

Participate with you & Participate with me



Save the Children

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ISBN: 978-91-7321-434-6

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A special warm thanks goes to all the children, adolescents, staff and volunteers at:

Plan India's Child Advisory Board; Kids' Dream in Hong Kong;
Bac Phu secondary school in Vietnam; Plan Philippines in Tagpu,
Palobandera and Intusan; Save the Children Swedenin Côte d'Ivoire;
Child Protection Alliance and Voices of Young in Gambia

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**You have the right
to express your views
in all matters that affect you**

A Save the Children, Plan International and War Child Holland contribution to the
2009 General Assembly Resolution on the Rights of the Child



This book belongs to:

Name:

Age:

Draw a picture of yourself :)



About me:

If I could change one thing in my own life, it would be:

If I could change one thing in my community, it would be:

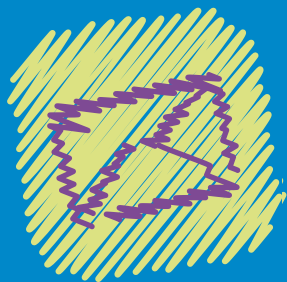
If I could change one thing in the world, it would be:

Some of my favourite things are:

Some of my favourite people are:

If every adult was listening, I would give them this message:

.....



Message from Adults:

Your right to participate starts from the moment you are born – the moment you start to participate in life! It is about people (adults, children, decision makers, parents, everyone!) understanding that your voice, opinions, feelings, needs and rights are important and matter.

Over the past several years we have worked hard to support children in many kinds of projects, consultations and events and we will continue to in the future. We will continue to teach adults about your right to participate and about ways of doing it so that it is meaningful and safe. We will continue to support organizations and projects that have been started by children and young people and help them to be stronger.

More than ever before, the past few years have been very exciting times for children to participate. Governments are focusing more and more on it and are learning more about what it means and how to do it properly. It is our hope that this book will be one way for you to learn more about this important right and to help other children, young people and even adults learn more.

We understand that children from different parts of the world will read this book and sometimes the information or ideas will be hard to imagine in different cultures or social realities. We therefore encourage you to read the information and talk to your friends and adults that you trust to explore ways that you can successfully and safely use the information. Throughout this book you will find words highlighted, at the end of the book you will find explanations for these words.

We have also written two other books similar to this one. One of the books is about violence against children and the other one is about discrimination:

In the book "Safe You & Safe Me" you can learn about the types of violence facing children around the world. The book can also give you some ideas on how you can protect yourself from violence.

The book "Equal You & Equal Me" gives you information about different forms of discrimination and what you can do to help stop it. Please visit: Save the Children Resource Centre at <http://resourcecentre.savethechildren.se> for more information on either book.

Please enjoy the book and don't forget – your voice and opinions matter and count!

Nigel Chapman
CEO, Plan International

Hendrik van Gent
Managing Director (a.i.) of War Child Holland

Elisabeth Dahlin, Secretary General
Save the Children Sweden



Let's get started !



Participate with me
Participate with you & Participate with me

Some important information for you to know....

What are your Rights?

Every child has the same human rights. Some of your human rights have to do with the basic physical needs to stay alive. For example, you have the right to food, water, shelter and basic health care. Some of your human rights have to do with how other people treat you. You have the right to be treated with dignity and respect. Some of your rights have to do with your need to be cared for, to develop and to grow and be part of your communities. You have the right to an education, to express your own ideas and opinions, to information, protection and to participate in making decisions about issues that affect you. You also have the right to not be discriminated against because of who you are or where you come from.¹

United Nations

The leaders of our countries have promised to keep children safe and healthy. These leaders are members of the United Nations (UN). The UN is an organization (kind of a club) where leaders from nearly all the world's countries meet and talk about ways to make the world a safe place. They also want to make the lives of all grown-ups and children better.

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

World leaders met in 1989 at the United Nations building in New York and agreed to a document called the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). This document says that children have important rights, just like anybody else and all humans. Nearly all the countries in the world have signed this document. This means they have promised to do everything they can to make sure that all children will enjoy their rights.

**I have the right to express my views in all matters
that affect me...**



**...and the responsibility to also listen to
and support other children to express their views”**

WHAT IS CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION?

Children's participation **IS** about:



- having information about things that concern you and are important to you and other children
- being able to express yourself – your thoughts and opinions
- being able to have your voice heard
- having the chance to be involved in making decisions that affect you
- having your ideas respected and taken seriously
- being involved in something or playing a part in something that is important to you
- having the right to choose your own beliefs
- being able to join and set up groups or clubs

All girls and boys have the right to participate without any **discrimination** of age, **gender**, **disability**, language, colour of skin, poor or rich etc. Girls and boys from every part of the world have the right to participate, especially children living in difficult situations, for example: children affected by war, conflict, abuse and violence.

* All girls and boys have the right to have their voices heard and taken seriously.

Children's participation is **NOT**:

- about disrespecting or harming others
- about only a few children talking all the time and not letting others speak
- about taking over or wanting control over adults
- about adults doing everything children want or tell them to do
- about children always getting to do what they want, when they want
- about adults letting children speak but not caring about what they say



It is important to know that not everyone has to agree with everything you say and children's participation doesn't mean that you can do whatever you want. But your views need to be taken seriously. It is not good enough to just listen, adults also have to think about what you have said and allow that to shape the decisions they are making. When your wishes cannot be followed, you should hear about the decision and the reasons why your views were not followed.

What does participation mean to you?



Example:

Better Future for Children Living in the Slums²

A **community** organization wanted to learn more about children living in the slums. They wanted to understand what life was like, what the challenges were and what people in these situations – especially children – needed for a better future.

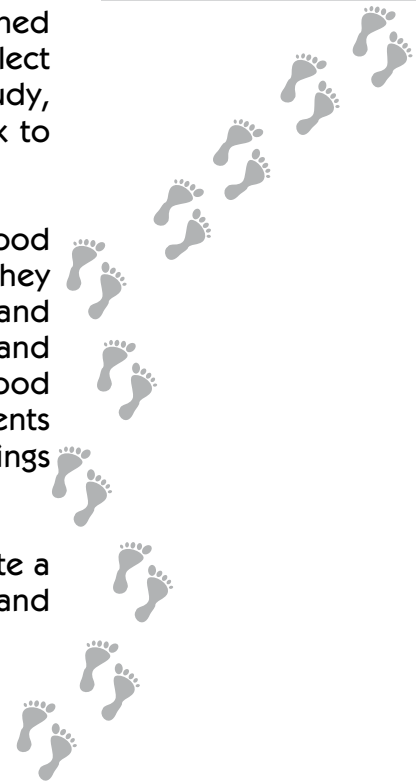
A group of 18 children, ages 12-18, were trained as **researchers** and given information about how to talk to other children and adults. Some of the 18 children were from the slums themselves. They learned how to do **research**, hold interviews and collect information. The children themselves designed the study, prepared the questions and then went out to talk to over 150 children and 30 adults living in slums.



children can do.

Working together with adults, the children researchers gathered their information and wrote a report. They presented the report to different groups including **non-governmental** and community organizations and different government representatives and departments.

A **slum** is a section or an area of a city or town where people live in poor housing, they may not have access to water and the people living there do not have a lot of money.



Adult decision makers worked together with children to look at what actions needed to be taken and how things could be improved for people, including children, living in the slums.

The research and participation of children helped to shape future policies and projects.




What do you think of this story?

Did you learn anything new?


Are there any actions you want to take after reading this story?

Do you have your own story or example?


What do some children say about children's participation?




"Our participation ensures... respect and equal treatment as humans...children's participation is a way of promoting love and unity in home, families, districts, and in the country." - children in Uganda



"Children around the world are in need of support and commitment from leader's of government, schools, communities and businesses to give hope for their future. We need people in positions of authority to be accountable to us. Therefore it is very important for children to be able to participate in decisions that affect their own lives." - young person from Canada



Children's participation is important because: "it will give confidence to the children; it will build our capacity in decision making in future; It will enhance the thinking capabilities of children in idea generation at later stages; it will build new ideas that will help in bridging the generation gap." - children in Pakistan



"Adults are afraid that children will take over. Parents must understand we only want our voices to be heard and our opinions to be taken into consideration." - young person from Norway

"If we do not share our opinions,
our rights will not be respected -
Adults do things that can harm
us but they will know it only if they
listen to us" - children from Peru



"How can an adult find out
what is the best to do for a child
without asking him or her? When adults
and children share issues children start
to trust adults and start to find words
for their feelings. Children can do
many great things if they are given
the opportunity." - young person
from Ghana



"This right is important for our
development. Participation makes us
more creative, kinder, more successfully
at school, and prepares us for future
life. It's our right and adults must care
about it!" - young person from Moldova



What do you want to
say about children's
participation?

Learning Activity

Ok or Not Ok?



This is a good activity to do by yourself or with a friend. If you do not know an answer, ask an adult you trust.

Can you tell if the following statements are **OK** or **not OK**? Do they support children's participation?

If you think the action is ok then you put a 😊 on the face.

If you think the action is not ok then you put a ☹ on the face.



Adults make all the decisions without ever talking to girls or boys.



Students work together with teachers to understand bullying and put a stop to it.



A **community** leader wants to build a play area for children and sits down with children to talk about the design.



The rules in the classroom are set together by all of the children and teachers.



A father decides to send his daughter to a different school and does not speak to her about it.



Adults are having a meeting to talk about people living in poverty but they do not invite any children to participate.



The parents of a 14 year old girl decide it is time for her to marry. They take her out of school and arrange a marriage to an older man.



Parents talk to their children about family issues and they all make decisions together.

Can you think of other examples that support children's participation? Please list them.

WHERE DOES CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION TAKE PLACE? ³

Children's participation should happen at home or other care settings, in the **community**, at school, at the workplace, with government, on the web/internet. Wherever there are children there should be children's participation!

In the Family:

The 'family' is seen as the best place for children to participate for the first time. Participation within the family helps you to grow and develop.

Other Forms of Care:

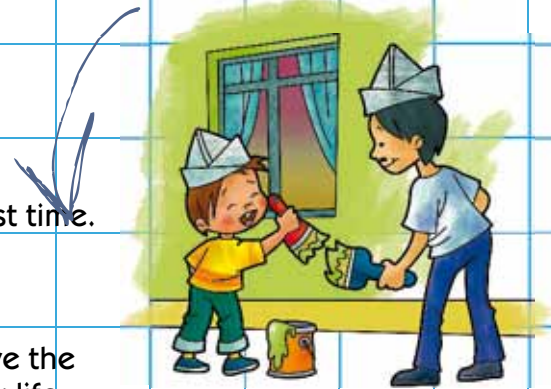
If you are unable to live with your parents, you also have the right to participate in decisions that affect your daily life.

In Health Care:

You not only have the right to live, the right to survive, the right to develop and the right to the best possible health, but you should also have the chance to participate in decisions that directly affect your health.

In Education:

Schools should be a place where you and your rights are respected. You should have the chance to participate in key decision-making processes in your school and systems should be set up within schools to support your participation (for example: student councils, peer education, student representation on school boards).





In your Community:

Many of the opportunities for you to participate happen at the **community** level. You need to be supported and encouraged to form your own 'child-led' organizations and projects, for example: youth parliaments or local youth councils. You should also have the opportunity to be involved in the design of your **community** (for example: school parks, playgrounds, recreation, transportation and health facilities) and other important decisions about your own life.

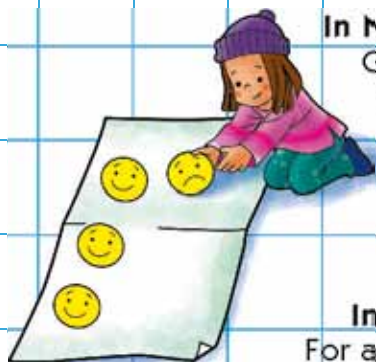
In the workplace:

Working children have the right to speak out when you are being treated unfairly or if you are being harmed in anyway. You should be supported to join or form groups/organizations that will help to protect your rights.



In National and Local Government:

Governments should not see children's participation as something that only happens for special occasions. Meetings, consultations or events should happen on a regular basis. You should help inform government decisions and shape the plans and actions that will be taken. You should also participate in the review and evaluation of these plans and actions.



In Monitoring and Evaluation:

For any program, plan or activity that has been developed for you, you should have the chance to participate in monitoring and evaluation. **Monitoring** and **evaluation** is about looking at what works well and what could be improved. It is about understanding what the positive results are and what the negative or bad results are. It is about learning from experiences and making things better.



In Court Decisions:

If the court is making a decision about you, you should be part of the decision-making process (for example: during a divorce, or adoption, or if you have to be separated and placed apart from your parents). You should be heard at all stages.



In the Juvenile Justice System:

Within the juvenile justice system your views should be heard at every stage of the process. You should have access to legal help, access to an interpreter and privacy at all stages and if kept in custody it should be safe and appropriate for children.

The **Juvenile Justice System** is all the people and procedures (such as courts, judges, lawyers and prisons) that societies have in order to deal with crime and young people who are seen to have broken the law.

On the Web/internet:

Many children go on the internet and learn about things that matter to them. But children need to be careful about who they talk to as sometimes the internet can be unsafe. You need to understand how to safely participate in online discussion spaces and share your views on the internet.

International Settings:

Many decisions that affect you are made at the international level, for example: by the United Nations or the International Labour Organization. It is important that you have information about these processes and the chance to shape and inform them.



Do you have anything to add? Are there other places that you can think of where children's participation takes place?

Cartoon – Day of action with children⁴



Over 200 children gather to meet with government representatives to talk about ending violence against children.



The children work together for a week to prepare statements and questions for the government representatives.



Together they select 12 children (10-15 years of age) that will ask the questions.



The questions focus on issues that are important to the children and include health, protection and education.

Adult representatives include people from the police and the Ministries of Health, Labour and Social Affairs.



12 year old Aya asks the police, “What actions are the police taking to protect children from violence?”

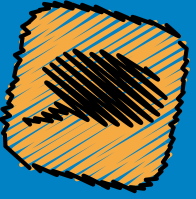


The police responds by saying, "Police are trained on protection issues and are working together with the community to increase awareness and to respond to cases of violence."

The children receive answers to many of their questions and report back to other children in their neighbourhoods.



Children also share information with other children, adults and throughout the **community** through newspapers, radio and television media.



Government representatives promise to think about what the children have shared with them and to meet with them again to report back on the actions they take and progress made.

What do you think of this story?

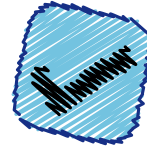
Did you learn anything new?

Are there any actions you want to take after reading this story?

Do you have your own story or example?

Learning Activity

Heard and Not Heard



Choose a part of your life to think about – for example: your life at home, at school, at work or in the community.

- Think of a decision that was made and you **DID** have the chance to have your voice heard. What was the decision?

- What did you say and how did it feel to have your voice heard?

- Do you feel you were taken seriously and your opinion shaped the decision that was being made?

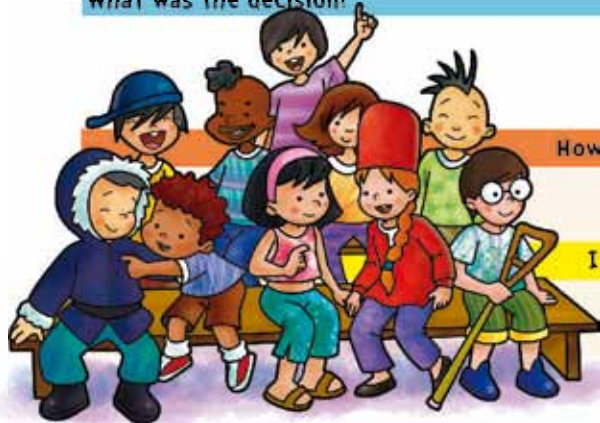
- Why do you think the adults or people making the decision asked you to participate?

- Did you feel you were supported? For example: Did you have time to prepare, was there information available to you to help you understand what was going on, were there people there to support you and answer questions?

- Now, can you think of a time that a decision was made and you **DID NOT** have the chance to have your voice heard? What was the decision?

How did it feel to not have your voice heard?

If someone had asked you, what would you have told them?



WHY CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION?⁵



Participation helps you to **learn and grow.**

Through participation you learn new skills, new information, have new experiences, think of new ideas and become more confident. You often get the chance to make new or stronger friendships with other children.



Participation leads to **better decisions and results.**

You have a unique understanding of your own life, needs and concerns. Decisions that are made with you reflect your true realities. Actions that are taken with children will be more helpful and last longer.



Participation encourages community **involvement and respect for others.**

One of the best ways to become a responsible adult someday is to be shown respect as a child. This respect helps you to learn that your feelings and opinions are taken seriously and are valued. Through participation, you can also learn how to respect different opinions and work with others. Participation can also help you to feel a sense of togetherness, belonging, responsibility, justice, caring and sensitivity.



Participation **protects** children.

When you participate, you may feel more confident and safe. Then, if something bad ever happens, you may feel it is OK to say something and get the help that is needed. You can be better protected from violence and abuse if you are ready to speak up, and if adults are listening, taking you seriously and creating a safe place for you.

Adults can only help you if they know what is happening. You are the only ones that can talk about what is really happening in your home, in school or in the work place. Adults need to talk to children to understand what is happening and then actions need to be taken to make sure children are safe.



Special note: It is important to realize that sometimes there are risks involved with participation. Sometimes adults do not want to hear what children have to say. Sometimes it can be hard to talk about what is happening to you if you do not have the proper support (for example, people you trust and a safe environment). Before you speak out or start any project or activity, you should talk to people you trust (adults and other young people) to explore possible risks and dangers and how best to keep yourself and others safe.

Do you have anything to add? Are there other benefits to children's participation?

What are some actions you will take to keep yourself safe?



Example:

Protecting children⁶

Here is a story from Thailand and a project designed to **empower** girls and boys to participate meaningfully in their **community's** activities. Thailand is in Asia and is one of the countries that was badly damaged by the natural disaster Tsunami in December 2004.

The school is settled high on the side of hill with sweeping views through a valley down to the sea. It is safe now. Tragically, the old school was too close to the coastline and was struck by the tsunami in December 2004, resulting in the death of eight children and one teacher. They were at school on Sunday rehearsing a performance for an upcoming New Year celebration when they heard a roar as the tsunami struck.

Disasters can happen from natural causes (such as a tsunami, earthquake or volcano) or they can be caused by humans (such as an explosion or fire). A disaster is a tragic event and can have negative effects on people, communities and the environment.

A Tsunami is a very large ocean wave caused by things like underwater earthquakes or volcano eruptions. Tsunamis can be very big and travel very fast and can be very destructive.

Different organizations have been working with 25 schools in tsunami-affected areas to build and improve the skills and knowledge of children through activities to reduce the risks of disasters. The activities range from learning about different types of disasters to learning how to prepare for different disasters in schools and communities.

Through project activities, children have developed skills and feel good about sharing their opinions and participate in group activities. They **empower** students to apply local knowledge to solve problems in their daily lives.

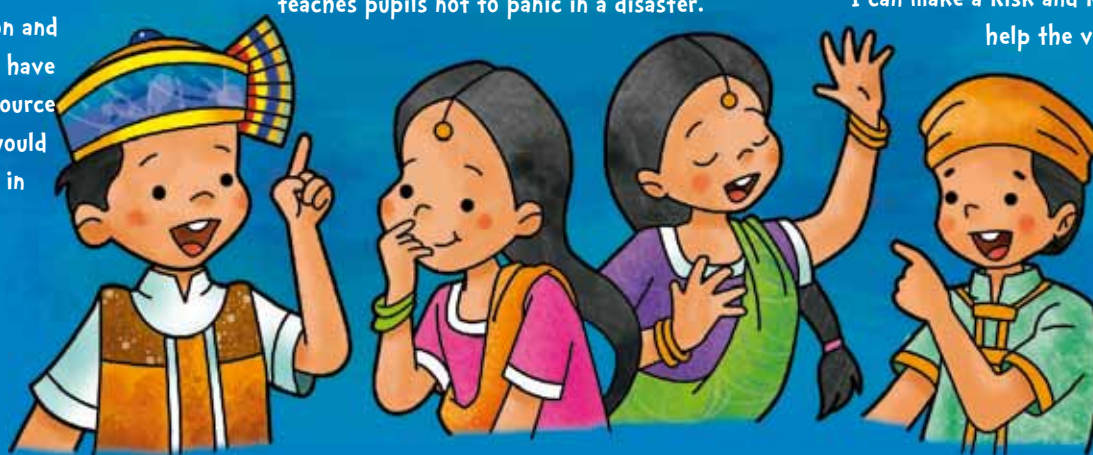
When asked what they felt they had learned and experienced from participating in the activities during the past two years, the children replied as follows:

Nu-Tar (age 12), "We had a lot of fun and I learned many new things. The good thing is that other people will learn about disaster risk reduction and it teaches the teachers as well. I have made a book, drawn Risk and Resource maps, and did puppet shows. I would like to see my book published in English one day."

Archa (age 12), "I am proud of myself. I never thought I would be able to make a Risk & Resource map but I did." She added that she was happy that the program teaches pupils not to panic in a disaster.

Ma-Na (age 11), "I feel proud of myself because I can make a Risk and Resource Map that will help the villagers."

Sead (age 11), "We've learned how to prepare for a disaster and find an evacuation route."



The students now understand how to be prepared and react to a similar emergency situation in the future. Children have gained knowledge and skills on how to understand disaster risk in their communities and most importantly, how to remain calm and in control if disaster occurs.

An adult staff person has this to say about the project, "The project is unique because the children are driving it. Normally the process of incorporating something into the curriculum [classroom lessons] starts from the government level and works its way to the students. This time it is starting with the students and is going to the Ministry of Education."

A **Risk and Resource Map** is a map developed by community members (including children) that shows the dangers or risks that exist in a community and the resources in the community (for example: where to get help) that can be used in different situations or emergencies. It helps people to know ahead of time what actions to take and where to go if a disaster happens.



Photo by Jack Picone

Students look at a “risk and resource” community map that they have developed. The map shows both risk areas and safe areas that members of the community can clearly see in the event of a disaster.

What do you think of this story?

Did you learn anything new?

Are there any actions you want to take after reading this story?

Do you have your own story or example?

Learning Activity

Word Scramble



There are letters at the end of each sentence which are all mixed up. Try to make words with them to complete the sentence.

For example:

Participation _____ children. (TEPORTSC)

The answer is:

Participation **PROTECTS** children.

1. I have the right to _____ my views in all matters that affect me. (SREPEXS)
2. All girls and boys have the _____ to participate. (GTHIR)
3. All girls and boys have the right to have their _____ heard and taken seriously. (IVESOC)
4. Participation encourages community involvement and _____ for others. (PEESRTC)
5. Processes should support the participation of children of different _____ and abilities. (SEGA)
6. You must be _____ and protected at all times. (EASF)
7. All children must be given the chance to participate as _____ without feeling left out due to their colour of skin, **disability**, language, and more. (LQAEUS)

HOW CAN YOU PARTICIPATE?'

Children's participation can happen for many different reasons and in many different places (for example, in school, at home, in the community, in the workplace, on the internet).

Children's participation can start in different ways, for example, sometimes it will be adults who start the process and sometimes it will be you!

Participation through Consultation:

Sometimes adults want to know what children think about an issue or topic and will ask you questions about it or discuss it with you. This process is called a **consultation** and is usually led by adults. It does not offer a lot of opportunity for you to make decisions but it does recognize that you have expertise that can help adults to better understand an issue and shape



adult decisions on issues that affect children's lives. For consultations to be meaningful, adults have to think about what you have said and act on it.

The earlier story 'Day of Action with Children' is one example of participation through consultation.

Participation in Partnership:

It is possible for adults and children to work in partnership. You might have the chance to share the decision making with adults and also take action in other ways. For example, you might help in designing a project, planning it, running the project and talking to other children and participating in conferences. You might also be involved in **monitoring** and **evaluating** a project or, in other words, looking at what works well and what can be improved, what were some of the positive results and where there any negative or bad results.

Both stories, 'Better Future for Children Living in Slums' and 'Protecting Children' (about the tsunami) are examples of participation in partnership.

Participation Led by You:

You can also take the lead and design your own ways of participating. You can decide what the issues are, what actions need to be taken and how things will happen. You may decide that it is useful or necessary to involve adults or adult led organizations, but this is not always the case.

Here is one example:



Example:

Children Defending their Rights⁸



A group of 150 young people are working together to defend children's rights. They started the program themselves and the group includes both children with and without disabilities.

Together they work to promote their rights and speak out and take action for children's rights.

They teach children and adults about children's rights and encourage children to do more so that their rights are realized. They also work with important adult decision makers (like government representatives) to ensure

children's rights are part of all decisions, policies and programs.

At first, the children had to work very hard to gain the trust of adults and to be taken seriously. Adults did not believe that the girls and boys had anything important to say. Sometimes, when they spoke to parents and committees they faced anger and doubt.

Over time, things began to change.

What is a "Disability"
A disability is when you have difficulty walking, hearing, seeing, speaking, learning or doing other activities.

People now come to them to report cases of abuse and they are able to give advice on where to get support and legal help. They also provide information about their rights and the laws in the country.



What do you think of this story?

Did you learn anything new?

Are there any actions you want to take after reading this story?

Do you have your own story or example?

Learning Activity Match Up



See if you can match each phrase in column A with one in column B. Draw a line to connect them.

A

1. I have the right to
2. Children's participation is the chance
3. Children's participation is not about
4. All girls and boys have the right
5. Children's participation is being
6. Children's participation is having
7. Children's participation is not

B

- a) children always getting to do what they want, when they want.
- b) involved in something or playing a part in something.
- c) express my views in all matters that affect me.
- d) information about things that are important to you and other children.
- e) to have their voices heard and taken seriously.
- f) about staying up late and playing games all day, every day.
- g) to be involved in making decisions that affect you.



STAYING SAFE AND KEEPING IT REAL

There are many things to think about to ensure participation is meaningful and to ensure you are taken seriously.

These are good guidelines for adults to know and be aware of but they are also important for you to know so that you can ensure you are respected, protected and safe.

- ✓ Your views need to be treated with respect
- ✓ You need all the necessary information and you need to know why you are participating
- ✓ You need to know the limits of your involvement and what the results will be
- ✓ You need to understand how decisions will be made and who will be making them
- ✓ You should never be forced to participate and can leave the process at any time
- ✓ The issues you are dealing with should be important to you: they should be about your life
- ✓ Adults need to create a good environment for you to participate. You should be involved from the beginning and properly prepared, supported and protected
- ✓ Processes should support the participation of children of different ages, children with disabilities, respecting their language, colour of skin, etc.
- ✓ Adults need to understand why participation is important and help to support children
- ✓ Participation needs to address issues of **discrimination** and must make sure that ALL of you have the chance to have your voices heard
- ✓ Adults supporting your involvement should have the proper training and skills
- ✓ You must be safe and protected at all times. Adults need to make sure that you are not at risk as a result of participating
- ✓ You need to know what the results are of your participation and how your contribution was used, what decisions were made based on your input and what actions were taken (or not taken)
- ✓ Adults should work together with you to review and **evaluate** processes

Please tell other children about the things you have learned in this book.

Share the information and do what you can to support CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION.

Five things I have learned from this book are:

1 



4 

2 

3 

5 

Five people I want to share this book with are:

1 

4 

2 

5 

3 





Five actions I can take to improve my participation (at home, at school, at work...):

1

2

3

4

5



Five actions I would like adults to take:

1

2

3

4

5

Word Bank

Throughout this book you may come across some words that are difficult to understand. To help, we have provided the following definitions:

Community: a group of people that know each other, or live near each other, or have things in common such as an interest or belief (for example: a religious group or a dance club).

Consultation: asking people what they think.

Disability: A disability is when a person has difficulty walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, learning or doing other activities.

Discrimination: discrimination happens when a person (including a child), or a group of people is treated badly or unfairly because of who they are, what they look like or where they come from. The unequal treatment may happen because of the colour of their skin, because they have a disability, because they are a refugee or because of their religious beliefs. It can happen because they are poor or because of their gender.

Empower: To give power to someone. Empowering a child can include building their self esteem (helping them to feel good about who they are), providing them with information/education, making sure their voice is heard, valued and taken seriously.

Evaluation: is about looking at what works well and what could be improved. It is about understanding what the positive results are and what the negative or bad results are. It is about learning from experiences and making better decisions in the future.

Gender: How someone identifies themselves as being feminine (girl) or masculine (boy).

Monitoring: checking to make sure something has been done and checking to see HOW it is being done.

Non-governmental organization: (also known as a NGO) –all organizations that are not part of government and are not working to make a profit. Many NGOs exist to help people or to protect something (such as animals or plants).

Research: careful study and investigation for the purpose of discovering and explaining new knowledge.

Researcher: a person who does research.

Save the Children

WE ARE the world's leading independent organisation for children.

OUR VISION is a world in which every child attains the right to survival, protection, development and participation.

OUR MISSION is to inspire breakthroughs in the way the world treats children, and to achieve immediate and lasting change in their lives.

Plan International's vision is of a world in which all children realise their full potential in societies that respect people's rights and dignity.

Plan aims to achieve lasting improvements in the quality of life of deprived children in developing countries, through a process that unites people across cultures and adds meaning and value to their lives, by:

- enabling deprived children, their families and their communities to meet their basic needs and to increase their ability to participate in and benefit from their societies
 - building relationships to increase understanding and unity among peoples of different cultures and countries
 - promoting the rights and interests of the world's children.
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War Child Holland (WCH) is an independent and impartial international nongovernmental organization investing in a peaceful future for children affected by armed conflict. WCH strives to empower children and young people and enable adults to bring about positive and lasting changes in the lives of conflict affected children and young people.

WCH programs strengthen children and young people's psychosocial development through education, child protection and psycho-social support interventions that are conflict sensitive and contribute to peace building processes. WCH works with children and young people in raising awareness of and advocating for their rights and holds itself accountable to them in doing so.

WCH's work is motivated and characterized by a commitment to applying the power of creative methodologies, recreational, educational and community development activities and sport to achieve positive life changes with children and young people. WCH activities seek to maximize children and young people's active engagement in both the activities themselves and in broader decisions affecting their lives, including those children and young people who have often been excluded from participating in such decision making.

As of March 2009 WCH is working directly or through partners in the following countries: the Netherlands, Lebanon, Israel and the occupied Palestinian Territory, Sierra Leone, Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Chechnya, Georgia, Afghanistan, Sudan, Sri Lanka, Uganda and Burundi.

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