving children in the survey process from the beginning. The Georgia Country Office pointed out the importance of involving young people in drafting the questionnaires and in developing methodologies for the research and the analytical framework for interpreting children's views. Researchers have the responsibility to ensure that children

receive the information they need to form and express their views. The degree to which children are informed conditions the weight that can be accorded to the views they express.

The fact that the poll was conducted simultaneously in 35 countries provided good opportunities for comparison and analysis. However, half of the COs responding rated the methodology as only "slightly appropriate". They pointed out the following drawbacks in the *Young Voices* methodology:

- Young people were not involved in carrying out the survey.
- The small sample size (400 children in each country) was an important constraint, even though the sample was designed to be representative of the country's population and demographics. At the national level, this limited the poll's credibility with decision makers, and its usefulness as a baseline.
- Although individual country reports were appreciated, they were sometimes received late and some of the data were already obsolete.
- There were too many questions; the poll should have been better focused.
- Using occupation and education level may not be the best method to define social classes in all contexts.
- Triangulation with other methods should be used to validate the results from the poll.
- The poll did not reflect the opinions of especially vulnerable young people (EVYP) and minority groups.

### Young Voices – Relevance

By drawing attention to the opinions and problems of young people, the poll aimed at contributing to policy reform, more effective programmes and greater public awareness that all children and young people have rights that must be respected.

Of the nine themes covered by the survey – happiness, home, school, society, safety, harmful substances, information, politics and the future – those most relevant to UNICEF's work, were considered to be school, future and home. Those that were least relevant were thought to be safety, politics and happiness (UNICEF 2001).

### Young Voices – Effectiveness

Although some COs said the poll was not used in their countries, others reported that the poll:

- ✓ raised awareness and strengthened advocacy for the CRC and for issues affecting young people, as it documented issues from the perspectives of young people themselves;
- ✓ helped develop young people's participation in decision-making and policy-making;
- ✓ identified priorities that children and youth see as important;
- ✓ became a reference source for designing youth-managed projects and activities;
- ✓ provided useful arguments for young people and NGOs in developing project proposals, in programming and in planning activities;
- ✓ was used in the design of UNICEF Country Programmes, for example by shifting priorities from areas where children were already well informed (e.g. child rights) to those where they said they had no real information (e.g. drug abuse prevention, sexual relationships and HIV/AIDS).

More specifically, in some countries the poll:

- ✓ resulted in a number of capacity-building training sessions for children and youth on child rights and participation skills;

- ✓ raised awareness on HIV/AIDS, reproductive health, healthy lifestyles, sexual behaviour and prevention of drug use;
- ✓ contributed to projects related to child trafficking and developing livelihood skills (in response to young people's perceptions of a bleak future and their desire to emigrate);
- ✓ led to the establishment of a Youth Parliament;
- ✓ helped with replicating and going to scale with Youth Resource Centres;
- ✓ helped to develop projects and advocacy for life skills based education (LBSE) and projects to make schools and teaching methods friendlier towards young people;
- ✓ contributed to research on learning achievements for girls and advocacy for girls' education;
- ✓ provided inputs to the Global Movement for Children leading up to the 2002 United Nations Special Session on Children;
- ✓ helped governments, NGOs, community groups, teachers, business leaders, the media and young people themselves to gain better understanding of children's perceptions regarding their rights and key areas in need of improvement and change.

Those COs that used the results reported that the poll was disseminated in a variety of ways: through a formal presentation or launch, media briefings, press conferences, press releases, Youth Parliaments, youth NGOs, round tables for young people, advocacy with decision makers, advocacy campaigns, Mid-Term Review discussions, etc. The country-specific results in particular triggered discussions and were cited in a variety of reports. The poll was most often used by those working with young people, NGOs, UNICEF programme planning and the media. In Moldova, the government used the results of the poll to describe young people's situation and justify its country priorities.

COs reported that the results of the poll were also used by young people themselves to:

- help them design and justify their project proposals;
- promote their project ideas and activities;
- prepare advocacy campaigns, meetings with parliamentarians, and broad-level debates;
- lobby for child rights with local and national authorities;
- develop peer education activities;
- introduce training sessions on healthy lifestyles and life skills.

In general, the COs felt that asking young people about their views in the form of an opinion survey and publicizing the results was a "very useful" way to make their voices heard in decision-making. Appropriate dissemination – it was noted – is a key element. At the same time, feedback on whether or not the poll should be repeated in one form or another was mixed.

### Young Voices – Efficiency

The present survey did not produce a great deal of information on the efficiency or cost-effectiveness of the poll. Most COs felt that cost-sharing was an appropriate funding arrangement; but opinions on the value-for-money of the YV poll were mixed. The Moldova CO noted:

*For the same money, we could have had a larger local poll, comprising all youth groups, including vulnerable ones. At the same time, we would have lost the possibility to compare with other countries in the region. We would prefer that methodology and questionnaires are developed regionally, while field work is done by an agency hired locally and involving young trained volunteers as field workers. This would have helped us to build local NGOs' capacities in conducting opinion surveys, and would have reduced costs.*

– Moldova Country Office

### Young Voices – Impact

The majority of COs participating in the survey felt that the YV poll made a positive contribution to the Country Programme and advocacy goals. At the same time, the YV poll was generally *not* seen to have contributed significantly to specific national policies and legislation. Nevertheless, certain COs did mention that the poll influenced the adoption of a National Plan of Action for Children (Armenia), and was used for policy design by the Department of Youth (Kosovo).

The field evaluations provided more information, both negative and positive, on the impact of the YV poll:

- The *Young Voices* survey was not promoted and used in **TFYR of Macedonia** by UNICEF or any of its partners due to the fact that the survey was launched during the internal crisis of 2001.
- In **Belarus**, it was difficult for the evaluation team to find evidence of the results of the poll. The national report is available neither on UNICEF's nor on the Ministry of Education's websites, and potential users of the poll did not give a high assessment to its information value. The CO did not participate in planning the poll or carrying out the research. The evaluation concluded that the validity and relevance of the results of the *Young Voices* poll for planning programmes and projects related to youth policy in Belarus are limited.
- In **Albania**, the survey was carried out without the participation of the UNICEF office. The distribution of the YV survey was very limited, as no funds had been programmed for publication. Nevertheless, two of the poll's findings were echoed in the media for several months: namely, that 44 per cent of young people wanted to leave the country, and only one per cent believed that politics could have a positive impact on their future.
- In **Moldova** more than half of the respondents confessed they had never heard of the study or had only a vague memory of it. Representatives of the Youth and Sports Department, the mass media, the Youth Parliament and UNICEF considered that the study had only limited credibility in the country. This mistrust was mainly due to: a perceived lack of transparency in the data collection process; insufficient information on the sampling strategy; limited sample size; and the quality of the questionnaire. Nevertheless many respondents asserted that the outcomes presented in the YV poll were accurate. Its use in the country was limited by the moderate number of copies available in Romanian.

Despite the above constraints, there was also positive feedback. For example:

- ✓ The *Young Voices* poll had multiple constructive results in the **Moldova** where it positively influenced:
  - the National Youth Strategy and the adoption of the National Plan of Action for Children (NPA);
  - the support of local authorities in establishing Youth Resource Centres and setting up a Youth Information and Resource Network to provide youth-friendly services;
  - the Ministry of Education's adoption of the Life Skills Education Concept Document;
  - the working group of the Youth and Sport Department, which developed a comparative analysis of the national youth legislation with reference to European standards, and proposed modifications;
  - NGOs, youth initiative groups and local authorities as a source of inspiration and motivation;
  - youth newspapers and local authorities, which carried out their own mini-surveys inspired by the YV study.
- ✓ As a result of the *Young Voices* survey in **Georgia**, two main problems were identified: the lack of information and low level of awareness of youth and children regarding the Convention on the Rights of the Child and HIV/AIDS. The poll revealed that the majority of children in Georgia (62 per cent) had no reliable and accurate information on their rights. This data served as a baseline for evaluating UNICEF's success in raising awareness among children of the CRC.

## 4. PARTICIPATION ENTRY POINTS

The research addressed a series of 24 **entry points** for young people's participation:

- ☐ The *Young Voices* opinion poll;
- ☐ Ten strategic approaches to promoting young people's participation:
  - Building skills of young people to claim their rights;
  - Youth Parliaments, Youth Forums;
  - Youth information / resource centres;
  - Multi-sector forums encouraging interaction between young people, civil society and government;
  - Facilitating public debate on young people's rights;
  - Strengthening the national legal framework;
  - Promoting young people's participation in national planning and government structures;
  - National Plan of Action for Children;
  - Peer education and outreach;
  - Participatory Action Research.
- ☐ Seven key settings for young people's participation:
  - Schools;
  - Health services;
  - Community development;
  - Media;
  - Young People's Media Network (YPMN);
  - Sports, recreation groups;
  - Interactive theatre and dance.
- ☐ Six key opportunities via UNICEF and UNICEF-related processes:
  - Situation analysis;
  - Country Programme design;
  - Project design and implementation;
  - Mid-Term Review;
  - UNICEF Reporting;
  - UNICEF Evaluation.

The survey report (UNICEF 2005) presents rich detail on the feedback from the COs on these entry points. This chapter includes the highlights from that report, complemented by examples from the field research.

### Participation Approaches and Settings

**Building young people's skills to claim their rights:** Youth participation – including adults actually *listening* to and *respecting* young people's opinions – is still a very new approach in many countries in the region. Building young people's skills in participation creates the foundation for involving them more fully. Building skills is closely linked to other participation approaches that provide opportunities for real life capacity-building experiences.

Through UNICEF programmes, young people's skills have been built in relation to literacy, research, project management, partnership development, community mobilization, livelihoods, advocacy, media, negotiation, communication, decision-making, team work, relating to peers and adults, handling emotions and disagreements, and critical thinking.

*Without assisting young people in building their skills on how to participate, we would face just tokenism and manipulation. Real participation is possible only if we invest in and assist kids in enhancing their skills on how to express their opinions and make informed decisions.*

– Georgia Country Office

Some examples from UNICEF COs in building young people's skills to participate include the following:

- In **Belarus**, the strategies behind skill-building initiatives aimed to: foster capacities of young people to negotiate effectively; solve problems and seek partnerships; create forums for dialogue between young people and decision makers; develop mechanisms to reach young people with important messages; and support the implementation of youth initiatives.
- Training courses in **Georgia** focused on empowering young people with skills to: identify local problems; develop activities and projects in response to these problems; seek and mobilize resources to address problems at the local level; implement projects using available resources; and communicate through the media.
- In **Tajikistan**, training was provided through a Child Reference Group in: facilitation and communication skills; advocacy, management, and team building; the CRC; and journalism.
- The **Ukraine** CO built capacity by supporting a Youth Participation Resource Kit developed by young people, training youth leaders and volunteers, and involving young people in the development, implementation and evaluation of projects.

*Once young people know how to participate effectively, this becomes sustainable, and they struggle for real participation in decision-making processes at all levels. These skills help youth to develop other initiatives, which change their image and raise their social status in the community.*

– Moldova Country Office

It is also important to build understanding among duty-bearers (e.g. high-level administrators, teachers, project managers, NGO leaders, parents) of the benefits and principles of young people's participation. It is essential that, in settings where young people participate, adults are not threatened when young people articulate their views and claim their rights. This may entail finding ways to change ingrained adult stereotypes that make them resistant to supporting young people's participation.

**Youth Parliaments / Youth Forums:** Youth Parliaments can provide an important platform for young people to express themselves, acquire knowledge and skills for effective participation, and participate in decision-making processes that affect their lives. For example:

- ✓ In **Albania** there are decentralized Youth Parliaments in 12 prefectures, with a national coordinator. A formula was developed to ensure democratic elections, gender balance and the widest representation possible. There are 30-40 young parliamentarians elected in each of the 12 prefectures: 70 per cent from high schools; 10 per cent from elementary schools; 15 per cent from universities; and 5 per cent from minority groups. The gender ratio in the last year was 60 per cent girls and 40 per cent boys.

Albania's Youth Parliament has given young people an unprecedented opportunity to participate in major public debates and initiatives at local and national levels, as well as in drafting a

national strategy on youth and HIV/AIDS. As part of its success record, the Youth Parliament convinced the Ministry of Education and Science to remove students' grade averages as a criterion for university admission, and to increase the education budget to 3.1 per cent of the country's GDP. In 2004 students' election of their representatives to the Youth Parliament was followed by the media and then promoted as a good example for national elections!

According to the field evaluation, 71 per cent of the young Albanians interviewed considered that the Youth Parliament addresses priority youth problems and policies. According to the report from Albania, Youth Parliaments offer young people the best experience of participating in decision-making. Young parliamentarians have often acted as pressure groups in the community, forcing positive changes at local and central levels. The "Free Movement of Albanian Citizens", an initiative launched and fully led by Youth Parliaments gathered 42,000 signatures saying "yes" to the free movement of Albanian citizens in Europe, in response to the inadequate and slow response of the government in achieving EU standards. In another example, the Youth Parliament launched the "Anti-Corruption Youth Movement" to fight corruption in high schools where some teachers allegedly used grades to extort benefits from their students.

- ✓ In **Georgia** 300 young parliamentarians have been trained in the principles of the CRC and the promotion of participation. Members of the Youth Parliament have worked closely with relevant ministries, taking an active part in elaborating laws on school self-government and harmful influences on children.
- ✓ In **Tajikistan**, young parliamentarians reviewed the National Plan of Action and made recommendations that enriched it.
- ✓ The Child Parliamentary Movement in **Ukraine** includes branches in 16 regions that network with one another and are readily accepted by the government. For example, the Parliament in the Kirovograd region is recognized by local authorities as a counselling agency to the regional government.
- ✓ In **Uzbekistan** young parliamentarians were involved in problem-solving at the local government level.

Generally, young people are elected from all districts, representing and giving voice to the concerns of all young people in their country. They have opportunities to discuss policy issues with government representatives and provide an efficient means for advocacy and community mobilization. In some countries where Youth Parliaments are active mainly at the central level, regional forums and regional youth centres – providing decentralized support in terms of information, capacity-building, equipment and spaces for participation – are essential to enhance young people's participation in the regions.

- The major shortcoming of Youth Parliaments is that they do not have wide direct coverage, particularly of especially vulnerable young people.
- Although Youth Parliaments provide a space for genuine participation in some countries, in others, it is a challenge to increase participation beyond the level of tokenism.
- Furthermore, it can sometimes be dangerous to actively involve young people in political processes because of the risk of manipulation by political parties and/or politicians.
- Young parliamentarians often encounter problems when implementing their ideas and initiatives at the community level because of lack of support from peers, parents, teachers and/or local authorities.

In response to this problem, the **Moldova** Country Office developed Local Youth Councils (LYCs) – consultative youth forums at the local level – to generate local support for youth-led initiatives.

**Youth Information / Resource Centres:** Youth centres provide essential opportunities to promote participation in the regions, where young people often lack safe, friendly spaces and opportunities to access information and build their skills. These centres:

- ✓ act as decentralized sources of information and resources;
- ✓ offer a variety of recreational and educational activities;
- ✓ provide services in health education, peer education and counselling;
- ✓ play an important role in building dialogue and understanding between adults and young people;
- ✓ provide opportunities for young people to participate in their communities.
- ✗ However, on the negative side, many COs mentioned sustainability as the overriding problem faced by youth centres.

Three youth resource centres are fully sustainable in **Georgia**, due to the volunteer work of young people who act as planners, animators and counsellors. More than 5,000 young people from these centres have acquired basic skills for participation, obtained knowledge on important issues (e.g. child rights and healthy lifestyles) and initiated a number of community development projects.

**Multi-Sector Forums:** These forums bring young people together with representatives of government and civil society in a platform for dialogue. This approach:

- ✓ produces a baseline for active, positive interaction between the three sides;
- ✓ promotes recognition of young people's views;
- ✓ provides a good tool for empowering young people;
- ✓ raises social awareness.

COs reported many positive results from multi-sector forums that provide a context in which to incorporate young people's recommendations into national youth strategies, HIV/AIDS strategies and education policy. For example:

- ✓ In **Albania**, a national Youth Consultation gave recommendations about the National Strategy on HIV/AIDS, and all of their inputs were fully endorsed by National AIDS Programme.
- ✓ An Inter-agency Task Force on Young People's Health and Development was created in **Azerbaijan**, involving teachers, international/national NGOs, youth associations and youth volunteer groups.
- ✓ In **TFYR of Macedonia**, a round table was organized prior to the 2002 UN Special Session for Children with government, NGO and youth participants. Young people provided the government with a list of priorities for children to be included in the National Plan of Action.
- ✓ An inter-generational dialogue project in **Kyrgyzstan** involves government officials, civil society and youth.

**Facilitating Public Debate on Young People's Rights:** It is essential to build young people's and society's understanding of child rights and what role young people can play in promoting their rights. COs reported a variety of interventions facilitating public debate on the Convention on the Rights of the Child and young people's rights, including:

- ✓ increased knowledge of young people on their rights and skills for participation;
- ✓ increased awareness of local policy makers, communities and schools on young people's rights;
- ✓ changes in the views of local authorities towards young people, from seeing them as problems to seeing their potential and positive energy.

Tangible results from such public debates on young people's rights include:

- ✓ a disability policy promoting physical accessibility developed in **Armenia**;
- ✓ increased knowledge and participation skills of young people in **Georgia**;
- ✓ greater social sensitivity to young people's issues in **Kyrgyzstan**.

**Strengthening the National Legal Framework:** Despite a number of initiatives in the region to involve young people in strengthening the national legal framework, in many cases government resistance remains a serious challenge. Some examples of successful interventions include:

- ✓ adoption of a National Plan of Action, development of a National Youth Policy Strategy, and formulation of a law for the graduates of state orphanages in **Armenia**;
- ✓ UNICEF supported the drafting of the Law on Youth Empowerment and Participation in **Kosovo**;
- ✓ publication and dissemination of national and international standards on minors' rights within the government in **Kyrgyzstan**, as well as support to develop the juvenile justice system.

Other examples where young people themselves influenced policy and legislation are included in Chapter 5 below (Influence on the Legal and Policy Framework).

**Promoting Participation in National Planning and Government Structures:** The most prevalent interventions for involving young people in national planning are via the development of National Plans of Action for Children, councils within ministries that give young people a consultative vote, and joint task forces dealing with sectoral planning. Concrete mechanisms at the policy level are needed to ensure young people's real participation into the decision-making process. One good mechanism is young people's councils acting as advisory bodies with relevant ministries for developing policies concerning youth. COs found that young people have enormous potential and capacities to plan and recommend strategies and activities that address their needs.

Among the process results cited were the following:

- ✓ Young people became more aware of their rights, responsibilities and duties, and gained experience in working with adults, analysing local situations and problems, and formulating solutions.
- ✓ Policy makers became more sensitized to youth issues.
- ✓ The role of young people in decision-making processes was increased.

Tangible results included the following:

- ✓ Young people became actively involved in Poverty Reduction Strategy Programmes (PRSP) working groups to develop the National Plan of Action, as well as in town-hall meetings and discussions in **Azerbaijan**.
- ✓ In **Ukraine** a public hearings project called "Right to Know" encouraged children and young people to discuss the national strategy for combating HIV/AIDS and to provide recommendations to improve the National Programme and its regional implementation. In six regions proposals were drafted during the hearings and then submitted to the State Committee on Family and Youth to be forwarded to the Government and Parliament. Local authorities also participated in public hearings and committed themselves to include recommendations from children into local plans of action.

**National Plans of Action for Children:** Six COs reported involving young people in the NPA process, resulting in:

- ✓ empowerment of young people to influence decision-making processes;
- ✓ official recognition of programmes important to young people;

- ✓ inclusion of the concerns of young people in NPAs;
- ✓ active involvement of young people in the implementation and monitoring of the NPA in certain countries.

In **Georgia**, for example, a permanent representative group of children and youth have been in continuous contact with the entire NPA process and are monitoring its implementation.

**Peer-to-Peer Approaches:** These methods are considered a “very important” to “extremely important” approach for all COs responding to the survey. Peer education is used for a wide variety of objectives, the most common of which is to promote healthy lifestyles and prevent risks from HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and drug abuse. Peer education is important because:

- ✓ It is a strategic vehicle for motivating and directly involving young people in their own health and development.
- ✓ Information on sensitive issues is often better received by young people from peers than from adults.



**Peer Educator Training on HIV/AIDS Prevention.**

(Photo: UNICEF/MOL/00906/Pirozzi, Moldova)

As an example, in **Belarus** UNICEF has supported the NGO “Fialta” in creating a national network of voluntary peer education centres devoted to the prevention HIV/AIDS and the promotion of healthy lifestyles. With UNICEF support Fialta established 17 peer education centres all over the country, and set standards in peer education through a rigorous selection process and strict certification of peer educators. Manuals for trainers and peer educators have been produced; about 400 peer educators have been trained and certified; and about 20,000 young people have been reached since 2001. According to the report from Belarus, peer education was mentioned by both young people and adults as undoubtedly the most effective method to promote participation.

In **TFYR of Macedonia**, UNICEF has collaborated closely with the NGO “Health Education Research Association” (HERA), which works to strengthen peer education methods and creates peer educator networks throughout the country. As part of UNICEF’s Right-to-Know (RtK ) project, HERA trained 30 volunteers from around the country who carried out 60 peer education sessions with adolescents in their towns and villages. HERA considers that the best achievement of this project is the involvement of young people from rural areas and their desire to continue to work there.

**Participatory Action Research:** Participatory Action Research (PAR) is a process of critically examining and evaluating social and environmental conditions as the basis for improving them. COs reported that:

- ✓ PAR enhances young people’s sense of social responsibility and develops their feeling of belonging to the community, their engagement in voluntary work and their active citizenship. It also helps them establish open relations with community actors.
- ✓ Through PAR, young people can map attitudes and behaviour, for example with regard to identifying youth health issues or community problems and local solutions.

- ✓ PAR has proved to be a good method to develop information packages and innovative communication strategies targeting adolescents, including those most vulnerable, and equipping them with information and life skills for the prevention of HIV/AIDS.

An interesting case study, the “Youth Barometer” project, was reported from **Ukraine**. A youth “opinion poll” methodology, based on peer-to-peer interviews, was developed as a vehicle through which youth could make their voices heard. Five opinion polls were conducted, the results of which provided insights into young people’s perceptions of their own situations and their priority concerns. The results were reported through the mass media, at various policy roundtables, and to the Deputies of the Kiev City Council. Young people aged 15-20 suggested the research subjects, conducted the surveys, compiled the materials, interpreted the data, and used the research findings to solve problems at the district and city levels. About 70 young volunteer-interviewers were trained to conduct surveys. The “Youth Barometer” results showed that young people have a high level of commitment to participating in such programmes. Today the “Youth Barometer” programme has become one of the ongoing programmes of the Kiev City State Administration, and is being replicated in many Ukrainian cities.

**Schools:** For all but one of the responding COs, schools serve as a setting for a variety of activities promoting participation. Because they access large numbers of children and youth, schools offer an efficient setting where a large audience can benefit from participation programmes. However, working in school settings provides challenges for participation because local governments are often reluctant and do not have the capacity to involve young people, and because teachers are often accustomed to authoritarian methods.

In **Bosnia and Herzegovina** and **TFYR of Macedonia**, for example, UNICEF has supported ambitious projects to transform educational systems by introducing child-centred teaching in a child-friendly environment.

*In the words of an experienced teacher on the benefits for children of child-centred education approaches and participation: “They express themselves more freely; they socialize easily and respect each other; they see themselves as the main factors of the school environment. According to their parents’ reports, they are more independent at home; they help each other and are very happy when they see their peers overcome obstacles thanks to their help; they are more active.”*

– Bosnia and Herzegovina Country Office

In **Albania**, the creation of student governments has developed school democracy and provided young people with decision-making opportunities.

According to the report from **Moldova**, schools offer the most favourable environment for youth participation. There is a school in every location that operates as a cultural and intellectual centre accepted by all, and there are no other institutions at the community level that act as an alternative. As compared to other community institutions, schools are accessible areas, free of charge and relatively well equipped. Moldovan Schools have made tremendous strides in promoting young people’s participation. Youth are now consulted in school decision-making processes, and they participate in meetings of Teachers’ and Administration Boards. Young people are often invited to organize training activities for teachers and students.

**Health Services:** All but two of the responding COs had some activity involving the participation of young people in health services, such as: mapping and creating advisory boards for Youth

Friendly Services; Voluntary Confidential Counselling and Testing (VCCT) services; peer education; and SOS help lines. Some key results of efforts to promote participation in health services include:

- ✓ the establishment of Youth Friendly Health Clinics and the training of doctors and health workers in six regions of **Azerbaijan**;
- ✓ youth friendly clinics in **Belarus**;
- ✓ creation of an AIDS office within the Ministry of Health in **Kosovo** and establishment of the first three VCCT centres;
- ✓ two health services with VCCT in **Bosnia and Herzegovina** that respond to the needs of EVYP;
- ✓ SOS help lines that are popular with especially vulnerable youth in **TFYR of Macedonia**.

**Community Development:** Community development refers to the promotion of active citizenship among young people to improve the communities in which they live. It is the practical expression of young people's participation. The challenges of involving young people in community development include sceptical mentalities, especially in rural areas. However, on the positive side:

- ✓ Youth participation in community development has proved a convincing approach for changing adult stereotypes about young people.
- ✓ It also allows young people real opportunities to change their situation.

Concrete examples include the active involvement of young people in Community Health Councils in five pilot districts in **Azerbaijan**, as well as the establishment of 198 Local Youth Councils in **Moldova**, where young people participate in decision-making processes and projects at the community level.

*[In the creation of Local Youth Councils] our goal was strengthening local capacities and empowering youth for conscious participation in community life. Such representative structures have awakened thousands of young people and tens of communities to life, providing them an opportunity to become active citizens.*

– Report from Moldova

As one example, the LYC in the village of Navarnet took the initiative to clean up the garbage that had been poisoning village life for a long time. As a result adults in the village said that community life changed for the better with the creation of the LYC.

*According to the adults in Navarnet, "Young people taught us grownups a good lesson, and mobilized us when they tidied up the school surroundings and planted the park in the landslide area."*

– Report from Moldova

**Media:** With their strong influence on both young people and adults, the mass media provide a powerful tool for youth participation. When children participate in the media on their own terms, audiences are attracted and millions learn how to listen properly to children, to see new value in listening to them and learning about the problems they face from a new perspective. A host of different young people's media projects have been initiated in the region, and have been effective in reaching out to the public. In addition, messages developed by young people are generally more credible and effective in reaching peers. A major benefit of youth media projects is an increased fluency in media literacy – that is, the ability to think critically, and to

understand and interpret media messages. Even though coverage is low, this is an entry point that is having an impact.

UNICEF can be proud of many successful youth media initiatives in the region. To cite a few:

- ✓ In **Albania**, Troç ("Straight Talk") has aired more than 100 shows and is the longest-running show on Albanian national television. It reaches all areas of country and even beyond through satellite TV. A nationwide audience survey in late 2002 found hundreds of thousands of regular viewers. People all over the country know the show, and in some towns young reporters have even become minor celebrities. They participate in the policy arena, for example working with the national government to develop strategies on youth and HIV/AIDS. They also serve on panels and boards of youth-friendly services.
- ✓ Widespread media-related initiatives are being implemented in **Azerbaijan** within the framework of the "Leave No Child Out" campaign, including article and photo competitions with a regular newspaper, and a one-minute film competition with a private TV station. Media training is being conducted for children and youth together with Internews.
- ✓ With UNICEF support a Youth Press Centre has been set up in **Belarus**. An educational newspaper is being designed and published by young journalists and a network of 18 Youth Information Centres has been created.
- ✓ In **Kosovo**, a 30-minute youth TV programme called "Respect" is produced monthly on public television, and a youth radio programme, the "Bla-Bla Café", is broadcast three times a week on 40 local radio stations in Albanian and Serbian languages. Both programmes are produced by young people for young people and offer media space for youth to freely express their opinions about their everyday lives and issues affecting them. These programmes provide apolitical information on youth issues in an entertaining format to young Kosovars throughout the country.
- ✓ The professional media in **Moldova** have become aware of young people's participatory potential and, as a result, have developed their capacities to address subjects related to them. Step by step, the image of youth promoted in the media is changing, as more and more media offer special spaces for materials by and about young people.
- ✓ In **Uzbekistan** children enjoy media initiatives where they have been able to express their views and influence behavioural change, even "teaching" adults in the process.



#### Young Radio Journalist

Daniela (17), a young journalist, presenting a radio programme at the UNICEF assisted "Young Voices" Radio Studio in Chisinau. The radio programmes created by the Studio are distributed to a network of seven adult local radios in several districts of Moldova and 18 school radios.

(Photo: UNICEF/MOL/01341/Pirozzi, Moldova)

**Young People's Media Network:** The YPMN assists, connects and recognizes youth media organizations and young people working in and with the media. Its goal is to strengthen the rights, role and voice of children and adolescents in the opinion-making process in Europe and Central Asia. The network helps young people share their experiences with peers from other countries of the region, opens the door to various international festivals, and helps young people gain important media literacy skills. The regional dimension of the initiative is seen to be effective and beneficial.

According to the report from Georgia, YPMN has been extremely beneficial to youth in their quest to: acquire media skills; obtain information; establish contacts with young people in other countries; and benefit from opportunities to participate in media competitions. Through the "Kids Crossroads" project, TV programmes are produced by young people from **Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia.**

**Sports / Recreation Groups:** Sports can be an engaging and effective setting to reach out and mobilize young people.

- ✓ Sport competitions organized at the national level can reach very large numbers of young people with key messages.
- ✓ National sports championships can mobilize diverse partners, such as politicians, celebrities, local governments, business leaders and young people in promoting healthy lifestyles.
- However, although coverage can be high, sports are often limited as an entry point for truly meaningful participation in which young people's views inform decision-making relevant to their everyday lives.

**Interactive Theatre and Dance:** Several COs mentioned interactive theatre and/or dance as a means to promoting participation. This was not anticipated as a specific entry point in the questionnaire. This approach, a hallmark of UNICEF's work in **TFYR of Macedonia**, has been shown to:

- ✓ provide insight and solutions to many of the social problems affecting the lives of young people;
- ✓ be especially successful when working with institutionalized and vulnerable young people;
- ✓ be a good way to enhance knowledge and build skills such as communication and negotiation;
- ✓ be effective in fostering tolerance and other attitude changes.

## Participation Opportunities via UNICEF-related Processes

**Situation analysis:** Many COs (Albania, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Tajikistan, TFYR of Macedonia and Uzbekistan) involve young people in UNICEF situation analyses, and consider this to be very important to their Country Programmes. Young people have contributed to a number of processes, including National Plans of Action, Mid-Term Reviews, mapping for Youth-Friendly Services, Rapid Assessment and Response (RAR), development of Common Country Assessments and project design. Their involvement in situation analysis has enhanced a results-based approach to programming, and has led to more successful programmes, which is appreciated by both young people and governments.

**Country Programme design:** COs reported that, by involving young people in their programme designs:

- ✓ UNICEF became more transparent;
- ✓ young people became more collaborative;

- ✓ programmes were more easily funded and more successfully implemented;
- ✓ young people gained skills in developing results-based programmes.

**Project design and implementation:** COs considered involving young people in project design to be very important to their programmes. Examples of positive results include:

- ✓ improvement in the quality and success of projects promoted by UNICEF;
- ✓ greater numbers of young people participating in UNICEF projects;
- ✓ increase in the number, type and diversity of youth-initiated projects as young people play a more active and fundamental role in the process;
- ✓ involvement of more disadvantaged and marginalized young people.

*Real participation of young people can be achieved only when they initiate activities which resonate with their specific needs or the needs of their community and peers, and they are involved in designing interventions, and managing all of the implementation process up to the evaluation.*

– Moldova Country Office

**Mid-Term Review:** The Country Offices of Albania, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova and Uzbekistan have involved young people in the Mid-Term Review process. One of the keys to their success was thoroughly preparing the young evaluators in advance. The results of young people participating in the MTR process were quite positive:

- ✓ Young people demonstrated that they could be responsible, objective and systematic in their assessments.
- ✓ The participatory process enhanced young people's capacities for evaluation. They became able to see and analyse the impact of the Country Programme, and were then able to participate actively in the design of the new CP.
- ✓ UNICEF was able to learn about young people's views on progress achieved in implementation of the CP, and to obtain their independent evaluation of projects. The involvement of young people also provided UNICEF with insights on how to improve the programme.
- ✓ MTR documents were produced that fully reflected, and benefited from, young people's inputs.

**UNICEF Reporting:** Four COs provided information on young people's involvement in UNICEF reporting processes such as mid-year and annual review meetings: Albania, Georgia, Moldova and Tajikistan. From the survey results, it would seem that UNICEF reporting remains an under-developed participation entry point in most Country Programmes. The COs recognize, however, that involving young people in UNICEF reporting represents best practice and should be supported and promoted.

**UNICEF Evaluation:** According to UNICEF COs, evaluation seems to be the weakest link with young people – perhaps because substantial training is required. Three COs did report involving young people in UNICEF evaluations:

- ✓ In **Georgia**, young people are involved in evaluating UNICEF projects on HIV/AIDS awareness, youth centres and child protection initiatives.
- ✓ Every year in **Moldova**, young people involved in youth projects participate in programme review meetings and carry out evaluations of their activities.
- ✓ Peer education in **Uzbekistan** includes initiating young people into the UNICEF evaluation process.

In the UNICEF programme in **Albania**, young people have been involved in many aspects of programme planning, monitoring, research and evaluation. For example in annual programme reviews it is young people, rather than the Project Officers, who present progress on projects such as Youth Parliament or Troç, the youth TV show. The Albanian Youth Council participates in working groups on needs assessment, strategic planning and evaluation of UNICEF programmes.

In planning activities to reach Albania's annual country targets in 2004 for programmes on HIV/AIDS, Youth Participation and Child Protection, the Project Officers asked representatives of the Youth Parliament to design some strategies to achieve the targets. They suggested creating Youth Peer Clubs in high schools to disseminate life skills information to reduce high-risk behaviour, with the goal of reaching 80 per cent of young people in the country within five years. They also suggested a "Campaign against Shame" to help women and girls take the painful step to report that they are victims of domestic violence. As part of the Mid-Term Review process, a special group of young people and government representatives was established to meet regularly in order to analyse the progress of UNICEF Programmes on HIV/AIDS and youth participation, and to make recommendations. In fact, young people's participation has been crucial in making progress towards the regional MTSP priorities related to HIV/AIDS and youth participation.

The Country Office in **Belarus** has had mixed results in involving young people in PPMRE:

*Interviews with UNICEF officers showed that they clearly understand the importance of involving children and youth at the earliest design stages of programmes. At the same time, it would seem that models of real rather than decorative participation need to be further developed.*

– Report from Belarus

At the same time the Belarus team found that young people's participation contributed strongly to the MTSP goals of fighting HIV/AIDS, improving protection of children from violence, abuse and discrimination, and developing effective Regional Strategies on HIV/AIDS. The majority of people infected with HIV are under 30, and UNICEF's programme focuses on HIV prevention through information and educational programmes via peer educators, who – contrary to adults – are perceived by young people as impartial social models. The high degree of trust in peer



**Assessment of Youth Participation Using Force-field Analysis (Brest, Belarus)**

educators has been a key factor in the success of these programmes among young people at risk.

The UNICEF programme in **Georgia** has a number of projects implemented primarily by young people. For example, young people participated in the planning of Youth Resource Centres established with the support of UNICEF in three regions of the country and are actively involved in implementing projects in those centres.

The main factor in the spread of HIV/AIDS in Georgia is the low level of understanding of this problem among young people. Here again, peer education is considered as one of the best strat-

egies for HIV/AIDS prevention through the promotion of healthy lifestyles among young people. Approximately 1,000 peer educators have been trained.

During the Mid-Term Review process, young people helped to evaluate UNICEF projects on HIV/AIDS awareness among youth, youth centres and child protection initiatives. Young people carried out assessments of the role of the youth centres on HIV/AIDS prevention and the effectiveness and appropriateness of such youth centres. The assessment methodology followed the principles of peer education, which was already known to them. Results and recommendations were presented in the MTR meeting and follow-up was directly initiated by the young people themselves.

In **TFYR of Macedonia**, the Right-to-Know project focuses mainly on improving young people's knowledge and information about HIV/AIDS and risk, and on promoting protective factors. The fact that young people participated in the implementation and monitoring of RtK activities through Participatory Action Research and creative workshops made it easier to adapt the educational materials to the target groups. Young people also participated in a Rapid Assessment and Response exercise that, together with PAR, provided a key evidence base with regard to the situation of young people and EVYP in relation to HIV. This baseline data not only supported UNICEF's work, but also contributed to the National Strategy on HIV/AIDS and to the formulation of a project proposal to the global fund for HIV/AIDS prevention.

The RtK project has also contributed to the regional MTSP goal of promoting the participation of young people. As it focuses on stigma and discrimination issues and brings together young people from diverse environmental, ethnic, regional and religious backgrounds, this approach fosters enhanced understanding and contributes positively to child/youth protection goals. Used indirectly as an entry point for participation, the RtK project also focused on improving the communication and negotiation skills of institutionalized young people and bringing them together with their peers outside institutions.

The RtK project has made a major contribution to the Regional Strategy on HIV/AIDS. An overall assessment in early 2005 found that almost all young people in TFYR of Macedonia have been reached with messages on HIV/AIDS.

## Comparison of Entry Points

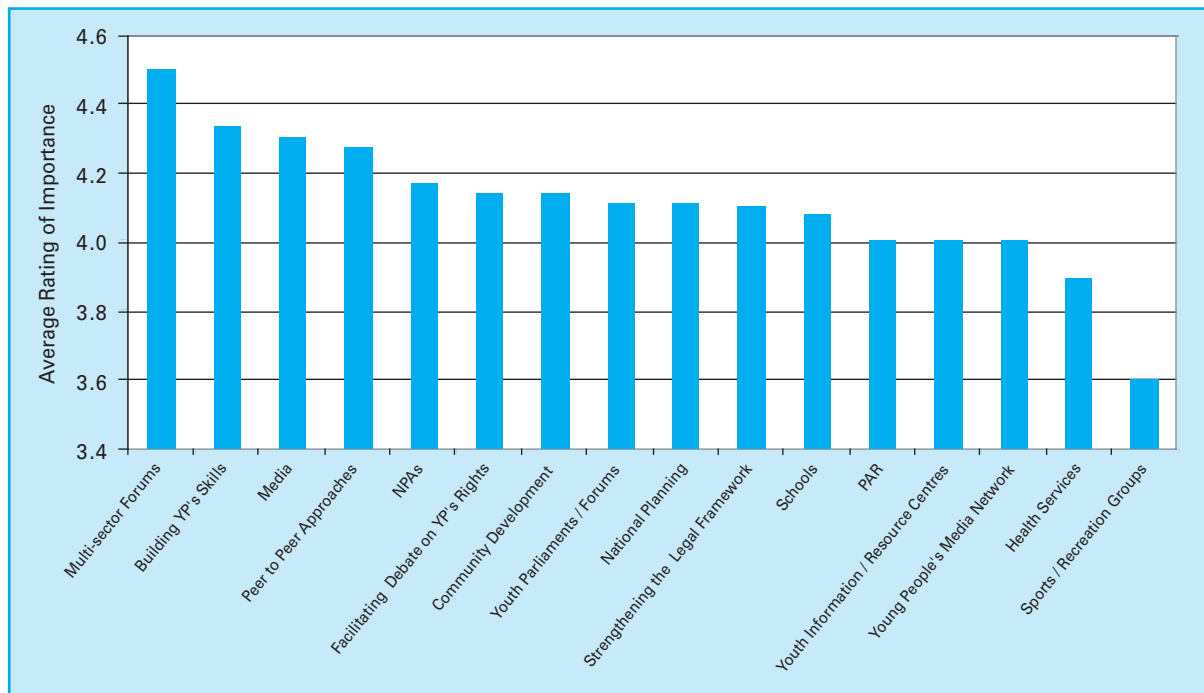
The most widely used participation approaches are building young people's skills and peer-to-peer methods, both of which are employed by all COs responding to the questionnaire.

As shown in Figure 2 below, of the 16 participation approaches and settings explored in the questionnaire, on average: eleven were rated between "very important" (score of 4.0) and "extremely important" (score of 5.0) to the Country Programme; three were rated as "very important"; and two were rated between "important" (3.0) and "very important" (4.0).

**Figure 2. Relative Importance of Various Approaches and Settings to Promoting Young People’s Participation**

Key to scores:

1 = not at all important; 2 = somewhat important; 3 = important; 4 = very important; 5 = extremely important.



The most important participation entry points were judged to be multi-sector forums, building young people’s skills for effective participation, media and peer-to-peer approaches. It should be noted, however, that these approaches, settings and entry points are not independent variables. In fact, many are intimately linked. For example, capacity-building is a fundamental and necessary component of all the others. Likewise, all the entry points provide opportunities for further capacity-building through experiential learning.

Building capacity for participation is an essential first step. Then the most powerful way to build capacity is through hands-on experience. When COs were asked which of the 24 entry points have had the greatest impact in building young people’s capacity to participate, peer-to-peer approaches were cited most often, followed by Youth Parliaments, media and Youth Resource Centres (Figure 10, Annex 11).

Likewise, when COs were asked which of the 24 entry points under consideration were most useful in engaging the participation of especially vulnerable young people, peer-to-peer approaches were again cited far more often than other entry points (Figure 11, Annex 11).

Regarding opportunities for participation via UNICEF programme planning, monitoring, research and evaluation, the COs considered the most important processes for the involvement of young people to be Mid-Term Reviews, project design and implementation, and Country Programme design (Figure 12, Annex 11).

When asked if involving young people made a difference in achieving programme goals, the COs responded strongly in the affirmative, saying that:

- ✓ By involving young people in the programme cycle, their needs and desires become clearer, better understood and consequently better addressed, thus enhancing programme effectiveness.
- ✓ Young people's participation in programming has resulted in innovative approaches that have proved effective.
- ✓ Reach and coverage of Country Programmes have increased as young people gained ownership of the programmes.
- ✓ Young people's participation has been especially effective in enhancing HIV/AIDS prevention among young people.
- ✓ Young people's participation has also enhanced advocacy for child rights.
- ✓ In some cases, young people's participation has effected real changes in policy and legislation.
- ✓ Donor funding has increased and been extended as a result of young people's participation.
- ✓ Participation also benefits those young people who are involved, equipping them with life skills, and resulting in an appreciation of their own competence and responsibility, positive behavioural change, and a greater sense of belonging to the community.

COs were also asked to describe programme goals and cite verbatim extracts from programme documents related to involving young people in PPMRE. Whereas all respondents had general aims, none had specific objectives for participation.

## Equity and Inclusiveness

Throughout the region, young people's voices are seldom heard in decisions that directly affect their lives.

As mentioned above in the section on the Regional Context, one of the urgent warnings from the *Young Voices* poll is the importance in this region of addressing boy's low self-esteem, general lack of participation, and difficulty in coping. This evaluation confirms those findings. The gender bias in the sample of young informants in the four countries that recorded the gender of the respondents is striking (Table 2): of a total of 1,470 young people sampled, 1,029 (70 per cent) were female and 441 (30 per cent) were male. When asked about this discrepancy, COs indicated that girls tend to be more involved than boys in participation projects. This has profound implications for programming, especially when addressing HIV/AIDS, for which the primary determinant of infection in the region is injecting drug use behaviour, and where the prevalence among young men is higher than young women.

Apart from boys and young men, other groups of young people have an especially hard time claiming their rights. Depending on the local culture, young people may be discriminated against according to their social or economic status, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, disabilities, HIV status, residence in institutions, etc. Types of discrimination are by no means homogeneous across the region.

Seven out of twelve COs responding to the questionnaire reported efforts to ensure ethical considerations, equity and non-discrimination in young people's participation, including:

- ensuring that all actors involved, including adults, understand why equity is an important goal;
- emphasizing that participation must be voluntary, not coerced;

- encouraging meaningful, rather than tokenistic, participation by setting realistic expectations, defining clear roles and responsibilities, and building capacities to participate;
- actively recruiting young people who tend to be under-represented (e.g. the poor, ethnic minorities, geographically isolated groups);
- building the capacity of groups that tend to be marginalized;
- ensuring that children and younger adolescents are adequately represented in roles appropriate for their age, and that their voices are heard;
- guaranteeing that both boys and girls are adequately represented and heard;
- avoiding domination of young people's groups by those who are the most vocal;
- promoting participatory decision-making and democratic mechanisms for young people to elect their representatives.

A variety of methods have been employed by UNICEF COs to address these important issues. For example:

- ✓ In **Moldova**, young people are involved in situation analysis, programme planning, monitoring and evaluation, allowing them to set their own objectives and determine their roles in the process. Specific projects – such as Youth Act Projects, Local Children and Youth Councils, and Small Grants for Youth Initiative Groups – have been developed to include the most vulnerable and marginalized groups. Criteria for the selection of young representatives are based on gender, age, geographical location, ethnicity, etc. Furthermore, training techniques include exercises to encourage and empower those who may be less assertive, making sure that everyone's opinions are respected. Ground rules established before training sessions begin help avoid domination by the vocal few. However, much depends on the facilitator and on the attitude and developmental level of the group as a whole.
- ✓ Of five Youth Resource Centres established in **Azerbaijan**, three are in districts that are geographically isolated or have a high concentration of internally displaced persons. Annual Youth Folklore Festivals are organized for ethnic minorities and then expanded to include all layers of the communities in order to promote understanding and dialogue among all groups. Children from orphanages join youth-related events as active participants. A drop-in centre for children living on the streets helps them not only to find appropriate shelters, but also to acquire educational training, and to operate as facilitators and peer educators.
- ✓ In **TFYR of Macedonia**, Right to Know projects have promoted the participation of young people recruited from marginalized groups, Roma and youngsters living in rural areas. Young people from institutions actively participate in theatre-based workshops and are offered learning opportunities and life skills. Programme interventions also target young people with disabilities. In rural areas, efforts are made to reinforce girls' participation.
- ✓ In **Albania**, a study using Rapid Assessment and Response promoted the participation of young Roma and injecting drug users as part of the teams who carried out field interviews. This proved to be critical during the response phase when a team of young Roma gave recommendations on how to produce information/education materials



**Young Evaluators Interviewing other Young Participants in the Projects**

(Photo by Vanja Dimitrievski, TFYR of Macedonia)

for their community, and translated them into their own language. These materials were later used by several NGOs working with Roma communities.

- ✓ Youth Parliaments in **Georgia** involve representatives of children living on the streets or in institutions, as well as ethnic minorities. Training workshops and seminars have been held for marginalized young people. In addition, to ensure that younger children are appropriately represented, the Children and Youth Parliament has two chambers – one for youth and another for children – to allow them to discuss age-appropriate problems and issues.
- ✓ The programme in **Kosovo** covers all ethnic communities (i.e. Albanian, Serbian, Roma, Ashkali, Egyptian and others) and ensures gender balance in all programme activities. The needs of younger children are addressed through five regional networks of Child-Friendly Schools.
- ✓ In **Uzbekistan**, children with disabilities cooperate with UNICEF. In addition, the programme supports poor families and single mothers through an empowering project that aims to prevent the institutionalization of children.
- ✓ Media projects in **Kyrgyzstan** ensure that the voices of younger children are heard by giving them appropriate roles for their age and skills.



## 5. KEY RESULTS OF PARTICIPATION

### How Participation has Changed Young People

A detailed account of how participation has influenced young people in each of the five countries participating in the field research is included in Annex 11. Below are highlighted the major benefits of active participation in civil society to young people, which include:

- ✓ improved level of knowledge and information and familiarization with new concepts;
- ✓ improved self-expression, self-confidence and self-respect;
- ✓ reduced tendency to engage in risky behaviour;
- ✓ improved communication and negotiation skills;
- ✓ improved relationships with family, peers, teachers and other adults;
- ✓ greater ability to participate in decision-making and to get their ideas implemented;
- ✓ exposure to young people of different social backgrounds, attitudes, values and needs;
- ✓ better performance in school;
- ✓ improved ability to make use of free time;
- ✓ increased likelihood of being viewed as a model by others;
- ✓ clearer professional orientation and enhanced life skills;
- ✓ greater optimism about life in general.



**Young People Self-evaluating their personal skills as a result of project activities, using a Smiley-face Scale**

self-evaluating their personal skills as a result of activities in the projects

(Photo by Vanja Dimitrievski, TFYR of Macedonia)

There was a high degree of congruence among the findings reported from the different countries on how participation has influenced young people (Table 5, Annex 11).

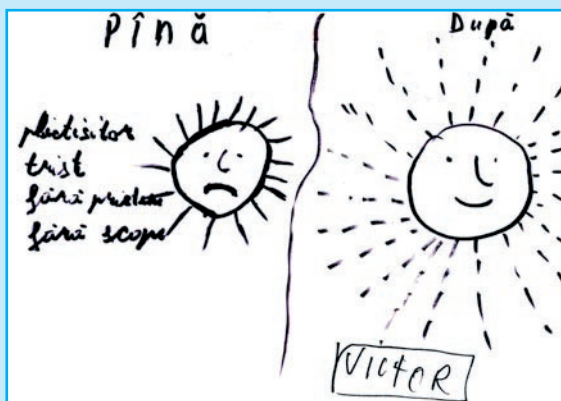
- Young people reported that they became more engaged, committed, active, motivated and mobilized to participate in society as a result of participation.

In four out of five countries they reported that participation made young people:

- more mature, responsible and accountable;
- better prepared for life;
- better able to listen;
- more tolerant of, and interested in, others with different backgrounds, attitudes, values and needs;
- better understand their own and others' societal rights and duties.

The field research found that participation not only enhances young people's knowledge and skills, but also promotes more tolerant attitudes towards others with different backgrounds. The report from Moldova sums up many of these changes:

- As a result of participation, young people succeeded in setting up interpersonal relationships based on acceptance of differences, tolerance and empathy, and overcame fear, unresponsiveness, boredom and a feeling of uselessness. All that has stimulated social activism of youth and helped them communicate with adults on equal terms.
  - Youth participation has encouraged adults to change their views of youth. Young people are now seen as promoters of new ideas and projects, initiators of volunteer work and valuable community resources.
  - Young people have engendered innovative forms of participation by means of which they can express their views freely: youth newspapers, school radio stations, video-facilitated workshops etc.
  - Noticeable changes have occurred in young people involved at an early age (10-12 years) and in various projects for longer periods of time (4-5 years).
- Report from Moldova



### Impact Drawing – Victor

When asked to illustrate how active participation changed his life, Victor Ignatiuc (16), from the Republic of Moldova's Singerei district, said that before involving himself in participation projects, "Everything was boring and sad; I had no friends and aim in my life. After I joined 'Adolescent' initiative group, it's sunny for me". Victor has been an active member of this group since he was 13. Recently registered as an NGO, the group decides on the projects and activities it will implement, among them the construction of the first bicycle parking place in Moldova.

(Photo: EYE Moldova)

## Building the Capacities of Partner Organizations and Institutions

Annex 11 provides highlights of the five field reports describing how collaboration with UNICEF has built the capacity of partner organizations and institutions. Table 6 and Table 7 in Annex 11 synthesize information on the methods, benefits and outcomes of capacity-building.

Overall, the field research provided evidence that collaboration with UNICEF produced the following benefits to partner organizations:

- ✓ additional human resources in the form of young people trained in the prevention of HIV and STI infections;
- ✓ establishment and/or improvement of social and thematic networks;
- ✓ improved services and project implementation;
- ✓ development of new strategies, methods, ideas and/or projects.

A good example of the development and increasing influence of an NGO as a result of cooperation with UNICEF is Fialta in **Belarus**, whose work is based on the active participation of youth volunteers. Over the last four years, Fialta has enhanced its image as the strongest peer education network in the country, while increasing the quality of its services, developing new methods of work, and elaborating and disseminating peer education standards to other NGOs. UNICEF's collaboration gave this young NGO credibility with the government, and today Fialta is included in Belarus' programme to prevent HIV/AIDS.

In **Moldova**, representatives of local public administrations, educational institutions and the Youth Parliament lauded UNICEF's outstanding contribution to building the capacity of school professionals by organizing training sessions, disseminating information and providing small grants. Attitudes towards young people's participation have also changed, and the capacity of schools to promote participation has improved.

## Influence on the Legal and Policy Environment

Strengthening young people's voices and promoting their influence in the policy and legislative arena is a radically new undertaking in all countries in the region. For the time being, young people's participation is making tremendous gains, but, according to this evaluation, its influence in the higher levels of decision-making is perceived by COs as modest in most countries (Figure 13, Annex 11). Thus far the strongest influence of young people is reported in the areas of education policy, health policy, social systems / child rights and state planning.

In terms of **education policy**:

- ✓ In **Albania** a new curricular framework for secondary education has been developed integrating Life Skills Based Education that includes critical thinking, creativity, the ability to know oneself and to communicate with others, to cope with emotions, stress and conflict, and to make good decisions. All these skills can be applied to promote responsible citizenship and healthy lifestyles. With UNICEF's support, the Ministry has: evaluated the curriculum to assess the coverage and quality of LSBE; developed a Life Skills manual for teachers after long consultations with stakeholders, including young people; trained teachers in LSBE content and methodology; set up a teachers' network to impart life skills; and authorized all high schools in the country to teach life skills. As mentioned above under Entry Points, youth parliamentarians convinced the Ministry to increase the national budget for education and to stop using average grades as a criterion for admission to university.
- ✓ In **Armenia** students, together with the Ministry of Education, drafted a framework for regulations for Student Councils.
- ✓ UNICEF's cooperation and advocacy work has had a positive impact on education policy in **Belarus**. A round table on LSBE was organized, bringing together the Ministry of Education, schools, and NGOs carrying out peer education programmes to discuss mechanisms to include peer education techniques in both formal and non-formal education in schools. A government and NGO working group was set up to standardize cooperation in peer education programmes and make them sustainable. The event got wide media



Exploration of Youth Participation Using Individual Impact Drawings (Brest, Belarus)

coverage and, one month later, programmes led by the Fialta peer education network, with financial support from the local education authorities, were set up in 15 locations in the Brest region. This constituted a milestone in LSBE, and was made possible by cooperation between UNICEF, the government and Fialta.

- On the other hand, although the need for real participation in school management has been prioritized in Belarus, self-governance mechanisms have not yet become an integral component of the school environment.
- ✓ Young people have been actively involved in elaborating legislation on education in **Georgia**. School self-governance bodies were established upon the initiative of the Youth Parliament, and now take an active role in disseminating information and mobilizing young people's participation. Together with the Youth Resource Centres, these bodies helped raise awareness among young people on child rights and HIV/AIDS.
- ✓ In **Moldova**, UNICEF has contributed to the development and implementation of the national strategy "Education for All", which places special emphasis on disadvantaged children and youth. In addition, UNICEF has provided technical and financial support to reform the Moldovan educational system to design a new curriculum for life skills education.
- ✓ Open forums were established in **Ukraine** between the Ministry of Education and Science, teachers, pupils, parents' associations and NGOs, which resulted in the revision of the draft Standards in Education. As a result of young people's advocacy, new content – notably HIV/AIDS prevention issues – was introduced into the "Health and Physical Training" subject area.

### Regarding **health policy**:

- ✓ NGOs participating in the Right-to-Know project in **TFYR of Macedonia** were influential in the conceptualization, adoption and implementation of the National Strategy for HIV/AIDS. The RAR and PAR activities of the RtK project helped to create the evidence base for the formulation of the strategy.
- ✓ In **Georgia** members of the Youth Parliament helped elaborate laws on harmful influences on children.

### Regarding **social systems and child rights**:

- ✓ In **Albania** the municipality of Tirana institutionalized youth participation in decision-making by setting aside three places for young people on the municipal council. In 2004 the municipality of Kukes asked the Youth Parliament to run the municipality for one day. They said they were amazed at what they learned from the young parliamentarians, and decided to repeat the event every year. Youth parliamentarians have participated in the drafting of laws relative to youth, education and the environment.
- ✓ Young people in **Azerbaijan** participated fully in working groups related to legislative reform in light of the CRC.
- ✓ UNICEF cooperates with government departments to ensure harmonization of the laws of **Georgia** with the CRC. In addition, young parliamentarians actively collaborate with the government Committee on the Protection of Human Rights to make Georgia's legislative framework more child-friendly. Young parliamentarians advocated for better integration of handicapped children and youth into society and, as a result, an agreement was reached to install appropriate infrastructure in all newly designed buildings. Representatives of Children and Youth Parliament of Georgia, in collaboration with the Young Lawyers Association, worked actively to draft an appeal to pardon juvenile delinquents in penitentiaries with the result that the Department for Probation was instructed to consider the issue and prepare a policy.
- ✓ In **Moldova** UNICEF programmes (e.g. training sessions, seminars, conferences, round-tables) have contributed to changing the mentality of the population concerning the rights of the child. As a result, studies have confirmed that 95 per cent of respondents are now

aware of these rights. With technical assistance from UNICEF, the Department of Youth and Sports is analysing Moldovan legislation in order to meet European standards in terms justice for minors. UNICEF has also provided support to government agencies to develop policies to protect the rights of the child.

- ✓ In **TFYR of Macedonia** creating and supporting projects that promote young people's participation and showcasing the results has allowed UNICEF to advocate for stronger participation of young people – not just in specific project activities, but also in larger frameworks where young people can influence policies and structures that have an impact upon their situation.

In terms of **state planning**:

- ✓ The National Youth Strategy and the National Strategy on HIV/AIDS in **Albania** were finalized reflecting the real opinions of young people. Also, as a result of an open letter from the Children Alliance, the government decided to draft a National Plan of Action for Children and to establish a central Bureau to monitor Children Rights.
- ✓ Round tables on the draft NPA were held with young people in different regions in **Georgia**, and their views were taken into consideration in finalizing the strategy. A representative group of children and youth monitor the implementation of the NPA.
- ✓ In **Moldova** a Youth Strategy and a National Plan of Action for Children, were adopted in December 2003, both of which benefited from the input of young people in the elaboration and consultation processes. In addition, these processes drew partners closer together: ministries, academia, NGOs, and youth groups.
- ✓ A National Youth Strategy was finalized in 2004 (but not yet adopted) in the **TFYR of Macedonia**, following the active involvement of youth NGOs.



## 6. CONCLUSIONS

### Young Voices Opinion Survey

In general, COs felt that asking young people their views in the form of an opinion survey and publicizing the results was a useful way to make their voices heard in decision-making. Appropriate dissemination, it was noted, was a key element. In many countries, however, the process of carrying out the poll was entirely adult-driven and fell short of encouraging full and meaningful participation by young people. An important drawback was that the YV poll did not reflect the opinions of especially vulnerable young people and minority groups.

In most countries, the YV poll was not seen to have contributed significantly to specific national policies and legislation. However, in countries where the poll was used wisely and the results disseminated (e.g. Armenia, Georgia, Kosovo and Moldova) it *did* have an impact – for example, providing a baseline for increasing awareness of child rights, influencing youth policy and legislation, adopting an NPA, introducing LSBE, and generating support for Youth Resource Centres. The majority of COs felt that the YV poll made a positive contribution to their Country Programme and advocacy goals.

### Methods and Processes to Promote Youth Participation

The evaluation identified a wide variety of entry points to engage young people. Among them, the most effective were judged to be multi-sector forums, media channels and peer-to-peer approaches, all of which present good prospects for strengthening young people's voices in decision-making. The likelihood of success of participation projects can be enhanced when they use a variety of methods and processes (e.g. Youth Parliaments plus Local Youth Councils plus small grants).

The most attractive projects to young people are those in which they are free to make their own decisions and express their personal opinions and ideas. Young people show an exceptional interest in projects aimed at their peers, especially in rural areas where opportunities for fun and access to information are limited.

A key finding is that marginalized young people in some countries and settings are can be heard. In Ukraine, for example, the opinions of especially vulnerable young people were taken into account in sub-national discussions on HIV/AIDS issues relevant to their lives. They are given opportunities to express their views, to build their skills in forging group consensus and to present their ideas to adult decision makers.



#### Exploring Youth Participation Using Impact Drawings

(Photo by Ermal Lusha, young researcher, Albania)

Peer-to-peer approaches in particular were considered by both the Country Offices and the field research to have the greatest potential in building young people's capacity to participate, and were cited as being the most useful in engaging the participation of especially vulnerable young people. In TFYR of Macedonia, for example, peer-to-peer interactive theatre activities were effective in involving young people, building their skills and working with attitudes related to HIV/AIDS prevention. Interactive theatre was especially successful with institutionalized youth.

In addition the participation of young people as peer educators develops their personal qualities and strengthens their social position, which in turn further enhances their motivation.

Participatory Action Research proved especially effective in engaging young people in identifying problems and finding solutions. PAR enhances young people's sense of social responsibility and active citizenship, and provides a good method for developing innovative communication strategies targeting adolescents, including especially vulnerable young people. In TFYR of Macedonia, for example, PAR processes helped map attitudes and behaviour regarding health issues (HIV/AIDS, STIs and drug use). In addition the PAR method created space for open discussion among young people, and generated valuable inputs to the design and implementation of Right-to-Know interventions.

Young people's participation through multi-sector forums that bring together government, NGOs and young people, has made important impacts on national policies and strategies. Examples from Albania, Armenia and Ukraine are discussed in previous chapters.

Youth Parliaments in some countries provide a space for genuine and influential participation; in others, this entry point requires further work with both adults and young people to increase participation beyond the level of manipulation and tokenism. Although Youth Parliaments are effective in building the skills of young people, in most countries they do not have wide representation, particularly of marginalized young people.

Regional youth centres were found to provide an excellent opportunity for young people: to acquire computer skills; to get access to information; and to become involved in the planning and implementation of projects.

Young people's voluntary participation in community development raises their sense of control over their own situations and makes them more willing to be involved. For example, in Moldova: Integrated Community Service Centres had young people serving on the boards; Community Centres tasked youth with responsibilities as instructors; and Local Youth Councils involved young people in decision-making processes.

This evaluation highlights the strong desire and potential among young people to participate, and shows that this constitutes a powerful opportunity for further developing their contributions.

The field research in Albania, Belarus, Georgia and Macedonia examined what motivates young people to participate. The major motivational factor was found to be, first and foremost, making new friends. This was followed by their desire to change the world, to help others, to spend their energy usefully, and to benefit from opportunities for: developing communication skills; personal growth; learning about issues of concern; training; expressing ideas and being heard by others; and entertainment. Frequently young people's interests, aspirations to help, satisfaction and rewards were combined.

The field research found that as a result of participation young people became more engaged, committed, active, motivated and mobilized to participate in society. Participation influenced young people to become more mature, responsible and accountable; better able to listen; more tolerant of, and interested in, others with different backgrounds, attitudes, values and needs; and better able to understand their own and others' societal rights and duties.

### Constraints

The evaluation found that COs have to take into consideration several key challenges in promoting the participation of young people: commitment to genuine – as opposed to adult-directed –

participation; resources to build young people's capacity; political commitment; and the support of the media.

For example, limited capacity in local and central government of services for young people, and schools that continue to be unfriendly and that have difficulty in reaching vulnerable and marginalized groups are elements that negatively affect young people's participation. These issues require effective strategies to be addressed.

Sometimes young people do not want to assume responsibility, or they may be scared of difficulties. Conversely, quite often adults are unprepared or unwilling to transfer responsibility to young people.

In some countries the absence of a youth policy developed with active participation by youth and youth organizations is an obstacle. Another constraint may be the lack of an effective department or ministry on youth affairs with qualified employees and strong management. Sometimes youth activities are carried out in a fragmented and uncoordinated manner by local authorities or by NGOs.

A critical lesson is that for young people's voices to be taken seriously, it is essential that adult decision makers are able to appreciate, understand and engage in participatory approaches. At the same time, situations in which young people encounter sceptical attitudes on the part of adults do not foster participation; young people are vulnerable to negative feedback.

In addition, specific cultural, social and political environments, such as adult stereotypes of young people, cultures and traditions that make promoting real participation a challenge and, in some countries, a constrained national context or tokenistic approaches to participation, are all elements that should be taken into account in the design and implementation of programmes to foster young people's participation.

### **Young People's Participation in UNICEF Processes**

Most Country Offices participating in the study involved young people, to varying degrees, in situation analyses, CP design and implementation, and they considered this very important to the relevance and effectiveness of their programmes.

Involving young people in the design of Country Programmes can be considered a reality check. COs involve young people in CP design for multiple reasons: to respect their rights; to ensure that UNICEF-assisted programmes respond to young people's needs and expectations; to get fresh ideas; and to build young people's skills in programme design.

In a number of countries, young people were involved in the Country Programme Mid-Term Review processes, enhancing the quality of the review.

In a small number of Country Offices, young people have been involved in UNICEF reporting and evaluation. This, however, remains an underdeveloped participation entry point.

The evaluation identified many successful approaches to promote young people's participation. However, although great advances have been made in some countries, young people are not yet *systematically* involved in UNICEF programme planning, monitoring, research and evaluation in the CEE/CIS and the Baltics Region.

It is clear that UNICEF's work benefits greatly from the participation of young people. The CEE/CIS and the Baltics Region is fortunate in having a number of COs that are making concerted and

strategic efforts to enhance young people's participation in their Country Programmes, and that have been willing, via this evaluation, to share their rich and valuable experience.

By involving young people in the programme cycle, UNICEF can more clearly see and appreciate their needs and desires, and monitor how their rights are being fulfilled – or denied. In addition, youth participation has resulted in creative and innovative approaches that have proved effective. Reach and coverage of Country Programmes have also increased as young people have gained ownership. As young people's needs are better addressed, programme effectiveness will be further enhanced.

### Use of the Field Evaluations

It is expected that the five field evaluations, where young people are at once the stakeholders, the target group and the implementers, will help UNICEF to better understand the mechanisms of youth participation, and thus improve strategies for promoting participation in those countries.

In **Belarus**, the findings of the evaluation were discussed with the Ministry of Education and the Peer Education Network, emphasizing the need for strategic and effective approaches for promoting real and meaningful (not decorative) participation in decision-making processes. This will be featured in the new 2006-2010 Country Programme. The 17 Information Centres supported by UNICEF will keep a record of the evaluation methods to be used in assessing their activities.

The evaluation report from **Moldova** was launched and presented by members of the evaluation team at: a press conference; a meeting with the National Council for Child Rights Protection with representatives of ministries and local authorities; the Mid-Term Review meeting; and 12 presentations were given at the regional level. A short movie made by young people about the whole evaluation process was well received and very convincing to the public. The results of the evaluation have increased advocacy in favour of young people's participation in meetings, roundtables and other events with high level officials. The findings helped to demonstrate the great impact of youth participation at the community level. In addition, the key results and recommendations were fundamental in the Mid-Term Review process and in formulating recommendations for UNICEF programming. A very promising, if unanticipated, result of the participatory evaluation in Moldova was the creation by young people of a new NGO – the Association of Young Evaluators, the concept for which is included in **Annex 11**). This association will further build the capacity of young evaluators and could serve as a seed initiative for a regional association of young evaluators.

The report from **TFYR of Macedonia** is considered by the Country Office to be useful not only for UNICEF's HIV/AIDS programme, but for other UNICEF programmes as well, as important lessons were gathered on how young people felt they were participating in project activities. The evaluation will also be very useful for the NGOs that participated in the Right to Know project and for the donor. In addition, the results of the field evaluation will serve as baseline evidence (previously lacking) to further improve young people's participation in UNICEF supported programmes, projects and activities in the new 2005-2009 Country Programme. The conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation have already been directly used to discuss and prepare participatory methods for the Youth Preparatory Forum, where 50 young people discussed issues related to social exclusion, basic services, etc. and generated ideas and suggestions for action for the Special Session on Children held in June 2005, which included government, NGOs, academia and youth representatives. It is hoped that this evaluation will help shape future strategies aimed at promoting young people's participation in public life in general. To this end, a publication in Macedonian for a wider audience is planned, targeting young people, coordinators, and relevant NGOs and governmental organizations.

## Lessons from the Evaluation Process

Carrying out field research with young researchers in five countries provided valuable lessons for participatory evaluations involving young people. Observations and lessons on the training are included in Annex 8. An analysis of the evaluation process, including limitations and lessons learned is given in Annex 9. Verbatim observations from the reports on the process of the field research are included in Annex 11.

## Lessons Learned from the Training

The training workshops were, for the most part, highly participatory, and this was universally effective in motivating the young participants and in enhancing the learning experience. In addition, the training workshops were more effective, and the young evaluators better trained, when the Principal Researcher took an active role in the initial training, and then continued to build the capacity of the young researchers during the evaluation.

The different cultural contexts as well as the different age groups of the participants required the trainer to adapt the training approach in each country.

Developing the research plan, a rather technical exercise, took over twice as long when young people were more fully involved in the process. In the end this was an empowering experience for them, and well worth the extra time.

Games and energizers were critical to the success of the learning experience in most, but not all countries, and especially with the younger research teams.

The training would have benefited from more emphasis on data collection, qualitative data analysis and UNICEF's Evaluation Report Standards.

Many of the young participants felt that the training had been not only a useful learning experience, but they were also very inspired by a sense of empowerment – the result of being given the responsibility to evaluate the programmes of an organization such as UNICEF.

## Lessons Learned on Participatory Evaluations with Young People

The strengths of the evaluation process included: the use of participatory evaluation methods; transparency during the entire process; using youth-friendly language and interactive methods; collecting data in workshops in the absence of adults; flexibility in the evaluation design; discussion of the advantages and constraints of the methods used at the end of every workshop; and involving young people in data processing and analysis.

In selecting the evaluation team, it would probably have been useful to specify the desired profile and skills required of the young evaluators before deciding who should be invited to participate in the research.

In terms of sampling strategies, comparing respondent groups who had participated in UNICEF projects with those who had not proved useful. More attention should be paid to disaggregating data from different respondent groups.

The major difficulties concerned the data analysis because of the lack of a pre-established system for data analysis and the large volume of qualitative information collected. The consultation

workshops where young people assessed the initial results of the data analysis and had the opportunity to discuss and comment on them and to formulate conclusions was found to be an effective method.

This pioneering work of involving young people in evaluating the participation approaches of UNICEF’s programmes in these five countries in the CEE/CIS and the Baltics Region has provided rich learning experiences. The experience of this evaluation indicates following **critical elements for success** in participatory evaluations involving young stakeholders:

- Strong capacity and commitment by UNICEF Country Office to manage and support the evaluation process and the participatory approach.
- Solid experience and proven track record of the Principal Researcher in participatory programme evaluation and in working with young people. The capacity, enthusiasm and competence of the Principal Researcher was probably the most important factor of all. S/he must fulfil a key role in building the capacity of the team and providing effective supervision, while at the same time encouraging initiative, ensuring robust collection and analysis of the data, and producing a report that meets UNICEF evaluation standards.
- Additional training for the young researchers beyond the initial workshop was very beneficial, as were subsequent team meetings to analyse the data and formulate conclusions and recommendations.

### Lessons from Key Results

Under optimal circumstances, young people can develop a clear understanding of what they need and what they wish to do. Given the opportunity and sufficient support, they can articulate their needs and develop effective strategies for achieving them. The following table presents some of the more specific lessons learned that emerged from this evaluation.

**Table 3. Lessons Learned from Key Results**

<i>Young Voices</i> Opinion Survey	Failure to systematically involve relevant UNICEF COs hindered the utility and impact of the report in certain countries. In addition, at the national level, the small sample size (400 children in each country) limited the poll’s credibility with decision makers, as well as its usefulness as a baseline.
Capacity-building	No activity or project will be successful unless it begins with the development of young people’s knowledge and participatory skills. Capacity-building is a key factor for success in all participation entry points. Building participation skills is a long-term process.
Supportive Environments for Young People’s Participation	Understanding among duty-bearers of the importance and principles of young people’s participation is key. More effort needs to be made in building the capacity, not only of young people, but also of adult facilitators, civil society and government focal points in child rights and participation. Mass media should be strategically involved on a large scale and at all stages in creating a supportive environment for participation.
National Planning	Concrete policy mechanisms, such as young people’s groups within ministries, are needed to ensure real participation in the decision-making process.

Youth Parliaments	Sometimes it can be dangerous to actively involve young people in political processes because they may be manipulated by political parties or politicians. This highlights the critical importance of building young people's capacity to participate effectively in political processes.
National Plan of Action for Children	It is advisable to create a permanent representative group of young people to be in continuous contact with the entire NPA process. Monitoring days involving young people should be organized to review if what was agreed in the NPA is being implemented.
Peer-to-Peer Approaches	Peer education has proved very effective, especially with vulnerable young people. Peer education is widely seen as the most effective method of HIV/AIDS prevention among young people.
Schools	Participation demonstrates that children learn better when they are made partners in the process and are co-responsible for their own progress. It is important that young people's participation in schools becomes part of the educational process through transformation of the education system.
Health Services	Involving young people in health services has proved very effective. For adequate coverage, promoting young people's participation in health services needs to be integrated within the existing health care system.
Community Development	Young people have proved that they are able to transform attitudes and values in their own communities. When they participate in community development in areas that concern them, they are encouraged by the realization that they can influence their own situation, as well as that of others.
Media	Youth media initiatives are a good means of reaching out to the public. Messages developed by young people are most credible and effective in reaching peers. Ongoing media coverage is important to create a favourable, supportive environment for participation and to promote best practices.
Participatory Action Research	PAR has proved especially effective in motivating young people to identify problems and find solutions. It enhances young people's sense of social responsibility and active citizenship, while providing an effective method to develop innovative communication strategies targeted at the prevention of HIV/AIDS in especially vulnerable adolescents.
Mid-Term Review	Because young people do not have a tradition of being consulted in processes like UNICEF's MTR, it is necessary to thoroughly prepare teams of young evaluators. To ensure that they understand the process, simple programme documents devoid of UNICEF jargon should be prepared for them.
Evaluation	Evaluation is the weakest link in involving young people in the UNICEF programme cycle. To involve young people in evaluating UNICEF's work, evaluation models and methods must be adapted and substantial training provided



## 8. RECOMMENDATIONS

### Improving the Evaluation Process

The following are priority recommendations for carrying out participatory evaluations with young researchers:

- 1) Define the key oversight role of the UNICEF Country Office at the outset.
- 2) Select each country's Principal Researcher with great care, ensuring that COs have seen examples of candidates' previous work demonstrating their experience and skills in programme evaluation, participatory methodologies, working with young people, and preparing reports that meet UNICEF standards.
- 3) Disaggregate all data by gender, age, ethnic group, etc. during collection, analysis and reporting and ensure gender balance among the young researchers and respondents.
- 4) Introduce ethnographic research methods, such as detailed field descriptions of public initiatives, auto-ethnographic descriptions, and participants' assessments of their successful and unsuccessful experiences.
- 5) Make evaluation results publicly available, involving young people in developing a communications strategy and in disseminating the results.

Recommendations on indicators as well as more detailed recommendations to develop the evaluation process are included in Annex 11.

The manual developed for this evaluation, *Useful Tools for Engaging Young People in Participatory Evaluation* (UNICEF 2004) is available to facilitate in-country training of young researchers.

### Polls such as *Young Voices*

The following recommendations emerging from this evaluation could enhance the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and impact of future opinion surveys such as *Young Voices*:

- 6) Retain centralized, regional management of the overall process, with stronger involvement of the UNICEF COs, especially in planning the survey, selecting the research agency, training pollsters in child/youth interview techniques, evaluating results, ensuring translation, and launching and disseminating the findings. Dovetail the survey's completion to coincide with UN/UNICEF processes so that the poll can inform the Common Country Assessment, the Country Programme Document and/or the Mid-Term Review.
- 7) Enhance the report's credibility, including the process of producing it, by involving young people in an appropriate way in developing the methodology and the questionnaire, analysing the data, and disseminating the findings.
- 8) Ensure that the questionnaire addresses current and emerging problems, such as child trafficking, risky behaviours, quality of education and the need for LSBE in schools.
- 9) Use a sample size that takes into account, not only confidence levels of findings across a large number of countries, but also confidence levels of results at the national level where the potential impact of the poll can be greatest. Target EVYP and ensure coverage of different ethnic groups. Design the methodology so that it double-checks answers via triangulation.
- 10) Develop a dissemination plan for each country during the design phase of the poll. Raise funds to increase the impact of the survey in the participating countries, and ensure that the final report is translated into all languages used in the questionnaire and interviews and that sufficient hard copies are printed.

## Strengthening Young People's Participation in Policies and Programmes Affecting their Lives

The following recommendations are intended to enhance young people's participation in civil society:

- 11) Deepen COs' understanding of what motivates young people's – especially boys' and young men's – participation in order to develop more effective strategies to engage them.
- 12) Develop strategies to further the participation of especially vulnerable and marginalized young people. Extend participation programmes to rural areas.
- 13) Disseminate information on participation projects as widely as possible, and in local languages, in order to promote and sustain young people's participation. Use information as a public relations tool, targeting not only young people, but also families, governments, NGOs and private sector partners.
- 14) Create concrete mechanisms to ensure young people's participation in the decision-making process. Advocate that participation entry points – such as youth information and resource centres, peer-to-peer approaches, young people's participation in schools and health services – become an integral part of national youth policies and legal frameworks.
- 15) Develop both adults' and young people's appreciation of child rights and their skills to foster meaningful participation.
- 16) Promote young people's participation in community development and local advisory councils.
- 17) Cultivate the capacities of youth and young professionals in participatory research methods. Survey the situation of young people at the community, regional and national levels regularly. Develop criteria to assess "youth friendliness" in communities and encourage authorities to meet such criteria.
- 18) Grow partnerships with mainstream media in order to spread messages to broad audiences. Train, orient, mentor, network and equip young journalists and producers to use the media to engage governmental or non-governmental organizations in problem-solving.
- 19) Provide financial support to youth initiatives.

*Young people hope their merits and performances will be recognized in the future and that their activities will be advertised. They see themselves as future "important people of society".*

– Report from Moldova

## Strengthening Young People's Participation in UNICEF Processes

- 20) COs should explore how young people can participate in all areas of concern to their own health and development, as well as in relevant steps of UNICEF's programme cycle.
- 21) Involve disadvantaged or under-represented young people in the UNICEF Country Programmes. Develop initiatives to ensure equity and non-discrimination as a hallmark of all UNICEF programmes.
- 22) Ensure the sustainability and institutionalization of young people's participation. Seek opportunities for young people's participation, both in concept and practice, and integrate them into UNICEF's policies, programmes, projects and activities.
- 23) Continue the support of the CEE/CIS and the Baltics Regional Office to COs in promoting young people's participation in terms of guidance, capacity-building, technical assistance and the development of youth policies.
- 24) Make the results of this and other evaluations publicly available.

The UNICEF Guidance Note on Promoting Participation of Children and Young People (UNICEF 2004) provides excellent recommendations on strengthening young people's participation in UNICEF processes.

## Strategic Recommendations

Thanks to the collective wisdom brought to light by the participating Country Programmes, this formative evaluation provides guidance towards a more strategic response to promoting young people's participation in UNICEF's work.

- UNICEF must partner with stakeholders (both public and private) to advance the meaningful participation of young people. This means purposeful planning of interventions that build on young people's unique strengths and evolving competencies, while taking into account whatever situation-specific limitations may exist.
- It is essential to increase public awareness of the importance and benefits of young people's participation. Creating a supportive environment is fundamental. This includes: political commitment and government support; an appropriate legal and policy framework; financial and human resources invested in building young people's capacity to participate; and the support of the media. Mechanisms such as multi-sector forums, can contribute positively to keeping the lines of communication open between young people, civil society and government, and to giving young people a voice in decision-making.
- It is critical to further develop innovative and sustainable mechanisms to allow and encourage marginalized young girls and boys, especially those most at risk for HIV/AIDS and substance use and violence, to participate in: assessing and analyzing local and national situations, articulating their point of view and advocating their positions, planning and implementing solutions and being part of monitoring and reporting.
- Efforts to support young people's participation must also address the "gender gap" and foster the participation of boys and young men in order to address the imbalance in participation levels between girls and boys.
- It is recommended that a regional consultation of partners focuses on the participation of marginalized and most at risk adolescents, giving attention to gender issues, best practices, useful synergies and existing, as well as new partnerships, all of which to inform programme direction and development.



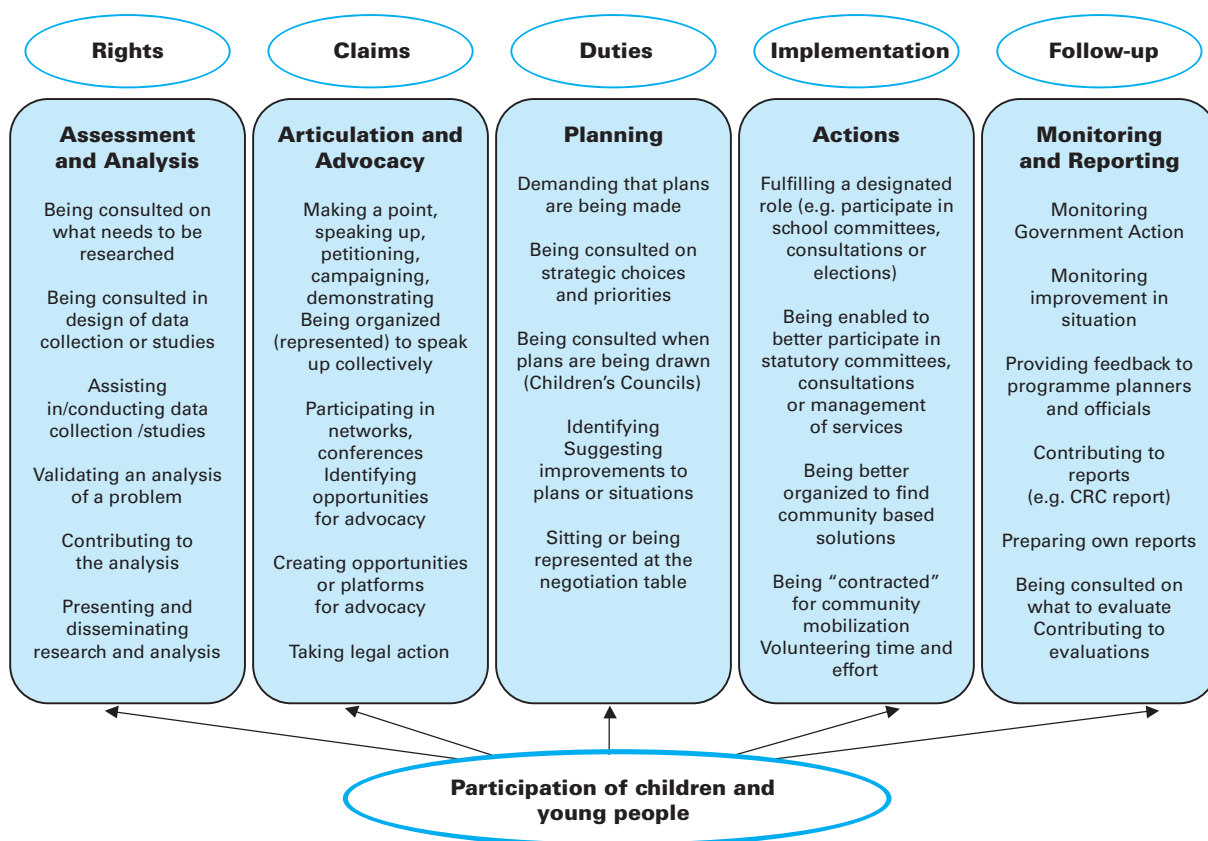
## Annex 1. Human Rights Based Approach to Participation

The following is an excerpt from the *UNICEF Programme Policy and Procedure Manual* (UNICEF 2004, pages 185-186):

As shown in the diagram, the Human Rights perspective helps to map different but related ‘participation roles’ of children and young people. Five broad areas of participation follow:

- *identifying unfulfilled rights*: participation in establishing the existence and magnitude of a problem and analysing its causes; participation in research,
- *claiming of rights*: demanding the attention of decision makers; advocating; petitioning,
- *identifying solutions and duties*: negotiating; making or improving plans,
- *participating in implementing the solution*: fulfilling a role; becoming an actor,
- *monitoring, evaluating and reporting* progress in the implementation of plans and commitments.

A Situation Analysis should aim to identify the participation gaps (e.g. major areas of the above continuum where children and young people are not able to exercise their participation rights). Strategies, tactics and initial entry points to get participatory practices off the ground should be considered when developing the programme strategy (and Country Programme Document), and in MTRs. It may be difficult to achieve significant participation simultaneously in **all** aspects of this continuum, at least at first.



## Annex 2. Terms of Reference

### Elements for Terms of Reference / Work Plan for Meg Gawler, 2003-2005

#### Task Phase 1

0. Develop draft protocol for an evaluation of the UNICEF work on Youth Participation in CEE/CIS and the Baltics

#### Task Phase 2

1. Finalize the draft protocol and questionnaire.
2. RO to send out draft questionnaire to two pilot COs.
3. Interview the two pilot COs and revise questionnaire accordingly.
4. RO to send out questionnaire to all COs.
5. COs to fill out and return questionnaires.
6. Develop proposed field methodology, including results matrix and standard report format.
7. Visit two pilot offices to further develop methodology and kick off field research.
8. Provide support to counterparts in pilot countries via telephone and email during field research, including weekly conference calls with counterpart and UNICEF focal point.
9. Analyse the results of the questionnaire sent to all COs in the region to evaluate young people's participation.
10. Present and discuss initial findings at UNICEF RO.
11. Prepare draft interim report on the outcome of the questionnaire for circulation to all COs.
12. Incorporate comments on draft from RO and COs, and produce final survey report.

#### Task Phase 3

13. Based on questionnaire results, the field results of the pilot offices and the needs of the implementing COs, develop training package to build capacity for field research.
14. Deliver training and kick off field research in five countries.
15. Provide support to counterparts in five countries via telephone and email during field research, including weekly conference calls with counterpart and UNICEF focal point.
16. Analyse and synthesize findings of field reports completed by participating COs.
17. Present and discuss initial findings at UNICEF RO.
18. Prepare synthesis report based on field research (draft).
19. Circulate draft report on field research for comments.
20. Incorporate comments from RO and COs and produce final report.
21. Prepare PowerPoint synthesis of results of survey and field research.
22. Present and discuss results at RO

#### Task Phase 4

23. Consultation planning and agenda
24. Present findings and rapporteur consultation
25. Consultation report on guidance
26. Co-author publication on lessons learned from training, survey and field research

### Annex 3. Evaluation Timetable

<b>Protocol</b>	
Develop evaluation protocol together with the Regional Office and with input from the COs	Aug. 2003 – Apr. 2004
<b>Survey</b>	
Develop questionnaire together with RO; pilot it in two countries; fine-tune the questionnaire in response to the pilots together with RO; develop and test web-based version; prepare final version in Word	Oct. 2003 – Jun. 2004
COs complete questionnaire	Jul. 2004 – Jan. 2005
Complete survey data analysis	Mar. 2005
Draft survey report	Mar. 2005
Comments on draft survey report	Apr. 2005
Final survey report	May 2005
<b>Field Research</b>	
Training of young evaluators in Moldova	Oct. 2003
Pilot research in Moldova	Oct. 2003 – Mar. 2004
Draft report from Moldova	Jun. 2004
Comments on draft report from Moldova	Jul. 2004
Final report from Moldova	Nov. 2004
Training of young evaluators in Albania, Belarus, Georgia and TFYR of Macedonia	Aug. 2004 – Oct. 2004
Field research in Albania, Belarus, Georgia and TFYR of Macedonia	Sep. 2004 – Apr. 2005
Draft reports from Albania, Belarus, Georgia and TFYR of Macedonia	Dec. 2004 – Apr. 2005
Comments on the draft reports	Feb. – May 2005
Final reports	Mar. – Jun. 2005
<b>Synthesis Report</b>	
Data analysis from survey and field research	May – Jun. 2005
Draft synthesis report	Jun. 2005
Comments on synthesis report	Jul. 2005
Final synthesis report	Aug. 2005

## Annex 4. Guidelines for Field Research

In preparation for the field research, the following guidelines were developed and shared with the participating COs to provide a common conceptual framework and to enhance the comparability of the five studies.

### Guidelines for Country Offices Planning to Engage in Field Research

Field research will involve a standard protocol for the participating countries, complemented by research that is designed and implemented by young people, to answer questions that are of greatest interest to UNICEF and to the young people themselves. Participatory evaluation techniques will be given priority for the field research, the data analysis and reporting. A participatory evaluation will involve several steps: 1) preparation; 2) developing a draft research design, questions and methodology together with young representatives and perhaps other key stakeholders; 3) piloting the research plan; 4) adjusting the design accordingly, and 5) carrying out the research, and analysing and documenting the results, again with the collaboration of young people and key stakeholders.

Qualitative methods would likely include key informant interviews, focus group discussions, observation and selected participatory methods. Quantitative methods might include questionnaires, cost-benefit analysis, etc.

The primary audiences for the evaluation are UNICEF itself, including other COs promoting young people's participation, and the young beneficiaries of UNICEF's programme. Secondary audiences would include government agencies, collaborating NGOs and donors.

For the evaluation to be useful, **the participation of young people is essential**. To this end, the evaluation process should include the following elements:

- Each programme will identify several young people to serve as focal points for, and assistants to, the principal investigator. They could play a number of roles, including acting as a conduit for issues that young people individually, or in groups, might not comfortably present directly to an adult evaluator.
- An evaluation design workshop should be held with the participation of the young focal points to develop the protocol and evaluation tools.
- The draft methodology should be piloted by the principal investigator and the young focal points.
- A second workshop could be held with the same participants, once the results of the pilot test of the protocol and instruments are available, in order to fine-tune and adjust the protocol and evaluation instruments.
- Young people will conduct interviews of selected target groups, with the principal investigator doing follow-up interviews with randomly selected individuals from these groups.
- If there are young people's film groups, they could record focus group sessions using digital video.
- The young focal points should be given specific research tasks, particularly to gather information that young people might not honestly report to an adult evaluator.
- A suggested format for young people's input would be a one hour VIPP (Visualization in Participatory Planning) session, whereby young people anonymously contribute their thoughts. For example:
  - What are your recommendations for improving young people's participation in your country?
  - What could be improved in young people's participation in this evaluation process?

Again, it is important that young people's contributions are reported verbatim, without editing by the young focal point or anyone else.

- After completion of the research, a second VIPP workshop could be held with young people to analyse the data according to the subject headings of the report.
- Again, young people could record the data analysis workshops using digital video.
- The young focal points should compile some evaluation results and provide comments, and should help prepare certain sections of the main report, and/or a youth-friendly version of the final report. Young people's contributions should be presented as they are received, and must not be edited by the principal investigator or the CO.

## Evaluation Framework with Standard Questions for All Participating Countries

<b>EVALUATION FRAMEWORK</b>			
<b>Key Questions</b>	<b>Specific Research Questions</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Data Sources + Tools</b>
<b>Key Results</b>			
1. What have been the effects in your country of the "Young Voices" survey?			
2. How has participation changed the young people involved in the programme?			
3. How have the capacities of participating organizations / institutions been strengthened?			
4. What has been the effect of young people's participation on the programme's ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- achieve its objectives?</li> <li>- contribute to the goals of the MTSP?</li> <li>- Contribute to the regional strategy on young people and HIV/AIDS?</li> </ul>			
5. How has the programme helped to provide an enabling legal and policy environment that encourages young people's participation?			
<b>Conclusions</b>			
6. What processes / methods have been most effective in promoting young people's participation?			
7. What could be done to strengthen young people's participation in your Country Programme?			
8. What recommendations do you have regarding meaningful indicators, and what are your recommendations to other programmes for what they should, or should not, do to increase young people's participation?			

As suggested in the evaluation framework above, all participating countries would design a research programme to answer these eight fundamental questions. For each of the key questions, the Country Office would identify research questions specific to the context in which the programme is operating, together with indicators and data sources.

For the key questions, it will be important to ascertain – to the extent possible – the views of representative samples of key informant groups, for example:

- young people (actively participating in the programme; benefiting from the programme; not involved in the programme)
- programme implementers
- participating / collaborating organizations and institutions
- communities
- government officials.

### Country-specific Participatory Protocol

Research that is participatory from start to finish will involve stakeholders and beneficiaries in all of the stages of the evaluation process: design, implementation, analysis, and reporting.

The following table gives a series of questions that could be used to guide the Country Office during the preparation and design stages:

Typical Questions	
<b>Guidelines for Preparation</b>	
1. Who are the stakeholders for this evaluation (with special attention to beneficiaries and vulnerable groups)?	
2. Who are the intended users of the report?	
3. How can stakeholders and potential users be involved in designing the research and in formulating the research questions?	
4. How can the stakeholders and users be involved in carrying out the research?	
5. How can the stakeholders and users be involved in analysing and documenting the findings?	
6. To whom will the findings be disseminated?	
7. Which stakeholders and participants in the research should be involved in commenting on the interim findings?	

Typical Questions	
<b>Guidelines for Research Design</b>	
8. What are the objectives of the key stakeholders and users with respect to carrying out research on young people's participation?	
9. What research questions are of interest to these stakeholders and users? What are their information needs?	
10. What criteria and values will be used to interpret the findings? Are these acceptable to the various stakeholders and users?	
11. Can the research be designed to also enhance the capacity and empowerment of key stakeholders? How?	
12. How can the research be designed so as to encourage follow-through by the users?	
13. Is the planned research service oriented, i.e. will it benefit the users and effectively serve the full range of beneficiaries?	

## Indicators

Very little work has been done to date in establishing robust indicators for monitoring and evaluating young people's participation. To ensure that the research is comprehensive, it is useful to consider seven main **conceptual measurement areas**:

Processes:

- i. accessing / benefiting from programmes (= coverage, the most basic level of participation)
- ii. participation in the programming process (programme design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation)

Effects of participation on:

- iii. the implementing institution/organization (e.g., changes due to increased awareness of young people's needs)
- iv. the individual young people, emphasizing the "generic" effects of participation (i.e., effects on the individual unrelated to the programme type (e.g., education, health services, livelihoods, etc), but related to its participatory nature and approach)
- v. achieving programme objectives (e.g., comparing the success of participatory vs. non-participatory life skills programmes)
- vi. programme efficiency (cost / benefit)
- vii. the wider context/environment (documenting "unplanned" effects outside of the programme context).

Then specific indicators would be developed to document the participation process and measure its effects. The following possible examples of **areas for developing indicators** have been adapted from sources in the bibliography given at the end of this protocol:

### Individual indicators

#### Process

- Young people are comfortable stating their opinions and asking questions
- Young people enjoy participating
- Young people feel their responsibilities are challenging and interesting
- Young people feel that their input is valued
- Young people feel that their input has made a difference

#### Generic

- Access to information
- Self esteem/ efficacy
- Interpersonal capabilities
- Motivation to participate and contribute
- Innovation (how participation stimulates creativity)
- Change in status as a result of participation
- Change in attitude towards the programme
- Youth participation in local and national elections; trust in political institutions

#### Programme-related

- Improvement in knowledge, skills, attitudes, practices
- Young people's capacity built to participate in public decision-making
- Management
- Communication
- Partnerships (young and adult)
- Responsibility / accountability

### Indicators for the implementing programme

- Programme is more sensitive to young people's needs
- Better able to identify / articulate needs and strengths
- Better serves the needs of young people

### Institutional indicators

#### Process

- Participation of young people in youth organizations
- Participation of young people in advisory bodies
- Young people value participation in the institution
- Organization's skills built
- Relations of adults and youth
- Responsiveness to needs of youth
- Designated roles for young people
- Young people incorporated into existing structures
- New structures created for involving young people
- Institutionalization of young people's participation

#### Outcomes

- New opportunities created
- Changes in opinions / perceptions of adults in institutions; effect of young people on adults
- Decisions influenced by young people's input
- Decision makers held accountable to young people's input
- Young people's input incorporated into vision statements, policies, norms and/or regulations
- Change in institution's coverage, effectiveness, success

#### Community indicators

- Change in attitude towards the programme; enhanced cooperation
- Change in attitudes and behaviours of adults involved
- Supportive social networks strengthened
- Young people respected by peers and community

#### Policy indicators

- Youth research carried out by national resource institutes to better understand young people's needs
- Participation of young people in the media
- The extent to which young people's views are taken into account in public decision-making
- Number and characteristics of young people involved in developing youth policy
- There is a government body responsible for young people's affairs
- Cross-sectoral approach to youth policy; inter-ministerial cooperation
- Government policy in the youth sector that is universal (i.e. focusing on the full development of the capacity of all young people), as well as preventive (protecting young people in difficult or at risk situations)
- Policies for young people at different levels of government administration (local, national)
- Parliamentary Committee on Young People
- Constitutional and legislative provisions relating to young people's affairs
- Laws dealing specifically with young people
- Budgets allocated for young people
- Information policy for young people
- Associative life of young people supported
- International cooperation in the youth field
- Criteria for the recognition and funding of youth associations, initiatives etc

#### Long-term outcome indicators

- Young people better able to advocate for participation / change
- Democratization / space enhanced
- Young people become responsible / active / critical citizens.

Each participating programme will need to develop indicators appropriate for its research. For each of the indicators selected, the research would examine:

- Were young people involved?
- If so, how many?
- Who was involved, and how were they chosen?
- What was the level of their involvement?

### **Suggested List of Resources for Reviewing the “Young Voices” Opinion Survey**

Berlin Conference Press Release (16.05.01): *Young Voices* of Europe and Central Asia: An opinion poll representing the voices of 93 million children. 4pp.

CoE Final Statement (20.11.01): *Young Voices* Seminar Final Report (by Malcolm Hill and Beate Sherrer). 3pp.

Trip Report: Sub-regional Opinion Poll Workshop (CARK and the Caucasus), Almaty, 17-18 July. 4pp.

Trip Report: Sub-regional Opinion Poll Workshop (Southeastern Europe and former Yugoslavia), Belgrade, 3-4 July. 1p.

Trip Report: Sub-regional Opinion Poll Workshop (RUB and Moldova), Minsk, 24-25 July. 4pp.

Trip Report: Sub-regional Opinion Poll Workshop (CEE National Committees), Prague, 11-12 July. 3pp.

Poll Donor Report (10.04.02): *Young Voices* Opinion Survey of Children and Young People in Europe and Central Asia (by Regional Offices for Europe and CEE/CIS and the Baltics). 5pp.

Press Coverage Highlights.

Press Release (16 February): UNICEF Conducts Major Poll of Children and Young People across Europe and Central Asia. 2pp.

SPSS Database Children 1 and 2.

*Young Voices* Opinion Poll Communications Strategy: *Young Voices* – First Regional Survey of Children and Youth. 3pp.

*Young Voices* Opinion Poll Follow-up (20.03.01). 2pp.

## Data Analysis and Reporting

A standard report format for all countries participating in the field research is available as a separate document from the consultant. The structure of the reports should be as follows:

1. Context
  - 1.1. Child Rights Issues
  - 1.2. Situation at the Start of the Programme
  - 1.3. Description of the Programme to promote Youth Participation
2. Evaluation Design and Methodology
  - 2.1. Objectives of the Evaluation
  - 2.2. Design
  - 2.3. Methodology and Indicators
  - 2.4. Participants in the Evaluation Process
3. Key Results
  - 3.1. *Young Voices* Survey
  - 3.2. How Participation has Changed Young People
  - 3.3. Capacities of Participating Organizations / Institutions
  - 3.4. Legal and Policy Environment
  - 3.5. Effects of Participation on UNICEF'S Programme
    - 3.5.1. Effects on Achieving Programme Objectives
    - 3.5.2. Contribution to the Goals of the Medium-Term Strategic Plan
    - 3.5.3. Contribution to the Regional Strategy on Young People and HIV/AIDS
4. Conclusions
  - 4.1. What Worked Well and not so Well
  - 4.2. Methods and Processes to Promote Youth Participation
  - 4.3. Strengthening Participation
  - 4.3. Recommendations
    - 4.3.1. Recommendations on Indicators
    - 4.3.2. General Recommendations

It is recommended that this standard report format be used as the overarching structure for data analysis.

The data analysis and report preparation phases should also incorporate participatory methods, as described previously.

## Annotated Bibliography

**The Participation Rights of Adolescents: A Strategic Approach.** Working Paper Series, Programme Division, UNICEF, August 2001 (principal author: Rakesh R.Rajani). 57pp.

This paper is a good resource for the design of new initiatives to support meaningful participation of adolescents 10-19 years old. Based on an extensive literature review, the paper provides the theoretical and conceptual basis for effective participation, then focuses on the programmatic and strategic aspects, and finally gives a set of tools for defining goals and indicators and for assessing and promoting adolescent participation, as well as a list of further references. The paper emphasizes investing in young people's assets – strengthening their capabilities, enlarging their access to opportunities, and providing them with safe and supportive environments. This approach has been shown by a number of large studies to be far more effective than focusing on young people's problems.

**Adolescent Participation: A Strategic Approach – Executive Summary and Practical Next Steps.** UNICEF (prepared for the meeting on Promoting Adolescent Participation, Hendon Hall, London, 2-4 October, 2000). (principal author: Rakesh R.Rajani). 13pp.

This is an executive summary of the above paper. It emphasizes the meanings and values of participation and the different settings and levels of youth participation, and summarizes the main strategies for effective participation as well as practical next steps.

**Promoting Children's Participation in Democratic Decision-Making,** Gerison Lansdown, UNICEF Innocenti Insight (ISBN: 88-845401-73-2), February 2001; available on [www.unicef.icdc.org](http://www.unicef.icdc.org). 53pp.

This paper begins with a discussion of the importance of participation and the implications of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The paper lists the characteristics of effective participation in terms of the project, values and methodology. It presents a variety of interesting examples of, and lessons learned from youth participation in: consultative processes, participative projects, research with children, democratic schools and self-advocacy. The paper also gives practical lessons for promoting effective participation, and a thorough step-by-step guide on facilitating youth participation in conferences, with examples and lessons learned from specific conferences. Also included is a list of additional references.

**Guidance Note on Promoting Participation of Children and Young People.** UNICEF, 2004. Programme Policy and Procedure Manual: Programme Operations. pp 181-198.

This paper is a section of UNICEF's Programme Policy and Procedures Manual, describing the programmatic implications of promoting the participation of children and young people in national development and in UNICEF-assisted programmes. It discusses options for involving children and young people in the preparation of National Plans of Action and similar policy processes, and how to move from event-based approaches to mainstreaming and institutionalizing participation opportunities in the home, the school and the community. The paper proposes a systematic approach based on the understanding of participation as a Human Right, and discusses the ethical issues of promoting participation of children and young people. Some principles and standards in relation to the involvement of children and young people are provided. The added challenges of bringing about authentic participation of children and young people from deprived and marginalized population groups are discussed. The paper also includes an annotated list of further reading and websites.

**Youth in South Eastern Europe: Policy for Participation, Empowerment and Social Inclusion – Draft Conference Report.** World Bank and UNICEF, June 2002 (by Hilary Homans). 69pp.

This paper is the report of a conference co-sponsored by The World Bank and UNICEF on "Youth in South Eastern Europe: Policy for Participation, Empowerment and Social Inclusion" held in Rome in May, 2002, with participants (including young people) from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Moldova, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro, TFYR of Macedonia and Kosovo. The overall objective of the conference was to reach a consensus among decision makers, donors, youth and civil society representatives, and the private sector on the essential elements for effective youth policies in order to guide investments in youth in South Eastern Europe. The papers and case studies detail specific actions taken by a wide range of actors to develop and implement sustainable youth policies. In addition, the report discusses the rights-based approach to working with young people, and gives guidelines for developing youth policies for participation, for youth empowerment, and for social inclusion and peace-building.

Policies based on the needs of youth are essential, and the report emphasizes youth research as the most appropriate method of constructing a national youth action plan. It also suggests some indicators for monitoring and evaluating youth policy and gives an extensive list of references.

**Report of a Meeting on Measuring Adolescent Participation in Programmes and the Effect of Adolescent Participation on Programme Effectiveness.** WHO/FCH/CAH, September, 2002. 22pp.

This report presents the results of a technical consultation of WHO's Department of Child and Adolescent Health and Development, which brought together international experts to identify the main domains of measuring adolescent participation. The consultation began to identify a set of measures that could capture the process of participation, and the effect of participation on individuals, programmes and the wider socio-cultural environment. The report summarizes the presentations, measurement domains identified, discussions, and recommendations to improve measurement tools and indicators for adolescent-focused programmes, and suggests areas for developing indicators for measuring participation.

**Supporting Young People in Europe: Principles, Policy and Practice.** The Council of Europe international reviews of national youth policy 1997-2001 – a synthesis report. Council of Europe, 2002. (by Howard Williamson). To order: <http://book.coe.int>. 128pp.

This book seeks to capture the key themes, issues, lessons and omissions from the seven CoE international reviews of youth policy carried out from 1997 to 2001 in Finland, the Netherlands, Sweden, Spain, Romania, Estonia and Luxembourg. The report examines both the strategic issues and the operational challenges for effective youth policy, and seeks to inform the production and implementation of youth policy, using illustrations of emergent practice. It argues that for the momentum for the development of youth policy to be maintained, there needs to be a rigorous reflection on the current state of youth policy in different countries, and a close relationship between research, policy and practice. The aim of youth policy, as defined by the European Youth Forum, is to improve and develop the living conditions and participation of young people, encompassing the whole range of social, cultural and political issues affecting them. A chapter on participation and citizenship highlights some of the challenges of fostering participation in developing youth policy in Europe.

**Between Challenges and Opportunities: Young People in South East Europe.** European Youth Forum Report. Conference Report from the Youth Policy Forum, Sofia, October 3-7, 2001 (by Tanja Kalovska). 72pp

This paper consists of two reports. One gives an overview of existing research on the situation of young people in the region of South East Europe in order to provide a basis for governments to devise strategies for the development of youth policy action plans. The second is the conference report of the Youth Policy Forum held in Sofia in October 2001. The research overview covers the Balkans, defined as the former Yugoslavia, Albania, Bulgaria and Romania. It outlines the problems young people are facing, and presents some recommendations to national governments and international organizations. The chapter on youth participation focuses on political participation and participation in the NGO sector, and suggests actions to be undertaken by governments to stimulate the involvement of young people. The report stresses the importance for national governments of all the countries in the Balkans to develop an efficient youth policy. One of the major findings of the report is that there is a great need to carry out more research on young people in South East Europe.

**Shaping a Country's Future with Children and Young People: National Plans of Action for Children – Involving Children and Young People in their Development.** Save the Children. 2002. 15pp.

This is a concise guide for practitioners intending to involve children in the drafting of National Plans of Action (NPAs). The first section of the paper gives a background to the NPA process (the Global Plan of Action from the UNGASS on Children in 2002; what is a National Plan of Action; lessons on NPAs from the 1990s). The second section presents the results of a consultation with 4,500 children, young people and adults from 14 countries worldwide on how NPAs should be developed. It provides young people's practical suggestions on how governments should involve them in the development of NPAs, how civil society can support the process, and how to ensure that all voices are heard. It also presents young people's ideas on how they can be involved in implementation and monitoring of NPAs, and methods to enhance the influence of young people.

**Children and Youth Parliaments.** UNICEF Adolescent Development and Participation Unit, 2002. 43pp.

The first part of this paper is a country-by-country compilation of information from the 2001 UNICEF annual country reports and CRC Committee reports from 77 countries on children and youth parliaments. This is followed by a stock-taking, prepared by the CEE/CIS office in 2002, on young people's participation through youth parliaments and other national youth forums in 20 CEE/CIS countries. Matrices for each country include: information on initiatives on youth parliaments supported by UNICEF and others; major actors (national and local); the impact of the initiatives; and lessons learned.

**Participation in the Second Decade of Life: What and Why?** Adolescent Development and Participation Unit, UNICEF and Commonwealth Youth Programme (CYP). 2003. 17pp.

This booklet explains what participation is and why it is important and gives examples of adolescent participation. It describes the levels of participation according to Hart's ladder and provides a checklist to clarify what real participation is.

## Annex 5. Suggested Requirements for a Principal Researcher

The Country Offices participating in the field research may wish to appoint a Principal Researcher to lead the evaluation. This person would likely fulfil the following qualifications:

- Solid experience in programme evaluation. Proven track record with written examples of evaluation work reviewed by the Country Office.
- Speaks the local language(s).
- Ability to communicate in English.
- Experience and willingness to work with young people.
- Experience in encouraging participation and in group facilitation (e.g. VIPP sessions).
- Good communication skills with a variety of types of key informants (young people, NGO and other community partners, government officials, donors, et al.).
- Management skills: able to direct and motivate a team of collaborating researchers.
- Skilled in data analysis and report writing.

## Annex 6. Annotated Report Format for Field Research

### Cover Page

UNICEF

Evaluation of Youth Participation in the CEE/CIS Region

Report from Your Country

By

Name and organizations of evaluators

Date

UNICEF Staff contact point

### Executive Summary: (maximum 5 pages, ideally 2-3 pages)

- Brief description of UNICEF Country Office programme to promote young people's participation (include years of implementation)
- Context and Purpose of the Evaluation (very brief)
- Evaluation Objectives, Design and Methodology
- Briefly emphasize rationale for choice of methodology, data sources used, methods of data collection, methods of data analysis, major limitations of the methodology.
- Key Results (most important findings)
- Conclusions
- Recommendations (highest priority recommendations).

### Table of Contents

#### Context

- **Child Rights Issues:** One paragraph describing the context of children's and young people's rights in your country (e.g. the legal and policy context of child rights, and to what extent this is being implemented).
- **Situation at the Start of the Programme:** One paragraph describing the context in which your programme began (e.g. policies and opportunities for young people to be heard. Do not include your programme interventions here.)
- **Description of the Programme to Promote Young People's Participation:** Give verbatim extracts from your programme documents of objectives of the programme intervention together with brief, essential descriptive details of duration, location, amounts invested, key implementation strategies, and the logic of the programme design or expected results chain. Describe the role and contributions of UNICEF and other stakeholders to the programme. N.B.: Young people's participation is defined as: ***young people partaking in and influencing processes, decisions and activities.***

**Evaluation Design and Methodology:** (N.B.: Photographs in the text illustrating the methodology, results, and conclusions are encouraged.)

- **Purpose and Objectives of the Evaluation:** Purpose: discuss why the evaluation is being done, its timing, and how it will be used. Evaluation objectives: state what the evaluation seeks to accomplish, its scope and coverage. The objectives and scope are the critical reference to judge whether the methodology selected and resources allocated were appropriate. The evaluation objectives could be stated as follows:
  - “The evaluation attempted to answer seven major questions:
    1. What have been the effects in your country of the “*Young Voices*” survey?
    2. How has participation changed the young people involved in the programme?
    3. How have the capacities of participating organizations / institutions been strengthened?
    4. What has been the effect of young people’s participation on the programme’s ability to:
      - achieve its objectives?
      - contribute to the goals of the MTSP?
      - contribute to the regional strategy on young people and HIV/AIDS??
    5. How has the programme helped to provide an enabling legal and policy environment that encourages young people’s participation?
    6. What processes / methods have been most effective in promoting young people’s participation?
    7. What could be done to strengthen young people’s participation in UNICEF’s Programme in your country?”
- **Design:** Briefly explain the evaluation design. Mention how the design considers UNICEF’s commitment to human rights-based approach to programming. Discuss how the design addresses programme performance and achievement of results, and the underlying questions of how the programme is managed.
- **Methodology and Indicators:** Explain how you measured participation. Describe the indicators used to measure processes as well as each of the five key results below.) (Fully describe the methodology, including data sources, sampling, indicators and benchmarks, methods of data collection, methods of data analysis, key limitations. Discuss how the methodology seeks to limit bias and explicitly identify areas where bias might occur. Describe how the methodology addresses gender and EVYP. Include data collection instruments, maps, and a discussion of your system for ensuring data quality in the appendices.
- **Participants in the Evaluation Process:** Briefly describe the level of participation of different stakeholders in the evaluation process, the rationale for this, and any capacity-building for data collectors. Describe your information sources: beneficiaries of the programme, and eligible persons not reached by the UNICEF programme. Discuss ethical issues involved in including young people while respecting their rights and dignity (e.g. the balance of costs and benefits to participants, any risk involved, the ethics of who is included and excluded, privacy, confidentiality and informed consent, and mechanisms planned to provide feedback to young evaluators and to those who participated in the survey as informants).

**Key Results:** In the five key results chapters below, be sure to distinguish between inputs, activities and results. In addition, findings on results should distinguish between outputs, outcomes and impacts, and should include any unintended effects, as well as any multiplier effects. To the extent possible, results should be measured against benchmarks. **In all cases, findings must be linked to data.** Full data can be included in an annex. To the extent possible, include a cost analysis and point out areas of efficient or inefficient use of resources. Discuss the relative contributions of UNICEF and other stakeholders or other factors to the results of the programme. Analyse “why”: reasons for accomplishments and difficulties, underlying causes, constraints

and opportunities. **Structure** your findings to enhance the clarity and coherence of these key results chapters.)

- Young Voices Survey: What were the effects in your country of the "Young Voices" survey?
- How Participation has Changed Young People: Present the evidence showing how participation has changed the young people involved in UNICEF's programme.
- Capacities of Participating Organizations / Institutions: How have the capacities of participating organizations / institutions been strengthened by working with UNICEF? Distinguish between those organizations that have collaborated with UNICEF in its programme to promote young people's participation and those that have not.
- Legal and Policy Environment: How has the programme helped to provide an enabling legal and policy environment that encourages young people's participation?
- Effects of Participation on UNICEF'S Programme:
  - Effects on Achieving Programme Objectives: Begin by recapitulating what the UNICEF programme objectives are in your country (state the programme objectives). Then present your findings on how participation affected each.
  - Contribution to the Goals of the Medium-Term Strategic Plan: Begin this section by briefly stating the goals of the MTSP, and then discuss how participation helped UNICEF in your country to contribute towards those goals (if it did help). As a reminder, the MTSP 2002-2005 established five organizational priorities for UNICEF worldwide. These are:
    - girls' education;
    - integrated ECD;
    - immunization "plus";
    - fighting HIV/AIDS; and
    - improved protection of children from violence, exploitation, abuse and discrimination.

Clearly not all of these are appropriate entry points for participation.

- Contribution to the Regional Strategy on Young People and HIV/AIDS: Follow the structure of the main topics of the Regional Strategy on HIV/AIDS. As a reminder, the MSTP has set the following global medium-term objectives for fighting HIV/AIDS: "By 2005, ensure that:
  - all UNICEF Country Programmes have conducted a gender- and age-disaggregated assessment and analysis of the HIV/AIDS situation..., and have developed country programme strategies...;
  - national policies and strategies have been approved and action plans are being implemented to reduce the risk and vulnerability of young people...;
  - national policies, strategies and action plans are under implementation to prevent parent-to-child transmission of HIV...; and
  - national policies, strategies and action plans are developed and implemented to ensure protection and care for children orphaned or made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS..."

Following are the key results to be achieved by 2005 according to the UNICEF Regional Strategy on Young People and HIV/AIDS:

- An increased percentage of adolescents have adequate knowledge of HIV/AIDS prevention, which they put into practice.
- An increased percentage of schools have teachers who know how to teach quality life skills based education and have taught it in the last year.

- National policies and strategies to ensure the integration of youth-friendly services into the public health system are developed and knowledge and skills of service providers are increased.
- Situation analysis on EVYP (covering young injecting drug users, young people selling sex and other marginalized young people) completed and targeted interventions underway.
- Young people participate in the development of HIV/AIDS policies and programmes.
- Mother and Child Health services are providing the complete range of Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission of HIV/AIDS services.
- Work has begun on the development of National Policies and Strategies to ensure the provision of a comprehensive package of care and support.
- The country will have mapped the situation of HIV/AIDS-positive infants and the capacities of care providers and will be developing a plan of action to ensure protection care and support of orphans, abandoned and other vulnerable children.

This section should focus on how participation has helped contribute to the regional strategy. Always present the evidence to back up your findings.

**Conclusions:** Each part of the Conclusions section should explicitly refer to evidence presented in the Key Results section above.) (Just as your findings must be closely linked to your data and methods, your conclusions must be substantiated by your findings. The conclusions are your **insights**, as a result of this evaluation, to the important issues in the chapters below. Make specific reference to the **evidence** that supports each of your conclusions. Simple conclusions that are already well-known or obvious are not useful.

- **What Worked well and not so well:** Analysis of key results
- **Methods and Processes to Promote Youth Participation:** What processes / methods have been most effective in promoting young people's participation?
- **Strengthening Participation:** What could be done to strengthen young people's participation in your country? What could be done to strengthen young people's participation in UNICEF's Country Programme?
- **Recommendations:** The recommendations should explicitly refer to evidence presented in the Key Results section and/or to the Conclusions above. Just like the conclusions, the recommendations must be firmly based on your findings and analysis, and these links should be clear. We also need to know who is targeted by the recommendations – are they all for UNICEF? Are some for government or other organizations? It is always useful to make sure that recommendations are realistic, and to prioritize them – are some more important or more urgent than others? Any raw data on the recommendations of the respondents should be put in an annex. The recommendations section of this evaluation report should present the considered recommendations of the **evaluators**.
  - Recommendations on Indicators: What were the most meaningful and feasible indicators for measuring young people's participation, and why?
  - Recommendations on the Process: From your experience, what would you recommend to other COs in evaluating young people's participation?
  - General Recommendations: What would you recommend to others to do, or not do, to promote young people's participation? This is the lessons learned section of the report, showing the wider relevance of the findings of this evaluation beyond your country programme. This is your programme's contribution to the general knowledge in the regional programme. As with the other recommendations, these should be well supported by the findings and conclusions. Simple repetitions of basic knowledge are not really useful.

**Annexes:**

- List of Abbreviations
- Terms of Reference and Cost of Evaluation
- Evaluation Framework: To be initiated during the training workshop and then refined by the research team.
- Evaluation Timetable
- Details on the Methodology: Examples of questionnaires used, interview protocols, focus group questions, participatory evaluation methods, etc.
- List of Key Informants (including young people)
- List of Documents Consulted
- Additional Data of Interest: For example, interesting full quotes from senior, influential informants; additional photographs, etc.

## Annex 7. Details on the Methodology

The methods most used in the field research were: key informant interviews, focus groups, impact drawings and testimonials, card visualization, force field analysis, smiley-face scales, questionnaires, and social mapping. Partial instructions from the tool kit (UNICEF 2004) for these techniques are given below.

### Evaluation Framework

This is an invaluable tool to structure, focus, and design evaluation so that all major questions are answered, and to provide the basis for the evaluation sampling strategy.

Decide on the purpose and objectives of the evaluation, (e.g. learning, accountability, improving implementation, assessing outcomes or impacts, etc.). Decide on the type of evaluation (e.g. self, internal, external, joint, participatory, etc.) and identify the evaluation team. Identify the stakeholders for the evaluation and their specific needs – what would they like the evaluation to cover?

Then identify the key questions or issues to be covered by the evaluation. Formulate specific research questions to explore each of the key questions in depth. Where appropriate, identify indicators for the specific research questions. Identify one or more data sources for each specific question, together with the tools you will use to collect the data from that source. The tools will be specific to the data source. Identify a sampling strategy: What geographical areas? What locations? What projects or activities? What groups? What individuals? How many of each? etc.

Check the realism of the evaluation framework and sampling strategy in the light of the evaluation budget and prioritise as necessary. Decide on an evaluation timetable together with the evaluation team.

**Figure 3. Evaluation Framework**

Evaluation Framework					
Key Issues / Questions	Specific Questions	Indicators	Data Sources	Tools	Sampling Strategy

For a traditional evaluation, the evaluation framework can be done by the principal investigator, together with the client. For a participatory evaluation, hold a workshop with stakeholders to develop the specific research questions, indicators and data sources.

## Impact Drawings

Impact drawings are a great tool to boost reflection and creativity when soliciting testimonials. They can be used to describe past, present or future situations, and to illustrate change.

Usually done in a group setting. Start with a moment of relaxation and reflection (can be done with relaxing music). Prompt people to think about their lives, starting with their earliest memories. "Visit happy moments and tragic moments. Think about what has made you who you are today."

Then ask participants to draw, on A4 paper, something that changed their life – or some other specific research question, and to sign their drawing when they are finished. If this is being done with young people, you can also ask them to note their age on the drawing as well as their name. The only rule is that participants should use at least three colours in their drawings. Tell them not to worry about not being great artists.

When everyone is finished, each participant presents their impact drawing. Explain in advance that the presentations should be succinct (not more than 1-2 minutes each).

The presentations should be taped, or carefully recorded verbatim (and in the first person) by skilful note-takers – just as for a regular testimonial. Recording the stories that go with each drawing is absolutely critical in being able to exploit the impact drawings as evaluation data.



**Impact Drawing – Elena**

"Being more romantic, I have represented participation as growing of the personality. Participation changed my life: I have started to notice things I did not notice before. I started noticing others and the problems of the world. I want to help others. The flower symbolizes a better world

- Elena

(Photo © Meg Gawler / ARTEMIS Services)

## Card Visualization

Card Visualization or "VIPP" (Visualization in Participatory Planning) allows a group to brainstorm individual ideas, and convert them into several overall ideas that represent a group consensus.

Begin with tips on how to write cards effectively:

- Write legibly with big, bold letters that can be read from a distance.
- Use both upper and lower case for clarity.
- Only one idea per card.
- Bullet style – key words, not a long paragraph.
- No more than three lines per card.
- No one-word cards (insufficient to express an idea).
- Follow the card colour code established for different types of ideas.

Write the overall question to be answered on a flip-chart or on a card up front. Give each participant one or more cards, and a thick black marker. Use different coloured cards for different questions. Be clear about the colours. Explain the question and encourage everyone to contribute one or more ideas. Ask if the task is clear.



Card Visualization (Moldova)

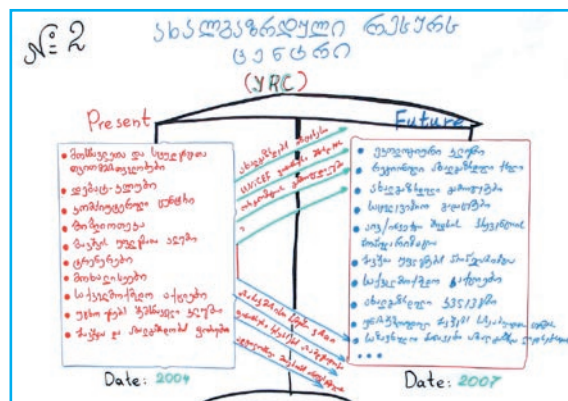
Collect cards and read them out to the group, checking that the meaning of each card is clear to everyone. If a card is unclear, ask who wrote it, and seek clarification. Add the clarification to the card, or ask the person to write another one. Make sure that all cards relate to the central question. If necessary, duplicates can be removed with the permission of the author.

Cluster the cards with input from the group. Ask for ideas about clusters. Ask the group to propose labels for the clusters. Label the clusters in red, with cards of a different colour. Recap the results.

### Force Field Analysis

This method allows participants to analyse **why** a project has evolved as it has (evaluation function). It can also be used to plan the future of a project (planning function). This is a more analytical tool, that allows us to understand, for a given project, not only the changes from the past to the present, but also why – what have been the positive factors and what obstacles have had to be overcome.

Start with a careful explanation of the tool, using a flip chart with a real-life example to illustrate. Like the other participatory tools, this is done in small groups of 3-5 persons. For the evaluation function, groups first describe (in the field on the left) the past, i.e. the situation at the beginning of the project, and then describe (in the field on the right) the present state of the project. They then analyse and record forces, i.e.: the resources that helped create the present state, and the constraints that influenced this evolution, indicating these on upward and downward arrows connecting the two fields.



Force Field Analysis

(Photo © Meg Gawler / ARTEMIS Services)

For the project planning function, instead of describing the past and present, they describe the present and then the future goals of the project, and, likewise, identify resources and constraints.

The overall diagram should be given a title, and the two "fields" labelled in time. The facilitator should go around from group to group to make sure they stay focused on the central question, and help them out as necessary.

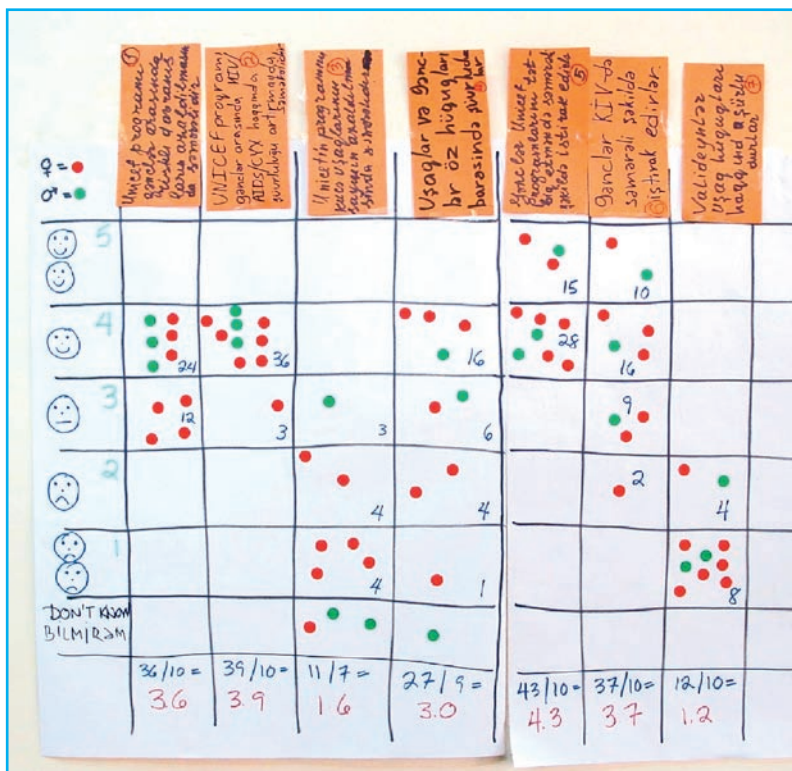
Groups then present their results, followed by a group discussion.

In the example below, participants used force field analysis to plan how to develop Youth Resource Centres.

### Smiley-face Scales

This method allows for quantitative group evaluations of specific research questions.

First decide on the research questions. These can be generated in a participatory fashion, using card visualisation techniques (above), or using pre-determined, standard research questions with a number of different groups. The research questions must be formulated as positive statements of opinion that can be evaluated by stakeholders according to whether they "Strongly agree, Agree, are Neutral, Disagree, Strongly disagree, or Don't know". Make sure the questions are appropriate for the group – that they know something about them.



Smiley-Face Scale

(Photo © Meg Gawler / ARTEMIS Services)

Prepare a worked example in advance to help explain the process. Prepare a blank matrix (see illustration below) with the statements to be evaluated and the various levels of agreement or disagreement. Write the meaning of the smiley faces underneath them ("Strongly agree; Agree; etc.)

Then turn the matrix away from the group so that participants can vote privately. Give each participant one voting dot per statement to be evaluated. Instruct participants to be careful to put one, and only one, dot in each column, under the different statements to be evaluated. Ask participants to vote one by one.

Then calculate the results (or ask a participant to calculate the results) for each statement (Strongly agree = 5;

Agree = 4; Neutral = 3; Disagree = 2; Strongly disagree = 1; Don't know = 0 and the vote is not counted). Calculate the mean for each research question and interpret the results together with the group.

In the following example, workshop participants evaluated a series of positive statements about different aspects of UNICEF' programme.

## Social Mapping

The purpose of social mapping is to understand the context in which a project operates, as well as community perceptions of their environment, their natural and human resources, their problems and resources for dealing with them. It provides insight into the interactions within a project setting.

This tool involves stakeholders in drawing maps of community structures, institutions, associations, kinship groupings, boundaries and resources. It is done in a workshop setting.

Select a few projects familiar to the group. Divide up into groups of about four persons each, according to projects. Start by asking groups to brainstorm ideas. They should first make a list of the main elements, then brainstorm to see what might be missing. Then ask groups to draw maps of community structures, institutions, associations and resources for their projects.



**Social Mapping**

(Photo © Meg Gawler / ARTEMIS Services)

When the groups are finished, they present their work to the plenary. It is important to capture the story using a tape recorder or careful notes.

## Questionnaires

Questionnaires are commonly used to collect quantitative, and sometimes qualitative, information on specific questions from a large number of respondents.

A questionnaire is a structured group of questions to gather information in a consistent way with each respondent. The quality of the information received from a questionnaire is directly related to the care with which it is designed.

Begin the questionnaire by clearly explaining its purpose and ensuring respondents of the confidentiality of their responses. Include an identification section to gather voluntary information on the respondent (e.g. name, function, age, gender, location, telephone number). Then formulate questions in a logical sequence. Questions are either fixed-choice or fixed-response questions, where respondents are asked to choose one or more answers from those provided, or they are open-ended, free-response questions, where respondents answer in their own words. At the end, thank the respondents for answering the questions.

Likert scales are often used in questionnaires and surveys. Here respondents are asked to assess a positive statement expressing an opinion and to record their level of agreement with that statement. Four-point scales such as “strongly agree; agree; disagree; strongly disagree” oblige the respondent to take a stance. A five-point scale adds “neutral” in between “agree” and “disagree”. In both cases, the results can be analysed and presented quantitatively. In addition it is always important to provide a “Don't know” option to avoid forcing respondents to give an opinion they don't really have.

Always check the clarity of your questions by piloting the questionnaire with a few typical respondents, and ask them to give you feedback on the questionnaire in general, how long it took to complete, and especially on anything that is not 100 per cent clear. A good pre-test invariably results in changes being made to the questionnaire: wording, sequence, length, etc. Note that if you fail to pre-test properly, your entire evaluation may be compromised.

### Key Informant Interviews

Key informant interviews are designed to obtain information on specific research questions. “Key informants” are people who have extensive experience and knowledge on one or more topics of interest to the evaluation. Often key informants are community leaders.

The first thing the interviewer must do is to establish trust and rapport with the respondent so that they will readily share their experience and insights.

It is often useful to prepare a data collection instrument or a brief interview guide beforehand to ensure that all key points are covered and the interview stays on track. This can be shared with the respondent ahead of time (together with a summary of the Terms of Reference for the evaluation) to give them the opportunity to organise their thoughts before the interview.

One should not plan to ask more than ten questions (fewer are better). Begin by introducing yourself and the purpose of the interview. Assure the respondent of the confidentiality of their responses. Start with easy, wide-open questions; then follow up with more specific questions as necessary. Any questions that may be a bit difficult or sensitive should be left until the end of the interview when a maximum of rapport has been established.

When pertinent and possible, it is good to record direct quotations of the respondent, together with observations by the interviewer.

A good interviewer is:

- an active listener, skilled in inter-personal communication;
- respectful of the respondent's ideas and values;
- committed to learning from the interviewee;
- aware of the importance of non-verbal behaviours;
- good at drawing people out and in following up with gentle probing;
- skilled in taking notes.

Plan in advance how you will record and analyse the information. Notes should be recorded in the first person, and salient ideas or descriptive phrases should be recorded word for word as quotations. Information should be recorded exactly as it is heard, and not filtered through the interviewer's ideas and values.

## Focus Groups

Focus groups are designed to collect data in a social context where people can consider their own views in the context of the views of others. Focus groups allow specific topics to be explored in depth with a group of selected individuals. They seek to provide a setting where the participants are comfortable with self-disclosure, and where the group dynamics and synergies create a chain of reactions designed to exhaust the views on a given issue. Focus groups are intended to help understand why people hold the views they hold about a given topic. The purpose is not to achieve consensus. Focus groups are useful for:

- determining stakeholders' preferences;
- understanding programme implementation problems;
- developing recommendations and suggestions exploring a range of views on a particular subject.

An effective focus group depends primarily on the skill of the facilitator and the composition of the group. Planning is important. You need a clear idea of the purpose of the exercise.

Often there are only five to six carefully constructed questions – designed for both content and process. Questions are always open-ended. Open questions are best because they allow participants to tell the story in their own words. Avoid quantifiers such as “How much...?” as they tend to restrict answers. Avoid questions with a yes or no answer. “Why” questions are not common because they are often too directive and tend to put people on the defensive. Allow about a half an hour per question. The sequence of questions should flow naturally from one to another. Participants should not have the impression they have finished one question, and are then asked another – but instead, they should feel that the session is an overall discussion.

Group composition is fundamental. Participants must have at least one common characteristic that bonds the group together and that is related to the research topic. It is best if the participants do not already know each other – people benefit more from the ideas of complete strangers. The ideal size is 6-12 participants: enough to achieve group dynamics, but few enough so that everyone has a say. Participants should be relatively homogeneous and are pre-screened by telephone or letter.

Begin by welcoming the group, explaining that the session will be filmed (or taped) and requesting the participants' consent for this. During the introductions, participants are welcome to give fictitious names if they like in order to protect their privacy.

In the data analysis, look for the big ideas and concepts, and organize these into a framework. Narrative summaries can be complemented by verbatim quotes.

## Annex 8. Observations and Lessons on the Training

The training workshops were, for the most part, highly participatory, and this was universally effective in motivating the young participants, and in enhancing the learning experience.

Participatory approaches take time – and courage! In one of the early workshops, the development of the research plan – essentially a technical exercise – was dominated by the Principal Researcher, and the young people felt excluded and resentful. In later workshops this was corrected, and young people were involved using sub-groups in designing the research. This was very positive in introducing them to the technical issues and challenges of evaluation methodology, but the process took over twice as long, and we were not able to finish the evaluation framework during the workshop. In these cases, the trade-off of promoting participation in designing the research was an incomplete product at the end of the workshop. In these cases the Principal Researcher took responsibility for finishing the evaluation framework with the input of the evaluation team. The full participation of young people in the research design was an enriching and empowering experience for them, and well worth the extra time.

Some teams felt that a weakness of the training was not enough attention was paid to the challenges of qualitative data analysis. In practice the methods for data analysis were the responsibility of the Principal Researcher.

A factor that enhanced certain training workshops was the participation of the Principal Researcher as an enthusiastic partner in introducing the young people to the essentials of evaluation.

The different cultural contexts in each country, and the different age groups of the participants required a flexible approach on the part of the trainer. For example, in some countries, the participants were awkward with games and energizers, probably because they did not want to appear silly or undignified. In other contexts, however, games and energizers were critical to the success of the learning experience.

In some workshops, the response of the young people showed that the workshop had been an empowering – and moving – experience. They felt not only that their voices had been heard, but that their ideas and talents were contributing to this evaluation, and thus to helping improve the work of a highly respected international organization such as UNICEF.

After the training sessions the consultant to the Regional Office provided the research teams with a toolkit for carrying out evaluations (UNICEF 2004), which proved to be a useful manual for the young researchers.

## Annex 9. Observations and Lessons on the Evaluation Approach

*This process demonstrated that an evaluation could be done with young people's participation, applying participatory methods and involving relatively low costs.*  
–Moldova Country Office

The most critical element in ensuring the success of the field research was close supervision and support from the Principal Researcher in order for the young people involved to function effectively as evaluators. In one case, we encountered attitude problems on the part of the Principal Researcher regarding the abilities of young people, and this was a major constraint. In TFYR of Macedonia, it was very helpful that the Principal Researcher was well acquainted with: participatory research methods; working with young people; and tools for qualitative data analysis.

Likewise it would have been useful to specify the desired profile and skills required of the young people who will participate in the evaluation in order to select the best. In TFYR of Macedonia it was a plus that the young evaluators were from different regions around the country, and had local knowledge of the situation of young people.

One weakness of the process was that the supervisory role of the UNICEF Country Office should have been more clearly specified at the outset.

The reporting format and guidelines prepared by the consultant to the Regional Office were considered to be of great value for both the research team and the responsible UNICEF officer.

Two teams mentioned that a major limitation of the study was the large number of research questions, and the need to narrow the tasks of the evaluation.

Sampling strategies were also of great importance. Comparing respondent groups who had participated in UNICEF projects with those who had not proved useful in several countries.

Descriptions of the methodologies used to collect the data are given in Annex 7.

In some countries, the data collection was less than perfect (e.g. not always systematically recording the age and gender of all young respondents). In addition, data from different respondent groups were not always disaggregated in the analysis.

Communication activities at the start of the evaluation process designed to prepare the young researchers to overcome fears associated with traditional perceptions of evaluation would have been helpful. Likewise, young people should be involved in disseminating the results of the evaluation.

Data analysis and reporting were perhaps the most difficult aspects of the process. In reviewing the first drafts of the reports on the field research, the consultant to the Regional Office used a table based on UNICEF's Evaluation Report Standards (UNICEF 2004) to structure feedback to the COs and Principal Researchers (Annex 10).

The research carried out in Moldova was a pilot exercise for the rest of the studies. Certain weaknesses in the approach here were corrected in the other four countries (e.g., lack of a guide describing the methods; lack of guidance on the report format).

Young people did not serve as sources for passive extraction of information, but rather they had the opportunity to learn evaluation techniques, to communicate openly, and to perform self-

evaluations. In general involving young people in evaluations is seen as contributing directly to improving UNICEF's programme. The report noted that the process of data collection by young people was freer and more efficient when local adults were not present.

According to the young people participating in the evaluation in **Albania**, the most effective evaluation techniques were:

- drawings, stories and questionnaires – because they were the easiest to understand, entertaining, and provided good information;
- interviews because they gave detailed, direct and varied information; and
- discussion groups because they collected a lot of information, enhanced participation, provoked debate, were easy to organize, generated new ideas, promoted the exchange of experience, and were interesting for the organizers.

*The young researchers reported that young people really liked the participatory techniques. They said that through most of the exercises, they didn't just collect information for the research, but they also had the opportunity to make young people think and develop solid ideas about important issues.. and how to reach out to young people. The enthusiasm, seriousness and persistence of the young [researchers] was higher than expected. UNICEF staff attended some of the focus groups and interviews with government representatives, and we were amazed at the seriousness and the richness of discussions.*  
– Albania Country Office

The team in **Belarus** tried all of the techniques presented in the initial training seminar, but found that historical timelines and trend analysis demanded too much knowledge on the part of the participants. Social mapping was often hard for the participants to understand, and provided only superficial information. Force field analysis, on the other hand, proved to be a powerful technique for the analysis of resources and partners and barriers and constraints. According to the CO, the strengths of the process in Belarus were: the initial training workshop; the focus groups; data collection in some regions; and progress meetings and discussions with the Principal Researcher. Weaknesses were that: data collection methods were good for promoting participation, but did not provide the quality of data needed for the evaluation; and the team members were not equally strong, resulting in unequal data quality.

*The young people involved in the process of evaluation were extremely enthusiastic from the initial training workshop. The young people were inspired by the process and two of them promoted the participatory evaluation methods in the work of the Youth Information Centres supported by UNICEF.*  
– Belarus Country Office

The report from **Georgia** expressed doubts about the value of including young people as researchers:

*For the purpose of retaining impartiality and an objective description of the situation, as well as conducting in-depth analysis, it would have been more expedient if the survey had been conducted by professionals.*  
– Report from Georgia

The team in **TFYR of Macedonia** found that some of the participatory evaluation tools (e.g. card visualization or force field analysis) were too sophisticated to be used with young people who were not proficient in writing. In these cases the tools were slightly adapted, or other tools such as impact drawings and interviews were used instead.

Many of the participatory evaluation tools are based on self-evaluations by the young respondents. One weakness of self-evaluations is that respondents may give themselves higher marks than is warranted, especially in the presence of others. For this reason, when using tools like the smiley-face scale, it is recommended that respondents should be able to place their votes anonymously, without being seen by others.

The data analysis process in TFYR of Macedonia benefited greatly from the provision by UNICEF of adequate data processing software.

Most of the evaluations would have gained from more time for the evaluation process, and especially more time for intermediate discussions of the methods and the results.

### Observations from the Reports on the Evaluation Process

*At the end of the evaluation, when asked what was the benefit, in fact the young evaluators first mentioned the training workshop and the certificate, then the experience, and only last the remuneration.*

– Albania Country Office

*The initial workshop was very useful for young people – not only to master the techniques – but it also created a very enthusiastic momentum, which lasted until the end of the evaluation.*

– Albania Country Office

*The initial training workshop really helped to kick-start the preparations and the evaluation in itself. It couldn't have been done without the workshop.*

– TFYR of Macedonia Country Office

*The most significant benefit from the training workshop was the fact that the young people were influential in designing the concept of the basic evaluation framework, in formulating specific research questions and defining indicators, and in identifying possible data sources and appropriate tools needed for the evaluation process. The fact that young people were not just trained as evaluators, but also participated in the whole process of designing the evaluation during the workshop added value to its results.*

– Report from TFYR of Macedonia

*We use the participatory monitoring and evaluation tools on a large scale in all our projects; young people and teachers enjoy doing this.*

– Moldova Country Office

*The manual was a significant aid to the researchers during the process of familiarizing the young evaluators with these tools and techniques, since it served as a reminder during the evaluation process.*

– Report from TFYR of Macedonia

*This process demonstrated that an evaluation could be done with young people's participation, applying participatory methods and involving relatively low costs.*

–Moldova Country Office

*The young researchers reported that young people really liked the participatory techniques. They said that through most of the exercises, they didn't just collect information for the research, but they also had the opportunity to make young people think and develop solid ideas about important issues.. and how to reach out to young people. The enthusiasm, seriousness and persistence of the young [researchers] were higher than expected. UNICEF staff attended some of the focus groups and interviews with government representatives, and we were amazed at the seriousness and the richness of discussions.*

– Albania Country Office

*The young people involved in the process of evaluation were extremely enthusiastic from the initial training workshop. In the evaluation those who were more skilful and communicable continued the process in the regions with the same zest. The young people were inspired by the process and two of them promoted the participatory evaluation methods in the work of the Youth Information Centres supported by UNICEF.*

– Belarus Country Office

*For the first time in the Republic of Moldova, young people were involved in an evaluation of youth participation and... the results of the evaluation are credible. Young people enjoyed very much being involved in this process. As a result, they became more confident in their forces, and acquired knowledge and skills about evaluation. Young people welcomed the applied methods and mentioned that the workshops were useful for them. The main thing they learned in this process was the necessity of evaluating their activities, and the process gave them practical tools to do it.*

– Moldova Country Office

*The youth evaluators mastered the entire participatory evaluation process during their training sessions where they learned to apply the tools and techniques. They are currently capable of leading participatory evaluation sessions with minor assistance from the Department of Ethnology... It is evident that their participation in the evaluation process was a good and very positive experience.*

– Report from TFYR of Macedonia

### Annex 10. Table used to Apply the UNICEF Evaluation Report Standards

**Applied to the following report:**

**Report authors:**

**UNICEF Country Office:**

**Report analysed by:**

**Date:**

See UNICEF Evaluation Report Standards (September 2004) for an explanation of the specific meanings of the ratings for each standard.

Abbreviated key to ratings:

**Missing** = standard not included.

**Poor** = included but inadequate, vague, unclear, inappropriate, superficial, largely incomplete, not directly relevant, lacking in analysis, or not linked to data/evidence.

**Satisfactory** = included but limited: does not include all elements; has gaps in logic, rationale, analysis, clarity or references; does not identify limitations; fairly general, lacking in depth.

**Very good** = includes all expected elements, clearly and comprehensively described in an easily understandable manner; complete assessment; sound analysis and explanations; includes wider comparisons; full discussion of limitations and rationale; findings explicitly well-grounded in data; insights into important issues and solutions to problems; lessons learned correctly identified.

**Excellent** = a model for all evaluations that could be referred to as guidance for this standard (rarely used).

To be acceptable, an evaluation report must have at a minimum an average score of Satisfactory over all the standards, and a minimum score of Satisfactory for each of the four key standards (10, 11, 14 and 19 below in bold face).

**Table 4. Table used to Apply the UNICEF Evaluation Report Standards**

<b>Standard</b> (key standards in bold)	<b>Missing</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Satisf.</b>	<b>V. Good</b>	<b>Excel.</b>	<b>Comments</b>
1. Completeness of title page and opening pages (name of programme evaluated; date; country/ies; name and organization of the evaluator(s); name and address of commissioning organization; name of UNICEF staff contact point; table of contents with list of annexes)						

<b>Standard</b> (key standards in bold)	<b>Missing</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Satis.</b>	<b>V. Good</b>	<b>Excel.</b>	<b>Comments</b>
2. Executive summary (2-3 pages) including: brief description of programme; context of programme; purpose of the evaluation; objectives of the evaluation; description of methodology; important findings and conclusions; most important recommendations)						
3. Description of the programme and expected results chain						This corresponds to section 1.3 of the report format requested.
4. Role and contributions of UNICEF and other stakeholders						This information should also be provided in 1.3.
5. Purpose and context of the evaluation (specific justification for undertaking this evaluation)						This would go in section 2.1 of the report format requested.
6. Use of standard evaluation criteria (relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, sustainability)	-					N.B.: This was not included in the instructions to the authors.
7. Evaluation objectives realistic and achievable; evaluation scope clearly defined						= Section 2.1 of the report format requested.
8. Incorporates human rights-based approach to programming						= Section 1.1 of the report format requested.
9. Considers results based management (i.e. how the programme ensures that its processes, products and services contribute the achievement of desired results (outputs, outcomes and impacts)	-					N.B.: This was not included in the instructions to the authors.

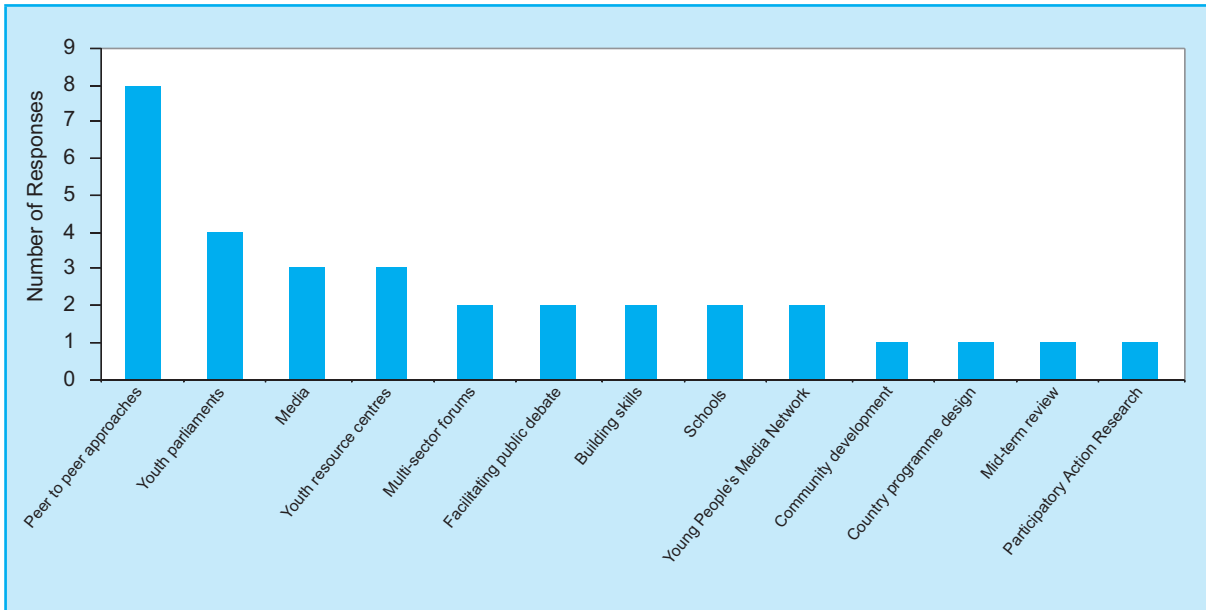
Standard (key standards in bold)	Missing	Poor	Satis.	V. Good	Excel.	Comments
<b>10. Transparent description of methodology, including: data sources, sampling strategy, data collection methods, indicators and benchmarks, data analysis</b>						
<b>11. Methodology is appropriate and adequate, limits bias, and addresses gender and EVYP; limitations considered</b>						
12. Complete description of stakeholder participation in the evaluation						
13. Information gathered from eligible persons not reached by the programme, as well as from those who benefited						
<b>14. Ethical evaluation design: balance of costs and benefits to participants in the evaluation, ethics of who is included and excluded in the evaluation, privacy and confidentiality, informed consent, feedback to participants</b>						
15. Findings are supported by data and cover all of the evaluation objectives; inputs, outputs, outcomes and impacts are distinguished and measured						
16. Includes cost analysis						Amounts invested in the programme were requested in section 1.3 of the report format.

Standard (key standards in bold)	Missing	Poor	Satis.	V. Good	Excel.	Comments
17. Includes discussion of the contributions of stakeholders to the results						
18. Reasons for accomplishments and difficulties identified; analysis of underlying causes, constraints and opportunities						
<b>19. Conclusions substantiated by findings; data and methods represent insights to important problems or issues</b>						
20. Recommendations firmly based on evidence and analysis; recommendations relevant and realistic, with clear priorities						
21. Lessons learned generalized beyond the immediate intervention to indicate wider relevance						= Section 4.4.3 of the report format requested
22. Complete set of annexes (ToR, persons contacted and sites visited, data collection instruments, system for ensuring data quality, list of abbreviations, cost of the evaluation as a percentage of the overall programme						

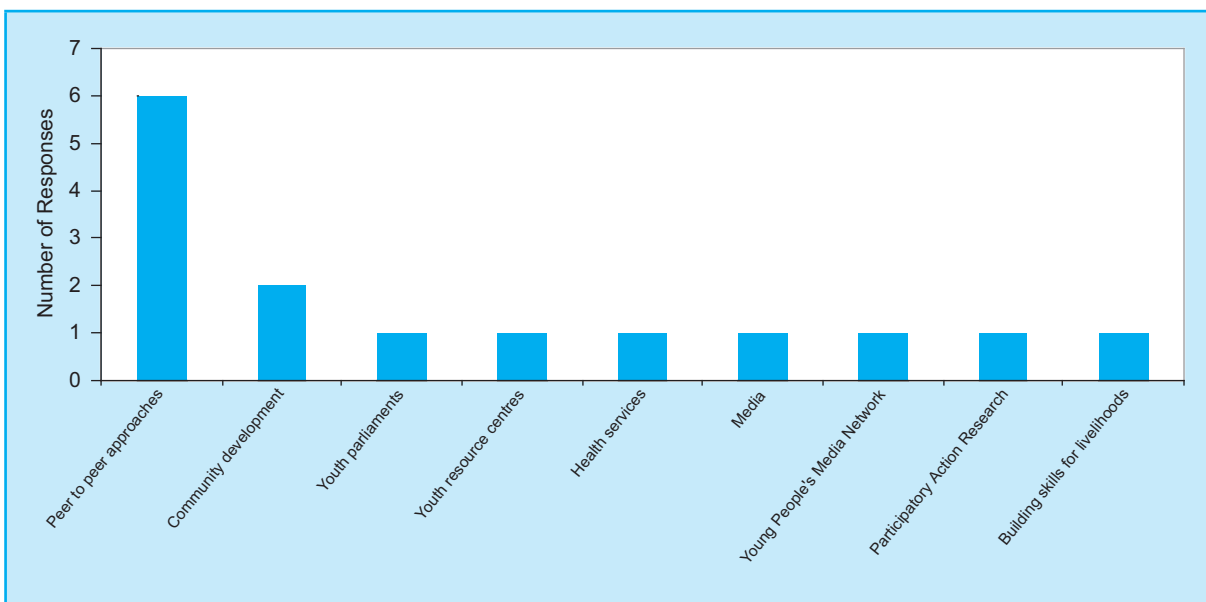
## Annex 11. Additional Data of Interest

### Figures Illustrating the Comparison of Entry Points and the Influence of Young People's Participation

**Figure 4. Entry Points with the Greatest Impact in Building Capacity for Participation**

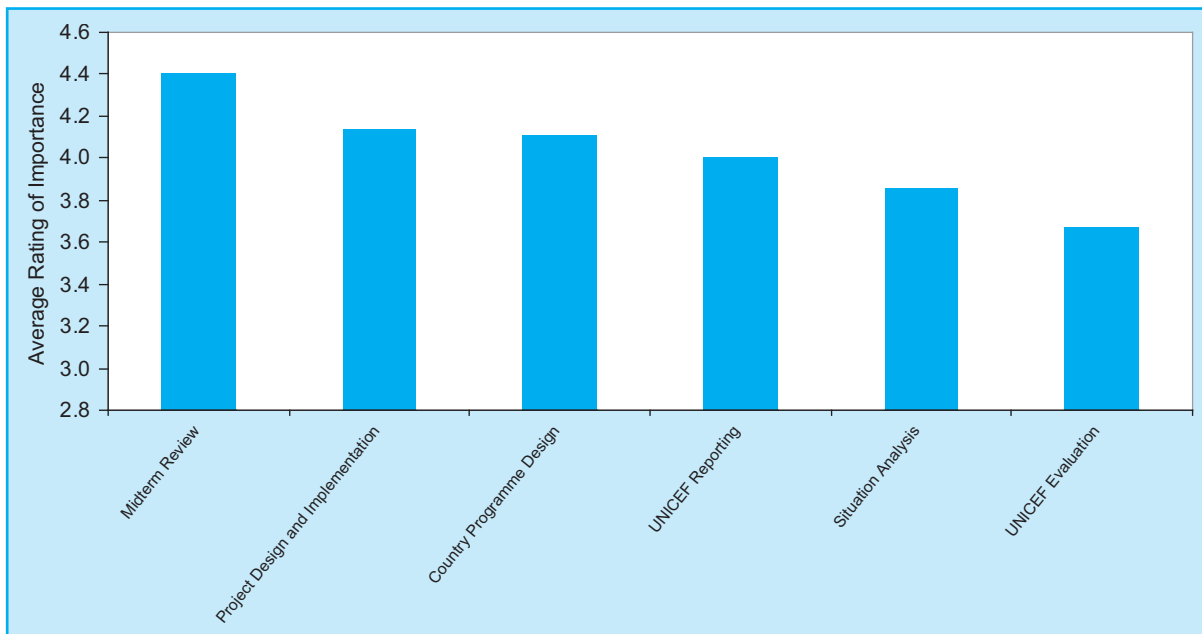


**Figure 5. Entry Points Most Useful in Engaging Especially Vulnerable Young People**



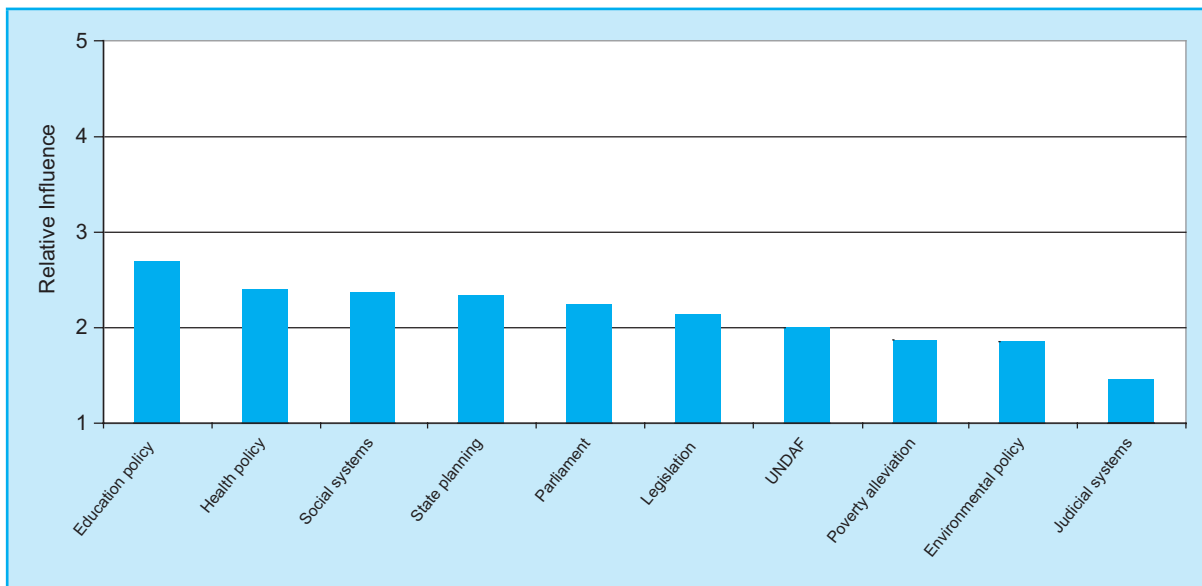
**Figure 6. Relative Importance of Various Opportunities via UNICEF Related Processes**

Key to scores: 1 = not at all important; 2 = somewhat important; 3 = important; 4 = very important; 5 = extremely important.



**Figure 7. Influence of Young People’s Participation**

Key to scores: 1 = not at all; 2 = slightly influenced; 3 = somewhat influenced; 4 = substantial influence; 5 = very strong influence



## Summary of Field Research on How Participation has Changed Young People

**Table 5. How Participation Changed Young People**

Changes Observed in Young People Who had Participated in UNICEF Projects / Community Life / Society	Albania	Belarus	Georgia	Moldova	TFYR of Macedonia
More engaged and committed; more active; increased motivation to participate in society; more mobilized	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Improved level of knowledge and information; familiarization with new concepts; enriched vocabulary	✓			✓	✓
Shift from passive to active search for knowledge				✓	
Felt appreciated	✓			✓	
More optimistic				✓	
Increased self-confidence, self-esteem and self-respect; felt better about themselves	✓	✓		✓	
Have established their own organizations			✓	✓	
More purposeful; more resourceful			✓	✓	
Enhanced creativity	✓			✓	✓
More independent	✓		✓	✓	
More mature; more responsible; more accountable	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Better self-control		✓			
Less apt to engage in risky behaviour	✓			✓	
More organized; better time management			✓	✓	✓
More courageous and daring				✓	
Better able to overcome feeling sad, shy, anxious or unconcerned				✓	
Better performance in school				✓	
Better able to analyse, understand and solve problems	✓			✓	
Better able to get their ideas implemented, develop projects and write proposals, and to raise funds			✓	✓	

Changes Observed in Young People Who had Participated in UNICEF Projects / Community Life / Society	Albania	Belarus	Georgia	Moldova	TFYR of Macedonia
Greater understanding of themselves and others; more tolerant of and interested in others with different backgrounds, attitudes, values and needs; better understanding of the rights and duties of themselves and others; better able to listen		✓	✓	✓	✓
Better communication skills		✓		✓	✓
Better self-expression		✓	✓	✓	
Enhanced skills in social cooperation and dialogue		✓		✓	
More effective team work; improved skills in problem-solving with people having different views		✓		✓	
Better able / more motivated to provide assistance to others			✓	✓	
Improved relationships with friends, family, teachers and others				✓	
Increasingly well regarded by others, including both peers and adults				✓	
Better prepared for life; better able to determine their future professional orientation	✓		✓	✓	✓

In **Albania**, since the young researchers sampled young people who had participated in UNICEF programmes and those who had not, they were able to compare the two groups. They reported that young people involved in UNICEF programmes were, by comparison, more engaged, better informed, better able to analyse and understand risky attitudes and situations, and better able to stay away from negative behaviours such as drug abuse and criminality. They felt appreciated and that they had a chance to contribute and be creative, to be heard, and to participate in decisions – all of which strengthened their commitment to the programmes. Participation gave them greater independence, self-confidence and openness to change and fostered a desire to take on new roles and responsibilities.

Young people participating in Youth Parliaments and in *Troç* (a youth-run television show) showed improved communication skills, the capacity to see things from different perspectives and an ability to manage their time more effectively.

The team also interviewed parents and teachers who knew the young people participating in UNICEF programmes. According to the adults interviewed, young people who participated were more active and better prepared for life. Because they understood problems such as drugs, alcohol and prostitution, they were better protected from risky behaviour. Parents reported a difference in their children's attitudes and skills before and after participating in UNICEF programmes, in particular an increase in maturity and more secure behaviour.

The research in **Belarus** found the following impacts of participation on young people: increased motivation to participate in society; more responsible behaviour; enhanced skills in social cooperation and dialogue and in problem-solving with people who have different opinions; better understanding of their rights and duties and the rights and duties of others; improved life skills (e.g. self-control, self-expression, self-confidence and self-respect). This team found that successful participation becomes an impetus to subsequent social activity and strengthens the motivation to participate.

*Most often, participants spoke about deep personal changes as a result of their involvement in UNICEF programmes: "I became more responsible and in general this has changed my character. I acquired new qualities, which I do not notice, but my friends notice and they are pleased with it. I began reflecting more often on my actions. Now I find it easier to communicate with people..." (Lyudmila, NGO activist)*  
 – Report from Belarus

According to the young people interviewed in **Georgia**, participation in UNICEF programmes provided opportunities to become more organized, responsible, purposeful, mobilized and independent. Young people acquired important experience, learned how to express their ideas and listen to others. They learned a lot about decision-making processes and finding ways for their ideas to be implemented.

Participation in UNICEF programmes provided young people with opportunities to see that they can take care of their problems and protect their rights, as well as provide assistance to others – even without support and financial assistance from adults. Young people believed in their abilities, became more active, and launched initiatives to take care of orphaned and disabled children.

UNICEF projects have allowed numerous young people to widen their horizons and knowledge in areas that interest them, and to acquire important skills that help them determine what path they would like to follow in the future. Young people who have participated in these programmes continue to work on youth issues, and some have even established their own organizations.

Participation in projects implemented by UNICEF has motivated young people to continue their activities even after termination of the project. As a result, a cadre of active youth was developed that has continued to participate actively in public life. Participation has taught them not only how to communicate better with their peers, but with the older generation as well.

The study in **Moldova** found that great changes occurred in young people as a result of their participation in community life and society, i.e.:

- acquisition of knowledge on a wide variety of issues;
- a shift from being passive receivers to active searchers of information;
- familiarization with new concepts and enrichment of their vocabulary;
- better performance in school;
- improved life skills such as problem identification and resolution, fund-raising, developing projects and writing proposals, time management, evaluation, computer work and community involvement;
- enhanced self-confidence, self-respect, personal dignity and value as a result of seeing their achievements acknowledged and valued;
- improved communication and negotiation skills;

- enlarged circle of friends and improved relationships with family, teachers, decision makers and even strangers;
- more effective team work
- greater understanding of themselves and others, resulting in greater tolerance, taking an interest in the views of others and less aggressiveness;
- becoming more courageous, more daring and more optimistic;
- increased ability to overcome complexes such as feeling sad, shy, anxious or unconcerned;
- increasingly regarded by others as well trained, well informed, popular, trustworthy – in short as worthy models;
- becoming more mature, more accountable and more resourceful.

*Young people said one significant change resulting from participation processes is the emergence of an optimistic attitude towards the future and their own role / place in society. Confident that things can be changed, they have no hesitation in taking a stand and constructively addressing community phenomena and actions that had direct or indirect impact on themselves.*

– Report from Moldova

The key findings from **TFYR of Macedonia** on how participation in the UNICEF supported projects has changed young people are summarized as follows:

- improved level of knowledge and information;
- meeting other young people of different social backgrounds as well as with different attitudes, values and needs;
- enhanced freedom to express their own ideas and develop creativity;
- active participation in modern societal trends;
- change of personal attitudes and values;
- improved communication among family members, peers and the wider environment;
- ability to make better use of free time;
- professional orientation (life skills).

Improved information and knowledge included: HIV/AIDS and STIs; risk factors in a wider context; and issues related to the development and growth of young people, such as violence (verbal, mental, physical), prejudices and stereotypes, education, family, migrations, the current social-political situation and the reason to why many young people are uninterested and passive.

Meeting other young people from different social backgrounds and with different attitudes, values and needs was very motivating and positively influenced their perceptions based on gender, background, ethnicity, geography, sub-cultures and religions. Prejudices were overcome and space was created for open and honest discussion.

Improved communication skills were seen especially in inter-generational dialogues on HIV/AIDS and sexual / reproductive health.

*Initiatives for inspiring and stimulating more active involvement of young people in all spheres of societal life... also served as a call to them to take greater responsibility for themselves and their actions.*

– Report from TFYR of Macedonia

## Summary of Field Research on How UNICEF has Built the Capacities of Partner Organizations and Institutions

The tables below synthesize information from the field reports on the methods used to build capacity and the benefits and outcomes of capacity-building. Blanks in the tables do not necessarily mean that such methods are not used in a given country – but rather that they were not specifically mentioned in the evaluation report from that country.

**Table 6. Methods to Build Capacity of Partner Organizations and Institutions**

Methods to Build Capacity of Youth Organizations	Albania	Belarus	Georgia	Moldova	TFYR of Macedonia
Training young people as resources				✓	
Mixed training courses (professionals + youth)				✓	
Training in youth participation	✓			✓	
Training in human rights and/or the CRC	✓		✓	✓	
Training in democracy and how to conduct free elections	✓				
Training in healthy lifestyles			✓	✓	✓
Training in advocacy	✓			✓	
Training in project planning	✓			✓	
Training in project management	✓			✓	
Training and/or study tours in television and/or radio journalism	✓		✓	✓	✓
Provision of information				✓	
Publication of methodological guidebooks				✓	
Provision of small grants				✓	
Planning Youth Resource Centres			✓	✓	
Provision of information; ongoing information support				✓	
Provision of opportunities to contribute to UNICEF planning meetings	✓				
Provision of opportunities to contribute to UNICEF programme review meetings	✓				

<b>Methods to Build Capacity of Government Agencies</b>	<b>Albania</b>	<b>Belarus</b>	<b>Georgia</b>	<b>Moldova</b>	<b>TFYR of Macedonia</b>
Raising awareness of young people's rights in regard to participation	✓	✓		✓	
Raising awareness of young people's needs in regard to health and development		✓			
Provision of information; information campaigns; ongoing information support		✓		✓	
Research		✓			
Training for professionals				✓	
Mixed training courses (professionals + youth)				✓	
Experience exchanges with professionals in other countries; international events; study tours				✓	
Policy development				✓	
Provision of small grants				✓	
<b>Methods to Build Capacity of NGOs and Private Institutions</b>	<b>Albania</b>	<b>Belarus</b>	<b>Georgia</b>	<b>Moldova</b>	<b>TFYR of Macedonia</b>
Training in youth participation	✓			✓	
Training in human rights	✓			✓	
Training in democracy	✓			✓	
Training in advocacy	✓			✓	
Training in project planning	✓			✓	
Training in project management	✓			✓	

**Table 7. Benefits to Partner Organizations and Institutions from Collaborating with UNICEF**

<b>Benefits to Youth Organizations</b>	<b>Albania</b>	<b>Belarus</b>	<b>Georgia</b>	<b>Moldova</b>	<b>TFYR of Macedonia</b>
Improved understanding of how to promote young people's participation	✓			✓	
Improved participation skills	✓				
Improved understanding of human rights	✓			✓	
Improved understanding of democracy	✓				
Improved advocacy skills	✓			✓	
Improved skills in strategic planning	✓			✓	
Improved project planning skills	✓			✓	
Improved project management skills	✓			✓	
Improved evaluation skills	✓				
Development of new strategies, methods, ideas and/or projects	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Better designed and longer-term projects	✓			✓	
Improved project implementation; improved services	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Involvement of young people in all phases of the project cycle	✓				
More material and financial resources	✓	✓		✓	
Funding / materials / moral support provided by local governments				✓	
Improved human resources	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Capacities built of EVYP to carry out workshops and theatre sessions					✓
Improved professional skills			✓		
Improved team work		✓		✓	
Better problem solving			✓	✓	
Improved ability to work independently			✓		✓
Improved leadership		✓		✓	

Improved capacity in foreign languages			✓		
Improved capacity in television and radio journalism				✓	
Improved quality of communication and information materials	✓	✓		✓	
Improved reach of information produced		✓			
Establishment and/or improvement of social and/or thematic networks	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Improved image, credibility and/or recognition		✓	✓	✓	
Acknowledgement by and/or prizes from local authorities				✓	
Improved attitudes and/or increased trust of school professionals towards young people's participation				✓	✓
Improved attitudes of TV and radio professionals towards young people's participation				✓	
Improved relationships with government agencies				✓	
Enhanced motivation				✓	
Increased self-confidence					✓
Establishment and/or improvement of links with the public sector		✓	✓	✓	
More effective advocacy	✓			✓	
Improved national policies		✓		✓	
Increased participation of young people in decisions that affect their lives	✓		✓	✓	
<b>Benefits to Government Agencies</b>	<b>Albania</b>	<b>Belarus</b>	<b>Georgia</b>	<b>Moldova</b>	<b>TFYR of Macedonia</b>
Better understanding of the need to create an enabling environment for youth participation		✓			
Improved relationships with young people's NGOs				✓	
Improved capacity of local authorities / communities				✓	✓
Improved capacity of schools to promote young people's participation				✓	✓
Capacity built among school professionals in creative methodologies and tools					✓

Improved capacity of health workers to promote young people's participation				✓	
Skills developed among health workers in interactive methods for transmitting information				✓	
Additional human resources (young people) in programmes to prevent HIV infection and/or STIs	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Establishment of a Child Unit in the Prime Minister's Office	✓				
Establishment of a ministerial Coordination Council on Child Rights		✓			
Policy decisions that promote child rights		✓			
Legislative acts that promote child rights		✓		✓	
<b>Benefits to NGOs and Private Institutions</b>	<b>Albania</b>	<b>Belarus</b>	<b>Georgia</b>	<b>Moldova</b>	<b>TFYR of Macedonia</b>
Better understanding of the major obstacles to young people's participation		✓			
Improved capacity of school professionals				✓	
Improved capacity of academics in knowledge and tools for working with young people					✓
Improved capacity of academics to address more relevant issues related to young people					✓
More material and financial resources		✓		✓	
Improved human resources		✓		✓	
Improved team work		✓		✓	
Development of new methods of work		✓		✓	
Improved quality of communication and information materials		✓			
Improved reach of information produced		✓			
Development, dissemination and implementation of strict standards for peer education		✓			
Improved project implementation; improved services		✓		✓	
Establishment of offices / branches in the regions					✓
Establishment of networks; improved networking		✓		✓	✓

Improved image and credibility		✓		✓	
Improved advocacy		✓			
Improved national policies		✓		✓	
Reform of education curriculum				✓	
Inclusion as a full partner in state programmes		✓		✓	

In **Albania** UNICEF has helped build the capacity of a number of youth organizations – the Children Alliance, Albanian Youth Council (AYC), Youth Parliament, *Troç* – as well as that of partner NGOs such as Aksion Plus (which works on harm reduction among intravenous drug users), Stop AIDS and the Institute of Pedagogical Studies. UNICEF is also supporting the Prime Minister’s Office to establish a Children Unit, which will soon be operational. One of the ways UNICEF has built the capacity of youth organizations is by giving them opportunities to provide input during UNICEF meetings. According to NGO partners, UNICEF is the only donor in the country that involves them in annual planning and the design of its Country Programme.

Young parliamentarians and AYC staff have been trained in project planning and management, advocacy, human rights, democracy and youth participation issues. AYC and UNICEF have collaborated for five years in the area of youth participation in decision-making. During this time AYC’s strategies and capacities have improved, as evidenced by short-term projects having been transformed into long-term projects. Now AYC is involving young people in all phases of planning, implementing, managing and evaluating its projects and activities.

NGOs cited the following major benefits of collaborating with UNICEF: capacity-building via training workshops and programme review meetings; communication and information materials; joint thematic networks; and assistance with strategic planning and project management.

UNICEF’s collaboration with government agencies in **Belarus** has raised their awareness of young people’s rights in regard to participation, their health and development, and being part of information campaigns and research. This change in capacity is reflected in a better understanding of the need to create an enabling environment for youth participation and in subsequent policy decisions and legislative acts such as the Law on the Rights of the Child. The decision by the Council of Ministers in December 2004 to establish a coordination council on child rights was a breakthrough for UNICEF advocacy for more effective cooperation to leverage policy mechanisms for child rights.

Not all of the organizations collaborating with UNICEF have been successful. The Belarusian Association of Youth and Children’s Public Organizations (RADA) included 26 national level NGOs and was a recognized leader of the youth movement in 2002. UNICEF worked with RADA to analyse the major problems in Belarus regarding the participation of children and youth, including stereotyped, sceptical attitudes of adults and gaps in legislation. RADA organized a National Children’s Forum in 2003 to provide input to the NPA, but afterwards conflicts broke out and the attitude of the authorities towards RADA changed. The report from Belarus concluded that this demonstrates that the success of an organization depends not only on the availability of resources, skilful management and wide public support, but also on the political environment.

The best example of the development and increasing influence of an NGO as a result of cooperation with UNICEF is the example of Fialta, registered as an NGO in 1995. Fialta’s work is based

on the active participation of youth volunteers. Over the last four years of cooperation with UNICEF, Fialta has not only built up its image as the strongest peer education network, but has also increased the quality of its services, developed new methods of work, and elaborated and disseminated standards of peer education to other NGOs. UNICEF's collaboration with Fialta gave the young NGO credibility in establishing cooperation with the government. Today Fialta is included in the state programme to prevent HIV/AIDS infection in the Republic of Belarus.

According to the report from Belarus, cooperation with UNICEF has helped improve partners': organizational structure; team work and human resources; leadership; quality of services; quality and reach of information they produce; social networks; and their ability to influence policies.

In **Georgia** UNICEF has worked closely with three youth organizations: Kutaisi UN Association, Gori Youth Association, Ozurgeti Resource Centre. UNICEF programmes have had a positive impact on the image of partner organizations. The projects implemented were extremely popular, and the organizations participating in their implementation were more easily recognized and trusted by society, NGOs and public agencies. One of the most important results for the youth organizations from implementing the programmes was the establishment of new links with the public sector, which has greatly facilitated implementation of different ideas and projects.

As a result of collaborating with UNICEF, youth organizations have developed in the following areas: social and personal networks; human resources; professional skills; project implementation and foreign languages; and capacity for working independently.

The evaluation in **Moldova** examined how various factors contribute to improving the capacities of partner organizations. Here UNICEF has collaborated primarily with: Local Youth Councils; community youth centres; young journalists and television and radio stations; the Department of Youth and Sports; the Ministry of Education and school administrations; the Ministry of Health and community health centres; and local administrations. According to stakeholders in the evaluation, factors that were found to contribute the most were: training sessions for professionals; training young people as resources; providing information; publication of methodological guidebooks; reform of the education curriculum; provision of small grants; and policy development.

Certain municipalities where UNICEF has been engaged have increased or started allocating funds for activities proposed by young people. In addition, local authorities motivate young people to participate by acknowledging their achievements and promoting their image. Young respondents cited their delight in receiving diplomas and prizes from local authorities. In many municipalities young people receive material, financial and especially moral support for their projects. In some localities, however, attempts of young people to forge collaborative relationships with more authoritarian local governments have not proved successful.

Representatives of local public administrations, educational institutions and the Youth Parliament highlighted UNICEF's outstanding contribution to building the capacity of school professionals by organizing training sessions, disseminating information and providing small grants. Attitudes towards young people's participation have changed and the capacity of schools to promote participation has improved.

Moldovan health institutions, especially in rural areas, are often of low quality, unfriendly to young people, and sometimes corrupt. UNICEF programmes have helped to build the capacity of health workers to set up collaborative relationships with young people as resources for disseminating information on HIV/AIDS and STIs with adolescents. As a result of their collaboration

with peer educators, certain health workers have themselves started using interactive methods in transmitting information. However, compared to other entry points, changes in health services have been slow.

UNICEF has also contributed to improving the capacity of youth groups in TV and radio journalism through study tours, training sessions and small grants. With UNICEF's support the young journalists have helped overcome certain stereotypes of media editors and managers. Professionals are now exploring new approaches with young journalists, who are no longer viewed simply as sources for sensationalism, but as valuable community resources.

In **TFYR of Macedonia** UNICEF has collaborated with five NGOs and four institutions in the Right-to-Know project. Through collaboration with the Macedonian Inter-ethnic Association, a national network has been organized and the capacities of local communities strengthened. The capacities of local communities have also been reinforced by the activities of another NGO with which UNICEF collaborates, Theatre Youth of Macedonia, which has established local branches in 15 towns and cities. In addition, the RtK project works with the NGO, Art Forum, which focuses on using theatre as a creative tool in helping especially vulnerable adolescents living in institutions. According to Art Forum, the most significant benefit of participating in the RtK project has been building the capacity of new youth coordinators recruited from the EVYP target group, and who have become capable of carrying out workshops and theatre sessions independently.

The RtK project built the capacity of young people in various creative and interactive methodologies, including workshops on: photography; comic strips; web design / internet; graphic design; video magazines; theatre / role play; music (hip-hop and R&B); journalism; peer education; printed materials; and inter-generational dialogue (parents and children). Through these workshops, young participants had an opportunity to share their knowledge with their peers, to learn more, and to gain livelihood skills that may lead to employment in the future.

Significant progress was made during the RtK project in building the capacity of schools to support young people's participation. School administrators and teachers who participated in the project developed positive attitudes towards the project activities, the creative methodologies and tools, and towards the young participants. Getting permission from schools to carry out educational sessions without the presence of adults increased the self-confidence of the peer educators.

The Institute of Ethnology worked with UNICEF in Participatory Action Research in the RtK project, and also in the present evaluation of young people's participation. In the past the Institute was engaged mainly in academic research. Through its collaboration with UNICEF, it has gained new knowledge and tools for working with young people, and is now starting to address more relevant ethnological and anthropological issues related to young people's everyday lives.

According to the report from TFYR of Macedonia, the most significant benefits that strengthened the NGOs' capacities were: opening offices in the regions; networking among NGOs; networking among community-based organizations; and creating national networks, for example of peer educators or interactive theatre.

## Indicators Recommended by the Field Studies

The evaluation in **Belarus** found that the following shortened and simplified list of indicators worked reasonably well:

- |                           |             |   |
|---------------------------|-------------|---|
| I. Individual level:      | 1. Process: | Comfort, positive emotions, satisfaction<br>Feeling of responsibility<br>Feeling of one's own importance  |
|                           | 2. Result:  | Personal changes, gaining knowledge and skills<br>Increase in self-esteem<br>Establishing new contacts<br>Change of attitudes (toward participation, programme, etc.)<br>Influence on a subsequent career |
| II. Organizational level: | 1. Process: | Scope (quantity of participants)<br>Inter-organizational communication  |
|                           | 2. Result:  | Changes in the organization<br>Establishment of new ties<br>Acquisition of new resources<br>Attraction of new participants  |
| III. Programme level:     | 1. Process: | Scope (quantity of participants)<br>Quantity of partner organizations   |
|                           | 2. Result:  | Change in focus of the programme<br>Change of methods<br>Number of partners<br>Number of Youth Information Centres<br>Achievement of programme objectives.  |

The team from **Moldova** suggested that a clear indicator of optimism is that young people have largely given up the idea of emigration.

The following table excerpted from the report from **TFYR of Macedonia** provides the most meaningful and feasible indicators that were used in the evaluation, and gives recommendations on how to make the best use of these indicators.

RECOMMENDATIONS	EXPLANATION
<p><i>N° of Participants:</i> To constantly monitor and follow the number of participants, to inform on all changes of the number of participants and establish the reasons for the change of their number</p>	<p>Having in mind the specific approach of the NGOs and the features of certain target groups, the number of participants should not be a main indicator. This is especially true when it comes to the work with vulnerable groups of young people.</p>
<p><i>Coverage / outreach:</i> To widen the project activities in small urban environments and villages. The definition of project activities and methodology, to adapt it to the needs and wishes of the local young people.</p>	<p>The flow of information and possibilities for the population in smaller cities and in the villages are extremely limited, and thus more work should be done on the development of basic capacities</p>
<p><i>Qualitative indicators (measuring motivation attitudes and behaviour related to participation):</i> To use form/tools for monitoring and evaluation that will show all phases and/or levels of participation of the young people in the frames of the projects.</p>	<p>Along with quantitative indicators, the qualitative should also be used. This is especially important for defining the benefits of those activities that include a smaller number of participants.</p>
<p><i>The situation, needs and interests of the target group:</i> To use tools and techniques and creative work that will continuously motivate the participants.</p>	<p>Coordinators of the workshops should be prepared to estimate the interest of the participants on certain topics, issues and tools, and to find the most appropriate way for practical utilization. It is recommended to consult experts and relevant institutions on issues that lie beyond the domain of the coordinators.</p>
<p><i>Time line of activities in place and followed:</i> To follow the precision in the implementation of the planned activities (timeframe) as well as the quality of implementation</p>	<p>Fitting in the timeframe is one of the key indicators for reaching success of the realized activities. A special indication should be put upon the process of realization.</p>
<p><i>End results/Final products:</i> To explicitly show the final results</p>	<p>Final results are an important factor for establishing the success of the projects; however they should not be a key indicator, since the main accent should be put upon the process the participants go through during implementation. Some workshops did not have final products due to the specific activities and target groups, but the changes that the participants went through during the process justify the reasons for implementation.</p>
<p><i>Cost benefits:</i> To justify the expenses to be estimated by comparison of the expenditures and results</p>	<p>When estimation on the success of the projects is made through justifying the expenses, one should have in mind the different aspects, the quality of the process and the final results. Justifying of the expenditures is rarely proportional to the quantitative indicators on the basis of which it is most often estimated.</p>

## Principles to Promote Effective Participation

The following is an excerpt of the report from **Belarus**:

1. *Start working with children on the principles of participation as a basis of their development from early childhood.*
2. *Ensure equal participation opportunities to all children irrespective of age, sex, social status, education, nationality, experience, etc.*
3. *Develop children's capacities needed for their participation through dialogue, discussion and practical experience (interactive motivation).*
4. *Encourage adults and develop their ability to listen to children and to support their participation.*
5. *Provide children and young people with information about the issues and problems which are of interest to them.*
6. *Trust children and young people, and delegate responsibility and power to them.*
7. *Allow adolescents to take reasonable risks, and respect their right to make mistakes as an integral pillar of the development process.*
8. *Give time to participation. Establish trusting relations between adults and children. Training, discussions and surveys all take time.*
9. *Allocate space, territory and premises for participation. Sometimes a format, style, environment, procedure or other things can be impediments for young people's participation in decision-making.*
10. *Account for the interests of children and young people. This is why they should participate in project development from early stages including identification of priorities, goals, tasks and programme design.*

*Many young people are willing to participate in various processes and in different ways. They would like to be involved and to influence changes. They are inclined to participate as equal partners rather than as consumers of services or cheap labour.*

– Report from Belarus

## Recommendations to Develop the Evaluation Process

The following recommendations are excerpted from the report from **Moldova**.

### Process Development

1. Transparency during the entire evaluation process to ensure outcome.
2. Permanent advertising from the very start of the evaluation process in order to prepare the audience to access evaluation outcomes and thus avoid frustration and apprehension, associated with evaluation in traditional perception as promoted by the educational system.
3. Encouraging free demand of evaluation by youth groups.
4. Using youth-friendly language and interactive methods accessible to youth in all stages of the evaluation process, in order to provide them an increased degree of safety and freedom.

5. Including activities organized by youth groups as source for data collection belonging to users.
6. Providing research data to young people to ensure a mutual learning process and availability for further use in their activity.
7. Making adults familiar with participation methods to contribute to the creation of shared understanding of the evaluation process, as well as later application in instruction-educational activities.
8. Involving youth in advertising evaluation results in forums, round tables, press-conferences, talk shows, creation of on-line data bases, publication of brochures and mass-media material.
9. Training local teams of young evaluators in aid of peers for ongoing evaluation of their activity.

### **Research design**

10. Setting up a design allowing for flexibility and process adjustment depending on specificity of responding groups.
11. Introducing participatory evaluation methods in the "Life Skills Education" curriculum.
12. Operationalization (setting up defining elements) of concepts approached in each question in order to avoid possible difficulties in understanding and analysis of data collected in the study.
13. Publication of a guidebook of methods for participatory evaluation to facilitate evaluation team activity.
14. Involving youth in testing evaluation tools for validation.

### **Evaluation team**

15. The evaluation team may include young people as :
  - Evaluators – facilitating workshops with young people, focus-group talks, carrying out interviews; collecting and recording data;
  - Data analysis experts – in charge of data processing and analysis; setting up reports together with other members of the evaluation team after youth consultation.
16. Involving as evaluators young persons experienced in participation, implementation of participation projects or familiar with the concept, to ensure creation of a free environment, setting up open and honest relationships, in favour of communication with peers in evaluation workshops.
17. Carrying out workshops for data collection by at least two evaluators, whose responsibilities are clearly distributed: workshop facilitation and data recording.
18. Involving data analysis experts during the entire evaluation process, including training and data collection, as analysis in this process requires not only professionalism and high qualification in socio-humanities but sound knowledge of the participation concept as well.

### **Data collection**

19. Carrying out data collection workshops in the absence of adults for more freedom of expression and better youth cooperation.
20. Informing adults on workshop outcomes and introducing tools for participatory evaluation in order to eliminate their concerns on the evaluation process involving young people.
21. Involving an optimum number of young people to provide them the possibility to express their opinion and feel important. A too large bulk of information collected can also render data analysis difficult.

22. Documentation of the data collection processes by young people using films, photos, audio records in order not to influence the development of activities and favor participants' natural conduct.
23. Using work groups no larger than 16 young people (4 subgroups) in data collection workshops in order to provide participants an opportunity to explain their statements.
24. Three to three-and-a-half hour duration of data collection workshops to preserve participants' energy and creativity.

### **Data processing and analysis**

25. Setting up a single electronic format for storage of participants' comments recorded in order to facilitate data processing.
26. Involving youth in the stage of data processing and analysis for better understanding of youth perspective and acquiring objective results.
27. Organization of a workshop for youth consultation. We recommend taking into account the following aspects:
  - an interval not exceeding three months for closing the data collection process after data primary processing;
  - involving a number of evaluation team members equal to that of youth involved (10 participants is an optimum number);
  - inviting youth in various regions of the country who have participated in data collection workshops;
  - respecting gender balance in both the young people's group and the evaluation team;
  - ensuring the diverse character of experience in the involvement of youth in various participation models;
  - including youth in making decisions concerning all organization aspects of the evaluation process (schedule, working conditions, work methods).
28. Insuring a context favourable to unrestricted communication between young people and members of the evaluation team. We recommend taking into account the following aspects:
  - A roundtable allowing for peer positioning and communication for all participants;
  - The possibility to move freely, music background, refreshments, coffee breaks;
  - Adjustment of work schedule to the rhythm required by participants;
  - Maximum work day duration of eight hours.
29. Organizing an interactive session for participants in the consultation workshop to be able to introduce themselves and become better acquainted with each other, aiming at strengthening the group and facilitating later communication.
30. Operating with VIPP sheets to facilitate systematization of data analysed during the workshop and inclusion of every idea.
31. Priority provided to youth in matters concerning expression of views on topics approached in the workshop, to eliminate the risk of young people being influenced by members of the evaluation team.
32. Distributing material on outcomes of primary processing of data collected, of minutes recording talks, which makes young people feel important and worthy.

## Recommendations to Improve Youth Participation

The following recommendations are excerpted from the report from **Moldova**.

### Recommendations for improvement of youth participation in the country

1. Facilitate communication and experience exchange through supporting study tours, conferences, forums as well as other joint activities of youth in various regions and projects.
2. Insure access to information for young people by opening resource centres, contributing to libraries, supplying Internet connection, provision of consultant services, youth supporting mass-media and editing information material and pedagogic supports for young people and adults.
3. Support for the network of youth participation projects, which will communicate and operate by means of a database, electronic and written newsletters, web sites etc.
4. Ongoing promotion of training activities for youth, focusing on such domains as the rights of the child / youth, development of life skills, advocacy, lobby, mass-media, persuasion and negotiation strategies, priority training of young people in rural areas that have diminished or have no access to such action.
5. Improvement of collaboration between young people and adults through training of various adult categories: civil servants, youth workers, teachers, parents, economic agents, journalists, employees in health and culture programmes, police collaborators etc.
6. Financial support to a larger number of youth initiatives, focusing on projects meeting the needs of youth to set up community and inter-community partnerships.
7. Advertising successful practices of youth through various media channels: newspapers, radio and TV broadcasts and creation of opportunities for free, direct expression of youth in professional mass-media.
8. Improving the legal framework for youth participation, meant to insure inclusion of youth in decision-making processes on all levels.
9. Provision of technical assistance to the Government with a view to setting up viable mechanisms for the application of legislative provisions. Support to the activity of multidisciplinary work groups.
10. Stimulating youth associating in organizations on local community level and provision of support to their activities.
11. Information for decision makers and youth on provisions of various international and European documents promoting youth participation.
12. Extending practices in place, giving them an official status and encouraging the development of new forms of youth participation.
13. Encouraging local authorities to support youth initiatives and involvement through provision of youth-friendly localities, schools, centres and clinics.
14. Introducing training for life skills in pre-university and university curricula of training institutions for teachers, social work, psychology, medicine, culture and arts, physical education, etc.
15. Supporting initiatives for the arrangement of organizing youth friendly areas, summer schools, sports, culture and leisure activities.
16. Promotion of the volunteer work for community benefit concept by setting up the Volunteer Work Law and stimulating civic initiatives.
17. Strengthening capacities of human resources in institutions delivering youth services to promote participation through training, information, stimulation and advertising of successful models.
18. Re-introduction of the youth specialist position in the staff charts of local authorities. Selection of persons qualified for this position through competition and with the consultation of youth.

19. Creation of efficient mechanisms for the consultation and coordination of efforts made by governmental and non-governmental organizations for the achievement of youth policies.

### **Recommendations for improvement of youth participation in the region**

20. Setting up criteria / standards concerning participation on regional level to facilitate the process of youth participation development and evaluation.
21. Supporting international activities for promotion of exchanges of experience / information among young people through meetings, summer schools, study and documentary tours, seminars, training sessions, conferences, forums, international camps, youth exchanges, cultural activities, publications, electronic newsletters etc.
22. Facilitating collaboration among organizations in various countries in promotion of youth participation.
23. Advertising successful youth participation practices in various countries through publication of best practices guidebooks, in the mass-media and the Internet as well.
24. Stimulating youth mobility through dissemination of information providing participation opportunities.
25. Encouraging bilateral and multilateral partnerships between governmental and non-governmental structures through trans-border project competitions on regional level.
26. Creating mechanisms for the involvement of youth in decision-making processes on sub-regional level.
27. Launching communication networks to facilitate the flow of information and its direct access by young people.
28. Creating regional databases providing lists of contact information for teams of young people able to provide consultant services to their peers in other countries.

Association of Young Evaluators (Moldova) – Concept document

### **Vision**

For the first time in Moldova, young people were involved in the Evaluation of Youth Participation. We realized that they manifest interest, openness and honesty for this process. This helped us entirely to understand the fact that young people can and have to be involved in all processes that regard them. We cannot conceive a step without their real participation anymore.

Many young people confessed that some adults perceive youth participation as a game and did not understand its meaning during the Evaluation of Youth Participation. For the adults that grew up in the totalitarian system, an evaluation can be a source of negative emotions, feelings of inferiority, stress and frustration. Traditionally, it is associated with external control meant to intimidate and punish those responsible if the results do not correspond to the highest standards. It is the same fear and tendency to demonstrate that everything is at the highest level, no matter the real situation, that adults are trying to impose on young people.

The Evaluation of Youth Participation showed that the evaluation can have a different approach: determining the activities' impact on persons, groups and community development. Our experience of participatory evaluation with young people shows that it can offer a space favorable for communication and free expression of thoughts, respecting the human rights and dignity.

We are convinced that young people are best placed to analyse and understand the changes produced with and around them. We consider that young people are the most suited to evaluate their own activities.

Creation of the Association of Young Evaluators will help young people request and practice evaluation as a natural stage in their activity. The periodical evaluation of their own activities by young people themselves will convince adults about the seriousness of participation. As a result, professionals working with youth will involve young people in the evaluation developing so their skills of using participatory methods of evaluation.

### **Mission**

Our mission consists in changing the public attitude, especially that of young people, about the process of evaluation as an important factor in the personal, group and community evolution.

### **Aim**

Our aim is to promote participatory evaluation as a field of intervention in youth work at personal, programmes, institutions and policies levels.

### **Objectives**

- To encourage young people to request the evaluation
- To multiply the methods and practices of evaluation among young people
- To increase the use of evaluation within youth work
- To build young people's capacities of evaluation of their own activities

### **Strategies**

1. Informing public opinion about the initiative to create the Association of Young Evaluators through several youth Networks: Youth Resource and Information Centres Network, Local Youth Councils Network, Participation Projects Network, Youth Media Projects Network, Peer Educators Network.
2. Registering those who want to become members by filling in an application form.
3. Convoking an organizational meeting with the members of the *Association of Young Evaluators* for clarification of eventual questions, approving the statute and regulations, establishing the training priorities and the action plan.
4. Studying young people's training needs in the field of participatory evaluation.
5. Realizing participatory research and studies in the field of youth developed by teams of young people.
6. Involving youth media (radio, newspapers and video) as a specific modality of evaluating young people's activities.
7. Facilitating the communication and experience exchange with associations of evaluators from other countries.

### **Members**

Membership in the *Association of Young Evaluators* is open to any young person interested in the Association's aims and objectives. A member is a person who has filled in an application form (available at [www.youth.md](http://www.youth.md) or 15 Serghei Lazo Str., MD-2004 Chisinau) and is informed about the membership conditions.

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ISBN 92-806-3919-6