



# When children take the lead: 10 child participation approaches to tackle violence



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Cover photo: Md. Sohel Mahmood, 12, plays with his pigeons in Mach Ghat, Bangladesh, on 30 July 2020. He studies in grade four and loves pigeons. He was arrested for stealing pigeons. With support from UNICEF he was released from jail. After counseling and months of education, he has managed to make a better life for himself.

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# Introduction

Two watershed moments in 1989 marked a ‘before and after’ for human history. While the Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) was being adopted by the UN General Assembly, Sir Tim Berners Lee was laying out his vision of what would later become the World Wide Web (WWW). Today, we can look back on three decades of efforts to uphold the rights of the child, and on the extraordinary expansion of the Internet. This seems a good moment to explore how these two dramatic developments have influenced each other to tackle a serious challenge: violence against children.

The right to participate came into being just as the Internet was being born – a vast phenomenon that would give the first generation of children to have specific rights an unprecedented opportunity to exercise them. Together, the UNCRC and the Internet have changed childhood.

At the same time, governments and organizations the world over have embraced the need for child participation to guide and shape programmes and policies and help prevent or report different forms of violence. The question is: are governments and organizations keeping up with the pace of change? Are today’s participation models adapting to the constant evolution of child participation?

This report draws on 10 case studies to examine child participation experiences related to different forms of violence, spanning initiatives driven by governments, international organizations and civil society. It zooms in on children’s roles, the methods used, the balance between offline and online, and how each initiative has achieved its impact. It identifies common elements that make child participation effective for violence prevention, reporting and awareness, offering concrete recommendations for children’s rights-based organizations.

This analysis of 10 child participation approaches aims to support child rights practitioners in their efforts to promote effective child participation. The ultimate goal is to unleash the positive power of millions of children who want to safeguard their right to a world free from violence.

# Child participation today: where we are, and where we are going

## A new and empowered generation

What we now understand as child-participation has helped us to see children “as active in the process of shaping their lives, learning and future. They have their own view on their best interests, a growing capacity to make decisions, the right to speak and the right to be heard.”<sup>1</sup>

The right to participate is a founding principle of the UNCRC, which is now the most widely ratified international human rights treaty, changing the way children are viewed and treated: “as human beings with a distinct set of rights instead of as passive objects of care and charity”.<sup>2</sup>

The treaty has changed not only the way in which children are viewed and treated; but also the experience of childhood itself. Children living in the world today are growing up in an environment that is quite different to the one in which children grew up before the Convention was drafted.

Participation is also one of the most radical provisions of the UNCRC, as implied by “the so-called ‘participation articles’, which entitle children to a range of civil rights, including the rights to information, privacy, and freedom of conscience and assembly”.<sup>3</sup> Their ratification was a groundbreaking moment for children globally, as this was the first time the world had agreed that children had the right to express their views on matters concerning them, and to have those views taken seriously by governments, states, authorities and decision-makers. What’s more, this is an obligation under the legally binding Convention, rather than a ‘nice to have’.

While participation is about expressing a view, influencing decision-making, and achieving change<sup>4</sup>, its definition should not be limited to these, as the term is widely used to describe different forms of engagement. However, “despite widespread usage, there remains considerable lack of clarity about what is actually meant by participation in the context of children’s rights.”<sup>5</sup>

UNICEF and Save the Children define it accurately as, “an ongoing process of children’s expression and active involvement in decision-making at different levels in matters that concern them. It requires information-sharing and dialogue between children and adults based on mutual respect, and requires that full consideration of their views be given, taking into account the child’s age and maturity.”<sup>6</sup> It must also start with children and youth themselves, “on their own terms, within their own realities and in pursuit of their own visions, dreams, hopes and concerns. Most of all, authentic and meaningful child participation requires a radical shift in adult thinking and behavior - from an exclusionary to an inclusionary approach to children and their capabilities.”<sup>7</sup>

But are these definitions of “participation” being realized? Are adults today moving towards an inclusionary approach to children and their ability to influence a world that remains ‘adult-structured’?

Three decades after the adoption of the UNCRC, its participation articles are starting to show results. Though much remains to be done to ensure that all children can fulfil their rights and grow up free from violence, every child alive today has grown up under the umbrella of the UNCRC, and with governments that have a duty to protect, educate and listen to them.

This generation of children is being raised by the first generation of parents to be brought up after the adoption of the UNCRC.<sup>8</sup> As a result, today’s children are more aware than any other generation of their rights to express themselves, to speak, confront, request, argue and associate. “The UNCRC has transformed the way international development agencies engage with children. Children have become recognized as significant actors within their families and communities, and as active participants in development, not passive beneficiaries.”<sup>9</sup>

This has resulted in an evolutionary leap: today’s children are not waiting for governments or agencies to open up spaces for them to participate. Instead they are creating them, and they are making good use of them.

## **Children in an increasingly digital world**

“From the moment hundreds of millions of children enter the world, they are steeped in a steady stream of digital communication and connection – from the way their medical care is managed and delivered to the online pictures of their first precious moments.”<sup>10</sup>

The digital revolution has transformed — and will continue to transform — our world in countless aspects, and “as more and more children go online around the world, it is increasingly changing childhood”.<sup>11</sup> As noted in UNICEF’s 2017 *State of the World Children’s report*: “youth (aged 15–24) is the most connected age group. Children and adolescents under 18 years old account for an estimated one third of Internet users; and a growing body of evidence indicates that children are accessing the Internet at increasingly younger ages”.<sup>12</sup>

Children go online to strengthen friendships, find new friends and to access information; and they are increasingly part of ‘bedroom culture’.<sup>13</sup> In some countries, 13 to 17-year-olds go online every day, and there is some evidence that children are going online at even younger ages.<sup>14</sup> Even children as young as 4 or 5 have emoji conversations with their friends through their parents’ or guardians’ phones. They may not be able to read or write yet, but they can use Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) to express themselves using symbols.

Despite a continuing digital divide (29 per cent of youth worldwide are not online) the number of people who are online is expected to rise in the years to come with the increase of mobile phone users and internet penetration. According to the World Bank,<sup>15</sup> in 2016 nearly 70 per cent of the poorest households in developing countries owned a mobile phone (more than the percentage of households with access to electricity or clean water). By 2025, the estimated number of unique mobile subscribers will reach 5.9 billion, equivalent to 71 per cent of the world's population,<sup>16</sup> with the biggest growth likely to be in access to mobile Internet, driven mostly by developing countries.<sup>17</sup> Internet connection is likely to become permanent and automatic within 15 years: "Eventually, connectivity will be constant and streamlined to the point where no individual 'connection' is really necessary. Universal Internet is slowly becoming a reality".<sup>18</sup>

A survey by the Pew Research Center and Elon University published in 2014 predicts that "information sharing over the Internet will be so effortlessly interwoven into daily life that it will become invisible, flowing like electricity, often through machine intermediaries". In addition, it predicts that "the spread of the Internet will enhance global connectivity, fostering more positive relationships among societies" and that "political awareness and action will be facilitated and more peaceful change, and more public uprisings like the Arab Spring will emerge".<sup>19</sup>

The challenge is how quickly humans and current organizations can respond to a growing phenomenon that has rapidly become part of childhood, with every Internet projection indicating that children will have more and more access to the online world in the years to come.

The Internet is increasingly changing the way people relate to the world. While this has been a hot topic in recent years, one aspect of ICTs in particular needs more attention: ICTs offer children more control, specifically through apps the people use to meet every day needs.

Before the 'app outburst' children had to wait for their favourite show to be on TV and wait to see their friends at school. Today, however, they can connect with friends whenever they want, regardless of where they are physically. Similarly, adults use multiple apps for multiple purposes: as personal shoppers; to run errands; order food; book transport, holidays and restaurants; find out about traffic or the weather; monitor their own health; the list is endless.

Children are exposed to this adult behaviour, they live in a world where they see adults gain more control over little things. And these little things add up: children come to understand that people are entitled to more control over every aspect of their lives.

As a result, a generation of children who have grown up with the right to participate not only has the Internet as a way to take that right forward, but also an adult digital ecosystem that tells them they are entitled to control their life. And control is power: the power to influence or direct the course of events. This begs the question: when agencies, governments and civil society encourage children to participate and influence programmes and policies, are they taking all of this into account? Because children are, increasingly, expecting some level of control.

## A SHIFTING PARADIGM: MORE POWER TO PARTICIPATE, AND MORE WAYS TO DO SO

Children today are more empowered to participate and make their voice heard, and have an increasing opportunity to do so as a result of the digital revolution. They are speaking out, engaging, participating, accessing information, and confronting adult structures as never before.

Children are no longer depending on adults to open up ‘child-participation spaces’: the space is already there for them on different Internet forums. “This generation of young people grew up in the era of digital activism – and digital ‘slacktivism’. Children and adolescents are using social media and digital technology to amplify their voices and seek solutions to problems affecting their communities. Organized efforts to encourage, cultivate and channel children’s participation using digital tools are varied and growing in scope”.<sup>20</sup>

This growing power to participate, coupled with the means to do so, is making headlines. For example, in 2009, aged just 11, Malala Yousafzai wrote a blog under a pseudonym for the BBC Urdu service about her life during the Taliban occupation of Swat, Pakistan, which encouraged a movement advocating for girls’ rights to education and won her the 2014 Nobel Prize.

There are so many others: the Chilean students’ movement in 2011; the ‘bucket challenge’ that went viral in 2014 using social media to tell a global audience about amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, with over 17 million people posting videos online; and the ‘Not Too Young To Run’ campaign in Nigeria to reduce the age limit for running for elected office, which has now turned into a larger global movement.<sup>21</sup> We have seen 16 and 17 year-olds expressing their disappointment that they could not vote in the UK’s 2016 ‘Brexit’ referendum in 2016; the 2018 March for our Lives campaign, with adolescents organizing one of the biggest youth-led protests in the USA since the Viet Nam war; and Greta Thunberg mobilizing thousands around climate change. In every case, ICTs have played – and are playing – a critical role: “The digital is not going to go away. If anything, the changes it is bringing to everyone’s lives, and the potential for conflicts between children and adults’ rights, and children’s protection and participation rights, are going to increase and intensify.”<sup>22</sup>

“Children themselves have high aspirations for a world facilitated by digital media, believing the Internet enhances connection between individuals, communities and cultures, across national and international borders, and positioning technology as key to promoting a spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality and friendship among all people, supporting their rights to non-discrimination”.<sup>23</sup>

Certainly, child participation cannot be, should not be, and is not limited to the online sphere. This report will, therefore, review a number of case studies on child participation in marginalized communities that have a strong offline focus. Nevertheless, the digital sphere is extremely fertile ground for child participation: a space where they can to express their views freely in accordance to their age and maturity (UNCRC Article 12)<sup>24</sup>; seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds (Article 13)<sup>25</sup>; express their freedom of thought, conscience and religion (Article 14)<sup>26</sup>; and associate (Article 15).<sup>27</sup>

The significance of the Internet for children’s participation is not just about access; it is also about how ICTs offer new ways to relate to data and information. Shortly after Internet usage became widespread, experts

started to talk about ‘big data’: the large volumes of structured and unstructured data that inundate businesses, governments and organizations on a daily basis. These are data that can be analyzed and processed. Since the term was first used in the early 2000s, however, ICTs have evolved to offer more profound access to new levels of information.

We are moving from ‘big data’ to ‘deep data’: a small amount of richer information that, when used and leveraged properly, can generate more value than vast amounts of data. For example, videos and audios from children reporting acts of violence can deliver meaningful insights about their fears. Such strong emotional content, if analyzed and used properly, can be used to influence programmes and policies at a deeper level. A large-scale opinion poll, in contrast, will deliver considerable quantitative information. One challenge is to combine big and deep data when trying to protect children online.

Being online is a form of permanent participation and engagement. Children do not need to wait for adults to open up ‘child-participation spaces’, because the space is already there: they blog, post, share, like, dislike, alter their image, take endless selfies with endless filters, do homework, play games, watch videos, share their own videos, chat, text, talk, access information and data, have conversations, and more.

Organizations working to protect children globally have persistently pointed out the many risks children face online, including different forms of violence like cyberbullying, cyber predators, and sexual trafficking. These risks are severe and persistent, and pose enormous challenges for state parties, governments, international organizations, civil society, parents, teachers, the private sector, and anyone looking to protect children anywhere. However, the reality is that children are online, and they will continue to be online. The digital world has no limits for participation, with all the positive and negative implications that entails.

The idea that children should influence the programmes and policies that affect them has been widely accepted by governments, agencies and organizations: “Children who are silenced cannot challenge violence and abuse perpetrated against them. The capacity to learn is restricted without the opportunity to question, challenge and debate. Policy-makers cannot identify the barriers to fulfilling children’s rights if they do not hear from children about the existence and nature of those barriers”.<sup>28</sup>

But how well are organizations today embedding child participation approaches into their work? How do decision makers know what children want? Do they enable spaces for children to confront, challenge and question them? Do children really get to re-shape policies? Are rights-based organizations capitalizing on the tools children already have (and use) to participate? Are they aware that new citizens will emerge in a few years’ time with new expectations? Are they aware of this new participation paradigm?

## ABOUT THIS REPORT

To answer these questions, we have analyzed 10 child-participation experiences. The aim is to better understand how rights-based organizations and governments are taking forward child participation to prevent, report, or create awareness on different forms of violence against children. Our 10 case studies are a mix of initiatives driven by governments, international organizations, and civil society — all of which have advocacy missions.

The case studies were selected to showcase a wide range of initiatives, from various geographic perspectives, implementing parties, and addressing different forms of violence against children (VAC).

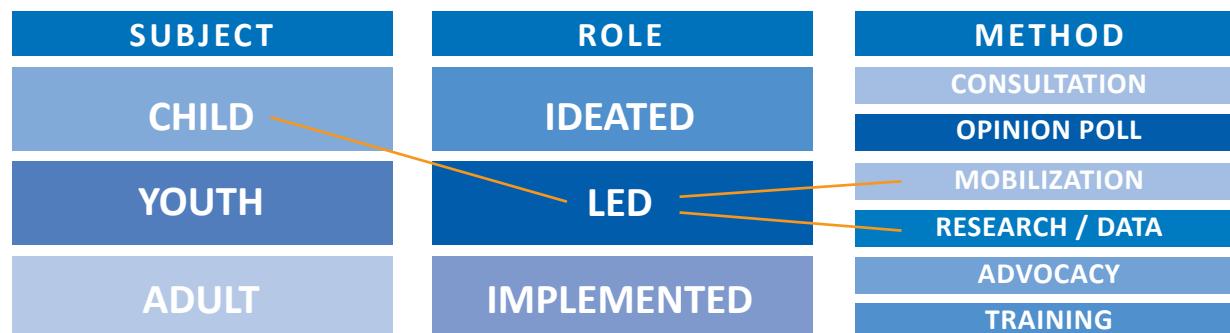
**TABLE 1: PARTICIPATION EXPERIENCES**

EXPERIENCE	GEOGRAPHIC NATURE	FORM OF VIOLENCE	TYPE OF IMPLEMENTING AGENCY
It's time to talk!	Global	VAC in working children	Civil Society
U-Report	Global	Bullying	UN Agency
Rise Up	Multi-country (Malawi and Guatemala)	GBV and Child Marriage	Civil Society
TEGA	Multi-country (Nigeria and USA)	GBV	Civil Society
IGLYO	Regional (Europe)	LGBTQI Discrimination	Civil Society
Yo Opino	Country (Chile)	Discrimination	Government
Restless Development India	Country (India)	VAC in working children	Civil Society
Restless Development Tanzania	Country (Tanzania)	GBV / SRHR	Civil Society
Stand Together	Country (Malaysia)	Bullying	Government, private sector, UN agencies, civil society
OpniNNA	Country (Mexico)	VAC in working children	Government

Interviews were conducted with project-implementing teams to collect relevant information about their process, methodology, activities, goals, strategies, child involvement, combination of offline and online work and barriers identified. Special attention was given to children's roles in the overall course of the experience, to classify the type (or types) of participation.

We identified different methods for child participation (Figure 1): consultation, opinion polls, mobilization, data collection, research and advocacy.

**FIGURE 1: TYPE OF PARTICIPATION**



For the concluding section of this report, we applied additional participation theory — specifically, the UK Department for International Development's (DFID) "three-lens approach to youth participation" adapted from the World Bank Development Report 2007." According to this approach: "*Youth participation can be viewed through three lenses: with youth as beneficiaries; with youth as partners and/or with youth as leaders.*"<sup>29</sup> In place of youth, the concept was adapted to children.

After individual interviews for each participation experience, case studies were structured to cover the following information:

- Its purpose
- The form of violence it aimed to address
- How children, adolescents and/or youth were involved and their roles at different stages of the process (leading versus passive, for example)
- The level of knowledge the implementing entity already had about participating children
- The implementing entity's strategy to connect to children's ecosystems
- How the implementing entity engaged children, and which outreach strategies they used
- The usage of ICTs: were they designed specifically for the initiatives, or were they built on existing software or social networks?
- The impact of the participation on the form of violence to be addressed
- The continued participation or engagement of children after the initiative
- And the barriers and challenges identified.

Each case study was finalized by identifying the key takeaways for this report, aiming to compile key findings that should be considered when using participation to prevent or report different forms of violence.

## KEY FINDINGS

Our analysis of the 10 case studies suggests that those that were most successful gave children significant roles as designers and leaders, encouraged them to identify the issues that affected them, and were based on peer-to-peer approaches. These projects generated concrete achievements, and children continued to engage, even after the projects had ended.

Seven key conclusions and recommendations emerge from our analysis.

1. **The child participation paradigm is evolving** from “let’s hear what children have to say”, to “let’s enable children to identify problems, make decisions, challenge others when necessary, and mobilize a range of partners, from decision makers to their own peers.”  
*Recommendation:* Adults need to share or even transfer power to children, understanding that this does not exempt them from their responsibility to protect and guide children in the process.
2. **Children need to lead.** It is not enough to be involved. Our case studies find that few organizations assigned a leading role to children; they were either partners or beneficiaries.  
*Recommendation:* Organizations need to include children at the earliest possible stage and trust them with leading roles so that child participation becomes part of the ‘fabric’ of the programme.
3. **Children need to be encouraged to identify the issues they want to address.** Most of the implementing organizations came to the project with a ready-made agenda for change, and invited children to join them.  
*Recommendation:* Adults need to connect to children’s personal motivations for achieving change and should limit their own role to facilitation and the provision of information and tools.
4. **Children trust other children, and most participation experiences benefit from peer-to-peer approaches.** Children are more inclined to participate when approached by someone who is – or close to – their own age.  
*Recommendation:* If adults are to create effective peer-to-peer approaches, they need to trust children. They must treat them as partners with a collective advocacy purpose.
5. **Children often continue to participate after the project has ended.** Some of the examples in our case studies planned for this.  
*Recommendation:* A comprehensive child participation model should, ultimately, be an empowering tool and experience, and should not end when children have provided adults with what they want. Organizations should aim for – and plan for – extended engagement.
6. **Only a few of the experiences we analyze in this report have made the best possible use of ICTs.** Many initiatives incorporated ICTs or technological elements, but only a minority made the most of their additional benefits, and most relied on offline strategies  
*Recommendation:* We need to adapt to – and mobilize – the technological revolution for child participation. Incorporating ICTs is crucial and implementing organizations should explore the benefits of ICTs beyond their value for quantitative data collection.
7. **The initiatives analyzed in this report apply and respect standards for child participation practice in general.** Yet initiatives with a strong ICT component require additional standards applied when planning and implementing child participation.  
*Recommendation:* Child participation models need to evolve in step with children’s realities, so that they can respond appropriately to children’s growing expectations in a digital age. A digital generation requires strong digital standards.



# CASE STUDY 1



# 1. It's Time to Talk! - children's views on children's work

*In collaboration with more than 50 non-governmental organizations, Kindernothilfe, Terre des hommes Germany, and Save the Children Canada, (Consortium Steering Committee) asked 1,822 working children from 36 countries to share their views on children's work.*

## **WHY: To integrate the views of working children into the political debate**

Globally, 218 million children aged between 5 and 17 years are employed.<sup>30</sup> Not all work by children is considered child labour, which is often defined as “work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that is harmful to physical and mental development.”<sup>31</sup> Some 70 per cent of working children, a total of 152 million children (64 million girls and 88 million boys) are involved in child labour globally, accounting for almost one in ten children worldwide. Almost half of them (73 million) are in hazardous work.<sup>32</sup>

Even though organized working children have, historically, demanded their right to participation and association, their views and suggestions have not been fully integrated into the political debate on labour. The implementing organizations for this project, It's Time to Talk!, “agreed that the topic of child labour could be more adequately discussed and addressed by the global policy debate if working children themselves could integrate their voices and expertise”.<sup>33</sup>

The advocacy goal was to increase opportunities for the views of working children to be heard in decision

-making processes that affect them. To this end, the initiative created a neutral space where non-organized and organized working children could share their reasons and motivations to work, their views on what they like and do not like about their work, and their messages to concerned stakeholders on how to improve policies and practices to defend their rights and best interests.

## **WHAT: Consultation with working children in 36 countries**

During this 2.5-year project, 1,822 working children aged 5 to 18<sup>34</sup> from 36 countries<sup>35</sup> were consulted on their views and experiences of children's work, which were then documented in a report. To support this process, 17 Children's Advisory Committees (CACs) of working children were established in Asia, Africa, Latin America, the Middle East and Europe, enabling working children to take an active role in different stages of the process as advisers, analysts, and advocates.

While adults initiated the project idea and its development, children gained more influence during the subsequent stages —specifically during the

implementation phase, which included collaborative adult-child participation and child-led advocacy and campaigning.

The existing level of knowledge about the engaged communities and the connection with the children's ecosystem were both high, as the implementing agencies acted through local NGOs and partners, who also communicated with parents and caregivers. In addition, national exchange meetings were organized collaboratively between working children<sup>36</sup> to share their experiences and priority messages as a way to influence policy makers.

### **HOW: Consultations, collaborative participation and child-led activities**

Mixed methods were used to encourage child participation. In all, 134 consultations took place in the form of focus group discussions, participatory activities and individual interviews. Child-led activities created a space and an opportunity for children in a few countries to plan and initiate their own actions, and to advocate for themselves on issues that affected them.<sup>37</sup>

In addition, more than 200 children aged 9 to 18 were actively involved in CACs in the framework of collaborative adult-child participation, where they had leading roles and decision-making power. They participated in the research and consultation process by drawing on their expertise and insights and acting as advisers, analysts, and advocates. CAC members met between three and seven times each year (varying by country) and had a high level of responsibility and power.<sup>38</sup>

The project collected quantitative data through individual interviews. Participatory research tools included drawings, body mapping, flower diagrams, games, matrices, stories and songs. The results were collected and then coded to transform them into data.

The resources used by working children during the project were mostly offline, and included toolkits for guidance in research, media, communications and child safeguarding. Online resources were used for training webinars and to share documentation of the process. Nevertheless, some CAC members exceeded project expectations by using social media to disseminate results and training resources among their peers, so that others could also benefit from their materials and experience.

Regarding outreach strategies, the implementing organizations invited participants to use established partnerships with local civil society organizations that already had direct contact with working children or connections to existing networks and associations of working children.<sup>39</sup>

### **RESULTS: Violence stops children fulfilling their aspirations**

The project report unpacks findings around multiple issues that affect working children, such as protection and risks factors, and delivers their messages to governments, caregivers, NGOs, and others related actors. They felt that violence and the hardships they experience while working hindered them from fulfilling their aspirations. They also emphasized the need for improved policies and practices, including those to reduce family poverty, prevent and protect children from violence and exploitation, and involve working children in the decisions that affect them.

The results of this participation revealed that working children are affected by diverse risk and protective factors at individual, family, workplace, community, society and policy levels. The project report indicated that working girls and boys are often scolded or insulted by their employers, parents, caregivers or members of the general public, and that some children experience physical punishment if they do not complete their assigned tasks or make mistakes. It also cited violence in schools as a reason for



children dropping out of education. Finally, the report stressed that girls face increased risks of sexual harassment, and that both girls and boys are exposed to violence (physical, emotional and sexual) when working on the streets.

### ACHIEVEMENTS AND OUTCOMES: Advocacy and stronger engagement

Findings from the main report were presented at a side event in the IV Global Conference on the Sustained Eradication of Child Labour in Argentina, in November 2017. Key findings were also presented by two representatives of the working children at the Global Child Forum conference on children's rights and business in Stockholm, in April 2018. Ongoing efforts are still underway to organize meetings between the International Labour Organization and working children's representatives, meaning that the project could continue to produce results. The experience has encouraged local, national and global advocacy activities, including collaborative and child-led advocacy to enhance recognition, understanding

and consideration of the views of working children.

It's Time to Talk! resulted in extended and unanticipated participation, with the subsequent engagement of children in advocacy activities. For example, CACs that built upon existing working children's associations have continued to meet since the project's conclusion. In addition, some of the CACs that were established specifically for It's Time to Talk! have now become ongoing structures, with working children continuing to participate actively in advocacy about the issues that affect them. The CAC for Indonesia, for example, continues to be used by working children as a structure around which to meet, organize and plan actions in Medan City.

In addition, the representatives of working children had interactions with municipal authorities and local officials through the project, resulting in commitments to more regular consultation with working children and their greater involvement in relevant practice and policy developments. Working

children's representatives from Medan were also invited to speak at a national event with businesses involved in palm oil production to share their views on how to better protect working children and support better livelihoods for families.

### **CHALLENGES: Non-biased communication with children and sharing power**

Organizers note that, while consultations create important opportunities to seek children's views and experiences, they are influenced by the quality of facilitation, including the values and skills of the facilitators. Non-biased communication with children remains a challenge to independent facilitation. In addition, children's perspectives and opinions on their working lives may have been influenced by prior exposure to local NGO interventions and the philosophy and values of adult staff members.

The project organizers also identified barriers to sharing power with children, noting that adults are less willing to support genuine participation of

children if they think children may make suggestions that they do not agree with. This contributes to children's limited power in political debates affecting them.

### **KEY TAKEAWAYS: Give children decision-making power**

It's Time to Talk! stands out for its collaborative and partner-like relationship between adults and participating children. The project granted CAC members a very high level of responsibility and decision-making power, which has shaped the ways in which they have continued to participate since the project ended. The adults involved truly transferred power to the children, who were included at the earliest stage possible.

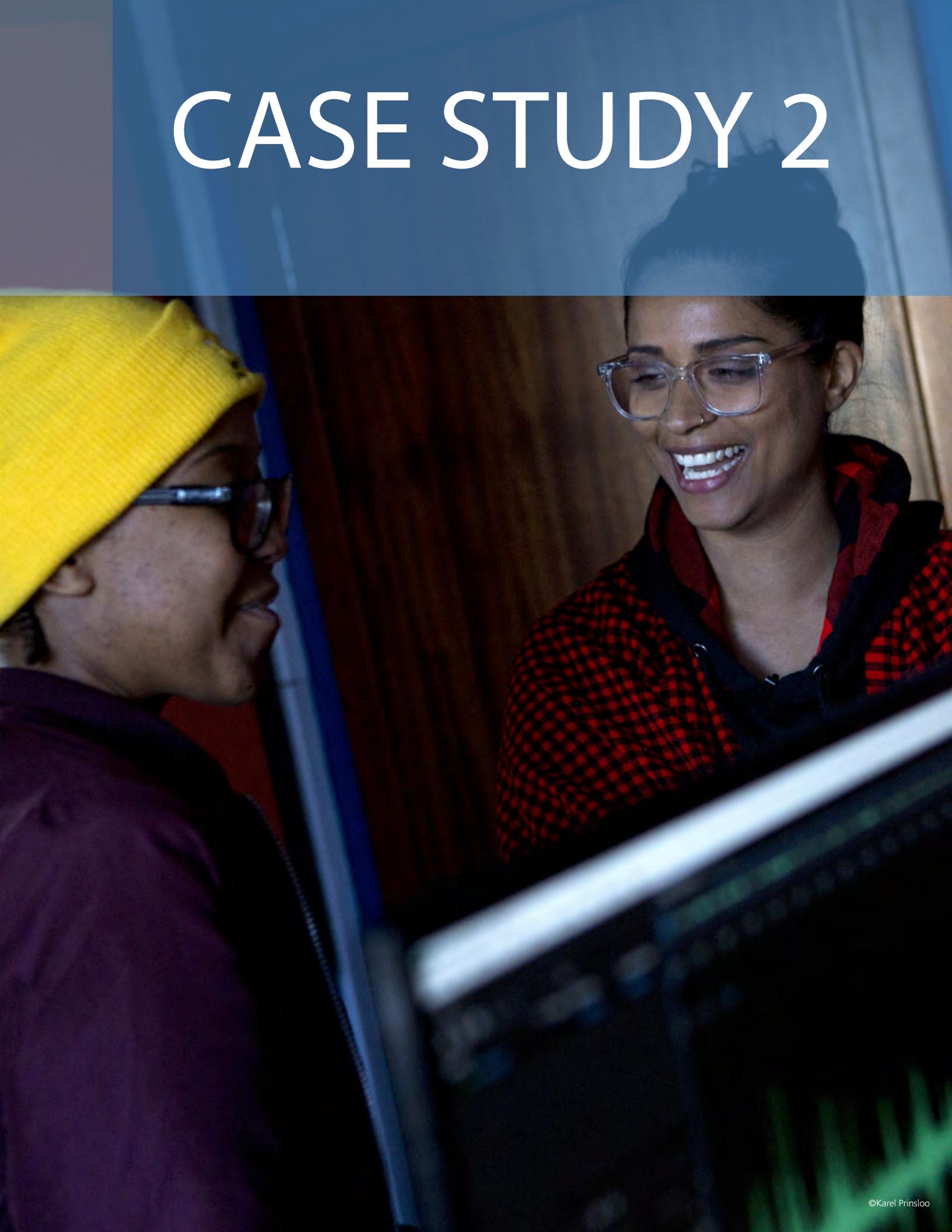
Organizing bodies also motivated CAC members from different countries to meet and exchange their experiences, enriching their perspective and the overall process. Working children were also supported to draw upon their own experiences:



©UN photo/Mark Garten

adults encouraged them to reflect upon their problems and surroundings, and respected and trusted the personal motivations of each child to participate.

# CASE STUDY 2

A photograph of two young women laughing together. The woman on the left is wearing a yellow beanie and glasses, looking down at something. The woman on the right is wearing a red and black plaid shirt and glasses, laughing heartily. They are in a dimly lit room with a wooden door in the background.

## 2. U-Report: adolescents and youth speak out against bullying

*In 2016, over 100,000 children from more than 20 countries shared their experiences on bullying through U-Report, a real-time data collection and communication programme run by UNICEF and partners. Findings revealed that two in every three children had been victims of bullying.*

### **WHY: Including children's views in the report on bullying by the United Nations Secretary-General**

As well as having the right to say what they think and have their opinions taken into account, children and young people can also provide valuable information, reporting in real time on what is happening in their communities. U-Report offers a forum to amplify the voices of young people through local and national media; provides real-time alerts to key stakeholders about the needs of young people; and feeds back ideas and information to participants (U-Reporters), empowering them to work for change and drive improvements in their local area and beyond.

While U-Report can be used to address any issue that affects children and youth, UNICEF and its partners use it as a youth-led tool to collect quantifiable data on specific issues (such as health, education, violence and emergencies, among others) that impact the most vulnerable, as well as any other issues U-Reporters want to address. The information is then shared with young people, the general public and policy makers to raise awareness and leverage the voice and concerns of young people and adolescents on issues that affect them.<sup>40</sup>

In 2014, the United Nations General Assembly requested a report<sup>41</sup> from the Secretary-General on “Protecting children from bullying” to be presented to the General Assembly in 2016, as part of a broader agenda to end all forms of violence against children. The views and experiences of children were to form a key element of the report.

The goal of this participation experience was to ensure that the voices of adolescents and youth were included in this report by asking them for their views on the causes of bullying and for possible solutions.

### **WHAT: Open-source messaging platform for community participation**

Managed by UNICEF and partners<sup>42</sup>, U-Report is a free open-source messaging programme for community participation. It is a real-time data collection and communication platform for children, adolescents and youth, and, as of July 2018, was live in over 45 countries. There is also a global version, where adolescents and youth can register from anywhere in the world. Through U-Report, UNICEF and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence Against Children (SRSG-VAC), conducted an opinion poll in 2016 focused on bullying that generated responses from 107,561 adolescents and youth,



almost 94 per cent of whom were from sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>43</sup>

### HOW: Real-time communication via different channels

U-Reporters are adolescents and youth who are between 13 and 24 years of age (approximately), from different parts of the world. They choose to join U-Report by texting a message to one of its available channels in their respective country (e.g. SMS, Facebook Messenger, Twitter, Viber, and other Internet-based channels), and then register by providing their age, gender and location. However, this information is not a requirement for becoming a U-Reporter, and participants can remain completely anonymous. When profile information *is* provided, however, it is used to categorize replies.

U-Reporters receive weekly questions on various issues, either open-ended or multiple-choice. Poll results are displayed on a country website in real time, and each question is disaggregated by

the profile information provided. Not all profile information is available, however, because (as noted) young people can choose to remain anonymous.<sup>44</sup>

UNICEF and its partners use the collected data to get feedback on programmes and inform local or national policies. The programme is free for participants, and U-Reporters can send and receive messages at any time about issues they'd like to discuss. Given that U-Report is a two-way communication channel, U-Reporters can also suggest topics for future polls.

Each country's U-Report programme runs autonomously through its UNICEF Country Offices and local partners, and is governed by a steering committee that includes UNICEF, at least one NGO or youth organization and often a government partner, as well as U-Reporters themselves.

The Reporters suggest issues for polls, use U-Report data for their own advocacy goals, and advise on the language used. Each country's version adapts this

approach to its context, so while the extent of youth engagement varies, they are always involved.

Similarly, the way in which the programme connects with young people's ecosystems, its promotion and its registration process are, in general, determined by partnering with youth, youth associations, and NGOs through social mobilization on the ground. U-Reporters themselves often invite their peers to join the programme, with traditional and social media used to support this outreach.

Occasionally, the same opinion poll is coordinated throughout multiple U-Report countries where UNICEF identifies an issue that may be relevant across borders, as was the case for the poll on bullying. The steering committees within each UNICEF Country Office opt in or out of these global opportunities, based on their own criteria.<sup>45</sup>

U-Report's model suggests a combination of both offline and online approaches. Information is collected via online and text-based means, but U-Reporters in many countries are engaged via offline strategies such as clubs, workshops and other events.

ICTs are, nevertheless, a crucial part of the programme, as U-Report is developed on RapidPro, an open-source software. RapidPro allows for mass - message communication and real-time data analytics via numerous channels including SMS, Facebook, Twitter and others. It is this technology that enables the programme's implementation.

U-Report opinion polls are not isolated events, given that young people join the programme to answer questions or messages on a weekly or bi-weekly basis. One crucial goal is to keep U-Reporters involved on a continuing basis, providing a safe space for them to engage with their communities and contribute to U-Report actions.

The bullying-focused U-Report opinion poll was an adult idea, implemented by adults, with questions suggested by the SRSG-VAC. While young people did not design the poll or lead the engagement, U-Report's model encourages country programmes to consult youth on poll questions, so that they can suggest ways to ask them in a manner that will resonate with their peers.

## **RESULTS: Two in every three U-Reporters have been victims of bullying**

Results were collected from more than 20 countries<sup>46</sup> and revealed that two thirds of participants have experienced bullying firsthand, and nearly nine in ten believe bullying is a problem, confirming the urgent need to address this form of violence. Given the voluntary nature of the programme however, U-Report is not a random sample, and results should not be considered as representative. High figures could indicate that U-Reporters are particularly interested in this issue because of their own experiences.<sup>47</sup>

One quarter of the children and young people who responded feel they have been bullied because of their gender or sexual orientation; almost one quarter because of their ethnicity or national origin; one quarter because of their physical appearance, and a little over one quarter for other reasons; Over one third of victims of bullying told a friend or sibling; one third told no one (until they told U-Report in this poll); less than one third told an adult, and less than one in ten told a teacher. In all, 31 per cent of U-Reporters did not tell anyone because they thought bullying was 'normal'.

Their understanding of why bullying happens was also evenly distributed, with about one quarter believing that it occurs because adults do not see it, because kids are mean, or because it is part of school (or they do not know why it happens). Finally, over eight in ten children and young people believe they

need to be part of the solution by raising awareness and addressing bullying in school.

These findings were shared with participants, as one of the programme's engagement strategies is to always report back to U-Reporters on results and the use of data, in the belief that children need to know how they are influencing change and improving the lives of their peers.

### **ACHIEVEMENTS AND OUTCOMES: bullying is amongst children's top concerns**

One major achievement of the U-Report poll was the inclusion of the views of participants in the report on bullying presented by the UN Secretary General. As part of the broader agenda for ending all forms of violence against children, the voices of adolescents and youth helped to demonstrate how urgent it is for UN Member States to take action against bullying.

Recommendations on how to address and prevent bullying were presented to the General Assembly in the report *Protecting children from bullying*<sup>48</sup>, which included U-Report poll results. The poll findings helped to confirm that bullying is one of children's top concerns and exposed the groups at heightened risk. They revealed a major gap in perceptions between children and adults, with bullying often being invisible to teachers, for example. They also reinforced the need for ongoing child participation at the heart of these efforts, as "they must be empowered and given the skills and confidence to stand up against bullying and seek help."<sup>49</sup>

The most alarming finding – two in every three children being the victims of bullying – was also used by UNICEF to raise awareness on International Youth Day 2016 as part of its End Violence campaign.

Participation outcomes are strongly connected to activities that may be unusual in some U-Report countries, such as the use of data to influence

programmes and policies for children at national level. U-Report Ukraine's poll results, for example, revealed that only 4 per cent of U-Reporters turned to their teachers when they were victims of bullying, and that 56 per cent believed schools should provide better training to teachers to stop bullying. These findings encouraged UNICEF Ukraine to plan and activate an anti-bullying campaign in Ukrainian schools to reduce violence among children.

### **CHALLENGES: A single data system, and the risks of inconsistent language**

The main barrier identified is the manual consolidation of global poll results, as UNICEF lacks a data system that compiles results beyond country level.

In addition, U-Report sends the same opinion poll across all of its country programmes, yet country teams may adapt the wording with young people to fit the local context. It is important to make sure that the polls' meaning, content and purpose are not altered in this process, so that the results can be combined to present a global picture.

### **KEY TAKEAWAYS: Real-time data for achieving change**

One of U-Report's main takeaways is that the programme works in real time, publishing results on a public website as they come in. This is extremely powerful for redirecting programmes and policies, and for being able to respond to children's requests immediately. As children respond to polls, they can see that other U-Reporters are also responding reinforcing a sense of community and online peer-to-peer engagement. Adolescents and youth get to feel part of a digital community that is trying to achieve positive change. So, the programme empowers U-Reporters while being data driven. In addition, the real-time data functionality of the programme adds great value for emergency response, and for reporting different forms of violence.

U-report also stands out for being an up-to-date use of ICTs, with this open-source programme constantly adapting to new channels and avoiding obsolescence. The technology has been designed according to UNICEF's Principles for Innovation and Technology in Development<sup>50</sup> to meet today's digital standards.

UNICEF also encourages country versions to include youth organizations in U-Report steering committees aiming to include young people as much as possible. So, this is a tool by youth, for youth. Its two-way communication is also noteworthy: U-Reporters get to respond to opinion polls, but they can send the programme a message whenever they want. In some countries, U-Report provides real-time counseling through partner organizations via text on a wide range of issues.

Above all, U-Reporters engage directly with others. In this way, the online sphere of U-Report mirrors many of the offline advantages of communication, while also collecting valuable data to improve programmes and policies.

# CASE STUDY 3



### 3. Rise Up for Girls: Tackling child marriage and gender-based violence in Malawi and Guatemala

*Rise Up enables girls, youth and women to identify their own problems so they can lead potential solutions through their own advocacy and mobilization strategies. In Malawi, young girls helped change national legislation by uniting their voices to outlaw child marriage and other forms of sexual violence. In Guatemala, a group of girls led the process of creating a national violence observatory centre to report cases of violence against girls and women. Rise Up's local partner organizations are the Girls' Empowerment Network (GENET) in Malawi, and Asociación Renacimiento in Guatemala.*

#### **WHY: Protecting girls in Malawi and Guatemala from child marriage and violence**

Guatemala has one of the highest rates of pregnancy in girls aged 10 to 14 in Latin America: a direct consequence of sexual violence. According to official data from the country's National Statistics Institute, more than 74,000 babies were born to adolescent mothers in 2018, including 2,000 who were conceived as a result of the rape of girls under the age of 14.<sup>51</sup>

Malawi is one of the countries with the highest levels of child marriage: almost half of all girls are married before the age of 18, putting them at greater risk of dropping out of school, domestic violence and the potentially life-threatening health consequences of early pregnancy.<sup>52</sup> The country's landmark legislation, which bans child marriage, ensures that 2 million girls in the country can finish school, lift themselves out of poverty and marry when they want. Yet so much more needs to be done.

Rise Up believes that when girls can raise their voices and advocate for improved laws and policies and their implementation on the issues they prioritize, they help to highlight their own needs and position their voices at the centre of possible solutions. The Rise Up model enables adolescent girl leaders to drive sustainable change and tackle the legal, cultural, and structural obstacles that contribute to their high rates of forced marriage, early pregnancy, school dropout, gender-based violence and pervasive poverty.

#### **WHAT: Banning traditional practices and protecting girls from violence**

In both countries, local adult leaders and their organizations helped adolescent girls identify the issues they saw as the most urgent and supported them with relevant information to help them pursue their advocacy goals.

In 2015, young Malawian girls (aged 10 to 18) advocated successfully for a change in national legislation to outlaw child marriage, banning this

harmful traditional practice against girls in 184 communities. Today, 650 trained girl leaders are mobilizing over 10,000 young girls to advocate for an end to child marriage on the ground. Their strategy is based on working directly with village chiefs and traditional authorities to find local solutions together, so that the national law has a local impact by dissolving early marriages or setting up reporting and enforcement systems.

In Guatemala, a group of 30 young girls (also aged 10 to 18) led advocacy efforts for the creation of a municipal-level watchdog group to ensure the adequate reporting of – and response to – cases of sexual violence cases against girls and women, referring them to legal, psychological and medical help. These girls were trained on a Sexual Violence Protocol<sup>53</sup> and, in turn, trained 150 more girls to identify, respond to and support survivors, and to prevent sexual violence in their communities. They investigated local violence rates using official facts and statistics to encourage decision-makers to approve a violence observatory centre. Consequently, they helped to train local authorities, teachers and parents on gender-based violence and effective responses to sexual violence.

### **HOW: Child-created, led and implemented mobilization and advocacy**

Children were involved as leaders and decision-makers at every step of this process. In both countries, adolescent girls identified the problems to address, helped to devise advocacy strategies, and later implemented them with the support of their adult allies. Between 25 and 30 girl leaders per country either took the lead or participated in the advocacy planning and implementation stage.

Rise Up's model is to partner with, and build the capacity of, local organizations around girl-centred advocacy. The local partners develop a girl-centred or girl-led advocacy strategy and invite young girls

to go through an intense capacity building training programme on leadership development, mental health, public speaking, sexual violence, gender issues, advocacy and human rights.

Typically, this training programme consists of 12 sessions over six months. Girl leaders first reflect upon their own lives and their surroundings, and then map out their problems, identifying those that are the most pressing in their lives. Initial sessions focus on understanding the context, environment, and the root causes of these problems. The training encourages girls to find and focus on their objectives and identify the political changes that could help resolve an issue, starting from its root cause. Girl leaders are active participants in planning their advocacy strategies and creating a work plan to engage and convince other girls, as well as decision makers, local politicians, council members and others.

After the training, girls go back to their communities, advocate directly with decision makers and mobilize other girls. From then onwards, their model is built on girl-centred advocacy and mobilization, and a peer-to-peer approach.

Rise Up's adult leaders and their partner organizations know a great deal about the girl participants. Indeed, connection with the girls' ecosystem is a critical aspect of their model, given that the girls' training encourages them to reflect upon their context, reality, community and surroundings. It is understood that participation and advocacy strategies will vary depending on local context, and that the girls themselves are the ones who best understand that.

The peer-to-peer approach is critical. Rise Up's partner organizations first engage girl leaders, who then become the main entry point for new participants. The precise engagement strategies used

will depend on their creativity, but some of the most common are posters, marches, community theatre, puppet shows, speaking at school assemblies and community meetings, and the innovative use of social media, such as Whatsapp and SMS.

In both Malawi and Guatemala, the resources used most often for participation are offline, given the rural contexts and the lack of access to technology. Where the usage rate justifies it, girls will use Facebook and Whatsapp to communicate with and mobilize others.

### **RESULTS: Girls' stories are the main source of data**

The data collected include a blend of qualitative and quantitative information. In both countries, girls realized that their own experiences — or the experiences of other girls they knew — were also their most powerful source of data. As a result, one of the most frequently used strategies was based on sharing their stories and experiences with decision

makers to bring them closer to the problems the girls face on a daily basis.

In this case, there is no need to share the participation results with the girls: instead, the girls share their results with adults and other girls and youth in their communities. Girls also evaluate their own work, as their training encourages them to appraise their achievements and processes, with the participation of the community. They are the ones who debrief, and they extract lessons learned that can be applied to future community mobilization and advocacy efforts.

### **ACHIEVEMENTS AND OUTCOMES: Banning harmful traditional practices and protecting girls from violence**

Both experiences had clear advocacy goals: banning child marriage in Malawi and activating reporting and referral mechanisms for young victims of gender-based violence in Guatemala. Not only have these projects resulted in important achievements



from both participation experiences, but they have also enabled girls to be invited to, and involved in, decision-making spaces. In Malawi, girls lobbied directly with Members of Parliament, and in Guatemala girls advocated directly with traditional and elected community leaders and decision makers; the Guatemalan participants were also invited to participate in their local 'protection network' or community sexual violence watchdog groups.

By using their stories to engage decision makers and other adult stakeholders, girls in Guatemala achieved the creation of two violence observatory centres in San Juan Comalapa and San Martín Jilotepeque, where 700 adolescent girls and over 1,000 women have been protected after reporting different forms of violence. In Malawi, 184 villages have banned harmful traditional practices, including child marriage, thanks in part to the advocacy efforts of the girls.

The Rise Up! experiences from Malawi and Guatemala have shown outstanding participation outcomes, considering that – on average – most girls continue to engage in activism for at least three years after completing the initial training. Girl leaders continue to advocate with and engage other girls to ensure that the laws, policies or programmes they helped to create are implemented and funded, and that the impact reaches the most marginalized members of their communities.

### **CHALLENGES: Sharing power and being taken seriously**

The main barrier to girls achieving change is the difficulty in convincing adults to share power spaces where girls can participate in decision-making processes. Girls have also pointed out that their opinions are not always taken seriously by authorities because of patriarchal and adult-centric practices, and that they are occasionally threatened and harassed by older women, men and boys in their communities.





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### KEY TAKEAWAYS: Girls lead, decide and mobilize

Rise Up's model stands out for enabling girls to be the ultimate designers and leaders of their advocacy goals. The implementing organizations invest time and resources in encouraging girls to reflect upon their ecosystems and identify for themselves the issues of greatest importance for them and their peers. Both Rise Up and their partner organizations understand the value of identifying the drive and motivation for participation, and, most importantly, transferring power and control to children and adolescents so they can take the lead and become agents of change within their own lives.

The model also relies strongly on a peer-to-peer approach, understanding that only girls can transmit that level of stimulation to other girls. Rise Up truly empowers girl leaders so they can, in turn, empower their peers.

The training delivered by adults is thorough and comprehensive, and it understands the different areas of information girls need. It also displays understanding of the role adults need to play in such forms of participation: that of guiding and protecting girls throughout their process.

Finally, the model stands out for using girls' experiences as the main source of data for approaching authorities. It recognizes that quantitative data need to be complimented by qualitative, deep information with a strong emotional content to bridge the relationship between decision makers and adolescent girls.

# CASE STUDY 4



# 4. TEGA: Technology Enabled Girl Ambassadors understand the problems girls are facing today

*Technology Enabled Girls Ambassadors (TEGA) is an innovative, participatory approach to youth participation created by the NGO Girl Effect. Girls use mobile devices to interview their peers and community members, collecting video, audio and survey data. In 2016, TEGA was mobilized to find out more about the lives of internally displaced girls and women in Nigeria, and in 2017 to collect information about girls and boys in Saginaw, Michigan, USA.*

## WHY: A girl will only really open up to another girl

To drive meaningful change, accurate data and insights are required to understand challenges and inform programmes. Conventional research methods, however, can have serious limitations — they can, for example, be slow, expensive and intimidating. Girl Effect perceived that traditional research approaches focused on the Global South are sometimes intrusive and, consequently, do not always gather honest responses from a very specific demographic: adolescent girls. It is common for men to speak for their households, and not allow women to talk privately with researchers. This leads to biased responses and girls being silenced on the very issues that most affect them. For Girl Effect, adolescent girls can be the most difficult demographic to reach in the world.

The TEGA initiative is based on the understanding that an adolescent girl is more likely to feel comfortable and speak truthfully about her life to another girl like her. She is more inclined to respond openly to someone who understands

her background and the culture in which she lives than to an adult stranger who does not share her experience. To tackle the data gap on this demographic, Girl Effect began to train young women aged 18-24 (and then younger girls) living within communities in Nigeria and the United States to become qualified researchers and Technology Enabled Girl Ambassadors (TEGAs). The organization taught trainees how to interview and collect valuable information from other girls in their communities. They assumed that girls would open up to them and share their stories. They were right.

Insights collected by TEGAs help organizations better understand the reality of girls' lives and, therefore, implement programmes that are better designed, more targeted and that have substantive impacts.

In 2016, displaced girls and women in Borno State, Nigeria were in desperate need of livelihood assistance. Many had fled from violence in their home villages, and often faced abuse and extreme poverty in camps and host communities. Humanitarian agencies were unable to gauge

the extent of gender-based violence in the host communities, and women and girls rarely opened up about their experiences during research. To tackle this, Girl Effect was approached by Oxfam to gain insights that would improve their humanitarian support services to women and girls displaced by violence.

In addition, Girl Effect wanted to pilot the TEGA process and method in the United States context, specifically in Saginaw, Michigan, where there were high levels of joblessness, crime and gender-based violence. According to the FBI, Saginaw was declared the most dangerous city in the United States for women to live and, in 2012, the city experienced the highest number of rapes per capita in the country. The TEGA-led research aimed to gain a new perspective on the city's high violence rates and help improve programmes and policies to protect girls and boys from that violence.

### **WHAT: Mobile-based, girl-operated research, with girls collecting data from other girls**

This initiative is a mobile-based, girl-operated research methodology designed to provide authentic insights from marginalized communities. It is designed by adults and youth, but, youth and child led, with girl-implemented data collection.

TEGAs use a specially designed app to interview and survey their peers and community members, collecting qualitative and quantitative information from girls and their communities. It is based on the simple premise that a girl will probably open up to another girl. The programme was co-designed with the TEGAs, who made sure that both the technology and its user experience were built by girls, for girls. This meant that their decision-making role was just as important as that of the organizations' staff members.

There are now two types of TEGAs. The first type constitutes a growing community of nearly 400 female field researchers, aged 18 to 24, from Bangladesh, India, Malawi and Rwanda, as well Nigeria and the United States, who come from marginalized and vulnerable backgrounds and interview other girls and boys. The second type of TEGAs, known as 'Selfie TEGAs', are younger girls, aged 15 to 17, who self-report qualitative data from their smartphones by interviewing their families and closest communities. There is currently one network of 114 Selfie TEGAs in Nigeria.

TEGAs and Selfie TEGAs live in communities where gender-based violence has a critical impact on both girls and women — communities where sexual assault, physical violence and child marriage are commonplace.

In 2016, TEGAs in Northern Nigeria interviewed both internally displaced and resident girls in host communities in Maiduguri. The themes explored included safety and gender-based violence. In 2017, TEGAs conducted participatory research in Saginaw, Michigan. The research provided valuable insights on violence and poverty, among other topics.

### **HOW: Technology designed by and for girls**

Girl Effect's model works through partnership with a local organization and calls for the training of marginalized and non-economically empowered girls from the community.<sup>54</sup> The underpinning design principle is that any girl can become a TEGA, and the only requirement for participation is literacy. Girls participate in an initial week-long training workshop, followed by three months of vigorous capacity building, which includes conducting interviews within their communities using the programme app, regular refresher training, and completing assignments at home. At the end of their capacity building, TEGAs can become certified researchers with a qualification

from the Market Research Society (MRS), an organization specializing in data analytics.

Interviews<sup>55</sup> are carried out in the field using an online mobile-based tool. The programme uses a specially designed software created to engage girls, which includes data collection and interview functionalities. The TEGA Research app features the typical elements of game playing – a strategy known as gamification – to stimulate the TEGAs in their learning journey.<sup>56</sup> For example, users are rewarded with different colours and medals as they move from one level to the next. This makes learning a fun experience, as girls are engaged and motivated by these functionalities.

The safety of the girls is supported by a number of features within the device, including: a unique pin code to access the app; an SMS-based panic button that sends the location of the girl to her support circle; connection with a secure content hub for uploading collected data to an online location (which is then deleted from the phone); and a referral pathway, in case any safety issues are disclosed during an interview.

The app collects quantitative and qualitative data and offers different ways to gather information and stories through videos, audio clips and photos. Such data carry strong emotional weight because they include personal expression and body language. One of the most valuable aspects of the tool is the versatility of the data it collects. Because the data capture the faces and expressions of the girls, as well as their fears and hopes, they can tell us a great deal about the needs of each girl.

There are different levels of youth involvement in TEGA. The TEGAs and Selfie TEGAs play a leading role in shaping the programme, technology, and its implementation, and are responsible for delivering much-needed data on girls and boys as young as six

years of age, depending on the research gaps that need to be filled.

The project's level of knowledge about the engaged communities is high as a result of the intimacy with which girls engage with respondents during interviews. The project also sought the highest possible level of connection with the girls' ecosystem, as the technology was designed, tested and used by the target audience: adolescent girls from the same communities that provide the information.

### **RESULTS: Findings include the lack of access to support services in Nigeria and widespread violence in Saginaw.**

According to results from 2016 surveys in Nigeria, women and girls reported early or forced marriage as the most prevalent type of sexual exploitation, followed by sexual assault and rape. Results also showed that girls fear repercussions for talking about their sexual assault experience. Specifically, referring to protection issues, TEGAs showed how girls experiencing gender-based violence were unable to access support services because humanitarian organizations were sharing inaccurate information about those services.

In Saginaw, more than 6,000 video and audio clips were collected from youth, mostly girls, revealing that 93 per cent of girls have witnessed violence caused by gang dynamics, generally as silent bystanders. The findings also revealed that two thirds of the boys and girls interviewed feel safest while at home, but that, strikingly, 11 per cent of girls only feel safe in their own room or bed. Stories revealed that young women in Saginaw tend to fear gun and gender-based violence, gangs and drug dealers.

For protection purposes, the results emerging from the data are shared back with the communities through Girl Effect's partner organizations, rather than through the TEGAs themselves.

## ACHIEVEMENTS AND OUTCOMES: Improving services, meeting community needs, and continued participation

In Nigeria, the results were used by Oxfam to increase the effectiveness of its services. Achievements include redesigning the processes for accessing services, leading to the adoption of changes across a number of organizations working to support survivors of gender-based violence.

In Michigan, results are currently being used by the Saginaw Community Foundation to shape their work, and by the Saginaw Police Department to strengthen their efforts to meet community needs for the prevention of violence.

One particularly praiseworthy outcome of this participation is that TEGAs and Selfie TEGAs continue to be engaged after conducting interviews and have formed a community of TEGAs who agree to find common goals. There have been examples

from networks across the globe, including in India, Nigeria and the United States, of TEGAs organizing group activities for themselves. This is a significant improvement, as girls tended to be distrustful and suspicious of each other during the earliest pilot stages. In 2016, for example, TEGAs from Kano, Nigeria hosted a three-day workshop for Girl Effect staff from across the world to teach them how to set up their own network. TEGAs in Kano have also taken on additional project management responsibilities within the office of Girl Effect's local partner.

## CHALLENGES: Ensuring girls' safety

Ensuring safety for girls has been Girl Effect's main challenge when implementing TEGA. During the early stages of TEGA's conceptualization, there were concerns from the international community about the safety of giving smartphones to girls in vulnerable communities, for fear that they would become targets for theft and even violence and sexual harm.



Girl Effect is continuously adapting the training for TEGAs as the organization learns more about the girls and their lives, with additional topics added to refresher sessions such as money management and digital safety. Similarly, in facing some push-back from community respondents, Girl Effect has restored participation by integrating a Community Leader video to the app. TEGAs can play this to respondents who may be skeptical about the nature of the programme.

#### **KEY TAKEAWAYS: Fun technology for peer-to-peer collection of deep, meaningful data**

Girl Effect's TEGA initiative is groundbreaking and innovative in its overall approach: girls have a high level of power and responsibility, ICTs are used comprehensively (in its data collection system and user experience) to serve programme purposes, and it has a strong peer-to-peer approach across many different levels. The organization was able to identify a critical gap in data collection from a specific demographic — adolescent girls — and devise a solution that involved this group in its design, implementation and evaluation.

Girls had a leading role in designing technology that was girl-friendly and easy to use, while ensuring their safety — a critical aspect considering the risks TEGAs face as in-the-field researchers. Adults played a key role in empowering, guiding and protecting TEGAs.

Understanding that no one will comprehend the programme and its demographic's needs better than girl themselves, Girl Effect has transferred decision-making power to TEGAs. The technology and the programme are owned by girls who serve other girls' needs.

In addition, the use of ICTs has been remarkably innovative: Girl Effect came up with a way to collect extremely powerful data by using videos and audios to reflect girls' body language and tone of voice while sharing their stories, adding enormous value and delivering deep data. The organization also adapted to the needs and likes of their target audience by including typical elements of games in their research app, making it more fun and engaging for TEGAs. In short, the organization truly believed in girls' abilities and capacities.

# CASE STUDY 5



# 5. International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer & Intersex Youth & Student Organization (IGLYO): Activists' Academy and Inclusive Education Report

*With 95 member organizations in more than 40 European countries, IGLYO created the first inclusive education report, index and map, and a comprehensive overview of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTQI) bullying and discrimination in schools within each Council of Europe Member State. Through their Activists Academy programme, IGLYO is empowering young people to mobilize their peers to prevent discrimination against LGBTQI children and youth.*

## **WHY: The highly disproportionate levels of school victimization facing LGBTQI children and youth**

School bullying remains a serious global issue. A recent UNESCO report<sup>57</sup> estimates that 246 million children and young people experience school violence and bullying in some form every year. Furthermore, “*the proportion of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender students (LGBT) experiencing school violence and bullying ranged from 16% to 85% and the prevalence of violence was between three and five times higher among LGBT students than among their non-LGBT peers*”.<sup>58</sup> In 2016, to document this, IGLYO asked LGBTQI young people and adolescents across Europe to share their school experiences. Regardless of the country in which they lived, the stories were frighteningly similar: fear, isolation, exclusion and violence.

IGLYO has been working on the topic of education, and more specifically, tackling homophobic, biphobic, transphobic, and interphobic bullying in schools for several years. It has worked directly

with LGBTQI youth, teachers, youth organizations, academics and governments to better understand the causes of bullying, its impact on students, and possible solutions. To advocate for the greater protection and rights of LGBTQI students in school and beyond, and create the evidence needed, IGLYO created an inclusive education index and report. In addition, IGLYO realized that youth require practical skills at the very start of their activist journey to advance their ideas on tackling forms of violence and discrimination, and this led the organization to start an Activists Academy. The overall goal of both initiatives is to make schools safer and more inclusive for all students and empower young people to mobilize others to tackle LGBTQI discrimination.

## **WHAT: A comprehensive approach to tackling LGBTQI discrimination that combines research and training**

IGLYO’s intervention can be framed as a comprehensive youth-led approach to prevent LGBTQI bullying and discrimination, targeting adolescents and youth. IGLYO tackles bullying and different forms of discrimination through youth-led

research, and peer-to-peer training and mobilization. It develops the confidence and skills young people need to become leaders and advocates for human rights while, at the same time, collecting data and conducting research.

To improve LGBTQI students' experience in school, the organization compiled an extensive overview of the situation within each Council of Europe Member State (an inclusive education index and report), measuring the levels of LGBTQI inclusion within schools to provide clearer guidance for governments and education ministries. IGLYO also organized an Activist Academy, a five-day intensive skills-based training programme for young people in Europe who have a strong interest in LGBTQI rights.

### **HOW: Youth-led research, peer-to-peer training and mobilization**

IGLYO's initiatives are youth designed, led, and implemented, and its intended beneficiaries are children. All of its resources are developed by young people, who identify challenges and issues, and work collaboratively with IGLYO to develop material that they can use for advocacy. IGLYO's work is founded on how these young volunteers relate to their communities, what they see in their schools, and where they identify gaps in support. Given that the IGLYO network operates through member organizations, its level of knowledge about their engaged community, and its connection with children's ecosystem, are both high.

To develop the inclusive education index and report, IGLYO held a consultation workshop at its Annual Members Conference in October 2016 with 30 young people as a starting point for the updating of previous minimum standards and put together a set of indicators. These indicators comprised: anti-discrimination laws applicable to education; policies and action plans; inclusive national curricula; teacher training on LGBTQI awareness; gender recognition;

data collection on bullying and harassment; support systems; information and guidelines; partnerships between governments and civil society; and international commitment.

Subsequently, organizers established an expert working group with government representatives, civil society organizations and academics to look at existing research on inclusive education and align these indicators with other international recommendations. The indicators were tested in seven countries through IGLYO member organizations, and feedback was collected. Once updated, a questionnaire was sent to all member organizations to produce the final index and report.

As part of the overall strategy to empower young people to use the collected data to drive change, IGLYO's Annual Members' Conference in 2017 included a session with 65 young people on how they could use the index and report to advocate for change in their own countries. They were split into six groups based on their perception of government support for LGBTQI inclusive education (from very supportive to very against) and tasked them to work collaboratively to create solutions that could be implemented in their home countries, with advocacy goals and strategies in mind.

The Activist Academy is a five-day intensive training programme for younger, less experienced LGBTQI activists, providing them with confidence and skills to create a new generation of motivated LGBTQI youth leaders. They carry out team-building activities, skills workshops (covering online campaigning, community organizing, group facilitation, filmmaking, community mobilization and public speaking), and activities to apply the skills they have learned. After the 2017 training session, participants left with greater confidence in their abilities to draft speeches, organize workshops, and develop films and campaign



materials that they could use for advocacy and community mobilization upon returning home.

Because of the networking nature of IGLYO's organization, its promotion and engagement strategies are built upon existing structures, inviting participants through each of their member organizations and giving them priority participation.

As well as offline activities such as workshops, conferences, training, toolkits, guides and research, IGLYO also provides online webinars, toolkits and guides. For each event and/or programme, such as the Activists Academy, IGLYO creates a closed Facebook group where participants can connect with each other before and after the event. Most of these remain fairly active.

### **RESULTS: Rating governments on how inclusive their schools are**

For the inclusive education index, IGLYO collected

data on how well each government measured up against the indicators listed above. The results were then used to advocate for inclusive education in schools in 49 countries. The organization received responses from 18 of the 49 governments, three of which have already provided feedback on programmes and policies currently being implemented.

Of the 49 countries reviewed, there are currently only four that provide most of the measures suggested by the indicator (Malta, Netherlands, Norway and Sweden). Some regions of Spain have also developed inclusive laws and policies, but they have not been implemented nationally.<sup>59</sup>

The next stage of the project will be a mentorship programme working directly with three or four governments. Participation results have been shared back with adolescents and youth through IGLYO's 95 member organizations and through social networks.

## ACHIEVEMENTS AND OUTCOMES: Advocacy and further engagement

The inclusive education index aims to provide clearer guidelines for governments and their education ministries on LGBTQI inclusion in schools. Regarding the Activists Academy, participants have embarked upon national advocacy work to prevent LGBTQI bullying and discrimination.

Adolescents and youth from the 2017 Activist Academy have continued to use their new skills after their participation experiences. One participant from Romania, for example, drew on the experience to run a workshop at a regional LGBTQI conference, and to set up a new support group for transgender youth to help prevent and address violence and discrimination against transgender youth and children. Another participant from Finland set up activism training and went from being a volunteer to becoming a paid staff member of the local partner organization, designing support workshops for young people to

help them during their 'coming out', and to face or prevent school bullying and discrimination. Finally, a participant from Belgium co-coordinated a joint meeting with three other LGBTQI NGOs, increasing collaboration on LGBTQI discrimination.

## CHALLENGES: Language and responses to high demand for participation

IGLYO events are 95 per cent subsidized, which makes them accessible to all young people regardless of their financial situation. Because the working language is English, however, some young people from across Europe are excluded. As a result of the high demand for participation at IGLYO events, those with higher academic achievements are more likely to be selected because of the standards of their application.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS: Data and skills

IGLYO stands out for delivering a comprehensive approach that combines data collection with



assessment, while training youth and providing the tools they needed to become activists.

It also relies on a network structure and a peer-to-peer model: even though IGLYO works with youth over 18, its organizers understand that children and adolescents are more likely to engage with a young person who is closer to their age than with an adult.

IGLYO also empowers youth and adolescents to build upon their own experiences and motivations to mobilize others, understanding that the drive of children and adolescents to participate is critical for the engagement and mobilization of others.

# CASE STUDY 6



# 6. Yo Opino: children in Chile speak out on the issues that affect them

*For three consecutive years, the Government of Chile implemented the country's largest ever national consultation with children. The consultations had a different focus and advocacy purpose each year, so children's voices could be used to inform programmes and policies. The urgent need to address different forms of discrimination came up in all three of these annual consultations.*

## WHY: Reflecting children's views in national policies

In 2018, the Government of Chile reported that 65 per cent of children and adolescents in Chile (aged 12 to 17) had been exposed to violence in their community over the previous year, while 46 per cent had been victims of physical violence and 34 per cent had been victims of violence or abuse by their parents or caregivers.<sup>60</sup> Violence in schools was also a problem; 23 per cent of children had been victims of verbal violence and discrimination at their school, and 20 per cent victims of physical violence.<sup>61</sup>

In 2014, the Government of Chile created the 'National Council for Children', a presidential advisory body, to coordinate public agencies for the development of comprehensive policies for children. In 2015, responding to the need for an ongoing mechanism to collect children's viewpoints and reflect them when developing programmes and policies, the Council created *Yo Opino* (meaning 'I opine', or 'I give my opinion'), a national youth consultation process, which gathered youth opinions for three consecutive years. Subsequently,

the Council used the resulting data to achieve its goal of drafting a National Policy for Children and Adolescents.

## WHAT: Annual child consultation

*Yo Opino* was used as an ongoing way to collect children's views and opinions each year in 2015, 2016 and 2017, in collaboration with a number of partners.<sup>62</sup> The Council promoted and implemented this activity through schools across the country, during school hours, with facilitation by teachers in the classroom. Although this initiative was not focused specifically on violence, children raised persistent concerns about being victims of assault, discrimination and other forms of violence during all three annual consultations.

*Yo Opino*'s participants were aged 4 to 18 and came from different parts of the country. In 2015 the consultation focused on the good treatment of children, their participation, and their progressive autonomy. The results aimed to inform the National Children and Adolescents policy drafted by Chile's National Council for Children, as well as

legislative discussions on child-related legislation being discussed in Congress at the time. The 2016 consultation collected children's views on the promotion of their rights, aiming to feed these into school's civic education programmes. The 2017 consultation focused on the Sustainable Development Agenda (SDA), introducing and reflecting upon the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and giving children the opportunity to speak out on their priorities and identify possible actions to address them. In this year, children participated as data providers.

The consultation was adult-designed, led and implemented, but it did respond to a previous demand from children for an adult-free participation space where they could voice their opinions. Such demands emerged from previous offline dialogues<sup>63</sup> between children, adolescents and adults, which were conducted by the National Council for Children and UNDP Chile between November 2014 and March 2015.

### **HOW: Combining methods, with a focus on group work and discussions**

In 2015, 831,434 children took part in the annual consultation; 424,446 in 2016, and 658,605 in 2017. Basic information was gathered for each participant (age, gender, school and ethnicity), and the extent of connection with children's ecosystems often depended on the capacity and creativity of each individual teacher.<sup>64</sup> Children were not involved in the design process and did not take the lead.

The 2015 consultation intended to involve children more actively before the implementation phase, and a methodology for this enhanced involvement was shared with a children's advisory committee. However, there was not enough time to incorporate their feedback.

Each consultation used the same approach: core themes used as guidelines for the consultation<sup>65</sup>, varied activities that depended on the age group, data-collection systematization, and the uploading of results by an adult facilitator (usually a schoolteacher). Regardless of the presence of adult facilitators, the methodology encouraged and reassured children in relation to their right to express their opinions freely.

The youngest children (aged 4 to 10) worked with short stories, which varied according to their age group, with the youngest drawing pictures. Two teachers facilitated the activities: one encouraged discussion among a small group of participants, and the other was responsible for registering the outcomes. After a process of reflection, children would draw the subjects that had captured their attention. Teachers would then choose the five drawings that best reflected the group work and upload them as part of the results.

Children aged 11 to 18 worked with collective discussion methodologies, dividing themselves into three groups (one for each core issue). They moderated the group discussions and took notes for themselves. Each group presented their work to the rest of the class, and conclusions were identified collectively.<sup>66</sup>

The initiative's direct engagement was with schools, rather than children themselves. The Ministry of Education promoted the participation activity, capitalizing on existing structures. While the participatory activities were offline, their results were collected on a website, and later published online.

### **RESULTS: Children want non-violent treatment from adults, and an end to bullying and discrimination**

Each consultation collected both quantitative and qualitative data on a wide range of issues.



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The results of the 2015 consultation showed that 20 per cent of children believe non-discriminatory practices and respect for diversity should be promoted. Qualitative data demonstrated that children want adults to treat them with more respect (avoiding verbal and physical punishment), as they often feel invisible to them, and feel neglected when they are punished or verbally mistreated. The results also revealed that children are well aware of violent behaviours between their peers at school. They expressed a desire for better relationships and for ways to avoid and eradicate violent practices such as bullying and cyberbullying.

In the 2016 consultation, the right to non-discrimination was a major priority for children. The results showed that children firmly believe – and from a very young age – in their right to be protected against any form of violence, abuse and exploitation. In fact, the younger they are, the stronger that belief. The findings also revealed that, as children grew

older, ending discrimination became even more important. Again, this was strongly connected to in-school relationships, and consequent bullying and cyberbullying.

Similarly, during the 2017 consultation, children chose SDG 16 (Peace, justice and strong institutions) as their second most important priority<sup>67</sup>, right after SDG 1, (end poverty in all its forms). Children also suggested specific actions that governments can take to stop discriminatory behaviour and promote peaceful interactions between communities.

Each year, the results of these consultations were shared with children and their school communities through the official website, and via offline regional<sup>68</sup> conversation spaces. While children took part in these regional conversation spaces, they were not in a position to evaluate Yo Opino as a whole.

## ACHIEVEMENTS AND OUTCOMES: Contributions to children's policies, and data for ongoing reference

Although the consultation processes fulfilled an advocacy role, its concrete achievements were not so tangible, as the results were used primarily as an ongoing reference to influence programmes, policies, and laws. The 2015 consultation results were used as input data during the drafting process of the National Policy for Children and Adolescents, and for ongoing reference by Chile's National Council for Children.<sup>69</sup> In addition, results were printed and shared with each Chilean MP to inform the legislative discussions around Chile's Law to guarantee the rights of the child.

The results from 2016 were used primarily by schools themselves. The 2017 results contributed to Chile's voluntary report during that year's High-Level Political Forum in New York, where the Government of Chile presented its progress towards the achievement of the SDGs.

One very specific outcome was the influence of the consultations on the Council's communication campaigns, as the results were used to create awareness of the importance of listening to children and the negative effects of not including them. Participating children were not, however, involved in actual decision-making processes as part of this activity.

The Council did not continue to engage children specifically around Yo Opino, although there are records of children's continuing engagement within schools. Some schools, for example, formed student councils as a result of Yo Opino.

This participation experience also encouraged other institutions to adopt ways to listen to children as part of their efforts to create child-related programmes and policies.

Encouraged by Yo Opino's methodology, the Dr. Exequiel González Cortés Children's Hospital hosted the country's first 'Participatory Congress on Health Rights'. The Congress revealed that children feel that they are overlooked as patients (with health professionals talking to their parents or other accompanying adults), and that they are excluded from any decisions. The hospital used these results to set new standards for how children are treated as patients: as bearers of rights, including the rights to information and to be heard.

## CHALLENGES: Direct participation without adults as intermediaries

Several barriers and challenges have been identified, the first being the role of adults who act as intermediaries to children's participation. The fact that teachers were responsible for translating and uploading results could have affected the accuracy of discussion outcomes. In general, the approach was top down from its design to its implementation.

Coordination between partners was also challenging, particularly as they varied from one year to another.

In the first year of implementation, cultural differences throughout the country affected the way in which children interpreted the content of the consultation. For example, stories were used for working with the younger children, yet some story characters were animals that were common in the south of the country, but unfamiliar to children from the north. This was addressed in the next two consultations by providing several content options.

In the 2016 and 2017 consultations, follow-up advocacy using the participation results was not the sole responsibility of implementing organizations, making it challenging to keep track of impact and concrete achievements. In 2016, for example, participation results were delivered back to

schools, so they could use them within their own communities. But there is no record of how – or if – they were used to achieve change.

In addition, Yo Opino's final version coincided with the last year of the Government administration. This, in turn, meant tighter deadlines for feedback on any achievements and the use of data. This suggests that when such activities are tied to the agenda of a single administration's agenda, it is less likely that they will continue.

### **KEY TAKEAWAYS: Political will matters for the inclusion of children's views in programmes and policies**

There are two key takeaways from this participation experience: first, the political will of the administration to include children's voices as part of its process, and second, the outreach achieved by building upon the existing reach of the Ministry of Education.

Yo Opino has been Chile's largest children's consultation. As such, it sends a strong message about the recognition of children's rights and the need to institutionalize measures for their participation. The fact that Yo Opino was repeated for three consecutive years and implemented in the classroom conveys a direct and powerful message to children: adults are telling them that their right to freely express themselves should be respected, and that time and resources should be invested in such experiences.

This rights-based message was also well received by local governments, which aim to replicate the methodology within their own communities.

Yo Opino has not been implemented since the end of the administration that was in power at the time, and there is uncertainty about its continuance. Another takeaway is the way in which projects risk becoming tied to political agendas if they are not institutionalized.

# CASE STUDY 7



# 7. Restless Development India: Empowering children and youth against child marriage

*Restless Development addresses child marriage and gender discrimination in three of the most vulnerable states in India. The organization has created a network of youth leaders, encouraged child-centred community action and campaigns, mobilized over 287,000 children and adolescents, and prompted 10 villages to declare themselves free of child marriage.*

## **WHY: Child marriage is still socially acceptable in parts of India**

Child marriage is widespread across India, with nearly half of brides married as girls. While there has been a decline in the incidence of child marriage nationally<sup>70</sup>, the pace of change remains slow, specially for girls aged 15 to 18, and it remains a social accepted practice in many parts of the country. Girls married as children are more likely to face violence, abuse and exposure to HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases because they have fewer skills and less negotiating power.<sup>71</sup>

Restless Development engages girls and boys aged 10 to 17 who are at risk of child marriage, given the social characteristics of their environments. To lower the rates of child marriage, Restless Development has focused on mobilizing adolescents and youth with the following goals: to enable them to make informed decisions on Sexual Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) issues and child marriage; to empower young women and girls to exercise their SRHR and avoid the child, early and forced marriages encouraged by their environment; and to advocate for the development

and implementation of legislation and policies to prevent such marriages.

## **WHAT: Open discussion with children on their rights, education and mobilization**

Restless Development has been addressing gender discrimination and child marriage in three of the most vulnerable states in India: Odisha (Ganjam and Jagatsinghpur districts), Jharkhand (Deoghar and Pakur districts) and Bihar (Munger, Bhagalpur and East Champaran districts). It has done so by openly discussing these culturally sensitive issues, educating young girls about their rights, and equipping them with the skills to stay in school or employment. The approaches have tended to focus on youth-led mobilization, youth-led data collection, youth and child-led advocacy, and peer-to-peer education and learning.

Interventions are carried out in coordination with the Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights Alliance, which provides intensive training to the organization's youth leaders (aged 18 to 24). These youth leaders then mobilize children and engage parents, family

members, community members and panchayat<sup>72</sup> members to end child marriage.

Between 2014 and 2017, Restless Development trained more than 287,000 adolescent girls and boys, both in schools and in out-of-school settings, through a network of 40 young leaders on issues of child marriage, body rights and menstruation. In 2015, through their #KnotSoYoung campaign, they reached more than 180,000 children and young people in urban and rural communities. And between 2016 and 2017, over 194,000 girls led mobilization activities to help prevent child marriage.

Restless Development India has also trained approximately 150 young volunteers to collect data from children aged 10 to 14 using M-Sat, a smartphone-based technology. They identify areas with high rates of child marriage or school dropouts, and their volunteers visit households to collect data from children through face-to-face questionnaires. All data are uploaded automatically to a single server, where they are systematized manually.

Even though the activities have been designed mostly by youth, the organization has implemented 'youth clubs' in each community, which provide spaces for younger children (aged 10 to 17) to build their own advocacy plans. The campaign has included specific child-led activities as part of the campaign, with more than 19,400 girls aged 10 to 14 leading awareness drives in schools and communities on the adverse impact of early marriage and the need to demystify menstruation. In addition, approximately 150,000 children within the same age group participated in classroom lessons, with their views providing valuable data.

## HOW: Peer-to-peer engagement and mobilization

Restless Development's model is founded on a peer-to-peer approach. First, it trains a group of youth leaders (aged 18 to 24) to mobilize other members of their own community members, including younger children.

Their roles are to: assess the reasons for child marriage and collect personal experiences through their vulnerability assessment tool; educate children (whether in or out of school) and mobilize them and their communities<sup>73</sup>; strengthen spaces for youth-led activities by setting up youth clubs in schools and other settings to encourage young boys and girls to meet, share their opinions, and engage on different activities; and sensitize local authorities to ensure no more child marriages take place.

The youth leaders are supported by expert staff members for the implementation of peer-to-peer education, data collection, vulnerability assessment, and the mobilization of children aged 10 to 17. Community leaders create local youth clubs for these younger children, encouraging their continuous engagement by providing a physical space where they can meet and shape their own advocacy goals and strategies.

The organization's volunteers reach out directly to schools for in-school activities to engage children. They know the age, gender, city and school of each participant in the in-school work. However, they also identify out-of-school children and visit them in their homes.

A deeper level of connection is possible in youth centres, where participants are engaged more frequently. This connection with the existing ecosystems of adolescents and young people is one of the founding principles of Restless Development, and all activities are implemented in collaboration with children and youth who understand their communities and surroundings.

The work is carried out mostly offline and in person on the ground, yet Restless Development also uses social networks to support campaigns and stimulate greater participation.

### **RESULTS: Data and mobilization to protect children**

Different kinds of data have been collected through this child participation experience, including vulnerability assessment data from face-to-face questionnaires, data to monitor the progress of in-school interventions, and information provided by children in schools.

There have been other significant results. For example, the organization's youth leaders identified child marriage as a key risk factor for the poor attendance of some girls in schools – a problem exacerbated by the lack of functional toilet facilities to meet their needs during menstruation. Girls would not go to school during their periods and were at greater risk of being sexually abused or forced into a marriage. In-school clubs for girls and boys conducted

audits of facilities in their schools, which resulted in a campaign to install facilities that were private and functional.

### **ACHIEVEMENTS AND OUTCOMES: Declaring Panchayats 'marriage free'**

This participation experience resulted in many concrete achievements. As part of their Constitution mandate, Panchayats are expected to form committees to improve overall conditions for their citizens in relation to welfare, nutrition, health and WASH (to name a few), and to prevent child, early or forced marriages. However, these committees are often inactive or do not convene meetings. Restless Development encouraged committees to become active and to meet, and trained committee members to act in accordance with the rights of children enshrined in the Constitution as well as in various statutes.

As a result, more than 10 Panchayats declared themselves free of child marriage. In addition, girls' campaign and advocacy activities convinced local





authorities to install functional sanitary facilities in 64 schools, so their peers would not stop going to school during their menstruation.

Collected data have been used for advocacy purposes, such as a qualitative study on the causes of the high rates of child marriage in these three states (including a lack of awareness of the Prohibition Act of 2006), and to reinforce support for continued interventions against child marriage.

One other general outcome has been the ongoing participation of those involved. Young people, children, parents and other community members are engaged continuously through counselling sessions and other informal and interactive meetings in youth resource centres.

### CHALLENGES: Social acceptance

The main barriers to advocacy identified by Restless Development are: social acceptance of child

marriage; menstruation, which has cultural links to views around purity; poverty and low education levels, which pose a threat to child participation; a patriarchal mindset that does not allow girls (and women) self-determination over their bodies; to the vested interests of religious, political and ideological groups.

### KEY TAKEAWAYS: Peer-to-peer at different levels, empowerment and data

Restless Development India's model stands out for its combination of peer-to-peer approaches at different levels, and for working simultaneously with adults to sensitize and train them. Peer-to-peer work is conducted first by youth from the organization's staff (all of them under 30 years of age) to other youth, so they can become leaders in their communities. These youth then reach out to younger audiences, and later create safe spaces where children and youth can meet and engage others. It is very similar to digital virtualization, but in an offline sphere.

This approach is also very comprehensive: the organization collects data, trains other organizations, provides children with useful information, identifies children at risk, and engages decision makers and other adults. Restless Development India is very aware that children and youth need to collaborate with decision makers if they are to influence programmes and policies.

Restless Development also understands the importance of connecting with children's ecosystems,

as well as giving them a safe space where they can reflect upon their surroundings, develop their own strategies, and lead their own activities. Being composed of young adults, the organization transfers decision-making power to children, so they too can become the agents of change for their own lives.

Finally, this initiative uses ICTs for real-time data collection and reporting, understanding that empowerment itself can benefit from being data driven.

# CASE STUDY 8



# 8. Restless Development Tanzania: empowering adolescents and youth to break the silence on sexual reproductive rights and gender-based violence

*Between January and March 2018, Restless Development Tanzania used a peer-to-peer approach to reach and mobilize almost 10,000 adolescents around sexual reproductive health access and gender-based violence prevention.*

## **WHY: Empowering adolescents to break the silence**

As in every other country, children are not safe from sexual abuse in Tanzania.<sup>74</sup> According to Tanzania's *Human Rights Report* (2017) 85 per cent of reported acts of violence against children aged 7 to 14 were sexual, particularly rape or sodomy.<sup>75</sup> In addition, Tanzania carries 5 per cent of the global burden of HIV among adolescents.<sup>76</sup>

*"Girls are disproportionately affected and are almost three times more likely to be living with HIV than boys of the same age. Early marriage and childbearing are common – 27 per cent of girls aged 15–19 years are either pregnant or have had a child".<sup>77</sup>*

Lack of information about Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) influences the risks of sexual violence and discrimination and of being infected with sexually transmitted diseases, or both. Restless Development believes that empowering adolescents and youth to break the silence on these issues helps to prevent such forms of violence.

The goal of the intervention is to empower children and adolescents with sexual reproductive health education and information, so that they can claim their rights and benefit from all the positive outcomes of doing so, such as preventing and reporting different forms of violence, discrimination and sexually transmitted diseases. The objectives of the project are to create demand for health services, so they respond to the needs of adolescents and improve their programmes, and to provide adolescents with relevant information so that they feel more confident about speaking out when necessary.

This experience is part of Restless Development Tanzania's broader agenda. The organization aims to work with young people's priorities, equipping them to find solutions on the matters that affect them. In Tanzania, this means a specific focus on youth empowerment, livelihood, and sexual rights across 10 programmes.

## WHAT: Providing information, creating awareness, and referring adolescents to health facilities

Restless Development's model is based on the belief that children and young people can become agents of change in their own lives. The organization relies on adolescent- and youth-led peer-to-peer mobilization, youth-led advocacy, and child-led mobilization.

To tackle gender-based violence and sexually transmitted diseases, the organization aims to create awareness amongst adolescents and increase demand for health facilities and gender-specific referral systems. Its holistic approach includes raising awareness among adolescents' parents and teachers, as well as providing training to health facility staff, and working with authorities to improve interventions, reporting mechanisms, and adolescent SRHR-focused programmes in general. Restless Development works directly with adolescents, encouraging them to visit health facilities and report back on their experience, creating data that are then used for advocacy and service improvements.

Participants are male and female children, adolescents and youth aged between 10 and 24. Between January and March 2018, 10,046 adolescents were reached and mobilized with SRHR education, and 3,271 were referred to a health facility, of which 2,767 have confirmed using services.

## HOW: Mobilizing children, adolescents, adults, and stakeholders

The peer-to-peer approach works by first training young volunteer leaders (national and community, aged 20 to 28) on sexual rights, sexual reproductive health, gender-based violence, child protection policy, local culture, social norms, and current challenges in the country. National leaders serve as mentors for community leaders, who mobilize and educate children and adolescents both in and out of school in their communities through various

activities. Children and adolescents are encouraged to take part in weekly meetings where they can access information on SRHR and services, share their personal experiences, and suggest local advocacy work and strategies.

For in-school activities, community leaders capitalize on school structures to engage with adolescents, as well as their teachers and families. In some of their projects, school clubs are formed with children aged 10 to 14. For out-of-school activities, young leaders identify children who are not enrolled in school, engage with them through one-on-one conversations, and invite them to youth groups where they can benefit from the programme.

Young leaders also organize weekend outreach events that involve both in-school and out-of-school adolescents, where they create awareness among adolescents on SRHR and gender-based violence. They invite staff from health facilities to attend, so they can answer adolescents' questions and address their needs during the events, as not all adolescents are able to physically attend health facilities, even when referred (mostly because of school hours).

In addition, young leaders conduct regular parent and stakeholder meetings to update them and get their feedback and opinions for improvement. Mobilizing adults (parents, teachers and health workers) is an engagement and outreach strategy that ensures young people have access to safe, youth-friendly services.

Younger children (10 to 18) provide feedback and other contributions, which are considered and incorporated into the programme's implementation. In fact, most of the project activities are the results of the feedback received during the implementation of previous programmes.

Some activities are entirely adolescent-led, such as teen clubs for children aged 10 to 14. These have their own leadership structure and implement various activities on their own with support and mentorship from trained young leader volunteers.

The programme's level of knowledge about the engaged community is high, as young leaders mobilize children within their own communities and engage with them on a weekly basis. Connection with the ecosystem is also considerable. As part of their training, young leaders learn about their local ecosystem, including its social norms, culture, and current national challenges. The fact that young leaders come from the communities where their interventions take place is a key factor. Restless Development also encourages adolescents to build communities of their own, and to be creative in engaging others and mobilizing their communities.

Depending on their needs, some adolescents are referred to health facilities, and later report data back to their community leaders about their experience and what needs to be improved. Young leaders share this information with national leaders and Restless Development, who use the information to improve programmes and policies.

Data from the implemented project are collected via different means: from adolescents who visit the health facilities and report on their experience, and on a monthly basis from young leaders who report on project achievements and goals.

### **RESULTS: Using data to improve programmes**

Results and systematized data (collected from adolescents' reports upon visiting health facilities) have been presented to local authorities and health facilities to improve programmes, as well as the logistics and infrastructure of health facilities.



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Participation results are shared back with children through project review sessions, refresher trainings, and field-support visits. Children have not yet been able to evaluate their own participation, as project evaluation is still pending. However, their full inclusion in evaluation is planned.

Restless Development has seen good cooperation and support from local government authorities and school management. Interventions have been accepted positively by parents and guardians, and Restless Development's staff have seen positive changes in adolescents' attitudes, confidence and self-esteem.

### **ACHIEVEMENTS AND OUTCOMES: Verifying the needs of health facilities, and adolescents meet local authorities**

The collected data and participation results have been used for concrete achievements. By receiving adolescents' reports, Restless Development has been able to show that family planning supplies are rarely available in health facilities due to insufficient stock and highlight the lack of youth-friendly services. These two critical issues are now part of the organization's broader advocacy agenda when meeting with decision makers and stakeholders who aim to reduce gender-based violence and sexual abuse in Tanzania.

Another positive participation outcome is that, after accessing SRHR information and assistance, children and adolescents continue to engage in the community-based networks and clubs initiated by young leaders. Even so, sustaining child and adolescent participation over time has presented challenges, which have been partly overcome by involving the rest of the community, such as teachers, parents and local government authorities. The organization believes that if it builds a deeper understanding of adolescents' needs, it will have a better understanding of what it can offer. A belief that the well-being of children and adolescents requires

a collective community approach has translated into adolescent participation in village meetings with local authorities.

### **CHALLENGES: Logistics and reaching out-of-school children**

Most of the barriers that have been identified are related to the logistics and infrastructure for health facilities, particularly in relation to adolescents' SRHR needs. These barriers include attendance hours that coincide with school hours, making it difficult for adolescents to seek medical advice; insufficient skilled staff to deal with adolescents' issues; a lack of friendly environments and safe spaces where adolescents can feel comfortable; and insufficient stocks of supplies.

In addition, out-of-school children are hard to reach and engage, mostly because they are already involved in economic activities and have very limited time for participation.

### **KEY TAKEAWAYS: Empowering children**

The key takeaways from this experience are the importance of peer-to-peer work; believing in children's empowerment as a way to prevent sexual violence, gender-based violence, and sexually transmitted diseases; and encouraging children's communities to come together to help protect all children. As part of its broader agenda in Tanzania, Restless Development has empowered children and youth with information and access to health services. While the organization is well aware that this is not the only way to tackle such forms of violence, it trusts children with relevant and much-needed information, so they can make smart decisions that will help to prevent violence. This initiative also brings the community together – parents, teachers, guardians, decision makers, children, youth – around this issue, and that sends a strong message: children and adults can work together, and should all be responsible for children's well-being.



# CASE STUDY 9

# 9. #StandTogether: Organizations in Malaysia encourage child-led solutions to bullying

*Civil society, government, UN agencies and the private sector worked together to encourage children to think of ways to tackle bullying by focusing on kindness. Over 130 ideas were presented in one week, and over 30 solutions were deployed, enabling children to implement their own projects in schools.*

## WHY: Bullying is a critical issue in Malaysia

Multiple reports signal the urgent need to address bullying and provide support to create positive social change. The prevalence of bullying and cyber bullying, combined with under-reporting, punitive justice and a lack of action, are all areas of concern that affect children today.

Findings from a U-Report Malaysia opinion poll<sup>78</sup> indicate that 50 per cent of the children and adolescents who responded have experienced some sort of bullying in school, and that 74 per cent of the cases of bullying were not reported to school authorities, often because of skepticism or fear.

Strikingly, 58 per cent of polled children also admitted to having displayed bullying behavior themselves. The most common reasons were 'being annoyed' or 'for fun'. Results also revealed that one in two children and adolescents knew someone who had been a victim of bullying<sup>79</sup>, and three in four children who responded to the Children4Change 2017 survey in the country said that they were concerned about bullying and proposed more kindness and less violence to address the issue.

The educational landscape in Malaysia has been rocked many times by phenomenal cases of bullying, several of which have resulted in deaths. Most of the response has been around anti-bullying campaigns focusing on the victims of bullying, but have not addressed the bullies themselves. Stakeholders feel that such approaches tend to vilify bullies, creating a larger gap between aggressors and victims and a divide amongst young audiences.

By building upon kindness as a leading factor, implementing entities aimed to widen the spectrum of action and produce a campaign that would address both perpetrators and victims of bullying to create a healthy community anchored in proactive, rather than punitive, approaches.

The overall goal behind #StandTogether was to reduce bullying by emphasizing kindness as the solution. It aimed to engage schools to commit to the campaign by getting principals to adopt and apply kindness-based solutions, getting teachers to use the developed materials in the classroom to discuss bullying and cultural aspects, and getting children to come up with and implement student-led kindness solutions.

## **WHAT: Social mobilization, where kindness is the solution; adult-led, and child- and adult- implemented.**

In April 2018, a group of partner organizations comprised of UN agencies, government, civil society and the private sector<sup>80</sup>, launched a national campaign to promote kindness to tackle bullying in schools. After a series of bullying incidents that affected the nation, stakeholders from different sectors came together for #StandTogether Malaysia, inviting schools to submit solutions developed by child-adult collaboration to promote kindness in schools and prevent bullying.

In just one week, students submitted over 130 projects, and 750 schools took actions to promote kindness, including high cluster performance schools<sup>81</sup>, rural schools, community schools, and religious schools: indeed, all schools where children are potential victims of bullying and/or cyberbullying. In all, 30 projects were selected for funding and implementation.

The main level of children's involvement was in coming up with the ideas and implementing student-led solutions to bullying in their schools. While the campaign was led by adults, children were included as advisers from the initial stages.

## **HOW: Engaging schools, government and different stakeholders, and using ICTs to connect directly with children**

The campaign was developed in collaboration with a closed group of children age 14 to 18. Their feedback was incorporated and helped to shape some of the campaign's main activities. This was followed by a two-part contest that encouraged students to submit their own solutions to bullying within the framework of kindness. A committee of adult partners chose the winning projects.<sup>82</sup>

Children were encouraged to identify the problems within their school community, and to assess the feasibility of implementing their suggested solution by drawing up a budget for it. The 30 winning projects were awarded implementation grants, but all students were encouraged to implement their project ideas, regardless of whether they had won or not. Organizers launched a call to action to capture pictures of the solutions and post them on Instagram with a specific hashtag. The most active schools on Instagram were also given awards. Other activities were also tailored to the campaign, such as face-to-face conversations between children and counsellors, and a 'kindness carnival' where some of the children's ideas and solutions were presented to further engage others and keep promoting kindness.

Children had different levels of involvement during the overall project, depending on the nature of their relationship with the implementing entities. Some provided feedback before the campaign was actually launched; others suggested ideas or solutions to bullying around Kindness Projects; a significant number submitted their ideas as part of the multi-part contest; and others implemented kindness-related activities during the campaign.

Children did have a leading role within their own communities, specifically leading the design and implementation phases of their own solutions (although the process for submissions required the involvement of a schoolteacher to ensure the school supported the project and its implementation).

The level of knowledge organizers had about participating children was limited to age, gender and school, as they engaged mainly with school systems and administrative entities, and not directly with children themselves. The campaign's connection to children's ecosystems was high, however, as children were invited to identify their solution within their school context (their closest community) and reflect

upon their ecosystem. In fact, one critical question in the submission form was: why does your school need this?

#StandTogether used multiple channels to reach children. Building upon the existing connection between Malaysia's Ministry of Education and schools was critical, as the Ministry played a key role in ensuring that schools had the information they needed. The Ministry's endorsement was also a sign of assurance that schools could safely participate. Other engagement and outreach channels that proved effective were on-the ground-activities such as counsellor trainings, school assemblies and workshops. Celebrities also helped to amplify the campaign through videos posted on their social media channels.

Manuals and toolkits were available both online and offline. ICTs were used to promote the campaign on social media (Facebook, YouTube), disseminate resources, and collect real-time data. These online channels were particularly useful for direct engagement with children, without schools as intermediaries. UNICEF was able to collect real time data instantly via U-Report to contribute evidence on how children relate to bullying. Thanks to the #StandTogether hashtag, which categorized relevant social media posts, organizers could receive children's reporting when implementing their ideas. Celebrities could contribute to the campaign by raising awareness and communicating with children through their own posts.

### **RESULTS: Collaborative efforts for tackling bullying**

The campaign sent a strong message throughout Malaysia about the need to find different ways to address bullying.

More than 1,400 children provided their views and experiences on bullying through a UNICEF U-Report

opinion poll, and another 1,000 on World Children's Day 2017. The results were used to influence the campaign's roadmap, but also to advocate for better reporting mechanisms, as poll findings revealed that 42 per cent of victims of bullying who did not report the incident believed that if they did, it wouldn't achieve anything, and 24 per cent were afraid to report it.<sup>83</sup> Given the low level of reported cases, these results were shared with the Ministry of Education to promote the creation of alternative reporting systems, which are currently being assessed.

The campaign results have not yet been shared with children, and they have not evaluated the activity.

### **ACHIEVEMENTS AND OUTCOMES: Student-led initiatives take centre stage**

Organizers are still working on concrete achievements. As of June 2018, the overall outreach of the campaign was still under evaluation. Valuable data were collected to improve mechanisms to report bullying, and, in collaboration with their teachers, children came up with more than 130 possible solutions to tackling bullying using a kindness-based approach. By mobilizing thousands, the campaign made a clear statement: in Malaysia, children are part of the solution to bullying and cyberbullying.

The results of this participation have also contributed to the Ministry of Education's efforts to achieve SDG target 4.7 on the acquisition of knowledge and skills<sup>84</sup>, and to encourage the Government to examine student-led initiatives more closely as a way to reduce bullying and create safe spaces. Nevertheless, children have not been involved in decision-making spaces.

In terms of participation outcomes, children have continued to engage since the project's main activities. A winning school in Sabah, for example, was invited to be part of the Borneo International

Marathon, where its students had the opportunity to showcase their work. In addition, children and adolescents still use the hashtag #StandTogether in social networks as they continue to implement their solutions to bullying.

#StandTogether is looking to expand to a yearly national event, and to include advocacy outcomes.

### **CHALLENGES: improving collaborative approaches**

The main challenges identified were the coordination of processes across all the stakeholders, which had a direct effect on timings. Others included a reluctance to burden teachers with over-reporting for the campaign (given that the amount of administrative work they need to process on a regular basis is already a national problem) and mobilizing for such large scales.

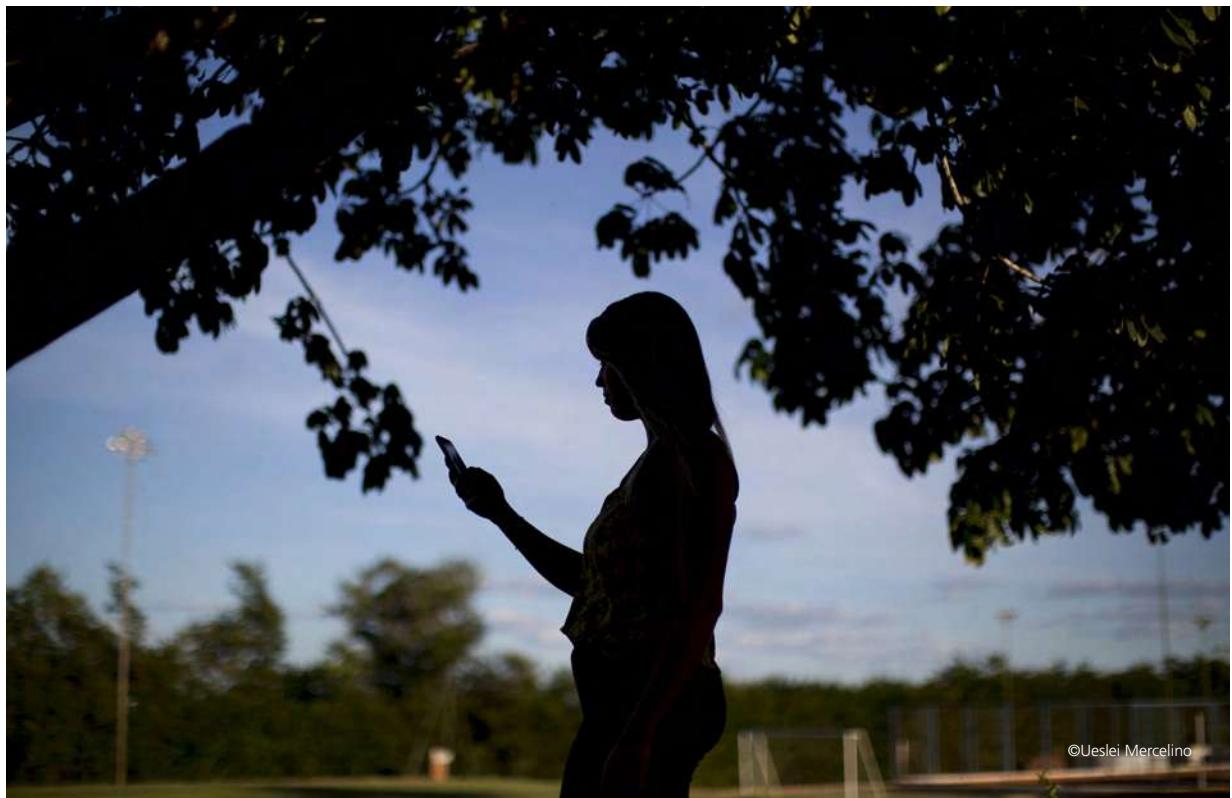
### **KEY TAKEAWAYS: Shifting the angle and involving all sectors.**

One main highlight of this participation experience is that it encouraged children to reflect upon their surroundings, ecosystems, and how they (or someone they know) are affected by bullying. Implementing bodies understood that children do not just engage for the sake of it: they are inspired to do so by personal drive and motivation.

Children who were invited to contribute their ideas for solutions based on kindness were stimulated to reflect upon a solution and a message of hope. Inviting children to think of a solution to 'bullying' is very different to inviting them to reflect upon 'kindness'. Implementing agencies – with the collaboration of adolescents – looked at bullying from a different angle and built an appealing campaign based on a positive concept (kindness), rather than a negative one (bullying). Furthermore, inviting entire schools to participate – and not just individual children – sent a two-fold message: we're all in this together (hence the name), and participation exercises and reflecting upon our surroundings are part of learning and growing up.

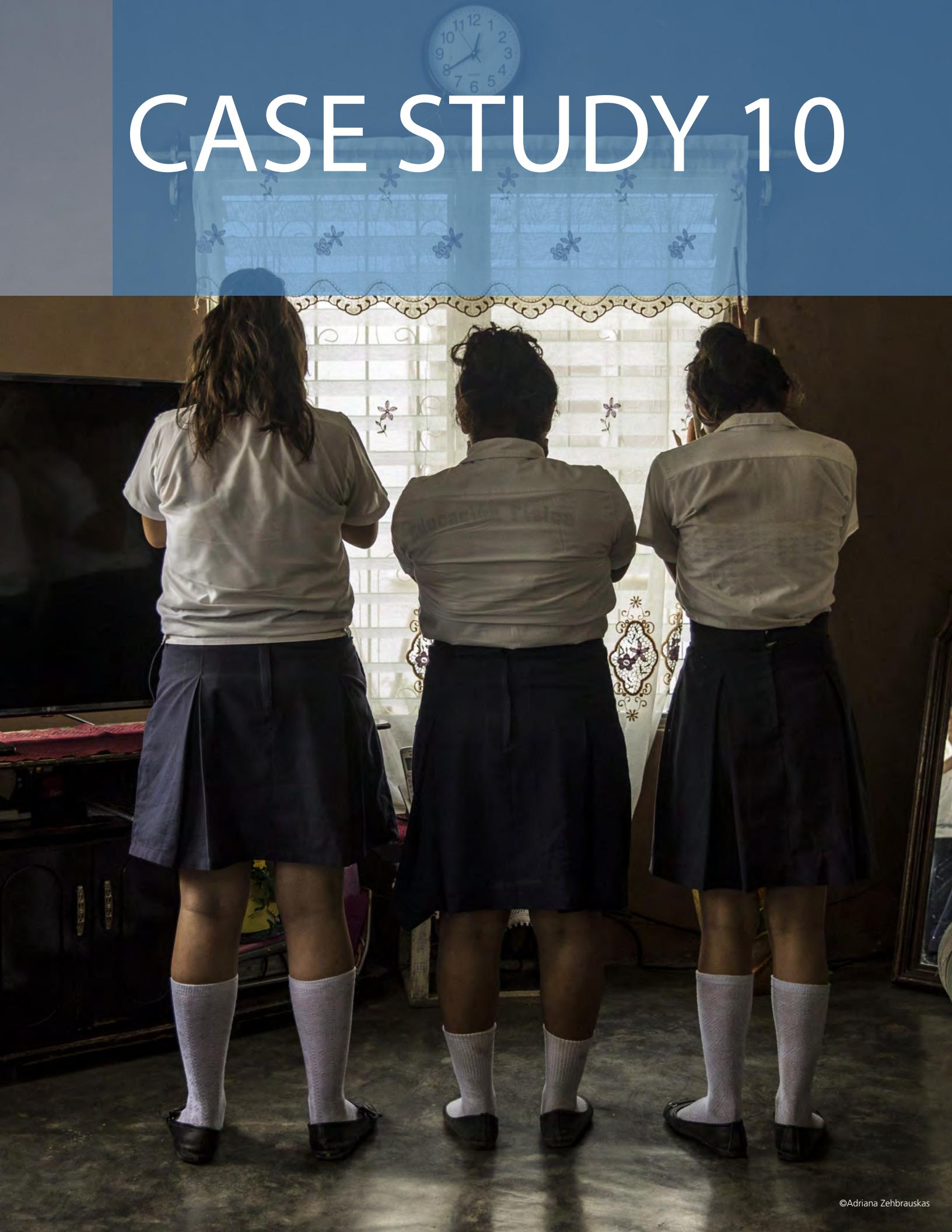
The experience also encouraged adults to partner with children, and to guide and protect them in the process. Adults shared decision-making power with children when coming up with ideas and implementing their kindness-driven solutions.

Lastly, #StandTogether Malaysia stands out for having a wide range of partners collaborating to encourage children to participate. It is the only experience analyzed in this report that benefited from contributions made by different sectors -- civil society, UN agencies, government, academia and the private sector -- to a single cause.



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# CASE STUDY 10



# 10. OpiNNA: Children in Mexico speak out on discrimination and the way they are treated

*The Government of Mexico asked over 46,000 children and adolescents how they feel they are treated. Findings revealed that 3 per cent of children experience physical violence by a family member on a daily basis.*

## WHY: Position children's voices to turn them into actions

Violence against children in Mexico is a determining factor in school drop-outs and even a significant cause of child deaths.<sup>85</sup> 2017 figures from the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) ranked Mexico, out of all 37 member-countries of the organization, as the country with the highest rates of physical violence, sexual abuse and homicides against children under 14.

In 2014, Mexico launched a 'General Law on Children and Adolescent Rights', which was followed by the establishment of a new child protection system in 2015. This required the activation of child participation mechanisms throughout government structures. To meet this need, the country's Sistema Nacional de Protección Integral de Niñas, Niños y Adolescentes (SIPINNA), meaning the National System for the Comprehensive Protection of Children and Adolescents, initiated a polling system to encourage child participation and collect quantitative data directly from children themselves.

Through opinion polls, the Government wants to understand the perspectives of children and adolescents on their rights, in order to develop new ideas for programmes and policies. By using OpiNNA, SIPINNA wants to integrate the voices of children and adolescents into decision-making processes so they can be heard and influence public actions.

## WHAT: Opinion polls to collect children's views and experiences

OpiNNA is an opinion poll system used to collect the views and opinions of children and adolescents through web-based channels, and occasionally Facebook and Twitter (for children older than 13). In 2017, OpiNNA engaged Mexican children aged 6 to 17 from different parts of the country<sup>86</sup> (1 per cent of whom were not in school), via adult-led and implemented opinion polls. Over 27,000 children shared their views on discrimination, and over 46,000 on how they were treated by adults.<sup>87</sup> Their main form of involvement was responding to opinion polls.

## HOW: Responding to online polls

OpiNNA uses 'Participa', a software designed specifically for online opinion polls. Children go online and choose to answer a poll. When doing

so, they provide their age, gender and location. All information is anonymous and confidential. Occasionally, other channels are activated, such as UNICEF's U-Report<sup>88</sup>, which works through Facebook and Twitter with children older than 13, but SIPINNA's official channel is its website.<sup>89</sup> Results are not displayed in real time. They are collected by SIPINNA and published online once systematized. Results are also shared with children through social networks and programme partners.

The entire system is built online. However, in order to engage out-of-school children, who may not have access to the Internet, SIPINNA partnered with CONAFE (the National Council for Educational Development) to promote the polls through their community instructors in the field. When they visit households in isolated communities, they invite children and adolescents living in those households to answer the polls and enable their smartphones or tablets so that they can do so. Workers explain to the children that their data are confidential, and then leave them to answer the questions by themselves.

Children have not been involved in designing, leading, or evaluating this participation experience, although a small group of adolescents (approximately 50, one or two representing each state, and all of them members of a network of organized children) contributed suggestions to poll wording and structure. The connection with the children's ecosystem is mostly through schools, building upon the Government's existing connections with the school system.

The two main outreach strategies that encourage children to respond to opinion polls are existing government structures connected to schools and project partners whose role is to amplify, and even duplicate the opinion polls via their own websites or participation channels<sup>90</sup> if available. Both children and teachers are notified of new opinion polls through @

PrendeMx, the Government's Education Secretariat, which is responsible for promoting these activities.

### **RESULTS: Three per cent of children are victims of corporal punishment on a daily basis**

Opinion poll findings revealed that 3 per cent of children and adolescents responding to the poll experience corporal punishment by a family member every day, that 63 per cent sometimes experience such violence, and 34 per cent never. One in two children agree that some kind of peer-to-peer discrimination occurs on a daily basis in their schools. In all, 40 per cent of participants believe that the victims of discrimination are mainly those children who have a different skin colour, 24 per cent children with disabilities, and 16 per cent children from indigenous backgrounds.

### **ACHIEVEMENTS AND OUTCOMES: A potential contribution to efforts to end all forms of violence against children**

The opinion polls did not serve a particular advocacy goal, other than SIPINNA's overall efforts to end all forms of violence against children in Mexico, and concrete achievements have yet to be accomplished.

The findings have been shared with the authorities to inform child protection programmes, but it remains to be seen how they have been used to influence policies (poll results were issued shortly before the publication of this report). Corporal punishment poll results were presented to Mexico's National Committee for Ending all Forms of Violence Against Children.

SIPINNA has not continued to engage with children in relation to this participation initiative, as the opinion polls are one-time events (although the goal is for OpiNNA to become an ongoing activity).

## **CHALLENGES: Children need to be more actively involved**

The main barrier has been reaching out-of-school children, who make up approximately 20 per cent of Mexican children, according to information provided by SIPINNA. SIPINNA itself has also identified the following challenges: involving children and adolescents in designing opinion polls and the issues selected for polls (the polls today are designed and implemented by adults); promoting OpiNNA directly with children and adolescents and not through adults; delivering child-friendly information to participants and to organized children's networks; a clearer advocacy strategy related to poll results; an evaluation phase and children's involvement in evaluation; training teachers; and activating awareness-raising actions and campaigns.

## **KEY TAKEAWAYS: Moving towards participation that is institutionalized**

The Government of Mexico is sending a strong message about children's participation in preventing and reporting different forms of violence. Although concrete achievements have yet to emerge, by encouraging children to share their views and opinions, SIPINNA is gradually moving towards the institutionalization of participation, and sending a clear message to decision makers about programmes and policies that affect children: they need to be part of the solution.

# Conclusions and recommendations

This report has explored a diverse range of child participation experiences, which vary in the models, structures and channels used, their outreach methods, and the forms of violence they have addressed.

Regardless of the differences between them, they all enable children, adolescents and youth to express their views and opinions to influence decision making and achieve change. What change looks like varies from one experience to another: global approaches have the potential to impact on millions of lives, yet political timetables mean that their achievements are most likely to become more tangible further down the line. Community-based approaches, however, seem to have a more immediate impact.

The most successful of these participation experiences gave children significant roles as designers and/or leaders of the projects, encouraged children to identify the issues that affected them by reflecting upon their surroundings, and were founded on a peer-to-peer model. They generated concrete achievements, and children continued to engage, even after the projects ended.

Some made good use of ICTs to collect quantitative and qualitative data, adapted to children's existing communication channels and ecosystems, and designed innovative approaches to child participation.

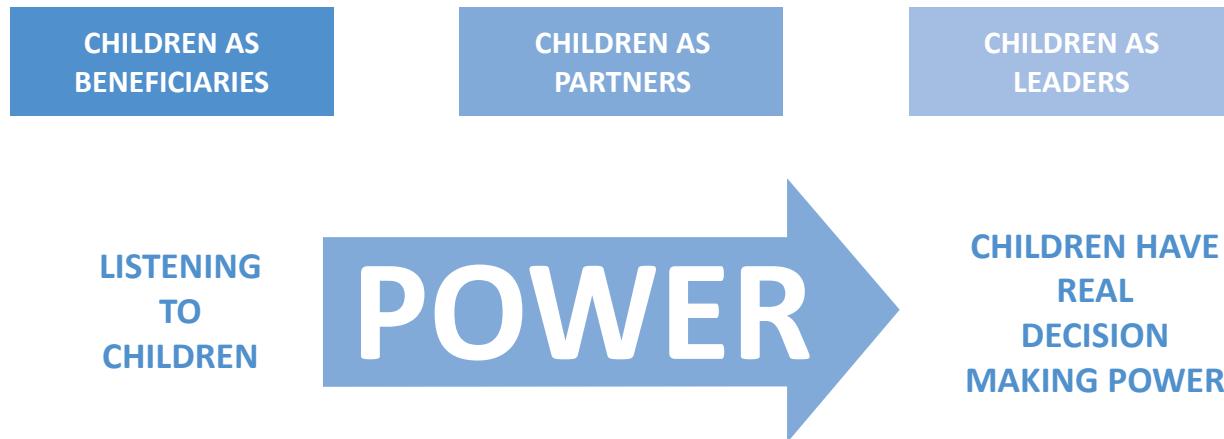
Seven key conclusions and recommendations emerge from our analysis.

## 1. The child participation paradigm is evolving

There is a shift in the paradigm around child participation, which is evolving from 'let's hear what children have to say', to 'let's enable children to identify problems, make decisions, challenge others when necessary, and mobilize a range of partners, from decision makers to their own peers.' Where adults were once the gatekeepers of participation, children today — who have been raised with the protection of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the development of ICTs — are increasingly their own gatekeepers too. We are seeing that if adults do not address certain issues, such as school shootings or child marriage, children are doing so by creating their own movements.

One underpinning principle related to this paradigm shift is the way adults and children relate to power and control. Power is the capacity to direct or influence the behaviour of others or the course of events, and, within the framework of child participation, it is more commonly exercised by adults. Parents, teachers, guardians and decision makers are usually the ones to encourage children and to redirect or influence their behaviour towards participation exercises. And when power is exercised solely by adults, children may be the 'beneficiaries' of participation, but they are certainly not driving it.

FIGURE 2



Power is not unlimited: it is a continuum where multiple actors can share different degrees of control. And these degrees of control are critical when we talk about the paradigm shift in child participation: when children make decisions, challenge adult structures, invite their peers, etc., they are exercising a certain level of power. This means that adults are sharing control with children and transferring power to them.

When adults transfer power, they should not abandon children to make decisions by themselves. They need to partner with them, assuming a guiding and protective role, while respecting children's autonomy and decision-making space. When power is transferred to children, adults invite them as project partners or leaders, as shown in Figure 2.

This paradigm shift requires changes in processes for child participation. However, only a few of our case studies seem to have adapted to this new model to allow children to truly take the lead without adults trying to maintain different levels of control and power.

Our 10 case studies suggest that processes that are driven by non-governmental actors are more open to sharing or transferring the power held by adults to children. In contrast, government-driven

initiatives tend to be more top down, with limited sharing and transferring of power to children, whose role often is often restricted to that of data providers.

The experiences show that when children and adolescents are provided with a safe space and a way to take a leading role in participation, they are eager to make the most of it. Yet many participation approaches come with restricted structures and limited space for children to influence the model: there is a disconnect between how empowered children actually are and the means they have at their disposal to make their participation a reality. Organizations that are adapting to the new paradigm have stepped aside to make room for children to lead and make decisions, while renouncing different levels of control and power that currently lie within adult structures, as demonstrated by the Participatory Action Research (PAR) programme in Syria.

Organizations that are adapting to the new paradigm have stepped aside to make room for children to lead and make decisions, while renouncing different levels of control and power that currently lie within adult structures, as demonstrated by the Participatory Action Research (PAR) programme in Syria (Box 1).

### **Box 1: ACTION RESEARCH BY ADOLESCENTS AND YOUTH IN SYRIA**

*In August 2016, through its Participatory Action Research (PAR) programme, UNICEF Syria engaged 11 adolescents and youth as a group of young researchers to identify and determine the issues of greatest relevance to themselves and their peers. The findings were used by this same group to shape their advocacy work, and also by UNICEF Syria to inform its programme approach on Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WaSH), Gender and Child Protection.*

*The initial group of researchers expanded to become a larger gathering of children and youth who have designed and led a number of activities on child labour, the promotion of peace and social cohesion, gender-based violence, WaSH and employment. As of June 2018, they had engaged more than 1,300 people through their “Express Your Peace Homs” Facebook page, and had reached more than 12,000 people in rural Hama with messages and information on gender-based violence, and over 9,000 with WaSH information, including people in remote areas.*

*One of their measures to prevent different forms of violence has been bridging job opportunities with young people’s needs, as PAR findings showed that 64 per cent of participants lack job opportunities because of high unemployment rates. Through a self-created platform, they have helped 300 young people find employment.*

*While the PAR programme does not feature as one of the 10 case studies in this report, it remains an excellent example of the transfer of decision-making power to young people, enabling them to shape their advocacy work and become agents of change. They received the information, guidance and support they needed from UNICEF Syria, while having full autonomy to shape the roadmap of their work.*

Where power has been transferred to children, it has resulted in concrete achievements. In Malawi, for example, girls managed to ban harmful sexual practices in 184 villages; in India, more than 10 villages declared themselves child-marriage free and toilet facilities to help girls attend school and prevent violence were installed in 64 schools; and in Guatemala two violence observatory centres were established.

Conventional participation models have helped children understand that they have a right to speak up, but as we mark 30 years of the UNCRC it is time to take participation models further and be willing to share power so that children’s views, opinions, and decisions are taken seriously.

*Recommendation: Adults need to share or even transfer power to children*, understanding that this does not

exempt them from their responsibility to protect and guide children in the process. To promote truly meaningful participation, adults need to trust children in making decisions and give up at least some of their control — as power is limited — so that children can act as problem identifiers, intervention designers, implementers, subjects of research and more.

#### **2. Children need to lead. It is not enough to be involved**

Most of the organizations profiled in our 10 case studies did not assign a leading role to children; they were either partners or beneficiaries. In the few cases where children were allowed leadership roles during initiation and planning, it resulted in concrete achievements.

Children decided to organize themselves and pursued further community engagement through

peer-to-peer mobilization as well as other programme interventions.

Children who were empowered to take the lead, such as working children's representatives, had interactions with municipal authorities, and the local officials have made commitments to consult them more regularly and involve them in practice, as well as policy developments that affect them. Children in Malawi, Guatemala, India, Tanzania and Nigeria who have taken the lead have been able to see the concrete results of their efforts. Because Girl Effect involved girls as leaders during a very early design phase of its project, the organization is now using a software designed by girls, for girls, where any girl — regardless of her literacy level — can become a Technology Enabled Girl Ambassador (TEGA), part of a larger community, and an economically empowered certified researcher, and help other girls and boys in her community improve their lives. TEGAs have been given a strong sense of ownership, and when people have a sense of ownership of what they are doing, they naturally feel more engaged and more accountable.

Leading their own advocacy and mobilization work, girls in Malawi used their own stories as a powerful data source to convince local authorities to ban child marriage: and it worked. In Malaysia, students who took the lead suggested their own solutions to bullying within their school communities.

***Recommendation:** Organizations need to include children at the earliest possible stage – aiming for child-initiated and child-led approaches – and trust them with leading roles during initiation, planning, implementation and evaluation.* Child participation must be part of the 'fabric' of the model, ensuring that children feel ownership over the process,

which, in turn, leads to stronger engagement and accountability.

### **3. Few of the child participation experiences outlined in our case studies encouraged children to identify the issues they wanted to address**

Most of the implementing organizations came to the project with a ready-made agenda for change, and invited children to provide data, help mobilize others, or campaign to support an advocacy purpose that had already been selected.

It is commonly the case that adults and children have different roles to play during child participation events. The usual process is that adults invite children to provide their views and opinions on issues that the adults have already identified as critical in children lives. Very few of the experiences analyzed in this report modified these roles. Those that did provide children with access to information, training, reflection spaces and the ability to identify the most pressing issues in their own lives.

Where children had the tools to reflect upon their surroundings and identify their problems, they experienced concrete achievements, as they had a personal drive to participate. In Guatemala, for example, girls analyzed their context and surroundings and identified the high rates of sexual and gender-based violence experienced by themselves and their peers on a daily basis. They were then provided with information on latest national statistics, trained on sexual-violence protocols, advocacy and mobilization, and more. But the crucial point was that they were first given a chance to reflect and see where the problems lay. This resulted in the creation of two violence observatory centres, to which over 700 girls and 1,000 women have already been referred, and in the training of national

## **Box 2: ZERO TOLERANCE CAMPAIGN TO REDUCE VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN IN BENIN**

*UNICEF Benin has been implementing an active Zero Tolerance Campaign to reduce violence against children, focusing on child marriage. UNICEF first approached young activist and youth organizations, encouraging them to reflect on the most pressing issues related to violence against children in the country. They themselves identified their own advocacy priorities.*

*The results of this process coincided with the development of UNICEF's own analysis. Since consulting the youth activists, UNICEF has supported the National Youth Platform established in June 2016, composed of more than 50 different youth-led organizations. The platform has helped to trigger a national social movement to end violence against children, and 300 young people have been trained to act as 'Zero Tolerance champions' within their associations and communities.*

*Following the launch of this massive campaign, which has resulted in an increase of reported cases of violence against children to the authorities, UNICEF has seen that children are starting to report being victims of violence, something once unheard of in Benin. UNICEF has even received letters from children reporting child marriage in some parts of the country, which have been referred to the relevant services.*

authorities by girls to better prevent and respond to gender-based violence.

**Recommendation:** Adults need to connect to children's personal motivations for achieving change, and should focus their own role on being facilitators, providing children with the information they need to identify their priority issues, and then the tools to mobilize others and reach decision makers. Implementing organizations should invest time and resources in inviting children to reflect upon their surroundings so they can identify what it is that is affecting them or their peers. It is also crucial for child rights organizations to trust children during this process and provide all the needed resources as facilitators. If children feel that the adults do not trust them, then they will probably not trust their own ability to participate and will not mobilize themselves or their peers to achieve change.

**4. Children engage with other children in all areas of their lives and, in general, trust other children or youth. Most participation experiences capitalized on, and benefited from, peer-to-peer engagement.**

The peer-to-peer strategy seems to provide an understanding and supportive environment, building on strong social and emotional connections.<sup>91</sup> Peers can be positive role models, seeming less threatening in hostile environments,<sup>92</sup> and provide a higher level of credibility. And the peer-to-peer approach in child participation is very similar to what is known as peer education, founded *"on the reality that many people make changes not only based on what they know, but on the opinions and actions of their close, trusted peers. Peer educators can communicate and understand in a way that the best-intentioned adults can't and can serve as role models for change."*<sup>93</sup>

Most of the experiences outlined in this report demonstrated the power of peer-to-peer models, and the importance of reducing the age difference between children and those inviting them to engage. In other words, children are more inclined to participate when approached by someone of a similar age. Many of the experiences were founded on youth being the ones to invite children to take part, confirming

that children might feel closer to them than to more mature adults. Lowering the age gap between facilitators and participants seems to be a real benefit of peer-to-peer approaches.

Using a peer-to-peer approach, TEGAs have collected completely new data by encouraging girls to open up to other girls. They have shown how, until now, silenced girls have endured different forms of violence. U-Report has engaged over 5 million children and adolescents worldwide through UNICEF's partnerships with youth organizations, and U-Reporters themselves invite their peers to join the system. Restless Development Tanzania has mobilized over 10,000 adolescents through sexual reproductive health and rights education. The models of IGLYO and Rise Up are also founded on a peer-to-peer approach.

Organizations that work for children also need to ask themselves what the peer-to-peer situation will look like in the coming years, given the expected growth of access to the Internet. Physical and emotional connections will always remain, but when they consider the rapid growth of ICTs, rights-based entities should remember the power of digital communication for peer-to-peer engagement.

The offline behaviour based on trust is also mirrored in the online world: content goes viral because people trust those who are close to them. If a person receives the same digital content from a peer and from a stranger, they are more likely to open the one sent by their peer.

In countries with high rates of Internet penetration, ICTs are already an extremely powerful tool for peer-to-peer engagement. WhatsApp, Instagram, Viber and Facebook groups – to name a few – enable today's adolescents

to invite their peers to (almost) anything. The power behind the 'share' option on any app is enormous, but it depends on trust. Just as children trust other children, adults need to trust them too. But do they? Only a few experiences trusted children with communication strategies, and fewer gave children leading roles.

*Recommendation: Peer-to-peer approaches have a critical role in child participation, and they work because humans trust other humans who are going through similar experiences. That is true for children as well as adults. If adults are to create effective peer-to-peer approaches, they need to trust children. They must treat them as partners with a collective advocacy purpose.*

Implementing organizations need to know that children will play different roles within a single initiative, and that each role has its own value. Being able to engage others has proved to be vital, but if children are going to engage other children, and invite their peers in, they need to see value in what they are doing. Children need to own their own issues, as well as the strategies to address them, so that they feel empowered enough to invite their peers to join the same experience.

Implementing organizations should reflect upon how far they have trusted children in the past, and how children have perceived that level of trust. Telling them they will be listened to is not enough. They need to know that this is their battle too.

## **5. Most experiences resulted in the engagement of children beyond the timeframe or goal of the project**

In some cases, longer-term engagement was anticipated and planned. This was the case for Restless Development, which created youth or teen clubs in both India and Tanzania where children could meet and work on their own

advocacy goals and projects. Anticipating that participation would leave children feeling empowered, they facilitated safe spaces where children could continue their participation as fully as possible.

Our case studies tell us that continuing participation is unlikely when children's role is limited to that of data providers. This was seen, for example, in one-way opinion polls. In contrast, when children were empowered by their participation, this led to widespread and continuing engagement.

Engaged children developed their own communities and movements, some still advocate for change, some have implemented their solutions to bullying and some have started clubs. When children are taken seriously, they take themselves seriously too.

Some engaged children have used social networks and other Internet-based channels to either communicate between themselves or engage their peers. This was the case for organized working children and child advisory committee members from It's Time to Talk! who have continued to advocate for improved policies and are using different channels to share information with other children who were not part of the participation project. Across our case studies, it was common for children themselves to decide on how best to channel their prolonged engagement and activism.

*Recommendation: A comprehensive child participation model should, ultimately, be an empowering tool and experience, and should not end when children have provided adults with what they want.* It will end on the children's own terms, and adults need to be prepared to stretch participation opportunities. When planning child participation

activities, organizations should: aim for extended engagement; plan their activity beyond an isolated event; utilize other available means for children to channel their continued engagement; incorporate children into decisions about how they would like to communicate or stay engaged; and capitalize on ICTs as a way to keep communication channels open.

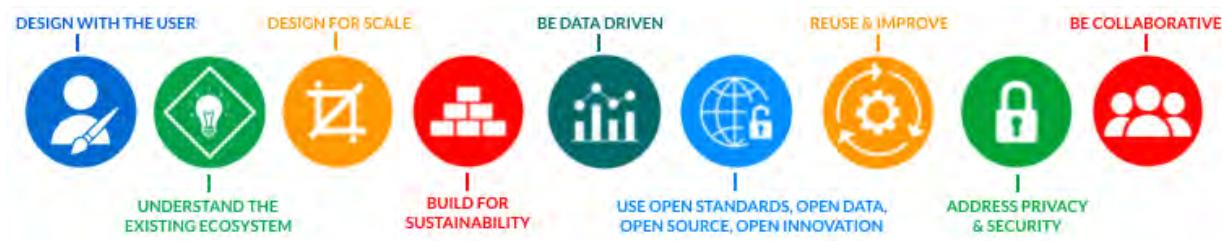
## **6. Few of the analyzed experiences used ICTs to their full potential**

Many initiatives incorporated ICTs or technological elements, but only a minority relied strongly on the advantages or additional benefits ICTs can provide. Most of them trusted offline strategies to achieve change, and of those that did use ICTs, that use was generally limited to data collection. The case studies also demonstrate that, in some cases, the use of ICTs was not considered part of the participation approach. Children themselves, however, incorporated them for continuing participation and engagement.

This opens up an interesting question: when children incorporate the use of ICTs as an additional way to engage with participation models that have already been designed, are they in some way owning these and taking control of participation? Is this also a way to shift adult-centered power structures? If the use of ICTs is a gateway to shifts in decision-making, and children have a more direct way to influence power, change no longer relies solely on decision makers, and children do not need adults to act as intermediaries for their participation. By incorporating social networks, messaging apps or other digital tools, children are taking control of a territory that may be more familiar to them than it is to adults.

*Recommendation: The world is going through a technological revolution, with all its positive and*

FIGURE 3: DIGITAL PRINCIPLES FOR DEVELOPMENT



negative impacts for children. Governments, civil society, UN agencies and any other child rights-based organization need to adapt to this reality when it comes to child participation. Incorporating ICTs to their full potential is crucial to any project that wants to remain relevant. Implementing organizations should look at the benefits provided by ICTs beyond the sphere of quantitative data collection.

#### 7. The experiences analyzed in this report applied and respected child participation practice standards<sup>94</sup>

Initiatives with a strong ICT component require the application of additional standards when planning and implementing child participation. We concluded that these agree with what are today known as the ‘principles for digital development’.<sup>95</sup> International organizations have agreed on the set of nine principles shown in Figure 3 – a set that may change over time as they are constantly reviewed, updated, and modified for different contexts and environments. The nine principles represent guidelines to help practitioners succeed in applying digital technologies to development programmes. Although they have been designed for digital technologies, the principles for digital development may be applied to offline as well as online approaches. They will help organizations meet the needs and standards expected by children today and tomorrow.<sup>96</sup>

These principles state that: “*With the advent of accessible digital technology more than a decade*

*ago, international development organizations began seeking new ways of including digital tools in their programming for improved outcomes. These efforts were initially quite successful; significant advancements occurred in various sectors such as health and agriculture, more communities around the globe were connected, and underserved populations were reached in a way that had not been possible before*”.<sup>97</sup>

Drawing on our case studies, we have concluded that a digital generation requires digital standards, and that child participation should be no exception. Our case studies suggest that most of the principles that follow have had some success:

**Design with the user:** User-centred design starts with getting to know the people who are supposed to benefit from a project. In this case, who knows and understands children better than children themselves? Many of the participation experiences reviewed in this report were initiated by adults, but later designed in collaboration with children and/or youth. TEGA, Rise Up, Restless Development, Time to talk!, IGLYO, U-Report, and #Stand Together all designed their approaches in collaboration with children, some with a deeper level of engagement than others. Organizations actively involved children when designing child participation models, and children’s ideas and suggestions were a determining factor.

### **Box 3: LOVEDOCTOR**

*LoveDoctor is a counselling service that uses a channel on Snapchat, a popular social network where users share text, video, photos and drawings, but where messages are erased from the system after a few seconds. In the words of the app's CEO, "Snapchat isn't about capturing the traditional Kodak moment. It's about communicating with the full range of human emotion — not just what appears to be pretty or perfect".*

*LoveDoctor is a way to replicate offline 'real emotions' through an online social network. LoveDoctor has implemented a real-time service for children and adolescents where they can receive counselling on violence and sexual abuse via Snapchat Direct Messages, first in India, and then in other countries.*

*Snap Counsellors — the implementing body — saw that adolescents were not reporting violence or abuse because they were afraid their partner or perpetrators would find out, and launched LoveDoctor with volunteer counsellors. The programme has provided total anonymity and confidentiality, using the most popular social network for adolescents in the country, which has encouraged young audiences to use it and break the silence, confident that their messages will be erased from the system after the chat session.*

*Within its first year, Snap Counsellors were able to help over 800 adolescents directly, most of them from India, but also Colombia, Costa Rica, Malaysia, Pakistan, Portugal, Spain, the UK and the United States, as the channel grew in popularity.*

**Understand the existing ecosystem:** "Children and young people's participation cannot be understood in isolation from social, cultural and political contexts when it occurs",<sup>98</sup> and well-designed initiatives need to consider the particular structures that already exist in each community. Understanding the existing ecosystem involves bending adult power and organizational structures: if adults expect children to engage in child participation, the models and methods used need to adapt easily to children's contexts, needs and channels, and not the other way around.

By understanding the context and cultural barriers faced by adolescent girls in the global south, Girl Effect could develop a technology to gather qualitative and quantitative data from a demographic that had not, till then, had a voice. U-Report offers adolescents and youth different channels to communicate with the programme (Facebook messenger, Telegram, SMS, Viber, to

name a few), and U-Reporters choose the one they prefer. This has enabled the programme to expand to reach more than 40 countries, and over 5 million registered users. Dedicating time and resources to analyze the ecosystem helps to ensure that the selected approach will be relevant and sustainable,<sup>99</sup> which is particularly important for encouraging child engagement beyond an isolated participation event.

And digital ecosystems are critical: implementing bodies need to be looking closely at the digital means that children and adolescents use (and the trends to understand, such as the ones they will be using in five years) and find a way to engage and protect children through them.

**Design for Scale** "means thinking beyond the pilot and making choices that will enable widespread adoption later, as well as determining what will be affordable and usable by a whole country or region, rather than by a few pilot communities".<sup>100</sup>

This is critical for organizations that want to implement child participation models using ICTs, and they should invest in analyzing trends and digital communities.

It is important to know where children are now, but also where they will be in five years. Will they still be using social networks? If so, which ones? How will they choose to participate? Will they prefer to send audio or video clips rather than texting a response? All of these questions matter for implementing bodies that aim to anticipate where child audiences will be, so they can design for scale. U-Report is a good example of a project that is designed to scale: The technology, RapidPro, is constantly updated so it is compatible with Internet trends, understanding the meaning of emojis in communication, and incorporating features such as images and videos.

**Build for sustainability**, particularly if one of the aims for child participation practices is to encourage children to become active agents of change, and not just data providers. “*A program built for sustainability is more likely to be embedded into policies, daily practices and user workflow*”.<sup>101</sup> Restless Development’s model ensures sustainability through its youth clubs in each community, so children can organize themselves around the issues that concern them. For example, creating decision-making spaces where children can wield a direct influence over programmes and policies in an institutionalized manner could be the ultimate goal for sustainable child participation.

**Be data driven:** in other words, use data to achieve change. All the child participation experiences analyzed in this report have collected valuable data to help protect children against different forms of violence, yet some have unique ways to add value to the way in

which they collect data. U-Report, for example, collects data from adolescents and youth in real time, and results are displayed on each country website, enabling immediate actions or responses. TEGAs collect both qualitative and quantitative data via videos and other means that contribute emotional components and body language. Restless Development India collects quantitative data through specially designed software, enabling the organization to evaluate its work on an ongoing basis. Using a data-driven approach, IGLYO compiled a set of indicators to measure the inclusivity of education programmes across Europe and help prevent discrimination against LGBTQI children. Both government-driven experiences collected quantitative data from children to use as reference points when implementing policies.

It is worth noting that some of these organizations seem to be moving from big data (voluminous amounts of structured or unstructured data) to deep data (high quality, actionable information). This reflects an understanding that numbers are not always enough, and that data need to reflect children’s experiences, stories, fears, hopes and aspirations, especially when the aim is to reflect upon, prevent and report violence. Today’s digital technology makes it almost impossible *not* to collect large amounts of data and information, and by taking that data a step further, we see a window of opportunity to truly understand what children want, fear, expect and hope for... and all in real time. Receiving deep insights on millions of children in real time is a game changer for any child rights-based organization, with deep information giving us a deeper connection to children.

**Address privacy and security.** The privacy, safety and protection of child participants must be the

top priority for any child participation initiative. As noted, empowering children to take the lead should not mean abandoning them. Child-rights organizations continue to have a duty to safeguard their well-being and ensure that their participation does no harm.

**Use open standards, open data and open innovation.** There is no need to develop technology from scratch. Organizations that want to implement child participation using ICTs should look at already proven open-source solutions that could be deployed locally, such as RapidPro.<sup>102</sup>

**Be collaborative.** *“Being collaborative means sharing information, insights, strategies, and resources across projects, organizations and sectors, leading to increased efficiency and impact”.*<sup>103</sup> We have seen that all of the experiences analyzed in our case studies worked in collaboration with at least one partner

organization and often many more, and a few included children and adolescents as equal partners. Implementing bodies should remember that children, working as equal partners in a collaborative way, can contribute as much as any other relevant stakeholder to the project, increasing outreach and impact. To name just one example, by working collaboratively, youth and adolescents have helped 10 Panchayats in India declare themselves free of child marriage.

*Recommendation:* [Child participation models](#) need to evolve according to children’s realities. Governments, civil society, and other bodies need to adapt to today’s technological evolution so that they can respond appropriately to children’s growing expectations in a digital age; a digital generation requires digital standards. Partners and stakeholders should apply the [Principles for Digital Development](#) if they want to take child participation one step further.

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35. Fifty-two per cent girls, 48 per cent boys, from rural, small town, big city, and IDP/refugee camps. Thirty-two per cent of children consulted were from Asia, 29 per cent from Latin America, 27 per cent from Africa, 8 per cent from the Middle East, and 4 per cent from Europe. Consulted children were engaged in a diverse range of paid and unpaid work in urban and rural settings, and the majority worked before and/or after school. They came from diverse backgrounds and included children with disabilities, living with different caregivers, from ethnic and indigenous minorities, children from migrant families, child refugees, children who were internally displaced, and stateless children. Nineteen per cent were members of organized working children’s associations.
36. Albania, Argentina, Bangladesh, Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Chad, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Germany, Guatemala, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Jordan, Kenya, Kosovo (UNSC 1244), Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Mali, Mexico, Myanmar, Nepal, Nigeria, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Rwanda, Senegal, Serbia, Tanzania, Thailand, Turkey, Zambia, Zimbabwe.
37. In Bolivia, Guatemala, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Nicaragua, Nepal, Peru, Senegal and Thailand.
38. Child-led actions took place in Costa Rica, Guatemala, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Kenya, Peru and the Philippines.
39. Their tasks included pilot testing the consultation tools and giving suggestions for improving them; exploring opportunities for CAC members to participate in the project and any further training needed; identifying options for children’s involvement in the preparatory process leading up to the IV Global Conference on the Sustained Eradication of Child Labor (2017), as well as options for meaningful participation during the conference; supporting consultations with working children in their country; helping to explore the reasons and motivations to work, as well as existing policies, laws and approaches; action planning for joint advocacy and action initiatives at local levels in order to share the consultations workshops’ key findings; supporting the analysis of key findings from child consultations around the world, with a special focus on protection and risk factors; reviewing and giving feedback on the main findings; helping to develop recommendations for different groups of adults to improve the lives of working children; and giving advice and supporting the development of presentations and child-friendly reports.
40. Particular efforts were made by the project organizers to be inclusive and to collaborate both with existing associations and movements of organized working children, and to collaborate with working children who had not previously been organized. Active participation of girls and boys was encouraged, and some CACs specifically engaged working children who were refugees (e.g. in Lebanon), stateless children (e.g. in Thailand), and ethnic minority groups (e.g. Roma children in Kosovo).
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43. Partners vary from one country to another including NGOs, youth networks, government, and the private sector. The programme’s global partners are the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, and the World Organization of the Scout Movement.
44. U-Reporters responded from Burkina Faso, Chile, Guinea, Indonesia, Ireland, Liberia, Malaysia, Mali,

Mexico, Mozambique, Nigeria, Pakistan, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Swaziland, Uganda, Ukraine, Zambia, as well as 477 respondents from other countries via the U-Report Global handle.

45. The option of confidentiality enables and empowers young people to speak out and report, ask questions and seek information they may otherwise be too embarrassed or afraid to report or seek.
46. That decision making is based on certain criteria e.g. how relevant the steering committee find the request, their engagement calendar, if the country has already recently discussed this issue, and whether or not young people believe that by participating their voice will be heard.
47. Burkina Faso, Chile, Guinea, Indonesia, Ireland, Liberia, Malaysia, Mali, Mexico, Mozambique, Nigeria, Pakistan, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Swaziland, Uganda, Ukraine, Zambia, plus U-Report's global version representing adolescents and youth from over 40 countries.
48. This is the author's speculation upon poll results.
49. In response to the UN General Assembly resolution 69/158.
50. United Nations Secretary General, *Protecting Children from Bullying*, UN Documents, New York, 2017. [<https://violenceagainstchildren.un.org/content/protecting-children-bullying-report-secretary-general>]
51. Official data on vital statistics from Guatemala's Instituto Nacional de Estadística (National Statistics Institute), 2018.
52. UNICEF Malawi, 'The Child Marriage Factsheet', July 2018. [<https://wcmprod.unicef.org/malawi/reports/child-marriage-factsheet>]
53. Specifically, in the 'Protocol of Care for Victims/Survivors of Sexual Violence (Protocolo de Atención a Víctimas/Sobrevivientes de Violencia Sexual)', which was created in 2009 and approved by the Guatemalan Government with national reach. The national Protocol activates an inter-institutional response that must be followed by government agencies when sexual violence cases are identified. This response ensures that medical, psychological and social services are made available to the survivors, and that there is a link with the justice system.
54. TEGAs are recruited through local partners. Girl Effect's criteria for choosing a local partner requires these organizations to be experts on working with girls, as well as having an excellent relationship with the target community. The program has seen that being part of a network and having a voice are important incentives for becoming a TEGA, as they acquire new friends, skills, and sense of confidence.
55. All the interviews serve specific needs, as data is requested by partner organizations who are contractually committed to act upon findings and provide an impact report back to Girl Effect.
56. Gamification is the application of typical elements of game playing (e.g. point scoring, competition with others, rules of play) to other areas of activity, typically as an online marketing technique to encourage engagement with a product or service. Gamification is an effective tactic to use with apps, as these elements capture the user's attention, motivation and engagement.
57. UNESCO, *School Violence and Bullying: global status report*, Paris, 2017. [<https://bangkok.unesco.org/content/school-violence-and-bullying-global-status-report-0>]
58. Ibid.
59. IGLYO, 'IGLYO Launches LGBTQI Inclusive Education Index & Report', 13 May, 2018 [<http://www.iglyo.com/iglyo-launches-lgbtqi-inclusive-education-index-report/>]

60. Gobierno de Chile, Subsecretaría de la Prevención del Delito, 'Primera Encuesta Nacional de Polivictimización en Niñas, Niños y Adolescentes, Subsecretaría de prevención del delito', Santiago de Chile, 2018.
61. Gobierno de Chile, Subsecretaría de la Prevención del Delito, 'Encuesta Nacional de Violencia en el Ámbito Escolar', Santiago de Chile, 2014.
62. (UNDP) United Nations Development Fund Chile, Corporación Opción, UNICEF Chile, Organización de Estados Iberoamericanos, Fundación Integra.
63. "Diálogos regionales por la infancia y adolescencia" (Regional dialogues for childhood and adolescence), a community participatory activity implemented in each of the country's 'regions' (15), a first-level administrative geographical boundary inside the country.
64. For example, adapting short stories to local cultural contexts with younger children so they can better understand. 2016 and 2017 versions took into consideration cultural differences within the country and suggested multiple adaptations of the methodology depending on geographic location.
65. 2015: participation, respect, and progressive autonomy; 2016: values, institutional rights, responsibilities; 2017: SDGs.
66. A lesson learned from the methodology implemented during 2015 was the need for cultural awareness and content adaptation. It was a common problem that, for example, a child from the south of the country could not relate to a story featuring problems from the north, or a child living a rural area not understanding content related to a child living in the city. Adult's roles as facilitators were critical.
67. When prioritized, SDGs were grouped on the basis of issue. One of these groups comprised the SDGs directly affecting people.
68. A region is the first Chilean geographical boundary (there are a total of 15 regions in the country).
69. Throughout all three years Yo Opino was implemented, results were used on a regular basis by the National Council for Children to inform its general work.
70. From 54 per cent in 1992-93 to 27 per cent in 2016, according to UNICEF India, 'Child Marriage'. [<http://unicef.in/Whatwedo/30/Child-Marriage>]
71. Ibid.
72. The Panchayat is a form of local government, where each village is responsible for its own affairs. They are institutions established as the lowest form of governance as per the Constitution of India. Approximately 100,000 people live in one Panchayat.
73. Restless Development's young volunteers have reached over 182,000 girls and over 105,000 boys, providing life skills on sexual reproductive health and rights. Classroom sessions are delivered by their volunteers regularly.
74. Legal and Human Rights Centre & Zanzibar Legal Services Centre, '*Unknown Assailants': A Threat to human rights*. Tanzania Human Rights report 2017, Dar es Salaam and Zanzibar, 2017. [<https://www.humanrights.or.tz/assets/attachments/1524659401.pdf>]
75. Ibid.
76. UNICEF Tanzania, 'Children and AIDS'. [[https://www.unicef.org/tanzania/children\\_aids.html](https://www.unicef.org/tanzania/children_aids.html)]

78. Further explained in this report, U-Report is an instant messaging engagement tool run by UNICEF in over 40 countries. Through different mobile and/or internet-based channels, UNICEF and partners send opinion polls to children and adolescents on diverse issues. Responses are collected in real time, and automatically aggregated and published on a website.

79. Opinion poll conducted by U-Report Malaysia on 1,260 adolescents and youth.

80. With the backing of the Ministry of Education and UNICEF, this nationwide campaign is a multisectoral collaboration led by RAGE, the youth reporting division of Star Media Group, with support from corporate companies such as SP Setia, Digi Telecommunications and Petrosains, together with nonprofits such as Teach for Malaysia, 100 per cent Project, StudyHub Asia and the Rotary Club.

81. Cluster school is a brand given to a school identified as being excellent in its cluster from the aspects of school administration and student achievement.

82. The submission form had four questions: What is your idea? Why does your school need this? What do you want to achieve? How much will it cost?

83. Findings revealed that there's optimism amongst those who have not been victims of bullying, as 74 per cent said that if they were, they would report it to school authorities.

84. By 2030, to ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development.

85. UNICEF Mexico, 'Protección a la niñez y adolescencia'. [[https://www.unicef.org/mexico/spanish/proteccion\\_6932.html](https://www.unicef.org/mexico/spanish/proteccion_6932.html)]

86. Responses were received from all 32 states in the country, though most came from Veracruz, Puebla, Tlaxcala, Estado de México, CDMX, Baja California, Nuevo Léon and Chiapas.

87. The number of participating children from both polls are not added up for this report, as each opinion poll is unique and different from the other. The system does not identify when one respondent has also responded to a previous poll.

88. U-Report is further explained as a separate case study later in this report.

89. Government of Mexico, 'Participa con tu gobierno en línea'. [<https://www.gob.mx/participa/ultimo>]

90. Project partners include UNICEF, Save the Children, World Vision, ChildFund, other government departments, traditional media, and local civil society organizations.

91. My-Peer, 'What are the benefits? The benefits of peer-based approaches'. [<http://mypeer.org.au/planning/what-are-peer-based-programs/benefits/>]

92. Ibid.

93. UNICEF, 'Peer education'. [[https://www.unicef.org/lifeskills/index\\_12078.html](https://www.unicef.org/lifeskills/index_12078.html)]

94. Save the children's "Practice Standards in Children's Participation" are recommended to ensure high quality participation, while safeguarding and protecting children. As a general outlook these are: adult organizations and workers are committed to ethical participatory practice and to the primacy of children's

best interests, with transparency, honesty, and accountability; children's participation is relevant and voluntary; children experience a safe, child-friendly, welcoming and encouraging environment for their participation; child participation promotes equality of opportunity and does not reinforce existing patterns of discrimination and exclusion; adult staff and managers involved in supporting/ facilitating children's participation are effective and confident, and have been trained and supported to do their jobs to a high standard; participation promotes the safety and protection of children, and child protection policies and procedures should always be applied; there should be a commitment to provide feedback and/or follow-up and to evaluate the quality and impact of children's participation. These practice standards describe the expected level of performance to ensure consistent, high quality participation practice.

95. Digital Principles for Development [<https://digitalprinciples>]
96. Original icons in Digital Principles for Development.
97. Digital Principles for Development.
98. Percy-Smith, Barry, and Nigel Thomas, A Handbook of Children and Young People's Participation, p.357.
99. Digital Principles for Development.
100. Ibid.
101. Digital Principles for Development.
102. Open source technology or software, is software in which the source code used to create the program is freely available for the public to view, edit, and redistribute. Anyone could use the code to deploy a similar project.
103. Digital Principles for Development.



OFFICE OF THE SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON  
**VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN**

The Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children is an independent global advocate in favour of the prevention and elimination of all forms of violence against children, mobilizing action and political support to achieve progress the world over. The mandate of SRSG is anchored in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other international human rights instruments and framed by the UN Study on Violence against Children.

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