



Measuring impact of the Child Participation Assessment Tool

Outcome indicators and guidance for data collection

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Outcome indicators and
guidance for data collection

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Section One:

Introduction

Background

The Council of Europe Child Participation Assessment Tool (CPAT) was developed to provide governments with indicators against which they could assess their progress in implementing Article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. However, its ten indicators only address the measures that are needed to build a conducive environment for child participation. In other words, the foundational elements necessary to facilitate and support children's participation were the focus. The indicators contained in the CPAT tool are set out in Table 1 below.

Table: 1 - List of the CPAT structure and process indicators

Protecting the right to participate	
1	Legal protection for children and young people's right to participate in decision making is reflected in the national Constitution and legislation
2	Explicit inclusion of children and young people's right to participate in decision making in a cross-sectorial national strategy to implement children's rights
3	An independent children's rights institution is in place and protected by law
4	Existence of mechanisms to enable children to exercise their right to participate safely in judicial and administrative proceedings
5	Child-friendly complaints procedures are in place
Promoting awareness of the right to participate	
6	Children's right to participate in decision making is embedded in pre-service training programmes for professionals working with and for children
7	Children are provided with information about their right to participate
Creating spaces for participation	
8	Children are represented in forums, including through their own organizations, at school, local, regional and national governance levels
9	Child-targeted feedback mechanisms on local services are in place
10	Children are supported to participate in the monitoring of the UNCRC (including in CRC shadow reporting) and relevant Council of Europe instruments and conventions

It purposefully omitted outcome indicators that would track actual changes in children's perceptions of the fulfilment of their right to be heard. Member States believed that including outcome indicators, before they had the chance to put the necessary structures and procedures in place for the right to be heard, was premature.

Since it was published in 2016, 13 governments have undertaken the process of assessing their level of compliance with the CPAT tool.¹ They each engaged in a year-long process involving wide-ranging consultations with professionals, NGOs, government agencies and departments and children and young people themselves. The process culminated, for each government, in a report and action plan to implement any necessary measures to enhance their compliance. Most of the participating governments have engaged in a subsequent commitment to act on the findings and strengthen the participatory environment to enable children to be heard on all matters of concern to them. There is now a growing demand for the creation of an instrument that States can use to start evaluating the results of that work to measure changes in children's experience of participation. This will enable the introduction or strengthening of measures to improve existing strategies and maximize the initial investment. Accordingly, the Council of Europe (CoE) has engaged in a process to develop a set of outcome indicators to supplement the CPAT.

1. Finland, Republic of Ireland, Romania, Italy, Bulgaria, Malta, Slovenia, Latvia, Estonia, Portugal, Iceland, Czech Republic, and Germany.

Using this guidance

This guidance has been developed to support States in finding out how effective their actions under the CPAT have been in building the 'architecture' necessary to facilitate, support and enable meaningful children's participation. It provides indicative guidance on how to collect the data against which to measure the outcomes of those actions.

In undertaking that process of data collection, it is important to take note of the following:

- ▶ The process for assessment of outcome indicators is substantially different from the process undertaken in respect of CPAT. These indicators are not measuring the action of States, but the results of those actions. The 10 outcome indicators, will rely on subjective and on objective feedback from children (Table 2). This data can all be gathered from children in single focus group discussions or surveys. The remaining indicator (no. 6) also draws on objective evidence in addressing the number of professionals trained in children's participation and will require a different data collection method.
- ▶ The guidance provides a broad overview of the possible approaches for gathering the data on all the indicators. However, this guidance is indicative. Individual states may choose to approach the data collection process in different ways, depending on, for example, information already available, resources, and population size. The process is an individual assessment by the State, and the findings are not intended for comparative use across countries.
- ▶ One of the challenges in measuring the impact of actions taken by States is the difficulty in how to attribute change. Of the 10 indicators in the CPAT tool, it is challenging to measure how any one of them, in particular, has contributed to strengthening opportunities for and experience of child participation. What can be measured is a gradual process of change over time in the context of the positive actions taken by States to build a conducive environment. The initial goal in using the guidance is to provide a baseline assessment of where things currently stand in terms of progress in building an environment conducive to children's participation. Accordingly, it will be important in future to use the same methodology again to assess the extent to progress.
- ▶ It is essential in using the guidance that efforts are made to reach out to children of all ages and in multiple contexts, as their experiences of participation will vary significantly. The findings need to be disaggregated in order to reveal any disparities, as this will provide evidence of where further government action is required.
- ▶ As with the CPAT process, it is recommended that the data collection process on outcome indicators is aligned with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) reporting process, and the findings are incorporated into the States' report to the CRC Committee.
- ▶ Although the outcome indicators have been developed through a rigorous consultative process, they have not, as yet, been piloted, nor has the guidance been able to be externally reviewed by governments. The Council of Europe, therefore, very much hopes that any States seeking to use the guidance to gather evidence on the impact of the CPAT measures would be willing to engage in a feedback process to share their experiences. This feedback could then be used to revise and strengthen the guidance.

Throughout the Outcome Indicator Guidance, the term 'children' and 'children and young people' are both used interchangeably depending on context. In both cases, the meaning refers to the definition in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child Article 1: 'For the purposes of the present Convention a child means every human being below the age of 18 years ...'

Section Two:

Introduction to the outcome indicators

The aim of the outcome indicators

Throughout the use of the CPAT Tool within the mentioned 13 countries, it has been demonstrated that structural and process indicators are valuable tools for strengthening States' investment in supporting child participation in policy, legislation, and other interventions. However, it is now necessary to quantify the impact of that work on children's experience of participation. Accordingly, a set of outcome indicators has been developed to complete the CPAT measures by providing a means to gather that data and evaluate the quality and extent of children's participation. They will enable States to measure the results of their investment in CPAT in terms of the increased enjoyment of children's right to participation over time.

Accordingly, outcome indicators aim to enable States to:

- ▶ Undertake a baseline assessment of children's perceptions of being listened to and taken seriously;
- ▶ Measure the effectiveness of the measures adopted under CPAT;
- ▶ Identify measures needed to strengthen participation rights;
- ▶ Highlight examples of good practice;
- ▶ Measure progress over time;
- ▶ Strengthen accountability to children and young people.

Developing the indicators

To produce a set of indicators to measure the outcomes of actions in place to promote and ensure the realisation of children's right to be heard, the following process was undertaken:

- ▶ A brainstorming among participants (both young people and adults) at the CoE Cork conference in May 2022 to elicit ideas on how to capture what most matters to children and young people;
- ▶ A review of the existing outcome indicators of child participation at the global level;
- ▶ Preparation of the synthesis of findings clustered under 6 core priorities that emerged as central to children's perceptions of what matters in relation to participation:
 - Cluster One: Awareness of the right to be heard and the opportunity to express views.
 - Cluster Two: Children have the opportunity to influence individual decisions that matter to them
 - Cluster Three: Children have the opportunity to participate in and influence decisions affecting them as a group
 - Cluster Four: Adult attitudes towards child participation
 - Cluster Five: Children feel safe to speak out
 - Cluster Six: Children have a sense of self-esteem and self-worth

- ▶ A webinar with government representatives and young people to prioritise and rank the indicators selected;
- ▶ Refinement down to 12 indicators based on the feedback at the webinar;
- ▶ Several focus group discussions (FGDs) with a total of 50 young people ranging between 11 and 17 years of age in different countries to review, amend, reject and prioritise the 12 indicators;
- ▶ Finalisation of 10 indicators based on the feedback from the FGDs.

It is important to note, therefore, that the process was strongly influenced by young people throughout. The final 10 outcome indicators, set out in Table 2 below, are very much a reflection of the issues that they have prioritised in relation to their experience of child participation.

Table: 2 - List of the outcomes indicators

Cluster One: Awareness of the right to be heard and opportunity to express views.	
1	% Children who know they have a right to be heard and their views are taken seriously
2	% children who feel confident and enabled to express their opinions
Cluster Two: Children have the opportunity to influence individual decisions that matter to them	
3	% children who consider they are able to influence <i>individual</i> decisions affecting their lives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ In their family, ▶ At school, ▶ In health care ▶ In sports and social activities ▶ Others (to include judicial and other proceedings)
Cluster Three: Children have the opportunity to participate in and influence decisions affecting them as a group	
4	% children who have freely chosen to engage in social or political activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Local child forums or councils ▶ Regional or national child parliaments ▶ School councils ▶ Child-led activism ▶ Community projects ▶ Others
5	% children who feel able to influence services and policies affecting them, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Education ▶ Health care ▶ Environment health ▶ Play and sports ▶ Safety and protection ▶ Others

Cluster Four: Adult attitudes towards child participation	
6	% of professionals who have been trained in children's participation, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Teachers ▶ Doctors and nurses ▶ Social workers ▶ Lawyers and judges ▶ Police ▶ Childcare staff ▶ Early years staff ▶ Immigration officers ▶ Others
7	% children who feel confident that professionals will take them seriously/respect them, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Teachers ▶ Doctors and nurses ▶ Social workers ▶ Lawyers and judges ▶ Police ▶ Child-care staff ▶ Early years staff ▶ Immigration officers ▶ Others
Cluster Five: Children feel safe to speak out	
8	% children know how and where to report if they are hurt/abused/discriminated against (per age and setting)
9	% of children who have a trusted adult outside of their family that they can talk to about problems in their life
Cluster Six: Children have a sense of self-esteem and self-worth	
10	% Children who feel accepted and valued by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Family ▶ Friends ▶ Community

Relationship between structural, process and outcome indicators

This set of outcome indicators builds on the configuration of indicators categorised as structural, process and outcome indicators. Data collection on structural and process indicators enables States to evaluate the steps they have taken to fulfil their commitments to respect, protect and fulfil children's right to participation under the CRC.

The outcome indicators are meant to capture individual and collective enjoyment by children of their right to participation as a result of those steps taken. Because of their nature, an outcome indicator, which is frequently a slow-moving indication and less sensitive to catching momentary changes than a structure and process indicator, measures over time the impact of the actions taken in relation to one or more structural and/or process indicators. For example, the percentage of children who feel confident in expressing their views might be influenced by a number of structural and process indicators, for example, legislation establishing the right, a national strategy, and the inclusion of children's rights in the national curriculum. In other words, an outcome indicator will rarely be connected directly to a specific action or intervention measured by an individual structural or process indicator. It is instead the result of the overall environment created by States to strengthen the fulfilment of children's right to participation.

Rationale for the outcome indicators

The following table, organised under the six core clusters, provides an overview of the aim of each outcome indicator and its relationship with CPAT:

- ▶ Column One provides the outcome indicator, organised under the six core cluster
- ▶ Column Two provides an explanation and rationale for the indicator
- ▶ Column three provides illustrative examples of which structural and process indicators could have contributed to that outcome

Outcome indicator	Rationale	CPAT Structure and Process indicators
Cluster A: Awareness of the right to be heard and opportunity to express views.		
<p>1. % Children who know they have a right to be heard and their views are taken seriously</p>	<p>A starting point for the exercise of rights is to know that you have them. It is not possible to exercise a right unless you first have knowledge that such a right exists. Accordingly, this outcome indicator is designed to measure how effective are the measures, required in CPAT indicator 7, that governments have put in place to provide that information. The aim is to find out from children that they both know that the right exists but also understand what it means and its implications.</p>	<p>Indicator 3 An independent children's right institution in in place</p> <p>Indicator 7 Children are provided with information about their right to participate</p>
<p>2. % children who feel confident and enabled to express their opinions</p>	<p>This indicator is designed to measure children's level of confidence and comfort in being able express their views. Their confidence will be influenced by the political and cultural environment in which they are living, and prevailing attitudes and commitment to children's participation. Accordingly, the most relevant CPAT indicators relate to the establishment of a legal right for children to be heard, for that right to be translated into a clear strategy for implementation, and that children also know they have that right.</p>	<p>Indicator 1 Legal protection for children and young people's right to participate in decision making is reflected in the national constitution and legislation</p> <p>Indicator 2 Explicit inclusion of children and young people's right to participate in decision making in a cross-sectorial national strategy to implement children's rights</p> <p>Indicator 7 Children are provided with information about their right to participate</p>

Cluster Two: Children have the opportunity to influence individual decisions that matter to them

3. % children who consider they are able to influence *individual* decisions affecting their lives

- ▶ In their family,
- ▶ At school,
- ▶ In health care
- ▶ In sports and social activities
- ▶ Other (to include judicial and other proceedings)

This indicator is designed to measure the extent to which children do feel able to have an influence on decisions that are being made about them as individuals, for example, personal choices within the family about social activities or choice of friendships, decisions in court about levels of contact with both parents in divorce proceedings, or the opportunity to appeal against a school exclusion. It will be necessary to capture the responses for each setting separately. For example, children might feel that they can significantly influence decisions within their own family, but not at all in relation to decisions at school.

The indicator would also apply to those children who have experience of using a complaints procedure in circumstances where their rights have been violated, including through a children's rights commissioner.

Indicator 4

Existence of mechanisms to enable children to exercise their right to participate safely in judicial and administrative proceedings

Indicator 3

An independent children's rights institution is in place and protected by law

Indicator 5

Child-friendly complaints procedures are in place

Cluster Three: Children have the opportunity to participate in and influence decisions affecting them as a group

4. % children who have freely chosen to engage in social or political activities:

- ▶ Local child forums or councils
- ▶ Regional or national child parliaments
- ▶ School councils
- ▶ Child-led activism
- ▶ Community projects
- ▶ Other

This indicator is distinct from the previous one in that its focus is on collective not individual participation. The inclusion of the word 'political' is not intended to imply political party engagement. Rather, it is included in recognition that if children are to engage collectively in activities to influence decisions that affect them, they will need to engage with politicians and policy makers and the associated political processes through which those decisions are made.

The aim here is to measure the level of social and civic engagement on the part of children at multiple levels. It will provide an overall indication of both the scale and range of opportunities for children to engage, as well as their willingness and interest in doing so. It is important to note that the participation of children must be voluntarily chosen by them and does not happen as a result of adult pressure.

In gathering evidence on this indicator, it will be important to ensure that the responses are collected separately for each type of activity, in order to obtain a meaningful picture of the nature of their engagement.

Indicator 8

Children are represented in forums, including through their own organizations, at school, local, regional and national governance levels

Indicator 9

Child-targeted feedback mechanisms on local services are in place

Indicator 10

Children are supported to participate in the monitoring of the UNCRC (including in CRC shadow reporting) and relevant Council of Europe instruments and conventions

<p>5. % children who feel able to influence services and policies affecting them, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Education ▶ Health care ▶ Environment health ▶ Play and sports ▶ Safety and protection ▶ Other 	<p>This indicator is intended to capture the extent to which children feel their participation is actually having an impact on decisions that affect them. It focuses on the actual services that they are using (such as schools, play facilities, health care, or sports provision) – for example, being able to influence how they are run, what services are available, when they are available, how much they cost, or who has access to them. It also focuses on the policies that impact on their lives – for example, policies at the local level to make communities safer, to reduce environmental pollution, or to create more cycle lanes, as well as at the national level, for example, policies relating to the school curriculum, to youth justice, to development of mental health services.</p> <p>The focus of the indicator is to capture the degree to which the collective engagement of children through, for example, youth parliaments, school councils, or youth councils is making a difference to services and policies. It would be relevant, for example, both where such a group was advocating for a particular change or where a local authority was seeking feedback on a proposal or service to improve it.</p> <p>With this indicator, it is not proposed that the data is collected separately for each policy or service area, as any given youth group might be engaged in several different policy areas. Rather, the aim is to gain an overall sense of whether children feel they are taken seriously through those forums.</p>	<p>Indicator 8 Children are represented in forums, including through their own organizations, at school, local, regional and national governance levels.</p> <p>Indicator 9 Child-targeted feedback mechanisms on local services are in place.</p> <p>Indicator 10 Children are supported to participate in the monitoring of the UNCRC (including in CRC shadow reporting) and relevant Council of Europe instruments and conventions.</p>
<p>Cluster Four: Adult attitudes towards child participation</p>		
<p>6. % of professionals who have been trained in children's participation, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Teachers ▶ Doctors and nurses ▶ Social workers ▶ Lawyers and judges ▶ Police ▶ Childcare staff ▶ Early years staff ▶ Immigration officers 	<p>This indicator measures the percentage of professionals who have received competency-based training on children's right to participation as a pre-service training programme for professionals working directly with and for children.</p> <p>It is directly linked to Indicator no. 6 of the CPAT Tool which focuses on competency-based training with a teaching approach that emphasizes learning and applying skills and acquiring knowledge.</p> <p>Competency-based training requires more than just knowledge. It also requires the ability to be able to translate that knowledge into practice.</p>	<p>Indicator 6 Children's right to participate in decision-making is embedded in pre-service training programmes for professionals working with and for children</p>

<p>7. % children who feel confident that professionals will take them seriously/respect them, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Teachers ▶ Doctors and nurses ▶ Social workers ▶ Lawyers and judges ▶ Police ▶ Child-care staff ▶ Early years staff ▶ Immigration officers ▶ Others 	<p>This indicator intends to capture the extent to which children feel confident that professionals will take and respect them seriously. The indicator is important in assessing if the government measures introduced to promote participation do actually result in children feeling comfortable talking to adults in different settings.</p> <p>It focuses on the professional figures with whom they interact, and the level of confidence children feel in expressing their opinion and that their opinion will be respected.</p> <p>With this indicator, collecting data separately for each professional figure is proposed to gain insight into the different attitudes of different professionals</p>	<p>Indicator 6 Children's right to participate in decision-making is embedded in pre-service training programmes for professionals working with and for children</p> <p>Indicator 7 Children are provided with information about their right to participate</p> <p>Indicator 9 Child-targeted feedback mechanisms on local services are in place</p>
<p>Cluster Five: Children feel safe to speak out</p>		
<p>8. % children know how and where to report if they are hurt/abused/discriminated against (per age and setting)</p>	<p>This indicator measures the extent to which mechanisms are in place to report abuse or harm and that children have both sufficient knowledge of their existence and how to access them.</p> <p>The existence of actors and mechanisms in place to respond to abuse or to help children seek redress is not, of itself, sufficient. The systems also need to be widely known about, accessible, and safe. This indicator is meant to measure this component.</p>	<p>Indicator 5 Child friendly complaints procedures are in place</p> <p>Indicator 3 An independent children's rights institution is in place and protected by law</p> <p>Indicator 4 Existence of mechanisms to enable children to exercise their right to participate safely in judicial and administrative proceedings</p> <p>Indicator 7 Children are provided with information about their right to participate</p>
<p>9. % of children who have a trusted adult outside of their family that they can talk to about problems in their life</p>	<p>Children commonly describe their safety and security as having trusted adults to whom they can turn when they need them. Safety is an important dimension of being able to speak out and express views. This indicator, therefore, aims to measure the percentage of children who are able to seek the help of trusted adults outside their families as and when needed. It will provide an indication of children's overall sense of being cared about and safe.</p> <p>By 'trusted adult', we mean: an adult the child trusts or feels safe to talk to.</p>	<p>Indicator 2 Explicit inclusion of children and young people's right to participate in decision-making in a cross- sectorial national strategy to implement children's rights</p> <p>Indicator 3 An independent children's rights institution is in place and protected by law</p>

Cluster Six: Children have a sense of self-esteem and self-worth

10. % Children who feel accepted and valued by:

- ▶ Family
- ▶ Friends
- ▶ Community

This indicator intends to capture the extent to which children feel accepted and valued by family, friends and the community. The overall aim of the CPAT is to shift the culture across countries towards a greater acceptance of children as agents in their own lives with views worth engaging with. The indicator provides an important measure of the extent to which actions taken by government to promote child participation have been effective in building environments in which children feel valued.

With this indicator, it is proposed to collect the data for all three aspects of the social ecology separately.

Indicator 7

Children are provided with information about their right to participate

Indicator 8

Children are represented in forums, including through their own organisations, at school, local, regional and national governance levels

Indicator 9

Child-targeted feedback mechanisms on local services are in place

Section Three:

Preparation for collecting the information on the 10 outcome indicators

The methodology for collecting information on the outcome indicators differs from the approach that needed to be undertaken for the Child Participation Assessment Tool (CPAT). Because CPAT comprised structural and process indicators, the data collection process focused more explicitly on analysis of relevant documentation on legislation, policies, structures, systems, and services. However, nine of the 10 outcome indicators will require evidence to be gathered directly from children and young people themselves. The other remaining indicator, which relates to the numbers of professionals trained in child participation, will necessitate a different approach, described below.

The issues to consider in undertaking the data collection process are as follows:

1. Co-ordinator responsible for the data collection

Where possible, a co-ordinator (or a small planning group) should be appointed to take overall responsibility for the data collection process and the subsequent analysis and reporting of findings. It is also possible to engage a group of young people in the co-ordinating process to enlist their perspectives and help ensure a child friendly approach. The role of the co-ordinator would be:

- ▶ To establish a time frame for the process and monitor progress over the course of that time frame;
- ▶ Determine the methodology for the data gathering;
- ▶ Enlist the support of partners to help with the design of the survey materials and focus groups discussion materials and subsequent roll out of those activities;
- ▶ Collect all the data emerging from the surveys and FGDs, analyse the findings and produce the integrated data;
- ▶ Organize a forum to reflect on the findings and agree on an action plan;
- ▶ Publish and disseminate the action plan, including in a child friendly format.

2. Diversity and disaggregation

Children's experiences of participation will differ significantly depending on their circumstances. It will be important to gather data from as wide a range of children as possible to gain a meaningful understanding of the impact that the CPAT measures have achieved for all children. Accordingly, it would be necessary to ensure that the process reaches out, for example, to children across the age range, with disabilities, in poverty, in detention, in rural and urban areas, as well as children who are refugees or asylum seekers, ethnic minorities, and LGBTQ children. Once the data is gathered, attention needs to be paid to ensuring that it is disaggregated in order to highlight which groups of children experience challenges in getting heard, and where investment is needed to strengthen the measures in place to engage them.

3. Assessment

In the CPAT process, after collecting the relevant data for each indicator, States were asked to assess their progress based on criteria elaborated on a scale of 0-3. This was designed to measure the progress that States had made in the specific actions required of them by the Tool, for example, introducing child friendly complaints procedures.

The assessment process for the outcome indicators is different. It is not seeking to measure State actions, but, rather, to measure the effectiveness of those actions. The outcome indicators, therefore, seek evidence based on the experiences of children or professionals subsequent to the actions taken by States on the CPAT indicators. The aim is to find out from children and young people themselves about whether they feel that they are listened to and taken seriously. They will be asked to assess their response to each indicator on a scale of 1-5 (with 1 being negative and 5 being positive). Accordingly, the data gathered in this process should be seen as a baseline from which to learn and build. The process will need to be repeated on a regular basis to assess whether real progress is being made. The analysis of the findings can be assessed using the following formula:

Numerator: number of children responding at each point of the scale 1-5 in response to the indicator

Denominator: total number of children contributing to the survey

Formula: $(\text{numerator}/\text{denominator}) \times 100$

[disaggregated by sex and grade level (or age)]

4. Approaches to data collection

A range of possible approaches can be undertaken to gather the data to assess progress on the outcome indicators. The suggested approaches to data gathering are:

- ▶ A survey tool to gather quantitative data on the views of children and young people on all the outcome indicators except indicator 6;
- ▶ Incorporation of questions relating to the outcome indicators into existing consultations or survey being undertaken in the country;
- ▶ Focus group discussions with different groups of children and young people to qualitative data on all the outcome indicators except indicator 6
- ▶ A survey of different professionals on outcome indicator 6, to establish the % that have had effective training in child participation;
- ▶ A survey of different training and academic institutions on outcome indicator 6, to establish the numbers of professionals that have had training in child participation.

Involving children and young people in the process

Some States may wish to involve children and young people themselves in the data collection process. For example, where there is an active children's parliament or youth council, those young people could be engaged in helping both design and implement the process. Their engagement could, for example, be to:

- ▶ Suggest creative activities for eliciting the information;
- ▶ Help with survey design to ensure that it is child-friendly;
- ▶ Contribute to a communication strategy to disseminate the survey;
- ▶ Co-facilitate focus group discussions;
- ▶ Contribute to the analysis of findings;
- ▶ Work with the government on a strategy for next steps to build on the findings.

Section Four:

Methodology for data collection

1. Survey tool on children and young people's views on child participation

A survey tool can be developed to be used online or disseminated through, for example, schools, youth clubs, or NGOs working with children. It would need to provide an introductory explanation of the questionnaire setting out why the information was needed, and how it would be used. It would also need to cover issues relating to the voluntary nature of the process. The survey would be addressed to children aged 11-17. It would not be appropriate for younger children. The findings from the survey would provide an overall picture of the degree to which children and young people feel they live in an environment where their views are respected and valued.

The survey would need to incorporate the following questions relating to the 9 child focused outcome indicators. For each question, the child responding to the survey should be asked to indicate on a scale of 1-5 (with 1 being negative and 5 being positive) what they feel in response to the question posed:

Indicator One: Do you know that you have a right to be heard and have your views taken seriously?

Indicator Two: Do you feel confident about expressing your opinions?

Indicator Three: Are you able to influence decisions that affect you personally:

- ▶ In your family
- ▶ At school
- ▶ In health care
- ▶ In sports and social activities
- ▶ In the court (if appropriate)
- ▶ Any other

(For this question it would be helpful to get responses in respect of each setting as the answers for each are likely to be significantly different)

Indicator Four: Do you take part in any social or political activities such as:

- ▶ Local child forums or councils
- ▶ Regional or national child parliaments
- ▶ School councils
- ▶ Child-led activism
- ▶ Community projects
- ▶ Others

In gathering evidence on this indicator, it will be important to ensure that the responses are collected separately for each type of activity, to obtain a meaningful picture of the nature of their engagement. It would also be useful to explain on the survey that the inclusion of 'political' does not mean party political, but rather engagement in activities that might influence political decisions such as youth councils working with a local authority.

Indicator Five: Do you think you are able to influence services and policies that affect you, within the following settings:

- ▶ Education
- ▶ Health care

- ▶ Environment health
- ▶ Play and sports
- ▶ Safety and protection
- ▶ Others

It is not necessary to collect information separately for the setting. The aim is to build an overall sense of the level of influence that children feel they are able to have in relation to services and policies affecting them overall

Indicator Seven: Do you feel that the following professionals listen to you and take your views seriously?

- ▶ Teachers
- ▶ Doctors and nurses
- ▶ Social workers
- ▶ Lawyers and judges
- ▶ Police
- ▶ Child-care staff
- ▶ Early years staff
- ▶ Immigration officers
- ▶ Others

In gathering evidence on this indicator, it will be important to ensure that the responses are collected separately for each group of professionals. It will help provide clear evidence on the differences that children experience and where progress is being made.

Indicator Eight: Do you know where to go and who you can report to if you are hurt/ discriminated against/ abused?

Indicator Nine: Do you have an adult that you trust and that you can go to for help if you have any problems in your life?

Indicator Ten: Do you feel accepted and valued by:

- ▶ Your family
- ▶ Your friends
- ▶ Within your local community (the area where you live)

In gathering evidence on this indicator, it will be important to ensure that the responses are collected separately for each group as there may be significant differences across the three contexts.

Incorporation of questions in other surveys

There may be consultations or surveys already taking place in a country that could be used to extrapolate data relevant to the outcome indicators. For example, a survey might be happening in schools, police, or hospitals or by a research department in a university. Where this is the case, it makes sense to rationalize the process rather than duplicate the work. Alternatively, if there are existing data collection processes taking place on a different but linked issues, questions relating to the outcome indicators could be added to that process in order to reduce administrative complexity and simplify the process of analysis.

Once all the survey data has been gathered and analysed, a report will need to be produced documenting the overall findings in respect of each indicator, with disaggregation to highlight any differences in experiences.

2. Focus group discussions with children (FGDs)

Step One: Preparation for focus groups

a) Understanding focus groups

Focus group discussions with children and young people can be an invaluable way of gathering qualitative data to enrich findings from survey material. A focus group is a discussion involving a small number of participants, led by a moderator or facilitator, which seeks to gain an insight into the participants' experiences, attitudes and perceptions. Focus groups have long been viewed as having certain advantages and are particularly suitable for use with children. For example, they create a safe peer environment and replicate the type of small group settings that children are familiar with from their classroom work. The peer support provided in the small group setting can help to redress the power imbalance between adult and child that exists in one-to-one interviews. Children may also be more encouraged to give their opinions when they hear others do so and their memory may be stimulated by the contributions of other participants.

b) Organising focus groups

All the outcome indicators, except Indicator 6, can be addressed in FGDs. The number of FGDs that will need to be held will vary from country to country, depending on population size, and the breadth of different child experiences that need to be captured. However, the following parameters are recommended:

- ▶ A minimum of 10 focus groups with up to 15 children in each. This will provide an opportunity to gather perspectives from various children with differing experiences. In some cases, it may be preferable to bring children from very different situations together in one focus group. In others, you may want to create a dedicated space for children with very specific circumstances. For example, you may want to have the opportunity to gain a specific in-depth understanding of the experience of children who are asylum seekers. And with younger children, it will be necessary to create spaces which are age appropriate for their level of understanding and needs.
- ▶ All normal procedures for consent from both parents and children, safeguarding policies and guidance on confidentiality need to be in place.
- ▶ The FGDs should last at least 2.5 hours but preferably longer and up to one day if possible. The time available should allow for children to be introduced to the issues raised by each indicator and to be able to explore their views and feelings before providing a concrete response to the indicator. It is possible to break the sessions up and meet with each group for several shorter sessions if that works better in accommodating other demands on children's time.
- ▶ The FGDs need to ensure adequate breaks are provided, and the time is interspersed with energisers and fun activities to enable the children to concentrate throughout. There are also a wide range of practical tools and resources available for eliciting children's perspectives on child participation, including with younger children, which can be used or adapted for the purposes of these focus groups.²

c) Role of facilitators

An experienced facilitator needs to be responsible for managing and running the FGDs. Their role will be:

- ▶ To ensure that the children and young people have given free and informed consent to participate in the process and fully understand the aims of the FGDs;
- ▶ To make the groups feel comfortable and at ease;
- ▶ To keep the discussion focused on the topic and ensure that every child wanting to contribute has the opportunity to do so;
- ▶ To enable the children to explore the idea behind the indicator, their views on it, and then to come to a consensus (if possible) on how they would rate its implementation;
- ▶ To provide specific responses to each of the nine indicators on a scale of 1-5 (with 1 being very poor and 5 being very good).

The preparation necessary for this process will require familiarization with the indicators, their implications and rationale, and the preparation of a plan for the focus groups with all the necessary timings, tools, and activities.

2. See, for example, A Toolkit for Monitoring and evaluating Children's Participation, Booklet 5, Lansdown and O'Kane, Save the Children/UNICEF et al, 2014, <https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/document/toolkit-monitoring-and-evaluating-childrens-participation-tools-monitoring-and-evaluating/>

It is worth thinking about whether there are games or activities that can be used to gather the information rather than simply asking the question. For example, body mapping might be a creative approach to some of the indicators. Another approach might be to use an interactive PowerPoint where all the indicators can be displayed on the screen and the participants can use their mobile phones to enter their responses to the indicator. (See, for example, <https://ahaslides.com/>)

Once each FGD has been completed, they will need to produce a report of the discussions which documents:

- ▶ The number and ages of the participating children.
- ▶ The diversity of participating children (for example, if the participants are all children with disabilities, or Roma children, or if the group comprises a cross section of children from different contexts).
- ▶ The findings from the group with the overall rating for each indicator on a scale of 1-5.
- ▶ Any key issues that arose in the discussion worthy of note.

Step two: Conducting the discussion on each indicator

Within the focus group, each indicator needs to be described to the participants. The following provides some indicative information that can be used to guide the discussion with the children and young people.

Indicator One: Do you know that you have a right to be heard and have your views taken seriously?

- ▶ The aim here is to find out if the government has been successful in ensuring that all children know about Article 12 and its implications.
- ▶ Explain what is meant by the right to be heard.
- ▶ Ask the children if they are aware of this right and what they understand about it.
- ▶ Explore whether the children and young people want to come to a consensus on how they would rate their knowledge on a scale of 1-5.
- ▶ Summarise your interpretation of the overall findings, including any differentiation of views within the group, and check back with the group to see if you have captured their views accurately.

Indicator Two: Do you feel confident about expressing your opinions?

- ▶ The aim of this indicator is to find out whether children do feel able to exercise the right to be heard. It is not enough to know the right exists. They also need to feel empowered to speak out.
- ▶ Encourage the children to think about different times when they felt strongly about something and if they felt able to talk about their ideas, concerns, or worries. Ask them to think about different places in their lives – home, school, youth clubs etc. and whether they are confident in all those places.
- ▶ Explore whether the children and young people want to come to a consensus on their levels of confidence in expressing their views on a scale of 1-5.
- ▶ Summarise your interpretation of the overall findings, including any differentiation of views within the group, and check back with the group to see if you have captured their views accurately.

Indicator Three: Are you able to influence decisions that affect you personally?

- In your family
- At school
- In health care
- In sports and social activities
- In the court (if appropriate)
- Any other
- ▶ This indicator goes one step further than the previous one to find out when children do express their views, whether they are taken seriously, and whether their views do influence what happens.
- ▶ Explain that the focus in this indicator is about children's influence on decisions that affect them personally, for example, medical treatment, decisions at home about choosing a school or friendships, or when and where they are allowed to go out, or what sports activities they are able to participate in.
- ▶ Encourage the children to think about times when they have spoken up about something, for example, at home, or with their doctor, or in a sports club, and whether the adults took them seriously. Did their views actually make a difference? Did they feel respected?

- ▶ For children who have been involved in any judicial or administrative proceedings, such as the family courts, immigration proceedings or a school exclusion process, it would be valuable to get input on how the child was able to influence what happened there. Obviously, in exploring this issue, it is important to exert caution, and respect children's privacy. Children should never be exposed to sharing information inappropriately or intrusively.
- ▶ For this question, it would be helpful to get responses in respect of each setting, as the answers for each are likely to be significantly different.
- ▶ Explore whether the children and young people want to come to a consensus on how they would rate their influence in each of the settings on a scale of 1-5
- ▶ Summarise your interpretation of the overall findings, including any differentiation of views within the group, and check back with the group to see if you have captured their views accurately.

Indicator Four: Do you take part in any social or political activities such as:

- Local child forums or councils
 - Regional or national child parliaments
 - School councils
 - Child-led activism
 - Community projects
 - Others
- ▶ This indicator is designed to find out how many children are actively engaged in some form of organised civic participation. It might be helpful to describe some of the types of organised participation that is possible.
 - ▶ It is important to explain here that the focus of the indicator is not party political engagement. The word 'political' means here any participation in activities where they can influence the political agenda, for example, through a local youth council, or involvement in a children's parliament.
 - ▶ Encourage them to talk about any activities they have been involved in and how they have been involved.
 - ▶ In gathering evidence on this indicator, it will be important to ensure that the responses are collected separately for each type of activity, in order to obtain a meaningful picture of the nature of their engagement.
 - ▶ This indicator differs from most of the other outcome indicators. It is not measuring a subjective experience, but requires factual information on whether or not they have been involved.
 - ▶ Summarise your interpretation of the overall findings and check back with the group to see if you have captured their input accurately.

Indicator Five: Do you think you are able to influence services and policies that affect you, for example:

- Education
 - Health care
 - Environment health
 - Play and sports
 - Safety and protection
 - Others
- ▶ This indicator is intended to capture information on whether children feel that they can influence decisions that affect them collectively. It therefore differs from Indicator 3 which was looking at influencing individual decisions.
 - ▶ You could provide them with examples of the types of decisions that they might play a role in influencing. For example, working with schools on the development of a behaviour policy, collaboration with a local authority on creating safe play spaces or improved and cheaper public transport.
 - ▶ Encourage them to think about any activities they have been involved in with school or youth councils and how successful they have or have not been in getting their proposals taken seriously.
 - ▶ For this indicator, it is not necessary to collect information separately for each service. The aim is to build an overall sense of the level of influence that children feel they are able to have in relation to services and policies affecting them overall.

- ▶ Explore whether the children and young people want to come to a consensus on how they would rate their influence in each of the settings on a scale of 1-5
- ▶ Summarise your interpretation of the overall findings, including any differentiation of views within the group, and check back with the group if you have captured their views accurately.

Indicator Seven: Do you feel that the following professionals listen to you and take your views seriously?

- Teachers
 - Doctors and nurses
 - Social workers
 - Lawyers and judges
 - Police
 - Child-care staff
 - Early years staff
 - Immigration officers
 - Others
- ▶ This indicator is designed to explore the attitudes and responses of different professionals in children's lives in relation to their participation rights.
 - ▶ Encourage the participants to reflect on experiences they have had with different professionals and how they feel about them. It is important to recognise that not all children and young people will have had experience with all those professionals.
 - ▶ In gathering evidence on this indicator, it will be important to ensure that the responses are collected separately for each group of professionals as it will help provide clear evidence on the differences that children experience and where progress is being made.
 - ▶ Explore whether the children and young people want to come to a consensus on how they would rate the attitudes of the different professionals on a scale of 1-5
 - ▶ Summarise your interpretation of the overall findings, including any differentiation of views within the group, and check back with the group to see if you have captured their views accurately.

Indicator Eight: Do you know where to go and who you can report to if you are hurt/ discriminated against/ abused?

- ▶ This indicator is intended to capture whether children are able to report any situation where they feel they have been treated badly. Being able to speak out when you have been abused is a vital aspect of the right to be heard. Having a voice that is listened to is fundamental to child protection.
- ▶ It is important not to ask children to share specific experiences of abuse or discrimination but rather to focus, for example, on what they know about reporting mechanisms, how to contact a children's rights commissioner or helpline, whether they would feel safe doing so and if they would be confident that their concerns would be taken seriously. The emphasis here should be on the process of reporting, not on actual incidences. (Your safeguarding policy will need to cover how to address any situation that does arise in which a child discloses abuse).
- ▶ Explore whether the children and young people want to come to a consensus on how familiar with and confident they are in using any possible reporting mechanisms available to them on a scale of 1-5
- ▶ Summarise your interpretation of the overall findings, including any differentiation of views within the group, and check back with the group if you have captured their views accurately.

Indicator Nine: Do you have an adult that you trust and that you can go to for help if you have any problems in your life?

- ▶ The need for trusted adults was highlighted very strongly by children and young people in the development of the outcome indicators. It was felt that having someone to go to that you trusted and valued and who would be available for you was a very important aspect of the right to be heard.
- ▶ Encourage the children to think about key people in their lives and whether they are someone who they can turn to when they need help or support. Encourage them to talk in general about why that might be important.
- ▶ This indicator differs from most of the other outcome indicators. It is not measuring a subjective experience, but requires factual information on whether or not they do have someone to turn to.
- ▶ Summarise your interpretation of the overall findings and check back with the group if you have captured their input accurately.

Indicator Ten: Do you feel accepted and valued by:

- Your family
 - Your friends
 - Within your local community (the area where you live)
- ▶ This indicator is included in order to assess children and young people’s sense of self- worth and self-esteem. Children who are listened, to respect and taken seriously are more likely to feel valued and accepted.
- ▶ Encourage the participants to reflect on whether they feel positive about the way that they are treated and recognized in each of these contexts. In relation to community, you could provide some examples of a community response that is positive or negative to children and young people. For example, does the local community provide plenty of spaces for play, recreation and sports? Are children made to feel welcome in local shops? Are efforts made to reduce car pollution so that children are not exposed to high levels of environmental pollution?
- ▶ In gathering evidence on this indicator, it will be important to ensure that the responses are collected separately for each group as there may be significant differences across the three contexts.
- ▶ Explore whether the children and young people want to come to a consensus on whether they feel accepted and valued on a scale of 1-5.
- ▶ Summarise your interpretation of the overall findings, including any differentiation of views within the group, and check back with the group to see if you have captured their views accurately.

3. Data collection on the training of professionals

The CPAT included an indicator on the inclusion of competency-based training on child participation in the pre-service training for professionals working with and for children.

Accordingly, one of the outcome indicators (no. 6) is focused on finding out the number of professionals in different fields that have been provided with such training:

Indicator Six: % of professionals who have been trained in children’s participation, including:

- Teachers
- Doctors and nurses
- Social workers
- Lawyers and judges
- Police
- Childcare staff
- Early years staff
- Immigration officers

Two approaches are suggested for collecting data on this indicator:

a) Survey of relevant training institutions

In the CPAT assessment process, the analysis will have identified which courses have begun to introduce competency-based training for professionals on children’s rights, including child participation. Thus, for example, one of the findings might have been that child rights training was now introduced at the pre-service level for teachers. Accordingly, a survey of all teacher training courses could be conducted to provide information on the number of students who have successfully completed those courses. The analysis of that findings should be produced on the basis of the following:

Numerator: number of students successfully completing a competency-based child participation training over the past three years

Denominator: total number of students undertaking professional training over the past three years

Formula: $(\text{numerator}/\text{denominator}) \times 100$

This information will provide evidence on how widespread the provision of that training is across all teacher training courses.

b) Survey of professionals in relevant professions

An additional source of information could be gathered by surveying professionals working with children. Again, the aim would be to focus on those professional fields which were identified as providing child participation training in the CPAT assessment. Using the example of teachers, a sample number of local municipalities could be selected. Within those municipalities, each primary and secondary school could be invited to provide information on how many staff had received child participation training. The analysis of these findings should be produced on the basis of the following, for example:

Numerator: number of teachers having received training

Denominator: total number of teachers employed in the schools surveyed

Formula: $(\text{numerator}/\text{denominator}) \times 100$

This data would provide evidence on the percentage of teachers in any given area who have received the necessary training in child participation.

Section Five:

Using the findings

Once all the data has been collected, the following actions are suggested:

1. A report should be prepared summarising the findings from all sources in relation to each outcome indicator and to provide an overview of the methodology used to gather the data.
2. The findings can then be used to undertake an assessment of the progress to date:
 - ▶ Is there clear evidence about where children are positive about their opportunities for participation?
 - ▶ Are there weaknesses and gaps highlighting that children's participation rights are not being fully implemented?
 - ▶ Do the findings highlight where further action is needed and which of the CPAT 2016 indicators need additional investment?
 - ▶ What are the priorities for the next steps?

States might consider whether to convene a working group, including children and young people, to explore these issues and help develop an action plan for moving forward.

3. Once the action plan is finalised, it should be published and made widely available. It is also important to make it available in a child-friendly format. Disseminating the plan is a demonstration of accountability to children and will encourage them to see that the government is taking them seriously and demonstrating a real commitment to change.

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