

The Role of Child and Youth Participation in Development Effectiveness

A Literature Review
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“Young people are the foundation for effective development, and if engaged they will improve many of the structural development challenges that we face today, including enhancing the cohesiveness of families and communities, reducing health risks and advancing livelihood opportunities. They are the bridge between effective development policy and valuable practical action on the ground.” (DFID 2010: 89)

This document summarises the findings of a literature review undertaken by Child Fund Australia with the Institute for Sustainable Futures, Sydney in 2012. The central research question was:

What is the role of child and youth participation in development effectiveness?

This research builds on other work undertaken by ChildFund Australia in May 2011. ChildFund Australia actively undertakes research to better understand the ways that child and youth participation in programs can be instrumental to enhancing development outcomes and to continually inform programs to increase their effectiveness.

The literature review found that there is a lot of published research on the role of children and youth in development, however there is less literature on children and youth in the context of aid effectiveness. This summary will present the literature which we found.

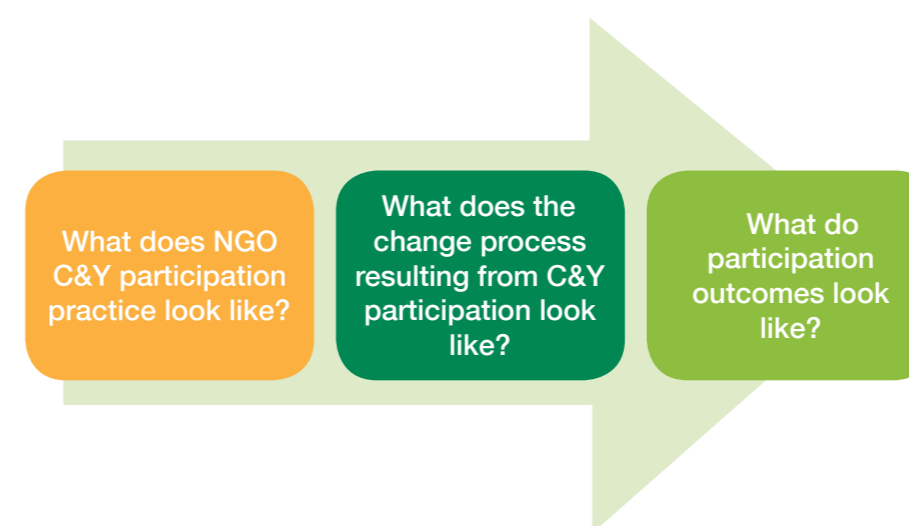
The structure consists of three parts explained below:

Chapter 1 Practice This chapter highlights what the literature says about the practice of child and youth participation, and explores the links between practice and development effectiveness. Across a range of thematic areas, it considers how participation happens in practice and what impact child and youth participation practice has on development.

Chapter 2 Change Process This chapter highlights what the literature says about the change process that occurs with child and youth participation, and how it links to development effectiveness. It explores how NGOs design child and youth participation in programming, and what role children and youth should play in change processes.

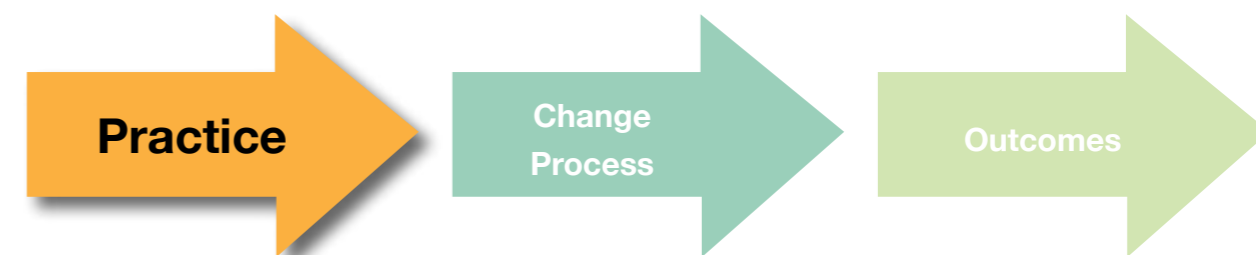
Chapter 3 Outcomes This chapter highlights what the literature says about the outcomes resulting from the change process and links to development effectiveness. It considers how NGOs and donors measure the outcomes of child participation and what role children and youth play in monitoring and evaluating development effectiveness.

Annex 1 This section contains definitions of development effectiveness, children and youth, and participation.





+ chapter 1: What does the literature say about child and youth participation in practice? How does practice link to development effectiveness?

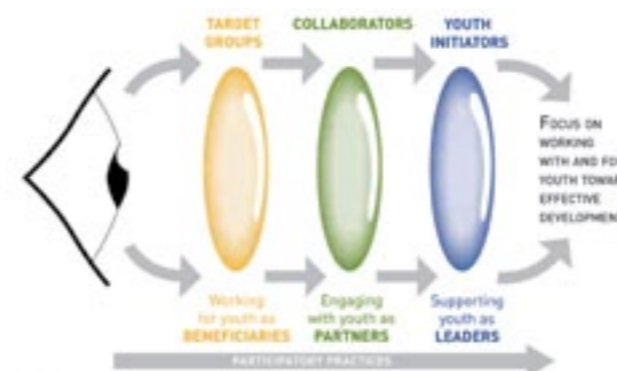


“Children are the most photographed and the least listened to members of society.” (Hart 1992: 9)

Key Point 1: Children and youth participate in different ways as beneficiaries, partners and/or leaders.

What does the literature say?

Different organisations are practicing different ways of engaging children and youth through participatory activities. DFID have a useful ‘three-lens approach to youth participation’ adapted from the World Bank Development Report 2007. Youth participation can be viewed through three lenses: with youth as beneficiaries; with youth as partners and/or with youth as leaders.



Lenses for participatory practice. Source: DFID 2010, Adapted from Work Bank Development Report 2007

The illustration below can be explained with these points:

- It is important to consider all three lenses;
- Different lenses can be used with different groups of young people during a project depending on the local context.
- Youth partners and leaders are also beneficiaries.
- The ultimate aim is to develop youth as partners and leaders in development based on youth having agency; i.e. the capacity to act, skills and capabilities and the ability to change their own lives.

The three lens approach complements work Bhatnager and Williams conducted for the World Bank in 1992 which considered the roles and operational levels of youth participation. In summary, roles include:

1. Information sharing: young people are informed to facilitate collective and individual action.
2. Consultation: young people are consulted and interact with an organisation which can incorporate their feedback and perspectives.
3. Decision-making: young people can own the decision-making process or share the role with others on specific issues of a project.
4. Initiating action: young people are proactive and able to take the initiative.

In considering the different types of roles children and youth can take in the practice of participation, and the operational level those roles are believed to move through to reach action, it is equally important to consider the question, **‘Why do organisations practice children’s participation?’**. Treseder’s answers are shown on the following page.

Why do organisations include child participation in their practice? (Source Treseder 1997)

Why involve children?	Justification
Based on principle	The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child includes children's right to participate in decision-making
Based on belief	That children have value as members of society and that adults can learn from and with them
Based on response to 'youth problems'	Such as behaviour, livelihoods, education, health and non-participation in decision-making
Based on citizenship	Because young people have citizen's rights and responsibilities
Based on pragmatism	Acknowledgment that participation leads to better decisions
Based on vision	Recognition of the mutual, life-enhancing benefits that come with engaging children and young people as equals

The literature suggests that this driver, 'based on principle', exists because of the internationally endorsed frameworks about the rights of young people to participate in development, to help meet the MDGs, and recognise that young people represent a growing proportion of national populations and are increasingly affected by development issues.

Evidence from practice

UNICEF Sierra Leone commissioned a partner civil society organisation (SPW Sierra Leone) to undertake a needs assessment with young people as researchers (DFID 2010). The assessment focused on children interviewing other children who had dropped out of school, those who never attended school, and those who had participated in non-formal school programs. The information collected was used to produce a set of guidelines for life skills programs delivering non-formal HIV education. Most life skills education for the prevention of HIV/AIDS undertaken by organisations is targeted only at young people in school. Youth were engaged as partners, with 20 people aged 18-22 receiving the skills to directly implement research in their communities using focus group discussions, interviews and consultative meetings with beneficiaries. Reported results found that this practice was a cost-effective way to collect information. Additional outcomes included youth partners developing skills and experiences, realising their own potential to undertake professional research. Out-of-school children commented that they found it easier to talk to young people than to adults (DFID 2010).

Implications for development effectiveness

“Development effectiveness cannot be realised if children are represented as passive actors or largely invisible.” (Harper et al. 2010)

The literature provides links between the practice of child and youth participation and aid effectiveness by citing the strong links between child and youth involvement in development activities and the benefits of tailoring programs to their strategic needs (Harper et al. 2010; DFID, CSO, 2010). The literature also supports the idea that including children in decision-making in development activities develops skills that shape their adulthood and develops their ability to voice their own perspectives (*ibid.*). DFID (2010) stresses that if activities are shaped to meet communities' needs, including the needs of children and youth, they will be more likely to lead to effective development.

Key Point 2: Literature on child development theory provides strong evidence supporting the importance of including child and youth participation in development practice.

What does the literature say?

Examining the history of how children grow and develop provides evidence for government policy makers and other actors (NGOs, CSOs, donors etc) to rethink how they view children and youth. In summary:

1. Early Western child theorists, including Sigmund Freud and Eric Erickson, regarded children as 'immature beings in a state of development'.
2. Later in the 1950s children (and youth) were viewed as actors, worth investing in. It was recognised that increasing skills and knowledge resulted in future returns.
3. This focus shifted again near the turn of the 21st Century, with researchers like Boyden and Levison (2000), saying that modern sociology sees childhood as more than a common or biological phase.
4. Boyden and Levison focused on the importance of children's own perspectives of their needs, abilities and free will. James and Prout (1990) agreed, adding that childhood is a social construction used to name the early years of life but has no other universal feature.
5. These new perspectives, led by Lev Vygotsky, recognise that children's social and cultural environments have a profound 'structuring' effect on them, greatly influencing their later development and behaviour (Boydon 2003).

Harper et al. (2009) and Jones and Sumner (2009) add that despite this recognition, the extent that mainstream development policy and practice incorporate understandings of childhood based on consultation with children remains still minimal outside the health and education sectors.

Some recent international development literature raises concerns about the practice of child participation following paternalistic models where 'children's needs' are built on adult perceptions of children's needs (Jones and Sumner 2009).

Evidence from practice

Practice shows that institutions, NGOs, governments and donors who are acknowledging the development, role and importance of child and youth participation in development activities are seeing the benefits. For instance, DFID (2010) found the following benefits for young people across five

case studies collated by their Youth Working Group:

- Improved skills, income, employment (including for socially excluded groups)
- Improvements in the sustainability of new and existing economic activities
- Improved health (including decreases in sexually transmitted infections and substance abuse), linking to MDG 5 and MDG 6
- Enhanced civil society engagement (including reduced violence and crime)
- Improved social and economic opportunities for young women (which is linked to later marriage and increased agency), linking to progress toward MDG 5
- Increased investments in continuing education by young people and their families

Implications for development effectiveness

Modern child theorists have turned around former theories that believed children to be incompetent, unreliable and unstable, and replaced them with an emphasis on children's ability to express their own perspectives concerning their needs, competencies and desire for involvement (Harper et al. 2010). This scientific evidence provides a foundation to support meaningful participation of children and youth in development activities.

Key Point 3: Child and youth participation practice is most commonly used in country level situational and poverty assessments and is documented to lead to more robust assessments, resulting in effective and targeted poverty reduction strategies.

What does the literature say?

Morrow (2006) notes that child and youth participation in national plan and policy development is often tokenistic and levels of participation vary.

Many countries forget to consider children's experiences of poverty (and the way these experiences change through childhood) in national situational analysis. Because of this neglect, there are few comprehensive child-focused approaches targeting child rights beyond education and health (Harper and Jones, 2009).

The literature provides some case studies of child and youth consultation assisting in the framing of development activities and resulting in policy that can better reflect children's concerns (Save the Children 2004; Morrow 2006; UNFPA 2008).

Evidence from practice

To help develop their Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), the Vietnamese Government commissioned Save the Children to conduct participatory consultations and reviews with children and young people in poor urban areas over a period of five years. The project found that:

- Children and youth can effectively contribute towards national PRSPs
- Child and youth perspectives can highlight issues that were overlooked by others leading to significant and positive policy changes
- Children and youth can play an important role in tracking progress through giving their feedback on how the strategy is progressing

Save the Children (2004) and UNFPA (2008) report that links between children's and young people's involvement in the Vietnamese PRSP and good development included that local officials learned from the process of child and youth participation by applying their knowledge and skills to their other work. Importantly, child and youth participation enabled the PRSP to be developed on the basis of evidence and research and is therefore more likely to target responses to those most in need. (Save the Children, 2004; UNFPA, 2008).

DFID, a CSO Working Group (2010), believes that involving young people in situational analysis (or policy and planning activities) creates an obligation to involve them in implementation and to meet their expectations.

Implications for development effectiveness

Having child and youth perspectives in national policy has been linked to more coordinated responses from government, NGOs, CSOs and donors which can lead to good development. DFID (2010) reflects that community level programs have translated poverty reduction assessments into appropriate targets and indicators so that accountability to national plans is happening at the community level.

Key Point 4: There is a great increase in innovative participation practices for engaging children and youth in poverty reduction initiatives.

What does the literature say?

A lot of literature talks about how challenging it is 'to do participation' well. GTZ (2008) says that consultation and dialogue are the most common form of child and youth participation practice, however many other new and innovative practices have been documented:

Documented collaborative practices Collaborative practices include leadership training, youth-adult

partnerships and co-management, child and youth group and network formation, and outreach engagement (e.g. through cultural activities, sport and other 'enabling' activities). Broadly speaking, these types of youth participation can be viewed as working with young people (through collaboration) and/or empowering young people (through development of capabilities) (Harper et al, 2009).

Documented peer-to-peer practices Bruno-van Vijeijken et al. (2011) refer to methods such as peer-to-peer approaches and community volunteer outreach as having potential to enhance behaviour change. Peer-to-peer can deal well with culturally sensitive issues amongst young people.

Peer-to-peer education is commonly cited as being used to address health issues including HIV and AIDS prevention and support adolescent reproductive health (ARH), including safer sex practices recorded in higher risk groups and females in particular. Peer education initiatives are commonly directed at children from age 10 through to people in their early 20s. However it's noted that this body of literature does not compare the effectiveness of using adult educators compared to youth educators (Vatsia, 2007).

“Peer educators are very effective in reaching individuals and groups at especially high risk, including males having sex with males, young people who are sexually exploited, gang members, homeless youth and those who use drugs. Many of these young people distrust adults too strongly for adult social workers to reach them. But peer educators are members of the communities they aim to reach; they meet these young people on their own territory, speak the same language and, most importantly, treat them with respect.” (UNICEF 2002: 32)

Harper et al. (2010) suggests that peer-to-peer practice can double as capacity strengthening support for resource and capacity-constrained children's agencies, NGOs and ministries for social welfare. Other reports, including FHI/USAID 2010, find the effectiveness of peer education initiatives to vary and question the role of youth in bridging capacity gaps.

According to UNICEF (2002) and Adamchak (2006), effectiveness in peer education can be enhanced by sustaining projects over time, and challenging and engaging young people as well as giving them an ongoing sense of responsibility. DFID (2010) and UNICEF (2002) add that if peer educators come from within the target community, it enables stronger levels of promoting community support and engagement compared to cases where educators come from outside the community.

Documented use of innovative and creative media Roche (2009) notes an “explosion of interest” in the potential of new technologies in development practice, particularly social networking platforms (blogs, Facebook, chatrooms etc), which act effectively as a channel for

opinions to be expressed and young people's voices to be heard. He suggests that in terms of accountability, such tools allow those with less power to tell their story and/or hold NGO and other stakeholders more accountable. The response is reported to be an increased level of upward and downward accountability through increased levels of transparency (*ibid.*). This trend is particularly present in developed countries and a reported outcome of ChildFund Connect - a project where children in Australia share stories with children in other program countries via new innovative technologies.

Documented use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) has 10 years of experience providing support for the use of ICTs for development, including a focus on child participation and links to development effectiveness. With this track record Kalas and Spurk (2011) reviewed project reports, studies and evaluations to identify some lessons learned.

The strengths and weaknesses of ICTs and traditional formats such as radio, television and print media were directly linked to their access and usage (Kalas and Spurk 2011). Accessibility of mobile phones has grown strongly in developing regions. Many mobile phones in developing countries reportedly have a widely used radio application, breaking the longstanding situation of the (male) household head being the only person to own a radio set and allowing youth to be direct recipients of messages even in some remote locations (*ibid.*).

Addressing inequality and the social exclusion of vulnerable groups of young people is a big challenge, even for child focused organisations. Creative methods to encourage the participation of these groups, such as the use of radio to reach out (for instance to illiterate youth in rural settings), has been used and cited as an effective tool in poverty reduction strategies (Masters 2004).

Phone-in radio programming, including the use of text messaging, has been shown to be a popular radio format in Africa (Kalas and Spurk 2011). The radio enhances public discussion based on popular feedback and the airing of views of various groups including youth.

The literature says that ICTs and traditional media are no longer considered to be separate and in conflict. Instead they are viewed as different instruments within the same toolkit that can be used together to engage children and youth, especially youth, for many purposes.

From their review of many SDC projects, Kalas and Spurk (2011) found the main success factors for effectiveness in ICT and media support include direct influence and support from personal, peer, or community participation, and the need for the technology to be embedded in wider social change and action programs. When these considerations are practiced there is evidence that ICT and media in the development sectors improve young people's voice, participation and accountability in programs.

Evidence from practice

Examples of successful ICT child and youth participation practice to assist development approaches include; using

mobiles to send information to young farmers, featuring environmental programs on radio or TV, raising awareness in different parts of society, having youth contribute to TV or radio through call-ins, and using education to enhance youths' capacity to use media that is accessible to them (especially those who are economically poor and marginalised) (SDC 2011).

Implications for development effectiveness

Many development obstacles can be overcome by transforming values and exploring new ways of working with, and for, youth.

DFID (2010) warns that deepening inequalities by targeting youth leaders from well-known and visible groups must be avoided. Instead, it is important to understand, plan and account for inequalities in power relationships and gender dynamics to reach good outcomes.

Percy-Smith and Malone (2001) point to the importance of building partnerships between adults and youth in a culturally sensitive way for good development outcomes. They believe that best practice child participation needs the traditional, adult dominated system to change and make room for children's values. If we do not include children's values, decision-making will stay in the structures that exclude the voice of children and youth, and development effectiveness will be limited.

Key Point 5: Child and youth participation has been documented as appropriate and effective across a range of thematic areas. Good practice has been well documented for child and youth participation in health, post disaster and peace building projects

What does the literature say?

ChildFund Australia (2011) found that a lot of literature notes the benefits of child and youth participation on development effectiveness across different and cross-cutting project themes. New evidence below builds on these findings.

Disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation With the increasing risks associated with climate change, new strategies are emerging which aim to empower children and youth to become agents of change and the leaders of their generation with regard to climate change adaptation (see for example, Plan 2010, UNICEF 2011). New approaches put into practice local strategies which enable children and youth, together with their communities, to reduce their vulnerability to climate change impacts (Polack 2010).

Emergencies, conflicts and post-disaster recovery UNDP (2006) notes that youth participation “has been particularly strong in post-conflict settings” and peace processes provide opportunities for a higher degree of

youth participation. However timely donor-driven aid responses (e.g. disaster response) often overlook including beneficiaries such as children (McIver and Myllenen, 2005). “Pressures of time and the urgency to respond have often meant that beneficiaries targeted in emergency situations are not consulted about the appropriateness of aid or the mechanism of its delivery to them” (McIver and Myllenen 2005: 6). This highlights the value of designating children’s and youth’s roles in any aid response before disasters occur.

Health including HIV/AIDS

There is a depth of literature on child and youth participation in sexual and reproductive health themed initiatives (including UNICEF (2002) and WHO (2003)). Entry points are documented as being through peer-to-peer education (DFID, 2010). HIV/AIDSs focused projects are reported to present opportunities for social change and changing the position of young people, as is sex education more generally, together with human rights and gender (Harper et al. 2009).

Livelihoods

Youth livelihood themes, including nutrition and food security (focused on skills transfer related to governance, voice and accountability) are documented as a key entry point for wide scale youth participation and as essential to equipping young people with peace-building skills (DFID, 2010).

Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

The Watercan project in Canada provides an example of children’s participation in a WASH initiative. This approach draws upon child-to-child activities which encourage awareness of health and hygiene issues (see www.child-to-child.org). A further example from a UNICEF project in Tajikistan drew upon a partnership approach between NGOs, the government, young people and UNICEF staff. This project noted that “schoolchildren can be easily encouraged to adopt child-to-child, child-to parent and parent-to-community approaches as an effective way to promote ‘Total Sanitation’” (UNICEF, 2010). Please refer to ChildFund Australia 2011 for a wide range of relevant case studies and implications for development effectiveness relating to practice across thematic contexts.

+ chapter 2: What does the literature say about the change process that occurs with child and youth participation? How does the change process link to development effectiveness?



“In defining effectiveness, two things need to be looked at – the outcome of an exercise and the process associated with the exercise.” (Rowe and Frewer 2004: 520)

Evidence from practice

Six NGOs are working in more than 100 Solomon Island communities from 2009-2014 under the AusAID-funded Solomon Islands NGO Partnership Agreement (SINPA). The change process that has occurred as a result of child and youth participation was described by an NGO field officer during a reflection and learning workshop:

“We started working with the youths to try to reduce their home brew dependence. We talked about culture, change and custom law. We involved the youths in the community learning centre. We also worked with and talked to the police to work with us as well as gaining support for youths from a Provincial Government member. We worked with everyone to map an alternative vision for the youths so Ministry for Agriculture helped deliver a workshop on farming for youths. So now the reliance [on home brew] is reduced but still a little bit there. People are respecting each other more.” (APHEDA Community learning centre leader in Willetts et al. 2010)

Other field officers commented on the change process they witnessed: “Young people are beginning to be assertive in the community” and “Youth are realising their potential and taking pride in their achievements”(Willetts et al. 2010).

Implications for development effectiveness

There is difficulty in linking child and youth participation in the change process directly to development effectiveness.

Key point 1: The change process that occurs during child and youth participation can be motivating, empowering, confidence building, and enhance child-adult relationships.

What does the literature say?

Authors describe the changes occurring as a result of child and youth participation in the change process as;

- Motivating, empowering, and confidence building for children and youth (Harper et al. 2003).
- Building stronger partnerships between adults and children and children’s empowerment in influencing the change process (Lansdown 2005).
- Increasing children’s skills in self-directed action and changing adults’ perceptions of children and youth’s abilities and capacities (*ibid.*).
- Highlighting the CRC and the idea that children and youth have rights, so adults view children as active agents in their own lives rather than passive recipients (Giertsen 2001).

These are all important ingredients in moving toward program sustainability, which is a core focus of aid effectiveness.



An individual 'cause' is hard to single out and prove because of the complex interactions within any program. However, some literature links child and youth participation with ownership and mutual accountability. These outcomes align with some of the participation and accountability principles of the Paris Principles.

Key Point 2: Engagement of young people in all stages of the project lifecycle as much as possible (in planning, design, implementation, and M&E) can lead to effective development.

What does the literature say?

Hinton (2008) and Hart (2002) agree and document that children's participation throughout a project can lead to tangible (and intangible) benefits to children's wellbeing. They also believe that involving children within the concepts of ownership and partnership is consistent with the CRC. Plan Indonesia include children's participation at each stage of their approach, called Child Centred Community Development (CCCD). Plan report that this leads to better poverty reduction strategies. DFID (2010) identify four operational areas in which youth can actively participate in creating change, including:

1. Organisational development.
2. Policy and planning.
3. Implementation.
4. Monitoring and evaluation

As donors and NGOs begin to include child-specific systems for monitoring and evaluation, they are also faced with ongoing discussions of *how* to involve children in M&E&L components of the project cycle.

DFID (2010) says that involving, training and supporting young people who are beneficiaries in monitoring and evaluation can produce more accurate data. However young people will need to learn technical skills to be able to contribute in a meaningful way. The literature warns that some stakeholders will be sensitive about discussing failures or issues with young people, as they may view them as having a lower status. This means for effective child and youth participation in monitoring and evaluation it is important to match young people's skills with contextual considerations (*ibid.*).

Landsdown (2005) believes that genuine participatory engagement is likely if children and youth are enabled to become researchers and are involved in discussions about research findings, analysis and future implications. Harper and Jones (2009), believe that the benefits of monitoring and evaluation in development practice are well understood, however the availability of clear monitoring and evaluation systems for child-rights policy and program implementation is lacking across most donors' approaches.

Evidence from practice

The literature also says young people's involvement should start in the design phase. One reason for this is that the design phase, partly because this phase involves building trusted relationships (Williams 2004).

An example of not involving children during the design phase comes from Egypt, where a local NGO worked with CIDA to include children six months into an initiative. (CIDA 2011). Young people identified design weaknesses and developed more effective implementation strategies, including a revised time frame for including youth in future projects. (CIDA 2011). While late inclusion of children had positive outcomes, their inclusion from the outset would have saved time and resources and delivered better outcomes. UNFPA and UNCT developed a scorecard for youth participation (see below) which asks whether young people have been adequately considered in planning, as well as monitoring and evaluation phases.

	Yes, sufficient	Yes, but not sufficient	Not addressed
a. Do young people engage in structured discussion during the planning stage?			
b. Do young people develop work plans in collaboration with adults?			
c. Do young people give feedback and comments to develop the work plan?			
d. Do young people lead the activity?			
e. Do young people contribute and have influence on the outcomes?			
f. Do programmes have opportunity of BOTH youth-youth communication and youth-adult communication?			
g. Are decision-making roles shared among young people and adults?			
h. Are young people involved in selecting indicators to be tracked and organising how they are monitored?			
i. Are young people involved in gathering information, analysis and reporting?			
j. Are young people involved in review meetings of activity progress?			

Youth Participation Scorecard (Source: DFID, 2010).

CIDA (2011) highlight that it is important to recognise that involving young people in all stages of project lifecycles is not always appropriate or practical and you need to keep in mind that participation should never increase their vulnerability.

Implications for development effectiveness

Plan make direct linkages between aid effectiveness and child participation by aligning their CCCD approach with the principles of the Paris Declaration of Aid Effectiveness:

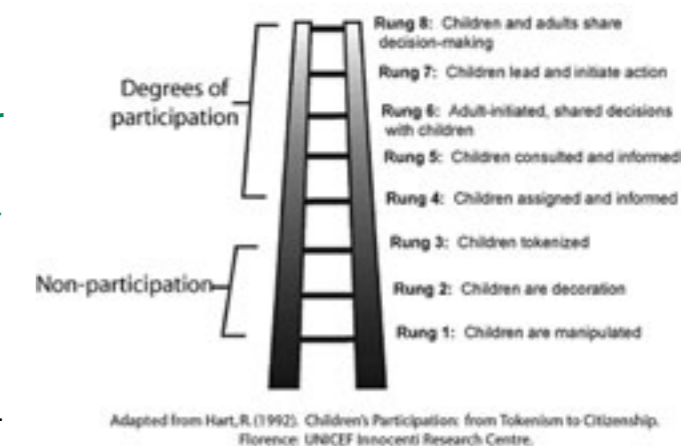
Mapping the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness to Plan's CCCD Approach (Source: Zuurmond 2010).

Principles of The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness	Child Centred Community Development
Mutual accountability: Aid donors and the governments of developing countries are accountable for development results	Governments are held accountable on child rights and programmes strengthen their domestic accountability. This, in turn, strengthens their ability to be a partner in mutual accountability. Plan is accountable to children, families, communities, partners, sponsors and donors for its contribution to bringing about lasting change in the lives of children.
Ownership: The state and the relevant national civil society institutions lead the national development agenda	By recognising the roles and obligations of national bodies the CCCD approach affirms and supports country leadership in promoting child rights.
Alignment: Donors design their overall support on partner countries' national development strategies, institutions and procedures	The objectives of the CCCD approach are to contribute to the realisation of child rights by seeking the consideration of child rights in national development programmes, strategies and orgs.
Harmonisation: Donors' actions are more harmonised, transparent and collectively effective	The CCCD approach requires working in alliances, partnerships to address child rights issues
Managing for results: Donors and partners manage and implement aid in a way that focuses on the desired results and uses information to improve decision making	The CCCD approach allows a clear definition of results to be achieved based on the Articles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Key Point 3: Different methods and levels of child and youth participation have different change processes and outcomes for access to assets, voice, agency, power and protection.

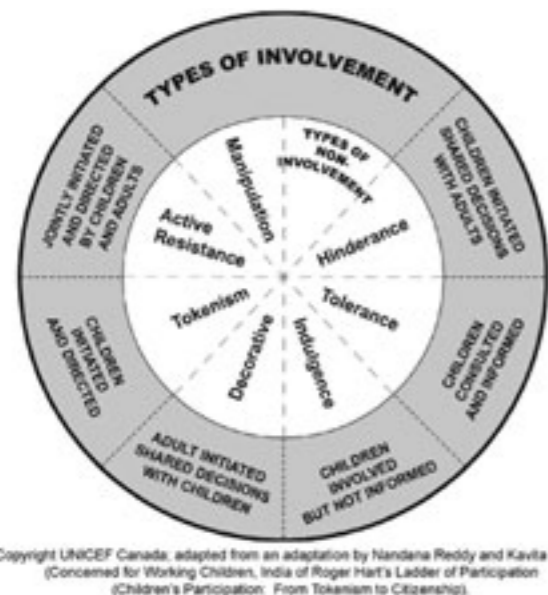
What does the literature say?

There is a lot of literature about participation and its many approaches (see Arnstein 1969; Hart 1992 and CIDA 2011). Since the adoption of the CRC, there has been a growing number of sources that look at child and youth participation. Most of the literature is built on Arnstein's 1969 'Ladder of Citizenship Participation', with Hart modifying the ladder for the concept of child and youth participation. Many child-focused organisations have modified Hart's ladder to suit their own needs (see right). The aim is to move up the hierarchy to achieve genuine participation of children with shared power and decision-making (CIDA 2011). The ChildFund participation ladder is adapted from Hart.



Source: CIDA 2011.

Additional ways of viewing participation have been developed to remove the concept of the ladder hierarchy and to recognise different types of child and youth participation (CIDA, 2011).



Copyright UNICEF Canada, adapted from an adaptation by Nandana Reddy and Kavita Ratna (Concerned for Working Children, India of Roger Hart's Ladder of Participation (Children's Participation: From Tokenism to Citizenship).

Wheel of children's participation, Source: CIDA 2011

Treseder notes that ladders like Hart's are simple and well known models, but he is uncomfortable with the hierarchy that suggest that the lower rungs on the ladder are less worthwhile. He says it is important to note that all different modes and levels of engagement (including those on the lower rungs of the ladder) have their own value and may be appropriate in different settings, depending on desired outcomes, outputs and impacts (Treseder 1997).

Participation can also be assessed on the basis of what level of influence an intervention seeks to achieve. Williams (2004), found that children's influence is most significant, successful and sustainable in relation to local issues – such as school issues, safety issues and local village issues. Williams (2004) suggests that it is hard for young people to challenge power relations and social norms beyond their immediate surroundings.

The majority of literature depicts engagement as either one-off (often called 'tokenistic') or ongoing. Williams (2004) warns that one-off engagement with children and youth can sometimes generate wide media attention with high, short-term impact, but result in a change process which is not linked to strong outcomes. Long-term processes of engagement are seen as being necessary to have sustainable changes with greater and more lasting effects related to access to assets, voice, agency, power and protection (*ibid.*).

Whether intentionally or not, adults can interfere and ruin the participation of children and young people through:

- Authoritarian behaviour.
- Unethical behaviour.
- Ignorance.
- Poor management, and/or lack of adequate training.
- Reluctance to attend forums or workshops that children are participating in (Save the Children 2010).

Cornwall (2003), draws attention to the tensions and fit between "gender-aware" and "participatory" approaches:

"Both gender and participation are areas where the rhetoric is full of grand sounding promises of empowerment of the marginalized" and instead "often takes the shape of enlisting people in pre-determined ventures and securing their compliance with pre-shaped development agendas." (Cornwall 2003: 1327)

Understanding the full context of a program is important to ensure an appropriate approach to participation is identified. It is best to choose one which accommodates different ways of participating as well as gender differences and sensitivities.

Evidence from practice

An example of a highly participatory initiative comes from Nepal, where UNFPA worked to mainstream the concept of youth participation through a number of processes which formed part of a youth audit (DFID 2010). Young people were involved in the project as partners and worked with UNFPA officers to design a scorecard to measure youth involvement. The change process that occurred as a result of this highly participatory approach relates to youth also being the beneficiaries of the project, with the audit findings resulting from the use of the scorecard being of benefit to the youth. In addition, local government representatives changed their views of the involvement of youth: "The assessment triggered our thoughts and reflected the true level of youth engagement in UNFPA Nepal's work. This assessment also helped us reinforce the message of meaningful youth engagement in our work by making us rethink the notion of youth participation and its position within the organisation." (Source: DFID 2010:28).

Implications for development effectiveness

Save the Children (2010) highlight some specific strategies to assist working at the top rungs of the participation ladder while building trusting relationships. These include:

1. Development of partnerships for sustainable initiatives in the longer-term.
2. Development of partnerships for implementing and measuring the impacts of local initiatives.
3. Identifying and encouraging existing cultural practices that support child and youth participation

These strategies all have the potential to improve development and are directly aligned to the principles of development effectiveness as noted in the Paris Declaration (OECD 2005).

Key Point 4: Active involvement of children and youth in programming has been shown to foster sustainability in some circumstances.

What does the literature say?

As noted in ChildFund's 2011 literature review, a body of literature states that the active involvement of children and young people in programming can foster greater sustainability of programs (ChildFund Philippines 2008; DFID 2010; Ataöv and Haider 2006; Sabo 2001; Cahill 2007). Furthermore, it is noted that participation enhances ownership of, and commitment to, development initiatives (Ataöv and Haider 2006; DFID 2010; Sabo 2001; Cahill, 2007; Van Beers 2003).

The literature also introduces some challenges with children's participation, related to sustainability. For instance, Save the Children (2010) describes barriers to sustainability in projects involving child and youth participation; including the:

- 1) **Mindset** of most organisations, as children's participation is not yet a mainstream issue and is not recognised as important or logical.
- 2) **Money** required to ensure genuine participation occurs, including preparation, training and ongoing projects.
- 3) Continual **momentum** required to ensure key benefits of children are realised.

Even though the short-term benefits of child and youth participation may be obvious, longer term sustainability issues, as well as those linked to the realisation of human rights, may be harder to define and therefore harder to prove (*ibid.*).

Plan's 2011 evaluation of projects in Nepal supports the importance of mindset, money and momentum, finding that initiatives that linked communities (inclusive of children and youth) with state institutions revealed more sustainable outcomes (Bruno-Van Vijfeijken et al 2011). Community ownership was found to result from the partnership and was identified as key to ensuring sustainability of the initiative. A Plan review document from 2007, notes that:

"In terms of sustainability, Plan's emphasis on partnerships, networking, institutional and civil society strengthening seems to be delivering strong outcomes." (Betts 2007: 53)

Evidence from practice

The role of partnership in sustainability was demonstrated in a CIDA funded project in Egypt which strengthened the numeracy and literacy skills of children. By including businesses alongside children and youth in the development a formal Code of Conduct, and requiring

businesses to sign on to the Code to access credit, children and youth built a lasting partnership with the private sector (CIDA 2011). This demonstrates a sustainable outcome, given positive impacts lasting beyond the project period.

Implications for development effectiveness

Aligning child and youth participation with national priorities, strategies and institutions contributes to the ability to sustain project outcomes and impacts in the longer term, thus supporting the Paris Principles.

Key Point 5: In cases where child and youth participation is reported to link to development effectiveness, strong governance structures, frameworks, plans and policies are already in place.

What does the literature say?

"The extent to which children's rights are addressed within a country's legislative framework, to a large extent, reveals the manner in which children are perceived within that society." (Save the Children 2010: 9)

Harper et al (2009), Hart (1992) and ODI (2009) note that the existence of national policies can support organisations implementing their own ways of including young people in programming. Assisting this process are regional programs of child-focused international development agencies such as UNICEF, Save the Children and Plan, who provide support in developing models (some included in this document) for child and youth participation. Save the Children (2010) suggests that these models then allow smaller NGOs and CSOs to implement child participation programs by enhancing their own capacity to take the resources and adapt them for their own governance mechanisms to support their initiatives.

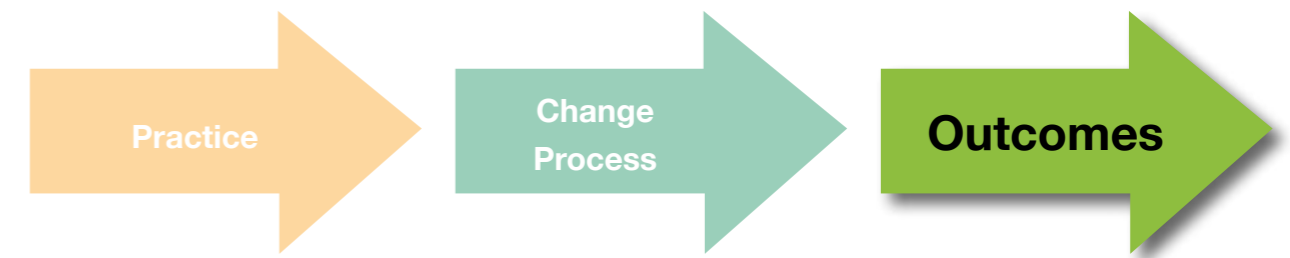
The CRC is still poorly embedded in broad government and organisational policies and programs. This can be attributed, in part, to the challenges noted in the previous section referring to mindset, money and momentum (Save the Children 2010). The literature reflects that translating the CRC into local laws and policies can be a challenge if child and youth participation is a new concept and not yet acceptable or mainstreamed in a society (Harper et al 2009; Save the Children 2010).

Implications for development effectiveness

For effective development, national frameworks need to guide community-level approaches to child and participation, in order to ensure consistency, transparency and that participation is not tokenistic.



+ chapter 3: What does the literature say about the outcomes from child and youth participation? What are the links between the outcomes and development effectiveness?



“(Child and youth) participation promotes learning, empowerment and greater control of lives, which enables a wide range of voices to be heard” (DFID CSO Children and Youth network 2010)

- Strengthened citizens’ commitment to and understanding of democracy: child participation benefits both children and adults. It offers children the opportunity to learn about their rights and duties in a manner that is practical and relevant to them. Child participation also helps adults to respect children and to treat them as fellow citizens.

Key Point 1: Common outcomes of child and youth participation include increased access to decision-making and increased influence, advocacy and voice, which can all lead to better development outcomes.

Benefits to Children

- Children achieve the specific objectives they advocate for: this shows children that their participation in governance is not purely tokenistic.
- Increased likelihood of continued child participation: past examples of child participation show that adults who collaborate with children in policymaking gain experience of the significance of children’s contributions and are more likely to expand and strengthen forums for child participation.
- Developmental benefits: *“Child participation provides significant developmental benefits for children and adolescents and allows them to develop the competencies and confidence they need to play an active role in society” (ADAP 2009: 3)*. It also improves their leadership skills and self-esteem.
- Improvement in children’s wellbeing through increased awareness of rights: when children’s rights are taken seriously, and when they understand that they have rights and are entitled to change exploitative situations, they are in a better position to protect themselves from victimisation and to alert adults and institutions that can offer them assistance when they are being victimised (Lansdown 2001: 7; ADAP 2009: 3).

What does the literature say?

Outcomes of child and youth participation cited in the literature include gains in self-esteem, enhanced empowerment, new skills and becoming more active citizens (Sabo 2001). Save the Children (2010) group the outcomes of good practice in child participation into two categories – general benefits and benefits to children. ADAP (2009) also support Save the Children and Sabo. Lansdown (2001) and DFID (2010) also contribute a good body of literature toward this topic. A summary is presented below.

General Benefits (of child and youth participation)

- Better decisions and policies: child participation allows decision-makers to tap into children’s unique knowledge and experience of government policies.
- Increased number of service providers: by involving children in initiatives as researchers or peer educators on matters they have experience of, an increased number of service providers are available to CSOs and government (ADAP 2009: 16)

Evidence from practice

Bruno-van Vijfeijken et al. (2009) uses an example from Guatemala where an outcome of a project seeking to raise

children’s awareness of human rights included children’s enhanced ability to relate their new knowledge about rights to their daily lives, saying “we have fewer arguments now and respect each other more”. This initiative also resulted in positive outcomes for females, with leadership skills emerging as an outcome in a male dominated society (Bruno-van Vijfeijken et al. 2009).

A 2011 review of Plan’s CCCD approach classified outcomes according to four dimensions: behaviour change, service access and quality, sustainability and equity (Bruno-van Vijfeijken et al. 2011). Plan’s CCCD approach was found to have influential outcomes in the dimensions of behaviour change and access to services, while outcomes for sustainability and equity were less obvious (*ibid.*).

Implications for development effectiveness

As the mainstreaming of child and youth participation in development gains momentum, NGOs, donors and development partners can work together to contribute to a harmonised approach to participatory, inclusive efforts and thereby work towards the principles stated in the Paris Declaration. DFID (2010) states that encouraging young people to engage with development can be linked to the Paris Principles in the following ways:

Enables the exercise of citizenship: exercising the Paris Principle of **mutual accountability**.

Makes initiatives appropriate for youth: building young people’s commitment to the solutions exercising the Paris principle of **ownership**.

Strives further towards **making the MDGs a reality:** linked to the Paris principle of **managing for results**. The World Bank, UNFPA and the Commonwealth Secretariat have identified youth engagement with democracy, development and peace building as critical to reaching the MDGs (DFID, 2010:7).

Key Point 2: Outcomes vary according to the approach used for participation; however uncertainty surrounds selecting the most appropriate approach that can be linked to development effectiveness.

What does the literature say?

“Many of the results credited to participatory approaches with children and young people appear to be in the very early stages – measurements of change may thus be premature or may at most indicate the potential for broader based change over time.” (ChildFund 2011: 8)

Given that child and youth participation is a relatively new idea in the area of programming, CIDA (2011) says that participation should be seen as an art, rather than a science, meaning there is not a strict procedure or method to follow to ensure appropriate participation.

Further, DFID (2010) confirms that assessing the most appropriate approach recognises children and youth as a group diverse across cultural backgrounds, education, gender, social groups, economic status and life experiences.

While some progress has been made to share methodological successes, Save the Children (2010) notes that:

“There is a need for tools and support to shift children’s participation from a set of activities or discrete projects to an approach or ‘way of working’.” (Save the Children 2010: 5)

Further, Save the Children (2010) cites the need to provide practical training in methodologies of child participation, to support reflection and theory. The need to network with other relevant organisations is also noted, so as to share effective (and potentially ineffective) approaches and methodologies which result in positive (or negative) outcomes.

Evidence from practice

A project in Nepal, funded by Save the Children and focused on supporting children’s clubs, drew primarily upon a range of participatory group methods as an approach to engage different children and youth. It was acknowledged that one method alone can hide individual differences and overlook issues of power. Individual interviews were introduced alongside the group approach to seek honest perspectives throughout the process and ensure that all voices could be heard (Rajbhandary et al 2001).

Implications for development effectiveness

“In fundamental ways, successful participation requires a paradigm shift among organisations, as they reconceptualise their role as not working for but with children.” (Giertsen 2001: 17)

Uncertainty in the approach of involving children and youth can pose challenges in how to measure outcomes. Plan’s 2011 review of its CCCD approach includes a matrix which seeks to help map CCCD strategies against potential good development outcomes including access, equity and sustainability which can be found in Bruno-van Vijfeijken et al. 2011 and the full literature review report.

Another Plan tool seeks to assess effectiveness of its approach against the following categories which aim to promote human rights: 1) attitudes and behaviours, 2) spaces and processes, 3) institutions, 4) legislation and policies, and 5) civic action. Authors note that understanding the importance of looking for these kinds of interactions and outcomes is key in designing, monitoring and evaluation frameworks, implementation processes and reporting.

Key Point 3: Intangible outcomes are often overlooked, however they have an important role to play in contributing to good development.

What does the literature say?

As shown in previous chapters, child and youth participation outcomes are commonly intangible in nature (e.g. feelings of ownership and confidence). Due to the difficulty of measuring and capturing intangible outcomes, they are often overlooked. The contribution that intangible outcomes can make to illustrate the benefits of child and youth participation toward development effectiveness is not widely documented. DFID (2010) illustrate intangible outcomes through an iceberg diagram below. Intangible elements are shown below the surface as less visible parts of youth participation.

Intangible outcomes (such as better learning environments, enhanced citizenship skills and increased confidence in children’s creativity and resourcefulness), were found to be most commonly cited – Guerra (2004); Lansdown



Youth participation as an ‘ice-berg’ of more visible and less visible outcomes. Source: DFID, 2010.

(2001); Lansdown (2005); and Davies (2002). Also noted in ChildFund (2011) and supported by Foresti et al (2007) and McNeil and Mumvuma (2006), is the importance of exploring direct, indirect and intangible outcomes of initiatives by drawing upon both qualitative and quantitative indicators.

CIDA (2011) and Bruno-van Vijfeijken et al. (2011) note that longer term benefits of participation of children and young people have been intangible attitudinal and behavioural changes, with added benefits of improved relationships and personal growth; all ingredients for citizens leading good development.

Evidence from practice

An example of intangible outcomes of child and youth participation comes from involvement of school children through the introduction of more democratic structures. Not only were children’s confidence and competence enhanced, leading to measurable increases in their abilities, but the school environments were more harmonious, and relationships between students and teachers were enriched (Lansdown 2005). These largely immeasurable outcomes illustrate the intangible outcomes participation can achieve.

Implications for development effectiveness

Incorporating approaches to purposefully look for and reveal intangible outcomes of child and youth participation is very important, given the impacts these difficult-to-measure outcomes can have in meeting the Paris Principles and striving toward good development practice.

Intangible outcomes may be positive or negative – it is equally important to capture both in order to ensure lessons learned are not limited to quantitative measures alone.

Key Point 4: The process of young people's participation in a project has been shown to have an important impact in contributing to development effectiveness.

What does the literature say?

The topic of participation can be understood in a number of ways as it relates to development effectiveness. Natal (2002) notes that participation can be described as either a process or approach to meet objectives, or it can be regarded as an outcome or an end in itself. Lansdown (2005) notes that to be meaningful, child and youth participation requires power to be allocated to children so they can shape both the process of participation and the outcomes that result. This concept requires further thought and analysis, as noted by Kirby and Bryson (2002):

“There is currently insufficient theorising about how program processes and contexts interrelate to produce outcomes.” (Kirby and Bryson 2002: 7)

ChildFund (2011) provides ample description of the literature that places importance of process as an end in itself and correspondingly, how this process can go on to influence outcomes of the project and link to good development (see for example Hart (1992); Ataöv and Haider (2006); Lansdown (2005); Plan UK (2003)). As noted by ChildFund (2011), and as described in Chapter 2, the methodological approach a process of participation

takes, including its quality and contextual relevance, has significant implications for the results or outcomes of the initiative. However, despite the evidence that participation often leads to positive outcomes for the children and youth involved, there is limited data available linking their participation to more broader development outcomes.

Evidence from practice

When discussing a rights-based approach to child participation, a Plan partner organisation noted “This is a process, not a project”. This highlights the significance of ongoing outcomes stemming from their approach, and the need to move from measuring quantitative indicators as ‘end of project’ outcomes in line with stated aims (Bruno-van Vijfeijken et al. 2009).

Implications for development effectiveness

Practitioners and policy makers need to be open to the diverse benefits of child and youth participation, especially the intangible ones.

Feeny and Boyden (2003) reflect on the influence child and youth participation can have on effective development:

Children who are capable of lateral thinking and problem solving can enhance their coping (in contexts of poverty) by identifying alternative options to their current circumstances and devising creative solutions. (Feeny and Boyden 2003: 13)

More investigation is needed into outcomes for children and youth that stem from their engagement in development activities and what this means for higher level, longer term development effectiveness.

+ concluding remarks

This literature review has presented some of the latest academic thinking and theories on the contribution child and youth participation makes to development effectiveness. Many sources strongly support the benefits of child and youth participation to good development practice. However few directly show how genuine inclusion of children and youth in development initiatives has direct positive impacts on development effectiveness.

Only a small amount of research and critical analysis has been undertaken in this field and there are many donors, development partners, CSOs and NGOs at the forefront of devising policies, processes and practices to support genuine participation of children and youth.

Although significant progress has been made, further evidence is required to build the sector's understanding of the role that child and youth participation can play in increasing development effectiveness.





+ definitions

Development effectiveness

Development effectiveness has become a central concern of all stakeholders involved in development. International discussion on the issue resulted in the Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the Accra Agenda for Action in 2005. These international agreements, which focus on the roles of donors, partners, governments, CSOs and NGOs, highlight the need to improve the distribution, management and implementation of aid projects (OECD 2005).

The five key principles of the Paris Declaration include:

1. Partner country ownership of development implementation.
2. Donor alignment with partner country development strategies.
3. Harmonisation of donor development approaches and activities.
4. Managing for better results through national development strategies and performance frameworks.
5. Mutual accountability between partners and donors.

ChildFund Australia draws on the 2004 Australian Council for Development Effectiveness definition of effectiveness:

“Promoting sustainable change which addresses the causes as well as the symptoms of poverty and marginalisation – i.e. reduces poverty and builds capacity within communities, civil society and government to address their own development priorities,” (ChildFund 2010)

In an effort to enhance the sustained impact of programs it supports, ChildFund Australia has developed a Theory of Change which identifies the causes of child poverty and the transmission of child poverty across generations.

Children and youth

The terms ‘children’, ‘youth’ and ‘young person’ are used throughout the literature with different definitions. The UN definition is commonly used and is the definition ChildFund Australia use for measuring effectiveness.

The UN, for statistical purposes, defines ‘youth’ as people aged 15-24, while also noting more culturally and contextually appropriate definitions individual countries may have. The range provided by the UN definition is helpful in capturing many young people who have finished school, are sexually active and facing livelihoods issues and the wider effects of poverty.

By the UN definition, children are those persons aged 14 and under.

Importantly, as noted by DFID (2010), identifying children, young people and youth is not, and should not be artificial; it is about ensuring that none of the population is excluded from development projects and processes. It is about the need to design programs and projects specifically for the needs of the age of people they are targeting.

Participation

Different frameworks have been used to think about participation and have been adapted for child and youth participation initiatives. Participation and participatory development are commonly confused terms, as they can mean different things to different people.

The World Bank defined participation as:

“A process through which stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives and the decisions and resources which affect them.” (World Bank 1994: 1)

DFID’s definition is linked to a rights perspective:

“...enabling people to realise their rights to participate in, and access, information relating to the decision-making processes which affect their lives.” (DFID, 2000)

The focus on child rights has increased interest in discourse on youth participation. The literature states that participation is often very superficial in cases where young people are invited to one-off consultations. In such cases child and youth voices do not often affect real decisions. This kind of participation can be a tokenistic and frustrating. Real participation includes a redistribution of power (Ackermann et al 2000; Auriat, N., Miljeteig, P. and Chawla, L., 2001; Cahill, C., 2007; CIDA, 2011; Chawla, Louise, 2001; ChildFund Australia, 2011; DFID 2010; Harper and Jones 2009; Hart, R 1992; Landsdown 2001, Masters et al 2004; Shier 2001; Tisdall, 2008).

In Arnstein’s 1969 paper on citizen participation, he talks about participation in terms of citizen power, and he says that genuine participation leads to inclusion in decision-making processes. The ladder of participation, Figure 1, from Arnstein (1969), provides a simple illustration of the various forms of participation, from manipulation up to citizen control. Hart’s ladder model of participation is viewed as a pathway of activities that happen and in 1992

+ references

Hart described a ladder of participation based on young people.

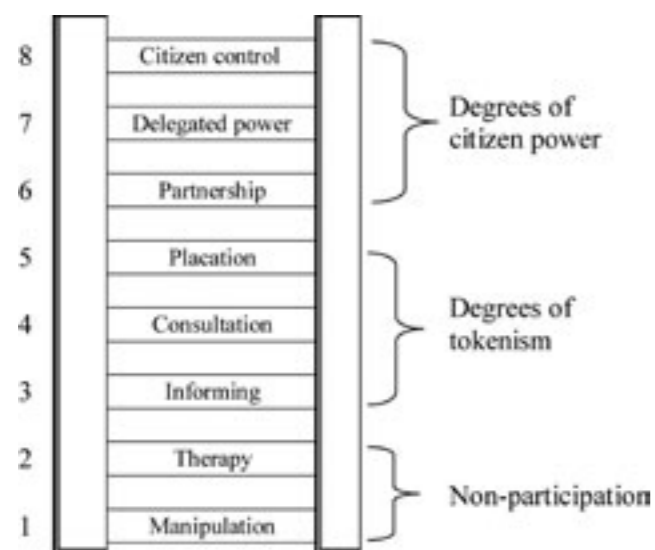


Figure 1 Ladder of participation Arnstein 1969

In Chapter 2 of this paper we present a new wheel of child and young person's participation introduced by Treseder in 1997 to Save the Children's programs. The concept seeks to remove the rungs of the participatory ladder and show that different participation modes can be useful in different contexts, to reach different desired outcomes.

According to ChildFund (2011), child participation is broadly understood to mean children and young people sharing ideas, thinking for themselves and expressing their views effectively, as well as planning, prioritising and sharing decisions that affect their lives and the life of their communities.

Participation can involve a multitude of approaches, strategies and models, not all of which will be discussed in this literature review due to its limited length and scope.

Importantly, a number of authors emphasise that participation in the context of young people means work with and by young people, not merely for them.

“Children and young people’s participation can be seen as a broad umbrella that has been used to promote and support a growing range of activities. It has served a vital role in establishing a place for children and young people’s participation at the different scales of decision-making, from micro-scales within communities to the macro-scales of national or even international politics.” (Tisdall 2008: 427)

ChildFund (2011) noted that the debate about whether participation constitutes an approach or an outcome in community development is important because of the different outcomes reported in the literature. In this consequent literature review it is viewed as both an approach as well as an outcome. What is important is the intent (see Chapter 3 for details).

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At ChildFund Australia, our vision is a global community, free from poverty, where children are protected and have the opportunity to reach their full potential.

To fulfil our mission, ChildFund Australia works in partnership with children and their communities to create lasting and meaningful change by supporting long-term community development and promoting children's rights.

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