



# GENERAL CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION CRITERIA



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**SECTORAL GUIDELINE AND INSTRUMENTS FOR ENSURING CHILDREN'S MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION**



**Save the Children**  
100 YEARS



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*Tirana, 2018*

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### **Tirana, 2018**

Save the Children is the world's leading independent organization for children. We strongly believe that every child deserves a better future. We provide children in Albania and all over the world with assistance to have a good start in life, opportunities to learn and protection from any type of risk. We do whatever it takes for children - every day and in times of crisis - to bring about changes to their life and joint future.

This guideline is published in the framework of the project "Children Keeping Children Safe", funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency and implemented by Save the Children in cooperation with Ombudsperson's Office and State Agency for the Protection of Children's Rights.

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We are deeply grateful and thankful to all those children who participated in consultation groups, which were part of “Voice 16+...” group in Burrel and Elbasan. They shared their opinions, experiences, feelings, and suggestions about child participation in Albania.

We would also like to thank all civil society representatives for dedicating their time and participating in face-to-face interviews, as part of the on-site work for developing this guideline. All civil society representatives shared their own opinions with the working group on children’s participation in Albania and issues constituting an integral part of this paper.

Special thanks go to the State Agency for the Protection of Children’s Rights for its contribution in improving this guideline.

Finally, we are deeply and sincerely grateful and thankful to the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, the support of which enabled the drafting of GENERAL CHILDREN’S PARTICIPATION CRITERIA”.



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## I. INTRODUCTION

Participation is among the fundamental principles envisaged by the Convention on the Rights of the Child under **Article 12**, clearly setting forth that children enjoy the right to participate in decision-making processes affecting their life. This article acknowledges children's rights to influence decisions related to their family, school, community and any other issue impacting their life directly. The principle recognizes children's capability to significantly participate in decision-making processes and to give their own opinions and suggestions on issues related to their lives, in line with their age and maturity.

As such, child participation enriches democratic processes and guarantees the upbringing and molding of future conscious generations actively involved in the lives of their communities.

The right to participation, as a fundamental right, requires adults' inclusion and engagement as individuals and/or governmental, public and non-public institutions; organizations, and community groups, the work of which directly or indirectly affects children's lives. Such right is realized on a dialog and free exchange of opinions basis, during which children express their own opinions and assume responsibilities.

Children and youth involved in participation processes are ultimate sources of knowledge and perspectives, which more often than not adults fail to understand. They recognize and voice far better than adults their marginalized peers' issues and challenges, but not only.

When feeling respected, heard and accounted for by others, children's self-confidence boosts and become capable of taking more control over their lives, thus turning into conscious and active citizens, positively working towards impacting the lives of the communities they live in.

In 2017, the Albanian Parliament adopted the **Law No. 18/2017 "On Child Rights and Protection"**, which sets forth the rights and protection that every child enjoys, responsible mechanisms and authorities that efficiently guarantee such rights exercise, observance and promotion, as well as child's special protection, pursuant to the Constitution, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, international acts operating in this field, and legislation in force, by promoting and enabling their development in society and ensuring the realization of child's rights in line with his/her personality development based on the child's best interest. The law is underpinned by the principle of child participation, therein defined as an ongoing process of child's active inclusion and observance of his/her right to express himself/herself and to be heard at all decision-making levels on related issues. **Article 12** of this law sanctions child's freedom of expression.

The child shall have the right to freely, individually, and collectively express his/her views and opinions on any matter affecting directly the child, his/her family, or community, in line with his/her age and maturity. The child shall have the right to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, in any form, or by any means of his/her choice, unless public security, national security, honor and dignity, or others' rights are at stake.



**Article 13** guarantees child's right to be heard either directly or through the parent, legal guardian, or representative in any judicial and administrative proceedings concerning him/her and by state authorities during decision-making processes related to the drafting and implementation of policies on child rights and protection. According to this article, the child shall have the right to complain, either directly or through the parent, legal guardian or representative, in line with his/her age or maturity, against related state authorities decisions or measures, in accordance with the legislation in force and imposes on civil service or judicial administration clerks the obligation to provide the necessary counseling. The law guarantees child's right to information on well-being, education and his/her psychological and physical development, as well as access to all records containing child-related data.

## **GUIDELINE GOAL, OBJECTIVES AND USE**

***“We, the children may not have a say in certain decisions, but we do in small-scale decisions”– E.Xh. Katund i Ri***

***“Those conducting consultations should be more flexible and comprehensible when speaking to children. They must know how to guide the conversation and encourage children to fearlessly give out as many ideas as they can” – K.C Burrel***

Regardless of efforts promoting children's consultation on various issues related to their daily life and future, their inclusion in decision-making is yet limited for a number of reasons, including adults' good will and capacity to believe and take into account children's points of view. In addition to the education sector, which has foreseen, established, and made operational Student Governments and School Boards, serving as concrete mechanisms in implementing the principles sanctioned by law, lack of sectoral mechanisms is one of the reasons. This document aims at presenting an overview on participation processes organization method, depending on their goal, who organizes them and how to organize, facilitate and manage the process and practical child inclusion instruments. As such, it will provide a valuable contribution to each professional engaged in ensuring children's participation.

The aim of this publication is to encourage and facilitate children and youth's participation in consultation and decision-making processes at all levels. It is based on the UN Convention basic criteria, as well as on the General Comment No. 12 on Meaningful Child Participation and provides guidance to adults in promoting and realizing children's right to participation and children's overall rights, as part of child activities, projects, programs, policies, or services, by introducing them with the main participation principles along with a measurement indicators menu for each. The list of questions presented at the end of the document serves as a process progress checklist.

The guideline aims to be in aid of a wide audience including both inexperienced and widely-experienced individuals/professionals working with children; state agencies and institutions, local

government units, educational institutions, social care institutions, NGOs, child groups/organizations employees; youth, civic groups, civil society organizations, etc.

It mirrors several practice criteria acknowledged by both parents and children that will ensure quality processes marked by children's inclusion, which in turn observe participation ethical principles and provide real opportunities to children to express their own opinion, influence decision-making, and increase and develop their potential through empowering processes.

Therefore, if we were to have a look at the main areas of participation principle application, they would vary from the individual and family plane up to communities, schools, services received by children in difficult situations, health, judicial processes, local decision-making institutions and national and international child rights monitoring and guarantee instruments.

### **The guideline aims to:**

- Break down in practice and bring joint understanding of child participation principle and how it can be achieved.
- Contribute in the process structuring and standardization and increase children and youth's participation in decision-making and policymaking.
- Support state institutions, local government units, education institutions, social care institutions, NGOs, child and youth groups/organizations, civic groups, and civil society organizations to conduct consultations and carry out participatory activities with children and youth.
- Ensure consistency and quality in participation and consultation processes with children and youth taking into account groups diversity.
- Provide practical instruments to guarantee a genuine and meaningful participation process, observing all principles of working with children.
- Provide practical examples on how to apply Child Participation Principle in several specific fields in which children are subject to strategies, action plans, or services provided by various sectors such as Education, Social Protection Services, Health, Local and Central Decision-making and exercise their role as Monitors and Reporters of Child Rights Situation in the country.

The guideline has been drafted in cooperation with the State Agency for the Protection of Children's Rights as an obligation foreseen by the National Agenda for Children 2017-2020. It also mirrors the feedback collected during large-scale consultations with child groups involved in Save the children projects and civil society actors in Albania, as well as the best international practice.

## II. WHAT DOES CHILD PARTICIPATION STAND FOR?

### **“Article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child stipulates that:**

“State Parties shall guarantee to the child, who is capable of forming his/her own views, the right to freely express such views on all related matters, by giving them due consideration in accordance with his/her age maturity.”

Child participation implies that all children enjoy the right to be heard, express their own opinion, and influence decisions affecting them directly.

Participation lines up among the fundamental principles of the **Convention on the Rights of the Child**, adopted by **United Nations in 1989** and **ratified by Albania in 1992**.

Other children's participation related articles include **Article 13** establishing child's right to seek, receive and impart information and opinions of any kind; **Articles 14, 15, 16, 17** guaranteeing child's right to freedom of expression, thought, conscience, religion, peaceful assembling, privacy protection and access to information; **Article 23** granting children with disabilities the right to participate in the community; and **Article 2** sanctioning the implementation of convention provisions for all children.

With regards to the above, participation is defined as a continuous child's active expression and inclusion process at all decision-making levels in issues affecting them directly.

The participation process requires communication, continuous and holistic information dissemination, and ongoing dialog among children and adults. It is based on respect towards children's opinions and points of view and their ability to express themselves in line with their age, maturity, social and economic background, and skills.

Participation is closely related to people sharing their ideas, thinking about themselves, expressing opinions effectively, planning, prioritizing and participating in decision-making to make a change. Children's participation implies children's empowerment to be an active part of decision-making and is achieved by providing them access to decision-makers and adequate information, support from adults they rely on, representation opportunities, and complaint mechanisms when need emerges.

- a) **Article 5. State Parties shall respect the responsibilities, rights and duties of parents or, where applicable, the members of the extended family or community as provided for by local custom, legal guardians or other individuals legally responsible for the child, to provide the latter with appropriate direction and guidance while exercising the rights acknowledged in the present Convention, in line with child's evolving capacities."**
- b) **Article 13. "The child shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either verbally, in print, in the form of art, or through any other medium chosen by the child.**

**Consultative participation** takes place when adults need to collect information from children that will serve to the initiatives undertaken to improve and/or draft legislations, policies, or services affecting children directly. The pioneers, leaders, and managers of such participation process are the adults.

**Collaborative participation** is mainly encountered in those cases when the main goal is strengthening democratic processes, providing opportunities to children to understand and implement democracy principles, and/or including children in drafting and designing legislation, policies, or services affecting directly their life and well-being. Collaborative participation may be equally initiated by children or adults, depending on the context. Child-adult partnership is a key factor affecting children's empowerment to influence and challenge the pursued process and the achieved outcome.

**Child-led/managed/initiated participation** is encountered in those cases when the main goal is children's empowerment to take up initiatives highlighting thorny issues to them, freely express such concerns and take measures to resolve them. In such cases, adults serve as process facilitators and in no case do they intervene to guide it. Process guiding and control is performed by children themselves.

## **How is a consultation process conducted? Which children participate in it?**

In some cases, for e.g. in establishing consultation groups for the purposes of planning, monitoring or opinion seeking on particular issues, the activity targets a small group of children. Which children will become members of this group and how are they selected so that the group be genuinely representative? Depending on the circumstances and for as long as it is possible, children's representatives are to be selected by children themselves. Likewise any other democratic process, the selected children will have to represent the same interests, express themselves on behalf of a larger group of children and report/inform the wider group on the process and achievements.

Preliminary steps:

- *Children are informed on the process.*
- *A fair and transparent process with clear criteria regarding selection of children to participate in the consultation is built.*
- *The consultation/meeting plan with children is designed.*

Selection process must target:

- *Directly interested children, and children with expertise or knowledge on the matter subject to consultation.*
- *Children that are to be selected must represent a wider group of children.*

**Children's selection- Selection criteria must consider the following:**

- *Gender*
- *Child's age (younger, older)*
- *Religious belief*
- *Rural or urban area residence to ensure a balanced representation of areas/regions*
- *School attendance*
- *Social and economic background*
- *Ethnicity*
- *Children with disabilities*

### III. WHY IS CHILD PARTICIPATION IMPORTANT?

Specific articles of the **Convention on the Rights of the Child** clearly acknowledge children's status as equal active citizens and important social actors, the opinions and needs of whom should be given due regard. The ones controlling their lives in all aspects and dimensions are children themselves, although they must be under adults' continuous protection and support. In order for the support provided to children by adults be positive, it should be child-centered and participation-directed.

Participation is related to opportunities provided to children to express their points of view, influence decision-making and bring about changes. It is the informed and voluntary inclusion of all children in any issue affecting them directly or indirectly, including disadvantaged or socially excluded ones, and children of various ages, genders, or abilities. Moreover, participation is a working method and an important principle affecting many life spheres such as families, communities, schools, and local, central, up to international institutions.

Thus, in order for the participation to be effective, ethical and safe, setting and applying some principles and standards that will prevent children's manipulation, exposure to dangers or deprivation to the right to express their opinions is a must.

#### ***Children's participation is important as it:***

- Contributes to their personal development, empowerment and motivation.
- Raises their awareness over their rights by developing protection and advocacy skills.
- Promotes children's ability for inclusion, civic engagement, tolerance, and respect towards others, especially towards the most marginalized ones.
- Develops and improves targeted and necessary services.
- Gives a long-term perspective on future issues that are difficult to be perceived by the older generation.

Best international and Albanian practices divide children's participation into three categories: ***consultative, collaborative and child-led/managed***. The selection of each category depends on the context, timing and children's opportunities to engage.

## IV. ETHICAL PRINCIPLES

There are some ethical principles that must be guaranteed anytime children get involved in processes such as data collection, studies, consultation on strategic documents and other participation activities. The two fundamental principles are: Child's best interest and safeguarding. These two principles will determine whether children must participate or not, and when should they be involved in such processes. Child's best interest as a due consideration is applied by promoting and protecting child's well-being. On the other hand, we must ensure that no link of the process in which children participate will inflict any kind of harm to them. Other considerations guaranteeing processes with high ethical standards are:

### ***(1) Conducting risks assessment and adopting measures for their avoidance.***

A child participation activity should be preceded by an activity-deriving risks assessment and a measure plan for their minimizing, considering the wide range of immediate or long-term risks and assessing parents/guardians and local representatives attitude or consent regarding children's engagement in advocacy or consultation activities. This is due to the fact that in some cases it may be (ethically) inappropriate to collect data directly from children, say for e.g. if the individual collecting such data does not have the necessary skills to interview a child, if the issue in question does not match their age, or if further support may not be provided to engaged children.

### ***(2) Ensuring that the staff is qualified and morally clean***

Institutions engaging children in activities, or seeking to collect data through children's consultation are ethically bound to engage in such processes professional staff that guarantee safety and have received the necessary training and support to perform such duty, owing that, during children's consultation and engagement processes, they may face sensitive data, vulnerability situations, etc. which need to be properly handled and may bring about consequences to the process and engaged children's well-being. Knowledge and experience in the field of child protection must be set as a criterion and skill necessary to interview techniques or facilitation of activities with children. Engaged staff must be trained on child-friendly approaches, child maturity assessment, gender equality and inclusion principles application, as well as must understand children's physical and mental development according to development stages and identify distress/stress signs.

### ***(3) Guaranteeing Acceptance and Consent***

Children's informed acceptance, or parents/guardians' informed consent on children's inclusion in activities, or consultations and interviews before children's consultation process starts is a must. If children decide to participate or not in a particular activity, such decision must be made following diligent information, so that children understand properly the reason for their engagement, role and what is expected of them. All the above must be accompanied with an explanation on further steps- what is expected to occur afterwards?

#### **(4) Guaranteeing data confidentiality and protection**

It is essential to understand and apply children's identity and data protection. Professionals engaged in child activities, or data collection from children through consultations must be made available clear instructions to guarantee the confidentiality and protection of information imparted by children.

#### **(5) Drafting and using child protection protocols and child safeguarding and safety guarantee procedure**

During our work with and for the children, we should understand that children's participation, as a fundamental right and principle involves many application areas. If consultations, interviews, or children's input contain elements related to children's protection (children from vulnerable groups or the issue being addressed is quite sensitive and is related to violence and abuse, or children are beneficiaries of a protection service etc.), then it is highly likely that their safeguarding and well-being guarantee emerges as a necessity during the process. For this purpose, the interviewer or the facilitator must not only have the proper knowledge, but must also act based on a well-defined protocol or procedure. Should there be any referral of a violence or abuse case during the process, the facilitator must know how to act, what to note down, who to inform, and the relevant timeframes. Additionally, an assistance provision plan to the child reporting violence should be planned and be made available anytime. On the other hand, all individuals engaged in organizing and facilitating children's participation must observe a special code of conduct to protect children from engaged staff's inappropriate actions/behaviors.

#### **(6) Understanding and assessing power differences between children and adults**

It is very important to understand the power level between children and adults involved in a consultation, so that participation be ethical and genuinely voluntary. The assessment of dynamics between children and adults will enable the drafting of such dynamics management plan and minimize potential emanating risks, thus guaranteeing each child's right to be heard (Example: children may not feel free to express their opinions if influential individuals to their lives, such as teachers, headmasters, parents etc., are involved in consultation processes)

#### **(7) Avoiding tokenism**

The nature and purpose of children's participation should be always clear and transparently expressed during the approval procedure. Institutions working with children in participatory or consultation processes must clearly perceive all limitations they are prone to, in order for them to take further actions based on findings or priorities expressed by children themselves and their capability to advocate on behalf of other children if necessary. Similarly, data extraction must be performed according to a transparent process, following involved children's information, including the opportunity to produce reports in a child-friendly language.

#### **(8) Guaranteeing an inclusive approach**

It is important that methods used while organizing participation processes maximize the chances that girls and boys participate evenly and equally, and that all efforts be made and all measures be taken in order for children with disabilities, children from minorities, or those from disadvantaged groups be also actively and meaningfully involved. Observance of particular individuals or social groups' right to participation must be accompanied with the assessment of potential engagement-deriving risks.



## Is children's participation always appropriate?

Some processes requiring children's participation may not be always appropriate for children to engage (for e.g. monitoring/evaluation, study, consultation etc.) Therefore, responsible adults must conduct an analysis of facts related to specific situation. Answers to questions listed above help responsible individuals to understand whether participation is appropriate and feasible, so that they can make the right decision for children's participation.

- *Is the participatory research/evaluation/consultation really necessary?*
- *Why should children participate in this activity? If children have major issues like poverty or violence, how much important would be for them to participate in this activity?*
- *Are there other more important priorities? Survival, shelter, clothing insuring...?*
- *What would be children's specific benefits in this case, if we are not to consider participation as a goal per se? How would this be achieved?*
- *Do process facilitators/monitors/researchers possess the necessary skills to guide an evaluation or research with children's participation?*
- *Participation requires materials and time. Do we have the necessary resources? Do we have sufficient time available to organize a genuinely meaningful process?*
- *Do we have direct contacts with the child?*
- *Do children have the skills necessary to engage themselves in meaningful participation?*
- *If we encourage children's participation in this process, do we make children subject to confusion/ burden /distress?*
- *Would children's positions or dynamics in the family, school, community and institutions be jeopardized due to their participation in this process?*
- *Can we provide the necessary support to children and carry on process follow-up?*

## V. CHILDREN'S SAFETY PROTECTION IN PARTICIPATORY PROCESSES

Child protection is among the fundamental principles of the **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child** underpinning the work of all professionals, institutions, or bodies working with and for the children. Everyone is legally and morally bound to guarantee that processes where children are involved in are safe and everything must be done under the control of such process leaders to keep children whom they contact or work with safe.

In specific situations, children's participation at child-led consultation or participation level may bring about risks for children, especially for those part of vulnerable and/or marginalized groups.

Therefore, child protection measures are necessary to ensure safe and risk-sensitive participation processes. Such measures must guarantee that children's health, physical and emotional safety, well-being and best interest are protected throughout the entire participation process, at any level. Additionally, they must guarantee that child protection measures do not impinge child's autonomy, independence, and freedom.

### Suggested measures:

- *When planning an activity with children's participation, make an assessment of potential risks threatening the child during all process stages (See Appendix No. 1).*
- *Clearly divide the roles and responsibilities of adults involved in the process.*
- *Inform children on child protection measures and rules and ensure they have understood them properly.*
- *Inform adults (child companions, activity facilitators, or other individuals in contact with the child) on their role and responsibilities.*
- *Ensure that parent consent forms are signed and stored before the activity starts.*
- *Ensure that children are always accompanied by an adult and are equipped with health insurance, accordingly.*
- *Ensure that an adult whom children trust to has been assigned as a focal point for child protection issues and children are aware of that*
- *Create a data system with the details of all participants (address, phone number, medical needs, parent/legal guardian consent forms) and assign one adult as the responsible person for such information storing and management.*
- *Respect child's privacy: Written reports, pictures, or footage and audio recording must not reveal children's identity without obtaining parent and child's permission in advance.*

- *Children's participation is voluntary and each child must feel free to leave and not be part of the activity/process if he/she wants to.*
- *Children must be treated with respect and must be considered as individuals entitled to rights, regardless of their age.*
- *Ensure that everything discussed, agreed upon and/or presented during the consultation or activity, including pictures, or video and audio recording are kept confidential and may be made public only upon child's preliminary consent for their publication.*
- *Adults serving as facilitators in consultative participation processes or activities must be given in advance guidelines clearly explaining how they should behave and act in cases of abuse and violence reports or testimonies from children, or any other type of sensitive situation related to their well-being.*
- *Adults serving as facilitators in consultative participation processes or activities must enable an open and mutual trust atmosphere to children, so that they can discuss any issue or concern raised by them.*
- *Adults serving as facilitators in consultative participation processes or activities must avoid any action or behavior that leaves room for potential abuses. They should not use inappropriate, offensive and/or abusive vocabulary, suggestions, or advice that aim at embarrassing, insulting, discriminating or excluding children.*

## VI. GENERAL CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION CRITERIA

### ***Child participation is:***

- *Transparent and informative to all*
- *Accountable*
- *Safe*
- *Relevant/meaningful/appropriate*
- *Mutual respect-based*
- *Voluntary*
- *Child-friendly*
- *Inclusive*
- *Supported by friendly and well-informed adults*

## **Criterion #1:**

### **Participation is transparent and informative to all**

#### ***Criterion description:***

1. Participation must be developed according to well-defined parameters clarified in advance for all involved actors and adults; children should be aware and must have already given their consent.
2. Activity planning timeframe depends on activity type and intensity, thus enabling sufficient time for children's participation organization.
3. Roles and responsibilities of all involved actors (adults or children) are defined and agreed upon from the very start of the process.
4. Children are involved from the beginning of the process and give their own input to its organization and content.
5. Children are made available all the information necessary to them to provide a significant contribution. Children have access-but in this case it's up to them; information provision from adults contributes to their in-depth information.
7. The entire necessary documentation is drafted in children's mother tongue.
8. In case representation is needed, children's selection is made based on a transparent, inclusive and children-approved process.

#### ***Measurement indicators:***

- ✓ Children understand their influence level and who will be the final decision-maker.
- ✓ Roles and responsibilities are clear, easily comprehensible and agreed upon by all children and adults.
- ✓ Children are familiar with and approve the selection process.

## Criterion #2:

### Child-friendly participation

#### **Criterion description:**

1. Child activities and methods used for their inclusion are instrumental in building and enhancing children and youth's self-confidence and self-esteem.
2. Activities are build and developed in cooperation with children, while their inclusion methodology is age, preference and skill-relevant.
3. Human resources, materials, and sufficient time is allocated to the participation process.
4. Adults involved in child participation activities are well-trained to understand the value of children's participation and support child participation.
5. Children are supported with information in a child-friendly language and training activities help them develop their skills to ensure effective participation.
6. Children are always asked about the information they need and such information is made available to them in a sufficient time span, child-friendly form and in a language they understand and communicate best.
7. Interpretation services are provided in any activity where children are exposed to another foreign language, the non-command of which negatively affects their understanding and communication, and as a result hinders full participation in discussion.
8. Adults use a non-technical language with children and explain to them every term they may encounter during discussions or written documents.

#### **Indicators:**

- ✓ Children freely express themselves, and are capable of contributing with their experience and viewpoints.
- ✓ Children's engagement and participation is a positive experience to them.
- ✓ Activities are child age, experience, skill and knowledge-relevant.
- ✓ Children clearly understand the language and jargon used in communications with them.
- ✓ Interpreters are engaged when children are not familiar with the language in which the activity is delivered.
- ✓ Adult facilitators are trained and experienced in inclusion methodology and children's consultation.
- ✓ Physical premises, methods, manuals and any other tool is adapted to children's needs and skills.
- ✓ Sufficient time, financial resources and human resources are made available to activity organization.

### **Criterion #3:**

#### **Participation is accountable**

##### ***Criterion description:***

1. Children are timely informed on their inclusion impact and tangible results of joint decisions and further steps.
2. Children are always asked about their participation experience focusing on suggestions for further improvement.
3. Activities outcomes, monitoring and assessments are communicated to all involved children in a child-friendly language, along with the engagement to consider lessons learnt in future work.
4. Children must engage themselves continuously and consistently.
5. Children participate/are engaged in monitoring and evaluation processes, during which they are enabled to provide their input; such inputs are incorporated in reports.
6. Children are supported to put in practice issues identified during the evaluation process.

##### ***Indicators:***

- ✓ Children are systematically provided with evaluation and monitoring reports, and updated written documents on activities they were part of in a child-friendly language.
- ✓ Children are granted the opportunities to influence activity reports, documents and final outcomes outline.
- ✓ Children are engaged in following up activities/initiatives they have contributed in.
- ✓ Children are made aware of the impact of their opinions on decision-making.

## Criterion #4: Participation is safe

### **Criterion description:**

1. Needs for children's protection are identified and planned before each consultation activity or process.
2. The adequate mechanisms, foreseen by regulations/legal acts providing for children's protection measures are launched with the view to prevent and minimize risks.
3. A diligent assessment is made on risks emanating from freedom of expression and children's participation in awareness-raising/advocacy campaigns, especially in those tackling sensitive issues.
4. Children must feel at ease, safe, and protected while in premises and rooms for children's meetings and activities. They must be accessible by children with disabilities as well.
5. An efficient concrete plan of measures based on foreseen risks must provide for in details the steps to be taken to ensure children's protection from risks and protect their identity.
6. No information imparted by the child, and no picture, video or any other type of data belonging to the child must be collected or published without child's permit/consent.
7. The child is protected from any type of abuse, exploitation, violence, discrimination, or maltreatment in any activity or communication, regardless of the physical participation.
8. Children's participation does not place them in dangerous or distressing situations.
9. Children and adults are continuously informed in any activity on child protection policies and code of ethics, including clear instructions on what they should or should not do in risks situations.

### **Indicators:**

- ✓ All adults working with children sign the relevant child protection policy document and are aware of their roles and responsibilities.
- ✓ Children are familiar with and fully understand their right to be protected from abuse and they know where to resort for help.
- ✓ Adults are familiar with their legal and ethical obligations and know how to act in case they are informed on inappropriate behaviors of others.
- ✓ Child protection procedures/manuals/regulation foresee concrete steps on risks and limitations that certain groups of children encounter when seeking help.
- ✓ Activities are carried out in child-appropriate hours to enable their safe return home.
- ✓ First aid kits are easily accessible in all premises where child activities are carried out.
- ✓ Children give their preliminary consent on their data collection, photographing, or video and audio recording.
- ✓ Children's adult companions are aware of the physical and mental health condition of the children they are accompanying.



## **Criterion #5:**

### **Participation is relevant/meaningful/ appropriate**

#### ***Criterion description:***

1. Elaborated issues and planned activities are appropriate and meaningful to involved children and are based on their knowledge, skills and opportunities.
2. Children are involved/engaged in setting criteria for their selection and representation.
3. Children must be involved/engaged in various ways, in line with their abilities and interests.
4. Other engagements of children at home, school etc. must be respected in time, content and experience.
5. Child work and inclusion methodologies must consider community's best traditions, knowledge and practices.

#### ***Indicators:***

- ✓ Children have sufficient information that enables them to make decisions on their participation and representation.

**Criterion #6:**  
**Participation is mutual respect-based.**

***Criterion description:***

1. All children's opinions are respected and given due consideration during the participation process.
2. The exercise of the right to participation does not interfere with other commitments' fulfillment. (for e.g. schooling)
3. Child health and well-being are not compromised by the exercise of the right to participation.
4. Children are respected in any time and situation, regardless of their age, gender, ethnicity, or social and economic status.

***Indicators:***

- ✓ Qualitative and quantitative child participation report based on gender, age, ethnicity, and social and economic status characteristics.
- ✓ Children assess positively the process and are capable of listing positive experiences.

## **Criterion #7:**

### **Participation is voluntarily**

#### ***Criterion description:***

1. Children's participation is voluntarily and they may renounce whenever they deem it reasonable.
2. Children are given time to decide whether they want to participate or not.
3. Children are free to withdraw whenever they want to during the participation process.

#### ***Indicators:***

- ✓ Children decide for themselves whether they want to be part of the process.
- ✓ Children are free to leave the process for whatever reason or whenever they feel to.

## **Criterion #8:**

### **Participation is inclusive**

#### ***Criterion description:***

1. All children must have equal chances to exercise their right to participation without being discriminated against on grounds of age, gender, abilities, language, origin, ethnicity or geographical origin.
2. Activities and methods used for children's engagement and participation must be easily adaptable to respond to various age groups and child groups' gender differences, needs, skills and expectations.
3. No assumptions are made on what a particular group of children can or cannot do.
4. Adults influencing their communities must be involved to gain marginalized groups' support.

#### ***Indicators:***

- ✓ All children regardless of their age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, and social and economic status, as well as children in need for special protection exercise their right to participation.
- ✓ Children in need for special protection, as well as children in residential institutions, daycare centers, and penitentiary institutions have the opportunity to express their opinions and to creatively engage themselves in the premises they are living.
- ✓ Balanced gender representation in activities.

### **Criterion #9:**

**Participation is supported by friendly and well-informed adults.**

#### ***Criterion description:***

1. Adults working with children must understand and support children's participation.
2. Adults must undergo specific training on participation practices and methodologies, technical communication skills, facilitation, conflict resolution, diversity etc. necessary to effectively work with children.
3. Adults must be supported, supervised and enabled to assess their experience in guaranteeing children's participation.

#### ***Indicators:***

- ✓ The support provided from adults to children is qualitative and suitable to them.
- ✓ Adults in contact with children are trained on topics and skills (accordingly) necessary to support and facilitate children's participation.

## VII. PROCESS PROGRESS CHECKLIST

### **Transparent and informative to all**

- ✓ *Is the objective of the process sufficiently clear to all involved children? Are they aware of the objective?*
- ✓ *Is the material presented to children drafted in a child-appropriate form and language?*
- ✓ *Have children been informed on their right to freedom of thought and participation, as sanctioned under UNCRC?*
- ✓ *Have children's parents/legal guardians been informed on the goal, structure and expected impact of this process?*
- ✓ *Have they discussed and preliminary agreed upon the goal, structure and expected outcomes along with their children?*

### **Voluntarily**

- ✓ *Were children made available sufficient time to consider the opportunity/good will for participation?*
- ✓ *Have facilitators been informed that they should and must not obligate children to express their opinion against their will?*
- ✓ *Have children been informed that participation is voluntarily and that they have the right to leave the process whenever they want to?*
- ✓ *Has the participation process been adapted with participant children's needs, pace and/or other engagements?*

### **Mutual respect-based**

- ✓ *Have children's opinions been considered in decision-making?*
- ✓ *Have children been consulted with from the very first stage of the consultation/participation process?*
- ✓ *Has sufficient time for children's consultation been made available?*
- ✓ *Are children's initiatives on issues they want to discuss supported?*
- ✓ *Have children been given clear and comprehensive feedback?*

### **Relevant/meaningful/appropriate**

- ✓ *Has the participation process been built as an ongoing process or as an occasional activity spanning over a specific time frame?*
- ✓ *Is the process responsive to children's needs?*

### **Child and youth-friendly**

- ✓ *Is the meeting room friendly and accessible by children?*

- ✓ *Have sufficient breaks been planned in between sessions in the agenda?*
- ✓ *Is the entire provided information and child-friendly participation/consultation process appropriate to selected age group?*

### **Inclusive**

- ✓ *Do children belonging to different ethnicities, social and economic statuses, genders, and geographical origins participate in the consultation process? Have children from vulnerable groups, children with different abilities, minorities, poor children, and children in contact with the law been included?*
- ✓ *Has any measure been taken (travel support, interpreting services and facilitators experienced in working with children) to ensure the participation of such groups of children?*

### **Supported by friendly and well-informed adults**

- ✓ *Has the necessary pragmatic information on children's participation as a fundamental principle of children's rights been handed out?*
- ✓ *Have materials aiding adults in working with children and facilitating their active participation been handed out?*
- ✓ *Have adults been trained on the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its permeating basic principles?*

### **Safe**

- ✓ *Have the relevant forms/permissions on participation, photographing, footage and video recording etc. been signed by children, parents/legal guardians?*
- ✓ *Has the focal point for children's protection been assigned?*
- ✓ *Have children been informed on children's protection measures?*

### **Accountable**

- ✓ *Has the participation process been assessed and have children been included in such assessment?*
- ✓ *Are children informed on process outcomes in a child-friendly language?*
- ✓ *Have sufficient financial and human resources been allocated in children's participation?*

## VIII. PROCESS FACILITATION

### **Qualities and skills a good leader must have:**

- i. *Considering all the elements foreseen under this guideline, it is extremely important for individuals guiding a children's consultation or participation process to have both the adequate field knowledge and a number of features such as:*
  - *Excellent facilitating, communication, and listening skills.*
  - *Capability to establish trust relationships with children.*
  - *Capability to provide support and aid children in difficult behavioral situations when under stress.*
  - *Show diligence and understand non-verbal communication.*
  - *Manage to identify situations and children in need for a more specialized help.*
- ii. *Better understand the situation of children receiving the service.*

In order to draft effective methodologies on process realization, adult facilitators must consider the characteristics, age and capacity of the group they are going to work with. It is their responsibility to adapt the methods to be used if the group is composed of children from marginalized groups that present greater difficulties such as: comprehension difficulties (in case of children from linguistic minorities), low level of learning, or illiteracy. Additionally, specific methods should be used when children with disabilities are engaged. Methods must ensure balanced power dynamics within the group (several children may feel more “powerful” and others more segregated; advantages and disadvantages among children themselves, and children and adults). Building on their experience, adults must be creative, adaptable and use culturally acceptable and appropriate methods for specific groups, but they should not feel obligated to follow instructions on facilitation ways and methods. Entertaining energizers are very important when working with children because they build group communication, contributing to nice paced conversations and the used language must be age appropriate.

- iii. *Identifying risks and drafting a plan for their mitigation. Analyzing and implementing the principle “Child Safeguarding from Harm” (let’s remember the principle “Child’s best interest” prevailing above all other principles, including the participation principle).*
- iv. *Clarifying child engagement goal: concrete examples consisting of cases when their opinion is sought in the drafting process of the individual protection/intervention plan; opinion seeking in divorce/ foster/adoptive family placement issues; opinion seeking about the quality of services provided in the center/institution; consultation on center/institution activity planning etc.*
- v. *Identifying/selecting individuals that will guide the process: the leader will facilitate the process and the assistant will assist the process.*



## IX. CHILDREN'S INCLUSION– SECTORAL APPROACH

Besides the education sector, which has already adopted the Normative Provisions on Student Government and School Boards Establishment and Functioning, no other sector has concrete institutionalized mechanism in place guaranteeing children's right to express themselves and to be heard.

Agencies and institutions in contact with children must include in the internal regulation the procedure for the establishment of children's consultation groups, setting forth activity areas (consultation/ opinion seeking, planning, assessment etc.); representative children's selection criteria and method; individuals that will guide such processes; how are documentation and reporting to children performed, and what has happened with children's written opinions and inputs.

### • Social Services

Though child participation principle has been mirrored in the quality standards of service delivery structures based on typologies, participation process organization and management method remains unspecified.

Theoretically speaking, such right is realized by the service psychosocial staff. Additionally, one of the guiding principles of children in need for protection protocol is child inclusion in processes by informing him/her and finding jointly the best accommodation in the face of a specific situation. Such process is planned, organized and managed by the Child Protection Unit Worker.

However, social protection services must establish according to their typology a functional mechanism on the systematic and meaningful participation realization, based on an internal regulation.

Social workers must ensure the following, based on child's age and skills:

- i. *Include children in any link of service provision by informing him/her on the situation and opportunities provided and decide together with him/her the best way of support provision.*
- ii. *Children must be an important part of service evaluation/monitoring, by giving their opinions on the quality of services they receive and potential improvements. In this framework, Save the Children in Albania has designed an instrument for children's social care services quality assessment, by conducting consultations with children themselves as such services beneficiaries. This instrument will serve to all institutions having a monitoring and inspection mandate for services quality standards<sup>1</sup>.*
- iii. *When groups of children in vulnerable situations who receive social protection services in daycare institutions, residential institutions, community structures etc. are involved, a participation process must be diligently and cautiously prepared. Adults' communication skills emerge as primary values:*

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1. Save the Children in Albania, CHILDREN'S INCLUSION IN SERVICE ASSESSMENT; Bharti Mephani, Tirana 2017

*in difficult situations, children need both moral support and practical help; for e.g. a child left without parental care needs an adult to take care of, guide, and counsel him/her. A child needs someone with whom he/she can vent to and open up about his/her concerns in whatever situation (family with problems, residential care, in street situation, in abusive situation etc.) If no one is standing besides the child to listen and help him/her, then he/she will feel aloof and isolated. Having someone to speak with helps them discharge stress and free themselves through words/conversation.*

## • **Education**

The Student Government is a body foreseen by Law No. 69/2012 “On Pre-University Education System in the Republic of Albania”. Pursuant to Article 36 of this Law, the Student Government shall protect and promote students' rights and contribute to school progress. It shall be set up and function in accordance with the Minister's Order; the head of the Student Government in high secondary education shall be elected by students with direct and secret ballot; the Student Government shall select an assistant teacher. The Student Government ensures students' direct participation in decision-making related to the teaching process and school life in general. The Student Government through their elected representatives participates in the educational institution's Ethics and Conduct Commission, school plan and report drafting in Parents and Teachers' Council as well as in the School Board. The said law recognizes the duty of educational institutions heads to facilitate student participation, through their representatives in the Student Government, in all school bodies foreseen by law, whose decision-making directly affects students.

## • **Health**

There are no mechanisms or provisions on child participation in place. Nevertheless, child engagement would be an added value to public health. Children may be involved in research, studies (use of substances like alcohol, drugs, tobacco, etc.); access to preventive services; role and performance of physicians/dentists in schools or in health promotion events, peer to peer methods<sup>2</sup>, which would be an added value for the 6 – 18 years old target age group.

As far as the mechanism is concerned, it may be arranged likewise social services cases. In particular, public health institutions should establish a cooperation relationship with educational institutions or other independent child organizations, should they exist within the territory.

‘Child to Child’ approach entails the role of older children in promoting not only the younger children's physical health (since early childhood), but also in stimulating their mental and emotional well-being. Understanding better younger children's feelings and needs, older children may be engaged in stimulating activities (through play, reading, etc.) and provide some valuable contribution to soothe and support the younger at difficult times.

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2. The methodologies are based on active learning and information exchange among peers, child to child or youth to youth.

## • **Juvenile justice**

This section refers to children in contact with the law, who are subject, witness or party in judicial proceedings.

Regardless of the status, being involved in judicial proceedings is a highly emotional situation, which becomes even more difficult for children. The justice system concept is not to be friendly; however, a series of required measures may be taken to create conditions that make children feel safe and calm, so as to enable their fair involvement.

A few of the main issues to be addressed for creating a safe and friendly setting:

- *Engagement of competent professionals who demonstrate empathy, are understanding and do not prejudice. This way, children will feel respected, will establish a trust relationship with them and express their thoughts freely.*
- *Preliminary information on the situation, upcoming process, their status/role and possible effects. They should be informed on and understand their rights and the procedure, to enable as effective involvement as possible.*
- *Information should be comprehensible for children and be provided in a friendly way.*
- *Selection of settings to conduct interviews, which should be as friendly as possible, to reduce at some extent anxiety.*

### **Aspects to consult with children in penitentiary institutions:**

- Classification, placement and rehabilitation program design – the child should be consulted to determine the most appropriate social care alternative he/she will be provided with.*
- Education, vocational training and employment – the purpose of education is to prepare children for the time they leave the institution. To this end, the best child treatment model is the support model that is based on his/her abilities, hence it should be decided on in consultation with the child itself.*
- Free time – recreational activities recommended by children may be carried out.*
- Religion – children may take part or refuse to take part in any kind of religious organization.*
- Health care – consultation with children is imperative to maintain their physical and mental health.*
- Contacts with the community – children should be asked on, and their opinion be taken into account regarding contacts to be established with other members of the community outside the institution.*
- Control and complaints – children should be recognized their right to talk to any of them in confidentiality.*

## • **Local government:**

Municipal Councils are decision-making institutions at local level, which, among other things, are competent for planning services within their territory. Under this frame, children, being stakeholders,

should be consulted to give their viewpoint on specific needs for services (school infrastructure, cultural or sports facilities, etc.). Several municipalities have consultation practices in place with citizens about certain matters, including children. However, how can this practice be consolidated to include most effectively their opinion? Considering this, the following steps should be taken:

- *Informing children – the children’s group is organized to prepare for the process, to be informed and become familiar with the plan*
- *Working in groups about the issue requiring children’s opinion (guided by the relevant facilitator (e.g. coordinator teacher of Student Government; Youth Center facilitator; leader of child-led group; etc.)*
- *Understanding and studying in depth the issue under discussion*
- *Expressing stance and advocacy messages or developing a report*
- *Appointing representatives and submitting opinion to the Municipal Council meeting.*

## X. CHILD CONSULTATION GROUPS / BEST PRACTICE

*There are several approaches on how to organize children and collect information regarding the abovementioned sectors. Below is presented a way of organizing children's grouping to facilitate consultation and participation:*

For any sector to fulfill its obligations foreseen by law in light of guaranteeing the child participation principle, an internal regulatory mechanism should be developed, which must foresee any step in the process for including children's voice on matters relating them. Such mechanism should foresee how stakeholders, in our case children, will be approached, how to organize them, how to achieve representative opinion of a large group, who is to organize and administer the process, what kind of methods and instruments must be employed to conduct consultation, planning or participatory situation evaluation/ monitoring:

- i. Best way and baseline of the process would be creating an informal group of children that would embody the characteristics laid out in "How a consultation process is conducted? Which children participate in it?" section.*
- ii. It is suggested that the number of participants per group be 6 to 10 persons, both boys and girls. We should always bear in mind that child selection process should be well-thought and highly precise in order for it to be democratic, inclusive and representative, as stated in the above sections.*
- iii. At first, children will be informed on the activity to which they are to provide their contribution (consultation, planning, evaluation/monitoring), to become aware of the purpose, how the process is developed, what they are expected to do, timeframe, as well as how their opinion and contribution are to be used.*
- iv. Children should be told that they are free to stay or leave at any time during the process, when they deem it right. Organizers should consider the age of children to be involved in the consultation group.*
- v. In case children are invited for consultation about a local or national action plan or some legal initiative, the children's capacity to understand and articulate thoughts on the issues under discussion should be also taken into consideration, which would affect the target age group, as well. In case children would be invited to give opinion or to evaluate a service they benefit, then the issue is also related to the type of service and age group provided to.*
- vi. In case of children involved in civil proceedings (placement in foster family, adoption or divorce, etc.), the relevant legislation determines the age for taking their opinion into account (10 years old) and for granting consent (12 years old) which is implemented in line with child development and capacities, which account for the specifications on psychologist's role and function in the process.*
- vii. Determining age group should be representative embracing a wide range of children. Nonetheless, it is suggested that division into groups not be based on great age differences according to development phases, but more than one group can be set up for children aged 8-11, 12-14 and 15-18 years old. All these issues should be analyzed during the participatory process preparation phase.*

## • Consultation planning

In any case, the Child Consultation Group should undergo some preliminary process before proceeding with reaching the final participation goal. Due time and attention should be paid to being recognized and identified as part of the group/belonging to the group. Preliminary information and discussion about the issue in question should be conducted in special sessions, during which the purpose and process should be explained, so that children have in-depth information on the issue at hand.

**Example:** In case of developing a local plan for children is to be discussed, the group should be explained what a plan is, which its components are and their respective meaning, who implements it, what it implies (what are its effects) for children and what would be children's contribution. Depending on the information volume, the number of sessions is to be decided on.

Meeting sessions	Activity	Process and group dynamics
<b>Session 1</b>	Why we have gathered here (explaining the activity) Agreeing on meetings, methods to be used	Establishing trust between group members and sense of belonging to the group
<b>Session 2</b>	Discussing on group rules and functioning Issues to be discussed Child Protection Issues (Child Protection Policy)	Establishing trust between group members and sense of belonging to the group
<b>Session 3</b>	Discussing issues in question Becoming aware/ being informed on the issue under discussion	Respecting and understanding Normalization
<b>Session 4</b>	Giving opinion on the issue	Productivity

**Note:** Child consultation or evaluation processes are often initiated by a central or local institution that has no direct contact with the child, such as the Ministry of Health and Social Protection or the Municipality. In such case, the person charged by the institution, who fulfils the criteria and characteristics described under Section 3 of this Guideline, is put in contact with services working with the child (school; service center; youth center; children's club, etc.) and together should coordinate the participatory activity (setting up and forming the consultation group).

In any case, fulfilling Child Safeguarding and Guaranteeing Safety and appointing the responsible person on child protection and safety issues should be taken into consideration (Appendix 1- A model/ summary of Child Protection Policy).

## • A child best interest determination checklist

As stated in the introduction of this document, in any process involving children, the best interest of the child principle is fundamental and guides actions and decisions of decision-makers and guardians. Nevertheless, it is imperative to clarify which elements need to be analyzed and taken into account for decision-making on child interest.

For carrying out such process, the General Comment of the Committee on Child Rights No. 14 is of great help as it describes 14 elements assessing and determining the Best Interest of the Child, which are as follows:

1. Child's views on the matter
2. Child's identity
3. Preservation of the family environment and maintaining relations
4. Care, protection and safety of the child
5. Situation of vulnerability
6. Child's right to health
7. Child's right to education

The General Comment states that the best interest of the child must be assessed and determined in light of the specific circumstances of the particular child on a case by case basis (for every child or group of children).

Such circumstances refer to individual or group characteristics, including cultural and social context.

### **Think about the following questions:**

*"If he/she was my child, what would I want to happen with him/her"?*

Or, if you are not a parent, ask yourself:

*"If I were this child, what would I want to happen with me"?*

It is highly probable that an honest answer to this question would determine the best interest of the child.

Below is a presentation of the practice of Child-led Groups "Voice 16+..."<sup>3</sup> being included in Municipal Council meetings in Durrës, Burrel, Elbasan, and Peshkopi. Such practice may be easily adapted and applied in any municipality of the country.

- i. *Municipal Council meetings may be attended by children, when they want to address an issue, or in ad hoc commissions, such as education, health or economy commissions, etc. Child selection to take part in those meetings is based on the knowledge they have on the matter under discussion and engagement towards it. The main criterion is being familiar with the group and the problem raised,*

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3. Voice 16+... " is a Child-Led Group. The group operates in four cities in Albania: Elbasan, Durrës, Dibër and Burrel. Their mission is to raise awareness and empower children regarding their rights observance in schools, family and community, and to have an impact on decision-making to improve the child rights situation in Albania.

*why it is being addressed, what we have achieved, which the information sources are, which path we have followed, etc., as well as recommendations to solve the issue raised on their part. In addition, young children are admitted in those meetings not only to participate, but also to be educated with a sense of responsibility and courage to discuss with authorities.*

- ii. The child group is organized to be prepared for the process, be informed and become aware of the plan, discuss its content and formulate their advocacy messages together. Such process requires engagement in terms of time in up to 4 consecutive meetings of the group. At the end, the group should decide on choosing 2 representatives (according to determined criteria, children elect each other or participate on a volunteer basis) and together with the adult facilitator take part in the Municipal Council meeting where they may express their ideas and submit their request.*

For such practice to be applicable in any municipality, the Municipal Council representative should provide access to children's opinion. For this purpose, contacts should be established and relationships be built with existing services and groupings, like Youth Center, Children's Service Center, and informal child groupings. In case of lack of such centers and groupings, the Student Government structures on a school basis may be engaged instead.



## APPENDIX NO. 1 – CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

### 1.1. Introduction

We are all responsible for ensuring that children with whom we work are protected and safe from any harassment or harm caused by third persons.

We intend to make children participating in this activity enjoy themselves, enjoy the activity and feel safe.

Guidelines to keep children safe:	Organizers' focal point	Duty fulfillment deadline	Duty fulfillment status
<b>Before the activity:</b>			
Obtaining the informed consent of parents / guardians for all children participants (including specifications and details on organization, such as type of activity, what the child is expected to do, date, time and details on the trip: such as e.g. information on the vehicle and driver, plates and contact number, approval on taking and using photos, explaining the purpose of their use).	XY	2 days prior to the activity	Under process: notification submitted, awaiting written approval.
Evaluation of possible risks during the activity:			Under process
Emergency aid team – in cooperation with the Public Health Service.			
Police Confirmation about surveillance throughout the activity.			
Names of child companions (teacher/parent, etc) ensuring that their personality has been assessed (trusted, have respect for children; have good communication skills, responsible, etc).			
Children transport to the activity meets the following criteria: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Licensed van/ bus.</li> <li>2. Reserved vehicle available only for the children's group.</li> <li>3. The vehicle seats are equipped with safe belts (which must be put on during the entire journey).</li> <li>4. Children are accompanied by adults during the journey.</li> <li>5. Parents are welcomed to accompany their children (they must cover expenses on their own).</li> </ol>			
The final list of children and child companions should be drafted and confirmed 2-3 days in advance.			

Children are accommodated in the hotel booked by the activity organizer.  1. <i>Children remain gathered at the same place.</i> 2. <i>Separation is done by child gender (girls separate from boys).</i> 3. <i>Child companions should never share the room with children.</i>			
Child companions are informed on child safeguarding and safety policy by the persons in charge for this matter before the activity.			
Participant children are informed on child safeguarding and safety policy: 1. <i>In case of concern over a risk posed to children due to inappropriate behavior displayed by adults working/being in contact with the child.</i> 2. <i>Where to report such concern.</i>			
Toilets should be separate and marked by gender (girls/ boys)			
<b>During the activity</b>			
Child safety is overseen and guaranteed during the entire activity.	Entire organizing staff		
Toilets are overseen during the entire activity.			
The emergency aid team is present and on alert during the entire activity duration.			
Police presence to oversee progress and prevent interventions to the activity by third persons.			
<b>After the activity</b>			
Children's transport back to their hometowns follows the same procedure as for arrival.			
Travelling during day time to avoid driving in the evening/at nights.			

## **1.2 Beware! Any participant in the children's activity should take the following into account:**

Prohibited behaviors:

- *Hitting or physically abusing a child.*
- *Involvement in sexual activity with anyone under 18 years of age, irrespective of claims. (Not having knowledge of the age does not ensure protection).*
- *Entering into such relationships with children may be considered exploitative or abusive.*
- *Abusive acts or acts putting children at risk of abuse.*

- *Using inappropriate, offensive or abusive expressions, suggestions or advice.*
- *Inappropriate physical acts or acts of provocative sexual nature.*
- *Sharing the room or the bed with a child.*
- *Performing personal actions for the child, which the child may perform on their own.*
- *Humiliating, denigrating and offending acts against a child or any other form of emotional abuse.*
- *Any kind of discrimination, unfair and differentiated behavior/attitude favoring some children.*
- *Spending time with the child alone without the presence of other people and away from others.*
- *Being involved in situations that present a risk for being accused of unworthy behavior.*

### **1.3 What to do when a concern for a potentially abused child emerges?**

- *Act quickly and ask for help.*
- *Support and respect the child. As far as possible, make sure the child is safe.*
- *Report the event to the focal point for Child Safeguarding and Safety and pursue the procedure.*
- *Keep all information confidential.*

#### **Emergency contact list:**

- |                     |         |
|---------------------|---------|
| - Police            | 126/129 |
| - Firefighting      | 128     |
| - Medical Emergency | 2222235 |
| - 24-hour pharmacy  | 2222241 |

### **1.4 Plan on guaranteeing child safeguarding and safety**

Activity: Awareness-raising campaign– Marathon

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Venue: \_\_\_\_\_

**Total number of involved children: 65 children**

#### **Children's hometown:**

Tirana - 33 children, Gjirokastra - 16 children, Korça - 16 children

#### **Total number of adult facilitators engaged in the activity:**

Tirana – 15 facilitators, Korça and Gjirokastra – 10 facilitators

**Adult child ratio– 1adult/ 3-4 children<sup>4</sup>**

32 children are accompanied by 10 adults throughout the activity, before, during and after the activity until their drive back to their hometowns in Gjirokastra and Korça.

**Activity venue:**

National “Qemal Stafa” Stadium

**Date and time:**

18<sup>th</sup> October, Hrs: 10.00 – 12.00

**Persons responsible for child safeguarding and safety: (charged for this particular activity)**

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

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4. Standardi minimal i aplikuar për raportin të rritur/ fëmijë është 1:4

## APPENDIX NO. 2- PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

### Model No. 1:

#### Presentation

- a. *Your ideas are important... and will be beneficial for us in order to help other children in the world.*
- b. *We represent an organization/ institution working to support children and youth, to make sure that they are safe, protected and receive proper care.*
- c. *We request your participation by giving you the opportunity to get involved to share your ideas and help us to understand what is important for you.*
- d. *How you can take part.*
- e. *A description of the process the child is expected to be involved.*
- f. *Your consent.*

#### Consent form for footage/photographs

Thank you for giving your consent to be filmed/photographed. We shall use this footage and/or photographs for the publication of Situation Analysis on Children and Youth –like you- report.

Your footage and photographs may appear in the said publication, on the Internet, in magazines, newspapers or other printed materials, on the social media, such as Facebook or Twitter, on TV, in advertisements or other means. People from around the world, including friends and relatives, may come across your picture or listen to your comments on the video.

Your contribution will be stored in a safe place and may be reused by the organization/institution in our awareness-raising materials in the future, but not longer than 5 years.

If you agree with these terms and comprehend what is written below, then please provide your personal info and sign herein.

What you are agreeing on (legal terms): \_\_\_\_\_

You are acknowledging the right of the organization / institution to record free of charge your voice, footage, photograph or to use any other electronic recording and to use your contribution in any media (both existing or new media) worldwide and with no compensation whatsoever.

The organization/ institution may edit, adapt or translate your contribution and you agree to bestow all “moral rights” to be used as explained above.

The organization/ institution may use your contribution any time in the future again, but not longer than within 5 years.

**If you sign on behalf of the child, you:**

1. Declare that you are the father/ mother/ caregiver/ guardian (please delete those that do not apply) of the child whose name is given below and who is under 18 years old and that you are over 18 years old. In case the latter is not true, then refer to a relative/guardian that is over 18 years of age to sign on your behalf.
2. Confirm that you have read this agreement and that you are satisfied because it is in the best interest of child whose name is given below and you allow the child to participate by signing this agreement.
3. When signing the agreement on behalf of your child, you grant and confirm to the organization/institution all the rights and child's consent, and agree therein to be responsible for the child throughout the entire activity.

**This section should be filled in by an adult over 18 years of age.**

Note: In case the parent is under 18 years old, please request a legal guardian over 18 years old to sign. e.g. grandparents.

Please fill in this form in printing letters.

I am filling this form in for myself (18 years old or over 18 years old), or on behalf of my Child/ Children (I am the parent or legal guardian), full name of the adult, full name of the child.

**Month/ Date/Year** of contributor's birth: \_\_\_\_\_

**E-mail:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Telephone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Child/Children's signature or fingerprint:**

**Adult's signature or fingerprint:**

**Would you like to use your real name?** Yes No

We will change your name, if we deem that this is best for your safety.

Your consent may be changed or withdrawn at any time by contacting with:

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**E-mail:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Telephone:** \_\_\_\_\_

Please beware that photographs or pictures that have been already published cannot be withdrawn.

The entire information will be secured pursuant to Law on Data Protection.

## Model No. 2:

I, the undersigned (parent) \_\_\_\_\_ with ID Card No. \_\_\_\_\_ hereby give my consent for my daughter / son \_\_\_\_\_, born on \_\_\_\_\_, to travel to \_\_\_\_\_, from **date** \_\_\_\_\_, **time** \_\_\_\_\_, in order to participate in the **activity organized by** \_\_\_\_\_, accompanied by Mr./Ms. \_\_\_\_\_ with ID Card/Passport No. \_\_\_\_\_.

I have been informed by Mr./Ms. \_\_\_\_\_ and I agree on the issues to be discussed.

I regard Mr./Ms. \_\_\_\_\_, with ID Card/Passport No. \_\_\_\_\_ responsible for my daughter/son during this meeting.

I further authorize him/her \_\_\_\_\_ to take decision in cases of urgent need for medical treatment.

I confirm that the health insurance procedures for my daughter/son have been taken by the Insurance Agency \_\_\_\_\_, in consultation with the delegation my daughter/son is part of.

I understand that the organization \_\_\_\_\_ is not to be held accountable for my daughter/son \_\_\_\_\_ for any harm or losses that may be inflicted to my daughter/son as a result of his/her participation in this activity.

I assert that I have full authority to give my consent on this content:

**Participant name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent or guardian's name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent or guardian's signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Acknowledged and admitted by the child companion:**

**Acknowledged and admitted by:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Child companion's signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX NO. 3 – PLANNING MODEL

1	<b>Fun activity</b>	<p>1.Presentation of the project/getting acquainted</p> <p>2.Encouraging interaction</p>	<p>Energizers</p> <p>Presentation in appropriate language and by projecting means</p> <p>Dodgeball</p> <p>Music activity</p>	Date/Month/ Year
2	<b>Setting up the consultation group</b>	<p>1. Understanding group dynamics and individuals members' characteristics</p> <p>2. Encouraging interaction and cooperation and the sense of belonging to the group</p> <p>3.Understanding group goal and objectives within the project</p>	<p>Energizer</p> <p>Presentation by drawing man (drawing features and characteristics of each group member)</p> <p>Repeating project goal in simple and comprehensible language</p> <p>Brainstorming in group and role identification</p> <p>Closing game suggested by children</p>	Date/Month/ Year
3	<b>Children's participation</b>	<p>1. Children perceive the concept of participation and joint group work.</p> <p>2. Encouraging clarification of roles, cooperation and decision-making in the group by means of creative activities.</p>	<p>Energizers</p> <p>Identifying common group elements through discussion.</p> <p>Reinforcing group goal:</p> <p>Role play- Defining roles, responsibilities and group leadership – children divided into 2 groups are assigned a task which they have to fulfill. Children themselves divide duties to perform.</p> <p>Wrap up of the day by children.</p> <p>Facilitator encourages discussion towards objective.</p> <p>Closing game.</p>	Date/Month/ Year



## APPENDIX NO. 4- ENERGIZERS EXAMPLES

### Who are you?

Distribute papers and ask everyone to write a short description of themselves. Then, turn papers upside down, and draw them one by one and try identifying the person based on the description. You may do this on your own or ask a participant to do so.

### Throwing the ball

This is a “wake-up exercise”, especially when an item requiring attention is introduced. Ask everyone to stand and form a circle. Throw a ball to a person and ask him/her which the most important concept he/she learnt is. Then, this person, in turn, throws the ball to someone else who should explain which the most important concept for him/her is. Continue this way, until everyone has caught the ball at least once.

### On an island

Divide students in groups of five and tell them that they are found on a deserted island. Explain that they have to choose five items among their personal things to help them survive and that each group member should contribute with one thing. Give those about ten minutes to search their bags, pencil cases or pockets to find the required items. Then, each group should stand and tell what they have chosen and explain why each object is necessary for their survival.

### Candies

Buy some small candies in various colors. Choose one category for each color. For example, red color for family, green for friendship, yellow for hobbies. Fill the basket with as many candies as possible and ask participants to take as many candies as they want without telling them anything. At the end, each should say as many facts as candies they have taken (e.g. 5 red candies - 5 facts for family, 3 green candies - 3 facts about friendship, etc.).

The same game may be realized with small colorful paper balls, but participants will not take so many balls.

### Two truths and a lie

Divide participants in pairs. In each pair, one should say 3 things of him/herself. Out of these, two should be true and one false. The other person should find which of the things is a lie.

## **The unique**

Participants are asked to show as many unique things they have or do as possible. Let them to think about 2-3 minutes and ask one of them to stand up and mention his/her facts one by one. For example, I have two cats. If no one tells that they too have two cats, then that person continues with the second fact until someone who has that characteristic is found. If that someone is found, the previous person sits down and the winner starts to talk about oneself until he/she is defeated by someone else. Facts of each not defeated participant are written down. The participant that has a greater number of special characteristics is declared the unique of the group. Encourage participants to start with saying: I am an only child that has .... E.g. two different shoe laces ...I am the only one who has twin brothers, etc.

## **Unite cards**

The facilitator chooses a number of well-known phrases and writes half of the expression on a piece of paper and the other half on another piece of paper...e.g. Happy –on one piece and Birthday on another piece of paper. The number of cards should be equal with the number of participants. Place all the cards in a basket and ask each participant to choose one and then each of them should find the other group member who holds the other half of the phrase.

## **Miming**

Divide participants in groups of 5. Name groups so that it is more fun. Each group chooses a profession and writes it down on a paper and does not show it to other groups. The second group has to find the profession and a volunteer is chosen from this group (to whom the profession is revealed) and then he/she has to explain it by miming. If the other group finds it, it wins one point. Then, the second group finds a profession for the third group (one volunteer is chosen among the third group, who is told the profession and then explains it to the group by miming). The third group chooses a profession for the forth group. The forth group chooses a profession for the fifth group and the fifth group chooses a profession for the first group. Elements such as items or animals other than profession may be also used.

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100 YEARS

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