



# Practical Toolkit

on children's participation

 terre des hommes  
Help for Children in Need

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Manual and toolkit were developed by Ornella Barros and Claire O'Kane. The toolkit as well as the documents of the Usefull Reading sections of the manual are available at:

[www.tdh.de/participation-toolkit](http://www.tdh.de/participation-toolkit)

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## Tool 4.0 Applying the basic requirements as a planning tool to overcome common challenges faced

This is a planning tool that can be used by adults in collaboration with children and young people to consider nine basic requirements for effective and ethical participation when planning a project. The nine basic requirements for children's participation have been elaborated by the Committee on the Rights of the Child in the General Comment on the Child's Right to be Heard (CRC/C/GC/12, June 2009). Participation should be: 1) transparent and informative, 2) voluntary, 3) respectful, 4) relevant, 5) child-friendly, 6) inclusive, 7) supported by training for adults, 8) safe and sensitive to risk, and 9) accountable. When designing and planning a project consideration of these basic requirements helps to minimise and overcome common challenges that are faced when implementing children's participation, and it supports implementation and monitoring of quality participation processes.



A minimum of 1-2 hours should be taken by project staff to use this planning tool. Ideally a series of meetings with children, young people, parents/caregivers, other relevant project stakeholders, and project staff may be organised to discuss and use this planning tool



Planning tool, flipchart paper and pens

1. Introduce the table below to the staff. The table will be used as a planning tool to inform the design, planning and monitoring of a project to ensure application of nine basic requirements for effective and ethical children's participation in a project. Explain that the nine basic requirements for children's participation have been elaborated by the Committee on the Rights of the Child in the General Comment on the Child's Right to be Heard (CRC/C/GC/12, June 2009). Participation should be: 1) transparent and informative, 2) voluntary, 3) respectful, 4) relevant, 5) child-friendly, 6) inclusive, 7) supported by training for adults, 8) safe and sensitive to risk, and 9) accountable. These basic requirements help to ensure quality children's participation, and they help to minimise and overcome common challenges that have been faced in previous TDH and partner projects (in different parts of the world) when implementing children's participation.
2. Review each of the basic requirements and use the checklist questions to determine if you have carefully considered each requirement. Use the column on the right to record and note follow up action that is needed to ensure application of each basic requirement.
3. Wherever possible undertake community visits to potential project sites to have focus group discussions with parents, caregivers and children to explore whether the project is relevant to children and to provide space and opportunities for children's perspectives to inform the design and planning. Observations and findings from the community visits can be used to review and update the responses in the table.

Basic Requirement	Common challenge faced in children's participation	Checklist questions on key indicators to apply the basic requirements	Follow up action to apply the basic requirement (what? By who? By when?)
1. Participation is transparent and informative	Lack of information about the programmes prevent children from participating in the activities either because children themselves are not properly informed or because adults discourage children based on the limited information they have about it.	<input type="checkbox"/> Has information about the project been developed in child friendly formats and languages to share with children, their parents and caregivers? <input type="checkbox"/> Do children have enough information about the programme to make an informed decision about whether and how they may participate? <input type="checkbox"/> Are the roles and responsibilities of everyone involved clearly explained and understood?	
2. Participation is voluntary	Socio-cultural traditional beliefs and attitudes towards children sometimes make it harder for children to speak up and make choices about their participation. Traditionally adults have power over children, and in many socio-cultural contexts children are not expected to speak up in front of adults, but are expected to obey adults.  Children's participation is not always voluntary. Sometimes project staff, teachers or others pick or select children and request them to participate. Some children may feel pressured to participate, and children may not know that they have the choice not to participate, or to stop participating.	<input type="checkbox"/> Have children been asked about whether they want to participate or not? And to ensure that they will be given enough time and information to make a decision? <input type="checkbox"/> Are the children informed and aware that they have a choice to stop participating if they change their minds?	

<p>3. Participation is respectful</p>	<p>Parents/caregivers are sometimes unwilling to support child participation. In many cases the parents/caregivers are not properly informed about the programmes' objectives and the importance of these opportunities for children. In some cases, parents/caregivers underestimate children's capacities to participate in decision-making in and outside the family, whereas in other cases children are not allowed to participate because parents/caregivers prefer to send them to spending their time studying, working or doing other tasks.</p> <p>Time constraints of children and staff are also faced. Participatory processes often lengthen the time involved for planning and implementation of activities and require adults to meet children at times that suit them. However, children are often busy with their studies, play, household work, and other commitments, and staff tend to have less time to meet with children at times that suit them, such as weekends or school holidays.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Has support from key adults in children's lives (e.g. parents, carers, teachers) been gained to ensure support and respect for children's participation?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Are children's own time commitments (to study, play, work) respected and take into consideration to inform the project design and timing of activities?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Have children been consulted about times that most and least suit them to participate?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Have exam times, seasons, or school holidays been taken into consideration to inform planning?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Does the organisation have flexible policies that allow staff to work at times that suit children?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Do the ways of working with children consider and build upon positive local cultural practices (e.g. traditional forms of expression)?</p>	
<p>4. Participation is relevant</p>	<p>Lack of opportunities and support including restrictions for children and young people to participate in policy-making processes; and limited opportunities of participation for children at high risk of vulnerability such as working children, orphans, children with disabilities, and children who are victims of abuse.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Are the project objectives and issues being addressed of real relevance to children's own lives?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Have children (of different ages and backgrounds) been consulted about issues that most affect them in their communities?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Have their priorities been taken into consideration to influence the design and planning of the project?</p>	

<p>5. Participation is child-friendly</p>	<p>Children may lack confidence to engage in participation processes especially if they have not had previous opportunities or encouragement to express their views and to participate in different project activities.</p> <p>Insufficient organisational support to child led organisations and initiatives that inhibits opportunities for creative, innovative, child friendly processes.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Are child friendly approaches and methods used that are suitable for children of different ages and abilities? (for example, drawing, creative arts, music, drama, photography, participatory visual tools, games, etc.)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Are TDH/partner staff available who can effectively communicate with children in their local language(s)?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Are child friendly meeting places used? Are such places accessible to children with disabilities?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Do the ways of working build children's self confidence among girls and boys of different ages and abilities?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Are children encouraged and enabled to work together in groups to support one another and to take forward their own ideas and initiatives?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Are children and young people who are experienced and confident to participate given opportunities and support to take on roles of facilitators and mentors?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Is networking, exchange and learning encouraged among children and young people?</p>	
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<p>6. Participation is inclusive</p>	<p>Discrimination and non-inclusion. In some socio-cultural contexts, discrimination based on age, gender, sexuality, disability, nationality, ethnicity, caste, religion, family income, HIV and other factors, makes it harder for some groups of children to express their views and to participate in different activities.</p> <p>In some socio-cultural and religious contexts parents and caregivers may not want their daughters to participate in projects outside of the home, or to be part of child groups. Parents/caregivers may also discourage their children to participate if they have disabilities. Furthermore, if children's participation opportunities (including child groups) are school-based, rather than community-based then out of school children will be excluded. In addition, in some school based child groups teachers sometimes have the tendency to select the "best" children to participate, thus excluding other children from opportunities to participate.</p> <p>When they form child and youth groups, children and young people may perpetuate existing power relationships and discrimination based on ethnic, religious or other differences.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Are girls and boys of different ages and backgrounds including younger children, children with disabilities, children from different ethnic or religious groups, out of school children, etc., given opportunities to participate?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Are sufficient efforts made to engage parents, caregivers and other relevant stakeholders to overcome additional barriers that may prevent the participation of girls, children with disabilities, out of school children etc.,?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Are the activities and venues accessible to children of different ages and abilities including children with disabilities?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Are children encouraged to reflect on existing patterns of discrimination and to address discrimination through their participation?</p>	
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<p>7. Participation is supported by training for adults and children</p>	<p>Insufficient capacity building opportunities for staff, and for children and young people.</p> <p>Instrumentalisation of child participation by adults (including NGOs) using and manipulating children's views as a tool to legitimise adults' positions and political interests.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Do staff have sufficient knowledge, confidence and skills to facilitate effective and ethical child participation?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Do staff have access to training on child rights and children's participation?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Does the training include a focus on the nine basic requirements for effective and ethical participation of children?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Are there plans and budget to support additional training of staff on children's participation?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Are there plans and budget to support children's capacity building on child rights and participation?</p>	
<p>8. Participation is safe and sensitive to risk</p>	<p>There are risks associated with child participation and there is often insufficient risk assessment and risk mitigation. This situation may result in children facing negative outcomes as a result of their participation projects or processes.</p> <p>Child protection concerns arise due to lack of proper assessment and minimisation of risks. The risks include: security and infringement on confidentiality and privacy; children's stigmatisation by the media; physical and verbal abuse from adults or other children; discrimination; and over exposure of children through participation.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Are all staff aware of and applying the child protection policy?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Have children been informed about the child protection policy using language and materials that is appropriate to their age and abilities?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Have risks associated with children's participation been identified and ways to keep children safe been identified?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Have children, young people, parents and caregivers been consulted to understand their fears, concerns and risks, as well as their suggestions to reduce and address the risks? Have these ideas been used to inform the project design?</p>	

<p>9. Participation is accountable</p>	<p>Insufficient accountability and feedback provided to children by adults has been identified as a challenge. There have also been challenges in monitoring and evaluating children's participation due to lack of agreed tools or limited resources for monitoring and evaluation.</p> <p>When supporting children's participation in policy and practice developments a lack of political will and insufficient allocation of human, financial and material resources for children's participation processes by organisations (including government and civil society organisations) has created challenges to supporting accountable participation.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Do children know where to go for help if they feel unsafe while participating in the project?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Are child protection focal points appointed for the project?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Have child protection response and referral mechanisms been mapped so that staff can help children access support or services if needed?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Do adults take children's views and suggestions seriously and act upon their suggestions?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Does the organisation have budgets and plans to support follow up and feedback activities with children and young people?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Are children given feedback from project staff about any requested support needs and follow up?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Does the organisation have indicators, budget and plans to monitor and evaluate the quality and outcomes of the participation process?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Do children have opportunities to actively participate in monitoring and evaluation of the project?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Is there a plan and budget to develop and disseminate child friendly report of any planned evaluations?</p>	
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## Tool 4.1.1 Exploring research ethics: agree – disagree

This tool can be used with children and young people who are interested in carrying out their own research to introduce research and to explore ethical issues and ideas to carry out their research in an informed and safe way.



45 minutes



Flipchart paper or large card: one piece with 'agree' written on and another with 'disagree' on

1. Bring together the group of children and young people who are interested in carrying out research. Explain that when undertaking research we need to carry the research in a way that respects people and does not cause harm.
2. Introduce the activity where you are going to read out a statement and everyone has to decide if they agree or disagree. If they agree they move to the right side of the room. If they disagree they move to the left side of the room. Once they are in their position they are encouraged to share their views (if they want to).
3. Initial statements to explore “what is research?”  
Read out each statement and encourage people to move to show if they agree or disagree.
  - Statement 1: Research is about finding out new things
  - Statement 2: All research projects must use a questionnaireDiscuss the group's ideas and see if the children and young people want to develop a group statement about what research is (and is not)
4. Additional statements to explore ethics  
Optional statements are included here which relate to ethical considerations when running a research project (these statements can be adapted or some additional statements could be developed to better fit your context. The ethical response is included in italics for the facilitator):
  - We always have to know the names and addresses of the participants (disagree)
  - You always have to make sure that people have had a choice about whether or not they want to take part in the research (agree)
  - It is okay to take photographs of children (disagree)
  - If we want to make a video with children at our school we must ask the children's parents, as well as the children, and tell them who will see the video (agree)
  - It is okay for a child from the group to interview an adult on their own (disagree)
  - It is okay to talk about what someone tells us for our research with our family and friends (disagree)
  - It is okay to film people in secret (disagree).

## 4.1.2 Steps in the research process: post-it storm

This tool can be used with children and young people who are interested in carrying out their own research. It is helpful to consider key steps in the research process including efforts to better define their research topic, to consider ethical and safe ways of carrying out the research, and to discuss and identify relevant research methods.



90 minutes for an initial meeting. It will require a follow up meeting for further discussions and planning for research with and by children and young people



Flipchart paper, pens, footstep shape cards, post-it notes (in 2 different colours)

1. Bring together the group of children and young people who have identified the need to do research on a particular topic. Explain that we will introduce 8 key steps of the research process and we will use post-it notes to explore our ideas on some of these steps.
2. Introduce 8 key “footsteps” of the research process. Write each of these steps on a “footstep” shape and place in a line on the floor:
  - i) Finding and developing our research topic, ii) Considering ethics, iii) Deciding what research methods to use, iv) Developing questions v) Identify and informing participants, v) Collecting the data vi) Analysis and interpreting findings, and v) Reporting
3. Firstly we will focus on step 1 Finding and developing our research topic.
4. If children have not yet identified their research topic you can use the post-it notes for children to share their ideas about what topic they would like to research and why this topic is important to them. If the children and young people have already identified their research topic then write this topic on a flipchart and ask children and young people to think about why this topic is important to them. Ask them to write their comments on post-it notes and stick them to the flipchart. Read out all the comments made and stimulate discussions based on these areas, Based on the discussion see if children and young people agree on the main research topic and the top 3-5 reasons why this topic is important to them.
5. Now ask children to think about research ethics. How can they make sure the research is carried out in a way that is safe where children have choice to share or not share their views, and in way that avoids children feeling hurt or upset by taking part. Give children post-it notes in another colour. Ask them to write down and share their ideas about how to carry out the research in a safe and ethical way. Share these ideas and agree good practice [See also tool 4.1.1 Exploring research ethics: agree – disagree].
6. Now let us look at different research methods. Write the name of a research method on flipchart paper (one method per piece of paper e.g. questionnaire, interview, focus group discussion, case stories, ob-

ervation, suggestion box, graffiti wall, etc). For each method ask the group to think about what is good and bad about this method, and who it may or may not be suitable for. Record the ideas on each flipchart. Based on this discussion see if the group can decide on which method or combination of methods they would like to use in their research.

7. Sum up what they have done so far. They will discuss and agree on: a) their research topic and why it is important to them, b) ways to carry out the research in a safe way, and c) some of the preferred research methods.
8. Plan when to have a follow up research planning meeting. During the next meeting they can use “post-it storm” to: further develop their research questions, and to identify participants – who they would want to answer their questions and why.

## Tool 4.2.1 Body Mapping on children’s likes and dislikes

The body mapping tool can be used with and by children and young people in separate girls and boys groups (of children of similar ages) to explore their likes and dislikes. This tool can be effectively used during situation analysis and it can be adapted for use in research projects. [Note: Ensure that a child protection focal person who is skilled in listening to and supporting children is available during use of the body mapping activity in case any child gets upset.]



60 – 90 minutes



Flipchart paper. In preparation stick 3 large flipchart papers together  
Crayons of different colours or washable marker pens  
Tape

1. Undertake the body mapping activity in focus groups of same gender and age. However, where opportunities allow in the plenary sessions body map results from girls and boys could be displayed for girls and boys to share and reflect on similarities and differences between their likes and dislikes in their community.
2. Introduce the body mapping exercise which will allow girls/boys to share their likes and dislikes in their community. [Note – depending on the focus on the situation analysis you can also adapt the focus of the body mapping to explore children’s likes/dislikes in their school/family or care-setting/work setting etc].

Place large sheets of paper on the floor for each focus group. Within each group ask for a volunteer child to lie on the sheets so that the shape of their body may be drawn around. Ask for a volunteer (of same gender) to draw around their body shape with crayons or (non-permanent!) pens. [Note if children are too shy to be drawn around – you can directly draw the shape of a body on the flipchart paper].

3. Encourage the children to sit around the 'body' shape and explain that this child is a girl or boy from their community. Draw a line vertically down the middle of child, and explain that one side (e.g. the left hand side) represents a happy child showing things they like; the other side (the right hand side) represents the sad child with things they do not like.

4. Encourage children in the group to express their views and to design the child to show things they like and dislike in their community. You can use the body parts to explore children's likes or dislikes, for example:

Eyes            Ask children what do they see in their community that make them happy or sad?; how do their parents or community members see them which makes them happy or sad? Why?

Head            Ask children what kind of knowledge they gain in their community that makes them happy or sad; what kind of happy or sad thoughts to they have about their community? Why?

Ears            What do they like to hear in their community that makes them happy? Why? What do they dislike to hear that makes them sad?; how do adults listen to them or not listen to them in their community or daily lives that makes them happy or sad?; why?

Mouth           What do they communicate about in their community that makes them happy or sad?; how do their community members/parents/caregivers communicate with them that makes them happy or sad? Why?

Heart            What happy or sad feelings do they have about their community?

Shoulders      What kind of responsibilities do they like to take on in their community? Why? What kind of responsibilities do they dislike? Why?

Stomach        What do they like to eat/drink in the community? What do they not like to eat/drink in the community? Why?

Hands and arms    What do they like to do with their hands or arms that makes them happy? Why? What do they dislike to do with their hands or arms? Why?; How do community members or parents use their hands and arms with children that makes them happy or sad?;

Feet and legs    Where do they like to go in and outside of their community? Why? Where do they dislike going in or outside of their community? Why?

5. If possible display the girls and boys body maps: encourage the girls and boys to identify similarities and differences between each. Enable discussion on the issues raised: What are the common likes of girls and boys in the community? What are the common dislikes of girls and boys in the community? Are there any differences between girls and boys likes and dislikes in the community? Why?

## Tool 4.2.2 How, how, how?

The „How, how, how?“ tool can be used with and by children and young people to support concrete action planning on any issue affecting them.



30 – 45 minutes



Flipchart paper  
Pens  
Tape

1. Explain to children that the how, how, how? Tool can be useful when they are trying to address a concern affecting them or planning action of any kind
2. Write the 'how' question based on an issue that children want to address on a wide long piece of paper. e.g. how can we stop bullying in school?
3. Draw 4 or 5 arrows coming from the how? Encourage girls and boys to give different suggestions as to how ? they can address the issue (e.g. how can they stop bullying in school? ) – record the different reasons by the different arrows. (e.g. by raising awareness with children about the harm caused by bullying, by getting teachers to take bullying more seriously etc)
4. By each of the suggestions given draw some more arrows and explore how? they will go about planning this (e.g. how will they raise awareness with children about the harm caused by bullying?). Encourage all the girls and boys to give different suggestions as to how they will develop their action ideas. Record the main ideas by the different arrows.
5. Keep repeating this process to identify the methods for addressing each stage of the action plan until very concrete plans have emerged.
6. Enable a discussion on the emerging action plan and delegate on roles and responsibilities to deliver the action plan.

## Tool 4.2.3 Supporting children's groups (Drama groups)

This tool can be used with members of existing child groups to enable them to reflect on positive and negative aspects of child group functioning and to share ideas on how to strengthen their child groups. Some children participate in programme implementation through their child group/club activities. Through more fair, inclusive child groups girls and boys will be more able to meaningfully participate in programming.



60 minutes



Flipchart paper  
Pens

1. Bring together members of an existing child group/club. Explain to children that we will explore their ideas about a good and bad children's group and will share ideas to strengthen their child groups/club.
2. There are many ways to define what it means to be a good children's group. One starting point to get the group thinking about these terms (involve everyone, clear, just) and whether they apply to their child club:

Briefly discuss these questions and note children's main responses:

- a) Is their child club inclusive? – does it involve girls and boys of different ages and backgrounds, including children with disabilities?
  - b) Is there clear information sharing and decision making in their club?
  - c) Is their club just and fair in its decision-making practices and distribution of responsibilities and opportunities?
3. Divide the large group into two smaller groups. Assign one group to perform an example of a good children's group and another to perform an example of a bad children's group. Each small group should meet for a brief period of time (about 10 minutes) to create a 5-minute drama or skit. The goal is for each person to be creative in the moment, even if the drama or skit is not fully prepared.
  4. Ask each group to perform their drama.
  5. After both dramas have been performed, discuss and reflect on the drama performances as a large group. What did the good children's group do that makes it a good group? What did the bad children's group do that makes it a bad group? Ask one or two people to keep track of ideas of what makes a good children's group on large flipchart paper, and on what makes a bad children's group.
  6. Reflect and discuss about the way your children's group works? Discuss how can your children's group become a better group? Record children's ideas and discuss how these ideas can be put into action.

## Tool 4.2.4 “H” assessment: analysing the strengths, weaknesses, and suggestions to improve

The “H” assessment tool is a tool that is easy to use with and by children for monitoring and evaluation of different projects. This tool can be used with children or adults.



45 – 60 minutes



Flipchart paper  
Pens

1. Explain to children/adults that the “H” assessment can be used as a tool to share their views about positive and negative aspects of the project and to give their suggestions to improve the project.
2. Give the participants a large piece of paper and pens or pencils. Make a ‘H’ shape on the large flipchart paper. In the left hand column draw a happy face 😊, in the right hand column a sad face ☹️ and below the middle “H” bar draw a light bulb (to represent ‘bright ideas’) – see visual example below. Explain that it is called a “H” assessment due to the shape of the “H”.

	Children involved in the “H” assessment (No. of participants, age, gender, background) & date of assessment	
	Suggestions to improve 	

3. Try out the tool. In the top middle section record the number of girls, boys, women or men who are part of the “H” assessment activity and the date of the assessment.
4. Say for example, the “H” assessment was being used to monitor and evaluate the community based disaster risk reduction project, then encourage participants to discuss and record:
  - What are the strengths and advantages of the community based disaster risk reduction project? Record their views and experiences under the 😊 happy face
  - What are the weaknesses or disadvantages of the community based disaster risk reduction project? Record their views and experiences under the ☹️ unhappy face
  - What are their suggestions to improve the community based disaster risk reduction project? Record their views and ideas under the lightbulb symbol

## Tool 4.3.1 The Spider Tool

This tool can be collaboratively by children and adults to assess children’s participation in advocacy planning and implementation. This tool can also be adapted to explore other quality dimensions of child led initiatives and organisations.



90 minutes



Flipchart paper  
Two different colours of pens or markers  
Tape

1. Briefly introduce the tool saying that it will allow them to assess the engagement of children’s in advocacy planning and implementation by looking at aspects of the scope, quality and outcomes of children’s participation.
2. Divide the big group into two or three smaller groups depending on the number of participants. Distribute a large piece of flipchart paper with a spider web of five corners and four radials, and two different colours of pens or markers.
3. Explain that they will discuss five criteria to assess children’s engagement. The groups will then be asked to score each of the criteria from 1 to 4 in terms of the current reality and the future ideal of children’s participation:

### First criteria: Participation in advocacy strategy and activity planning

1	2	3	4
Very few children are involved in the planning session of the advocacy strategy; adults set the strategy and annual planning and children have no information about the organisational advocacy plan.	Some of the children are aware that there is an advocacy strategy and annual plan; children are informed about the main components but adults decide when and how to involve them.	Children are familiar with the organisational advocacy plan though have limited knowledge about the advocacy strategy; they are informed about the main components and give input about the advocacy actions and initiatives.	Most of the children are familiar with both the organisational advocacy strategy and advocacy plan. Children’s groups or associations have selected representatives to participate in the planning session of the advocacy strategy and planning. Children give input about the advocacy goal, outputs, and activities.

**Second criteria: Quality participation of children in advocacy actions and initiatives**

1	2	3	4
<p>Girls and boys are barely engaged in planning and/or implementation of advocacy. The staff does not know anything about the nine basic requirements for an ethical and effective participation of children; communication with children groups and associations is limited to the few times the agency requires their attendance to conferences, events, or campaigns.</p>	<p>Children are somehow involved in both advocacy planning and implementation (e.g. through consultations to decide about an activity). Some of the staff in direct contact with children is aware of the nine basic requirements for an ethical and effective participation of children; they keep children informed about the advocacy agenda and activities; child-friendly tools are sometimes used to engage children in the advocacy actions; occasionally children are given feedback about their participation.</p>	<p>Children are regularly involved in both advocacy planning and implementation; they work collaboratively with adults for specific advocacy actions. All the staff in direct contact with children is aware of the nine basic requirements for an ethical and effective participation of children; efforts are made to ensure getting both parents and children's consent to participate; to involve children with disabilities, children from minority ethnic groups, migrant children, refugee and stateless children. Occasionally children are given feedback about their participation.</p>	<p>A system is in place to ensure permanent participation of children in advocacy planning and implementation (e.g. children's groups and associations have delegates for advocacy planning sessions). All the staff is familiar with the nine basic requirements for an ethical and effective participation of children; children's groups and associations are supported by trained staff on child safeguarding and participation; the nine basic requirements are assured throughout planning and implementation of advocacy actions; the activities engage children with disabilities, children from minority ethnic groups, migrant children, refugee and stateless children. Children are in regular contact with the advocacy coordinator for input and feedback.</p>

**Third criteria: Partnership and networks**

1	2	3	4
<p>The agency has its own policy on partnerships and networking; children are granted with participation opportunities through those platforms but their participation is conditioned to the principles and advocacy agenda of the agency.</p>	<p>The agency has its own policy on partnerships and networking; children's groups are sporadically asked for input to strengthening the advocacy networks; children are granted with participation opportunities through those platforms but their participation is not always independent from the principles and advocacy agenda of the agency.</p>	<p>Children's groups and associations are often asked for input to update the organisational policy on partnership and networking. They work collaboratively with adults to ensure participation opportunities for children in the different networks. Efforts are made to grant representation of children's groups and associations in child rights-related working groups.</p>	<p>The views of children's groups and associations are permanently considered to strengthen the organisational policy on partnerships and networking. Child-led initiatives are supported by the agency (more as a background role) and efforts are made to ensure representation of children's groups and associations in existing child rights-related working groups; children and adults work collaboratively to explore new participation opportunities for children and to find more partners able to support children's groups and associations.</p>

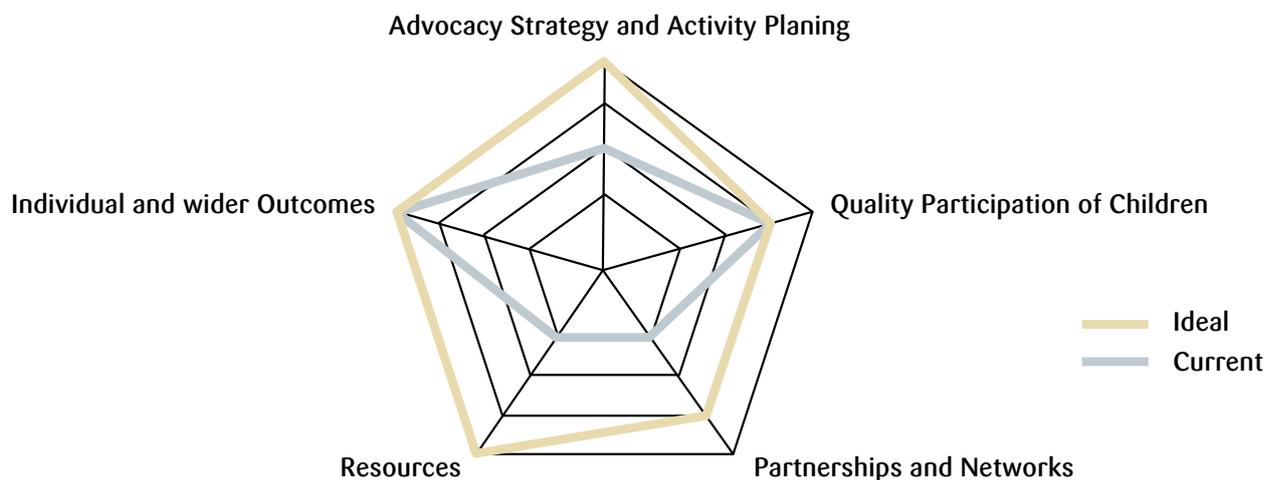
**Fourth criteria: Resources**

1	2	3	4
<p>The agency has the necessary budget to carry out the advocacy actions and initiatives. Children's groups and associations are informed about the activities but have no idea about the costs of the actions.</p>	<p>The agency has the necessary budget to carry out the advocacy actions and initiatives. Children's groups and associations are invited to take part of the actions planned by adults and count on the necessary resources for a successful implementation.</p>	<p>Children work collaboratively with adults on the budget available to carry out the advocacy actions and initiatives. Child-led initiatives rely exclusively on the agency's resources to undertake their advocacy actions and initiatives.</p>	<p>Children and adults collaborate to assess the resources available for advocacy actions and initiatives, and explore together sustainable options for the child-led initiatives to not rely exclusively on the agency's support to continue their advocacy work.</p>

**Fifth criteria: Individual and wider outcomes of children’s participation**

1	2	3	4
The few opportunities in which children have been involved in advocacy planning and implementation allowed them to learn valuable skills that will last them a lifetime including: working as a team; chairing and organising meetings, campaigns, demonstrations, and events; public speaking; action planning.	Occasional engagement of children in advocacy planning and implementation allowed them to learn personal skills (e.g. working as a team; chairing and organising meetings, campaigns, demonstrations, and events; public speaking; action planning), inspired them to be active citizens, increased their self-confidence, and encourage them to consider sharing their experience with others.	Regular participation of children in advocacy planning and implementation allowed them and their parents to have a greater awareness of their rights, developed children’s personal skills (e.g. action planning, working as a team; chairing and organising meetings, campaigns, demonstrations, and events; public speaking; action planning) while empowered them to undertake community projects and actions.	Permanent participation of children in advocacy planning and implementation allowed them and their parents to have a greater awareness of their rights; developed children’s personal skills (e.g. action planning; budgeting; working as a team; chairing and organising meetings, campaigns, demonstrations, and events; public speaking; action planning); increased organisational willingness to share power and involve children in decision-making; encouraged respectful relationships between children and the staff; and allowed opportunities for children to participate in decision-making instances in their schools and communities.

4. Ask the groups to use the two colours of pens or markers to indicate the scores given to each criteria in the spider web (see example below):



5. Encourage plenary discussion to share the results and explore:
  - Differences between the spiders of children’s participation in advocacy planning and implementation.
  - Main challenges of the current reality
  - Alternatives to reach the ideal scenarios
  - Key stakeholders that could contribute to improve the current reality of children’s participation in advocacy

## Tool 4.3.2 The advocacy hot air balloon

This tool can be used with and by children and young people to enable children to develop their own advocacy plan on children’s rights issues. This tool can also be adapted to explore the concept and practice of children’s participation.

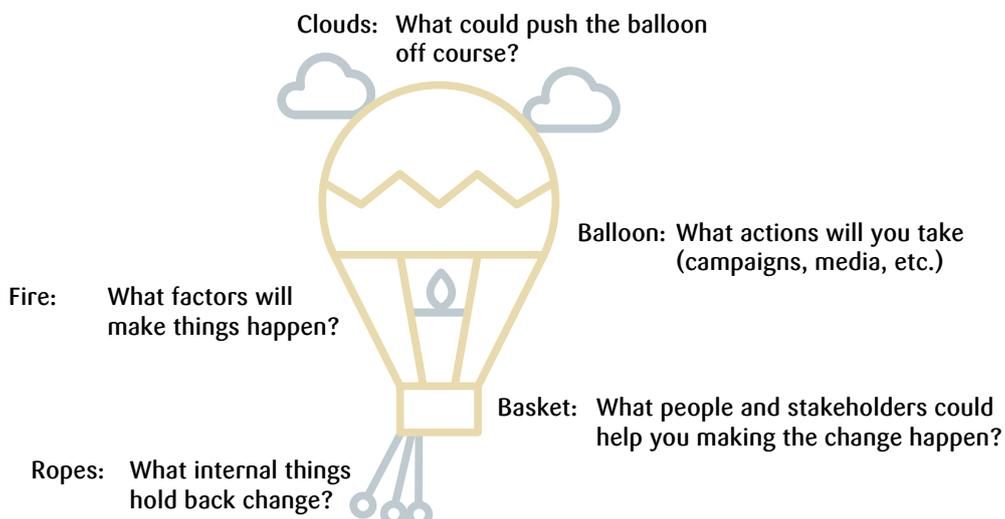


60 minutes



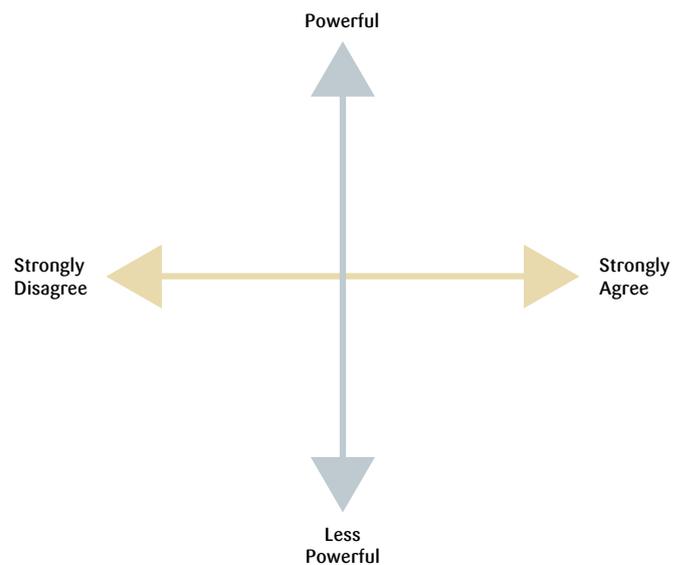
Flipchart paper  
Different colour pens, different colour crayons

1. Explain to children that they will use a “hot air balloon” image to help them develop their advocacy plan on a child rights issue affecting them. On a large sheet of flipchart paper draw the image of a hot air balloon. Introduce the visual image to the participants. Ask children if they have ever seen a hot air balloon and explain how it can fly in the sky! If children have not seen a balloon the facilitator could show 1 minute to show children what a hot air balloon is: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rGDqF6LGpaQ>. Then they could explain that we are using this visual image of a hot air balloon which represents children’s participation’s in advocacy. The balloon is a large circle divided into segments attached to a basket with children inside. The basket is held to the ground by pegs. Above the hot air balloon are a series of clouds and above the clouds there is the sky. Next to the hot air balloon there is a compass that represents a power mapping (see compass on page 22). When the pegs (barriers) are removed children can freely participate in advocacy on their rights.



2. Divide the big group into two or three smaller groups depending on the number of participants.
3. Ask the groups to choose a child rights issue that they are interested to address through an advocacy action. Help them by looking at their objective, what they want to change and achieve.
4. In each group the participants are asked to explore and record various parts of the visual image:

- **Basket and power mapping:** What people and stakeholders could help you making the change happen? (e.g. local politicians, national politicians, ministers, government, teachers, children’s ombudspeople, other organisations, etc.). Use the power mapping to assess the level of influence of each of the stakeholders you are considering to bring on board.
- **Balloon:** What actions will you take that will enable the change you want to see? – (e.g. campaigns, media, etc.), and when would they take place? – Timeline
- **Pegs:** What are the internal things that hold back change – Challenges (e.g. not enough resources: funds/staff)
- **Clouds:** What external things could make the change impossible to achieve – Threats (e.g. political environment, culture, economy, funding, legislation, events, etc.).
- **Sky:** What are the internal and external things that could help you make the change – Opportunities (e.g. political environment, culture, economy, funding, legislation, events, etc.).



5. In plenary, ask the groups to present their hot air balloons and ask one representative per group to record the findings in the following advocacy plan template:

Advocacy plan	
Name or topic of your action	
Objective	
Actions to achieve the objective	
Stakeholders that can support your action	
Challenges to bear in mind	
Opportunities that can be used	
Timeline of your action	

## Tool 4.4 Diamond ranking

Diamond ranking is a tool to be used with and by children for exploring their views about the most and least relevant ways in which they participate in communication.

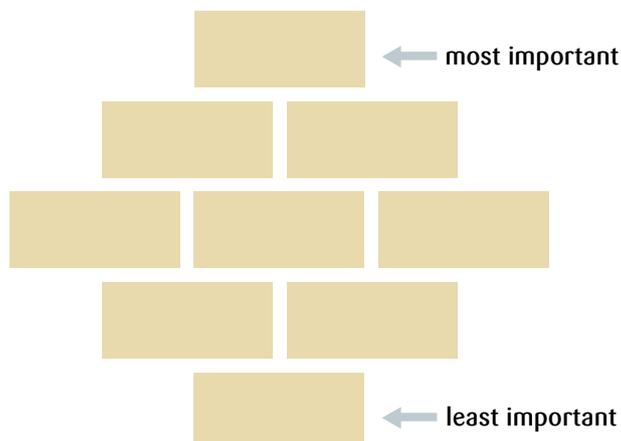


45-60 minutes



18 rectangular cards or big post-its  
Markers

1. Explain to children that the diamond ranking is a tool to explore their views and preferences about the way in which they participate in communication.
2. Divide the big group into two smaller groups.
3. Prior to the activity day, write down on nine rectangular cards or big post-its (one set per group) the following nine statements about the ways in which children could participate in communication:
  - Being interviewed for a radio or news programme
  - Being quoted or written about
  - Advising about materials for other children and young people
  - Taking over the social media of the agency for one day
  - Presenting at conferences
  - Making TV or radio programmes
  - Blogging or writing for publications/websites
  - Film-making or taking photographs
  - Appearing in a film or photographs
4. Ask each group to place the nine rectangular cards in the shape of a diamond (see picture)



5. Explain that each group must work together to decide about the ways in which they would like to participate in communication by selecting the statements that should go on the 'most important' or 'most preferred' card on top, the 'least important' or 'least preferred' card on the bottom and the ones in-between.
6. Once the groups reach a consensus about the order of the cards, ask each of them to present in plenary and get feedback from the other group.
7. In plenary, ask children to share their impressions about the activity:
  - Was it easy to reach a consensus?
  - Have you been already involved in any of these ways included in the diamond ranking?
  - Is there any other way in which you would like to participate in communication?

## Tool 4.5.1 Mapping it out

This tool can be used with and by children and young people. It allows children to explore and visualise fundraising alternatives near to the areas where their groups or associations carry out actions and initiatives.



45 minutes



Paper  
Markers, colours, pens, or paint  
Small post-its, small stones, or beans  
Magazines, scrap, strings, or newspapers

1. Explain to children that they will have the chance to identify fundraising alternatives to support their group actions and initiatives. Divide the big group into two or three smaller groups depending on the number of participants.
2. Ask the children to use the materials available to draw a map of the neighbourhood where their children's groups or associations are present. Remind them to include all the small or medium businesses, coffee shops, schools, playgrounds, supermarkets, parks, etc.
3. Once they finish the drawing, give them time to map out the alternatives they see in the area to carry out fundraising activities. Ask them to use the small post-its/stones/beans to indicate the places where they see a potential fundraising activity or opportunity (e.g. sports tournaments, cultural or thematic events, food festivals, walk-a-thon, garage sales, concerts, collection boxes, etc.). Remind children that they could also map out virtual opportunities available (e.g. crowd-funding using platforms such as gofundme).
4. In plenary, ask the groups to present their findings and encourage feedback from the other groups. Children could also vote for the ideas/opportunities that they consider more feasible to undertake.
5. Use the tool „Bricks in the wall“ to continue brainstorming about fundraising challenges and solutions.

## Tool 4.5.2 Bricks in the wall

This tool can be used with and by children and young people. It allows children to reflect on fundraising-related challenges that hinder the sustainability of their groups or associations, and the potential solutions to the issues identified.



40 minutes

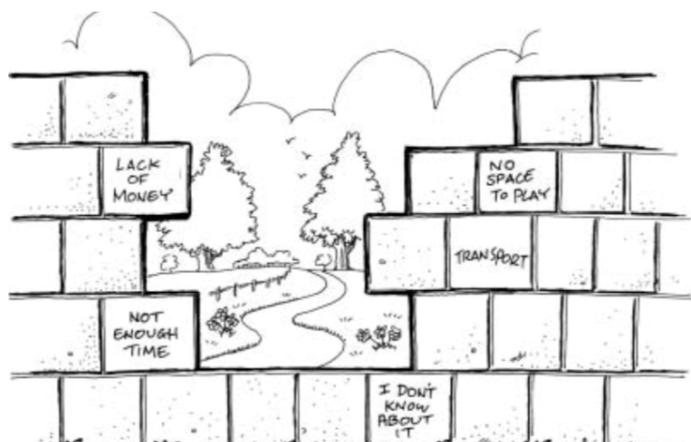


Mural of wall or other structure

A4 or A5 bricks, preferably in brick colours. Three or more shades of pink, orange and red make a more interesting visual display

Markers or pens

1. Introduce „Bricks in the Wall“ to the children and explain that the tool will allow them to reflect about the different fundraising-related challenges that make it difficult for their groups or associations to be more sustainable.
2. Divide the big group into smaller groups of twos or threes, and ask them to think of all the fundraising-related issues that hinder the sustainability of their child-led group or association.
3. Provide each group with a number of blank bricks and a marker or pen and ask them to write a short statement summing up an issue and add that brick to the wall.
4. Once the wall has been built give children the time to look at the wall or ask someone to read the statements out.
5. Explain to the children that the next part of the tool is to break down the wall with solutions to each of the challenges identified. Ask them to choose bricks either randomly or because they have a good solution and turn them over or write down the solution in a different colour.
6. In plenary, the solved problems are displayed (but not replaced in the wall) or read out to the whole group.



## Tool 5.1 TDH Schweiz young people’s participation assessment tool

This tool can be used with and by young people, and by children with adults. The tool has been designed by TDH Schweiz to analyse levels of participation by young people within projects and communities, and to inform the formulation of action plans to increase the participation of young people. The tool is based on TDH Schweiz concept of youth participation which includes the following goals:

- Young people take on responsibility in their projects and their environment
- Young people actively make an impact on the development of their environment through cooperation and participation in social processes



At least 90 minutes to introduce and use the assessment tool, and at least another 45 minutes for action planning.



Flipchart paper  
Markers

1. Introduce the TDH young people’s assessment tool to children, young people and adults. Explain that the tool can be used to reflect and analyse on levels of participation by young people within projects and communities. Assessment findings can also inform the formulation of action plans to increase the participation of young people.

2. Introduce the different levels of participation:

3. Explain that some key principles should also be considered when reflecting on the table below:

- Participation does not mean „the more, the better”, it is important to analyse the target group and critically assess where participatory processes would be helpful
- Participatory processes require a transparent framework
- The level of support required by each participatory process depends on the requirements of its participants



4. Review the table below: Discuss and identify what level of young people’s participation there is in project level work, organisational work, and broader system level contexts. At each level (project, organisation, systems) discuss and identify:

- which level of young people’s participation is currently reflected in the project? Why?
- which young people are involved and what are their roles?
- what are the roles of TDH staff or partner staff to support the participation of young people?

	<b>Information</b>	<b>Participation</b>	<b>Co-determination</b>	<b>Self-government</b>	<b>Autonomy</b>
Project level (targeted, limited time & money)	Are young people informed about the ongoing projects and the opportunity to get involved in them?	Can young people express their ideas and needs in the project planning process? Does the parent organisation listen to young people when making decisions relevant to the project?	Are young people regarded as project partners, do they make parts of decisions themselves, or are they part of a decision-making committee?	Do young people have the power to make financial, organisational and content-related decisions and are they simply accountable to the parent organisation?	Do young people work autonomously, perhaps even creating their own organisation?
Organisational level (e.g. organisational goals, planning, evaluation etc)	Are young people informed (in a manner appropriate to the target group) about the ongoing processes and decisions within the organisation?	Do young people have a say in important organisational processes, or can they contribute their ideas and needs to these processes?	Are young people part of a decision-making committee for organisational decisions? Do young people within the organisation contribute to making decisions that affect them?	Do young people manage part of the organisation themselves and determine its content, organisation and finances?	Have young people established their own autonomous organisation that is no longer accountable to the parent organisation?
Systems level (social sub-systems such as politics, school, health etc)	Do young people receive information (tailored to the target group) about the social sub-systems and do they know about the opportunities to get involved in them?	Do young people have a say in decisions regarding communal policy or relevant institutions that affect them (e.g. youth development act, school reform, etc.)?	Can young people express their ideas and needs during initiatives to change systems that are relevant to young people (Access to health services, school reforms, etc.)? Are they part of a decision-making committee?	Do young people have the power to make decisions concerning areas that affect them? Do young people have a representative on the (political) committee or do they make up an advisory board with defined decision-making powers?	(Autonomy is only possible here to a limited extent (e.g. own political organisation) as young people are always part of a system.)

- Action planning: Based on the assessment discuss which level of participation young people would like to attain in relation to projects, organisations, and broader systems strengthening work, and discuss and record action suggestions on how to improve their participation.

## Tool 5.2 Step behind

This tool can be used with and by children and adults for monitoring and evaluating the participation of children's groups in programming.

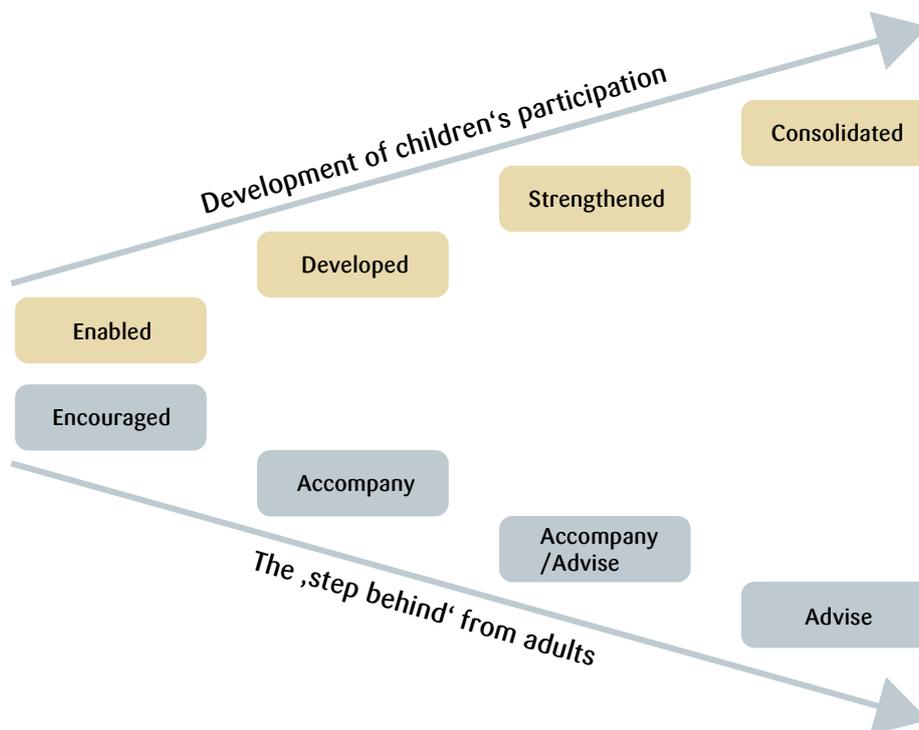


45 – 90 minutes



Flipchart paper  
Markers

1. Introduce the tool and explain that the 'Step behind' can be used to assess the development of children's participation in programming by looking at the development of children's capacities to undertake actions and initiatives and the role of adults in the process.



2. Use a large flipchart paper to draw the 'step behind' model. Alternatively, you can print the image above.
3. Use the table below to explore with the group the meaning of the stages of children's participation and the step behind from adults.

Enabled	Developed	Strengthened	Consolidated
<p>We (children) participate in spaces to reflect about our needs, experiences and knowledge. Adults or older children and youth take the lead to organise the activities. We are informed about the activities, invited to take part of them but it is up to us if we are interested to join.</p>	<p>We (children) are informed and consulted about the actions. We collaborate with adults for activity planning, as well as on the implementation of certain activities (e.g. organising cultural events, tournaments, etc.). However, we still need adult's support to carry out the activities.</p>	<p>We (children) suggest actions to sort out our needs, and take over the planning, budgeting and implementation of the activities. We make decisions autonomously in accordance with our evolving capacities without depending on adults'. We are no longer afraid of speaking in public, claiming our rights, and expressing our views.</p>	<p>We (children) suggest actions to sort out our needs, and take over the planning, budgeting and implementation of the activities. We represent others and our actions are focused on the realisation of all children's rights. We take shared decisions with adults in accordance with our evolving capacities and keeping respectful, acknowledgement, and equal relationships with everyone involved.</p>

4. Ask the children to individually assess the stage in which they think they are as a group through their participation in programming.
5. In plenary encourage children to share about:
  - Differences between the individual assessments
  - Opportunities to continue developing their participation in programming
  - Ideas to improve the role of adults in their participation in programming

## Sources

- 4.0 Applying the basic requirements as a planning tool to overcome common challenges faced  
This tool was developed by Claire O’Kane and Ornella Barros for TDH. It makes use of the nine basic requirements from the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC/C/GC/12, June 2009)
- 4.1.1 Exploring research ethics: agree – disagree  
This tool is from Funky Dragon & Partnership Support Unit (2011) Children as researchers: resource pack.  
Swansea: Funky Dragon & Partnership Support Unit
- 4.1.2 Steps in the research process: post-it storm  
This tool is adapted from Funky Dragon & Partnership Support Unit (2011) Children as researchers: resource pack.  
Swansea: Funky Dragon & Partnership Support Unit
- 4.2.3 Supporting children’s groups (Drama groups)  
This tool is from the Article 15 Project Resource Kit.  
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/oBy83lFoI5LfmRox6bWY2bUc4WDA/view>
- 4.3.1 The Spider Tool  
Adapted from Feinstein, C. and O’Kane, C. (2005). The Spider Tool: A self assessment and planning tool for child led initiatives and organisations. Save the Children Available at:  
<https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/sites/default/files/documents/2693.pdf>
- See: A Toolkit for Monitoring and Evaluating Children’s Participation, Booklet 3: How to measure the scope, quality and outcomes of children’s participation. Available at:  
[https://childhub.org/en/system/tdf/library/attachments/me\\_toolkit\\_booklet\\_3.pdf?file=1&type=node&id=22307](https://childhub.org/en/system/tdf/library/attachments/me_toolkit_booklet_3.pdf?file=1&type=node&id=22307)
- 4.4 Diamond ranking  
Adapted from: C. O’Kane. The development of participatory techniques: facilitating children’s views about decisions which affect them. Available at: <http://www.kingscollege.net/pomfret/4411/resources/OKane%20DMPS.pdf>
- 4.5.2 Bricks in the wall  
Adapted from Dynamix and Welsh Assembly Government. Participation Young Spice
- 5.1 TDH Schweiz young people’s participation assessment tool  
TDH Schweiz (undated) Youth participation assessment tool, terre des hommes Schweiz concept of youth participation  
TDH Schweiz (2010) Concept youth participation strategic priority of terre des hommes Schweiz
- 5.2 Step behind  
Adapted from Manualito Paso Atrás. Tuktan, tdh Schweiz.