Evaluation of the "Strengthening National Child Participation Frameworks and Action in Europe (CP4Europe)" Project

Evaluation Report

Prepared by: Maria Antonia di Maio, Independent Evaluator

Cleared by: Elena Buonomini, Head of Business Unit and QA, Monitoring & Evaluation, Lattanzio KIBS
Lara Moreschi, Project Manager, Monitoring & Evaluation, Lattanzio KIBS

Date: 22 June 2023

LATTANZIO
..KIBS

LATTANZIO
■■KIBS

Acknowledgements

Table of contents

LATTANZIO
.∎KIBS

LATTANZIO
..KIBS

Acronyms

CAT	Child and Young People's Advisory Team
CDENF	Steering Committee for the Rights of the Child
CP4Europe Project	"Strengthening National Child Participation Frameworks and Action in Europe" Project
CPAT	Child Participation Assessment Tool
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
DG JUST	Directorate-General Justice and Consumers
EC	European Commission
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OECD/DAC	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development/Development Co-operation Directorate
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound
TOC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
WP	Work package

LATTANZIO
..KIBS

Key Terms and Definitions

For the purpose of this Evaluation, the following definitions are adopted. For easier reading, definitions of criteria applied to the Evaluation have been included in the section on 'Evaluation Framework'.

Adolescence is defined as the period in human growth and development that occurs after childhood and before adulthood, from ages 10 to 19. (WHO, no date).

Assumptions are any external factors that are relied on to be true, real and certain for the realization of a project's outcomes and impact, and long-term sustainability. (Council of Europe, 2016b:99).

Baseline is the starting point before the effects of a project. (Council of Europe, 2016b:99). It differs from a needs assessment, which gives the broad overview and helps determine the focus of an intervention.

Beneficiaries are those who directly/indirectly benefit from the improved capacity (skills, knowledge, etc.) and quality of services and products of the target groups. (Council of Europe, 2016b:99).

A **child** is any person under the age of 18 years (UN CRC, 1989, art.1).

Child participation is about individuals and groups of individuals having the right, the means, the space, the opportunity and, where necessary, the support to freely express their views, to be heard and to contribute to decision making on matters affecting them, their views being given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity (Recommendation CM/Rec(2012)2 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe).

Child protection refers to preventing and responding to violence, exploitation and abuse against children, including sexual exploitation, trafficking, child labor and harmful traditional practices. (UNICEF, 2006).

Confidentiality is the process of protecting an individual's privacy. It pertains to the treatment of information that an individual has disclosed in a relationship of trust, with the expectation that this information will not be divulged to others without permission. (UNICEF, 2015:2).

Ethics is defined as the right or agreed principles and values that govern the behavior of an individual within the specific, culturally defined context within which an evaluation is commissioned or undertaken. (United Nations Evaluation Group, 2020:4).

An **evaluation** is a systematic and impartial assessment of an activity, project, programme, strategy, policy, topic, theme, sector, operational area or institutional performance. (Council of Europe, 2020a:8).

Gender refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for women and men. (Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, 2011, art.3).

Gender equality entails equal rights for women and men, girls and boys, as well as the same visibility, empowerment, responsibility and participation, in all spheres of public and private life. It also implies equal access to and distribution of resources between women and men. (Council of Europe, 2018:5).

LATTANZIO
KIBS

A **human rights-based approach** is about incorporating human rights standards and principles into all levels of project management with the ultimate goal of advancing human rights.. (Council of Europe, 2020c:5).

Immediate outcome is a change occurred as a direct result of the output of an activity. (Council of Europe, 2016b:99).

Impact is the effect taking place after one or more intermediate outcomes have been achieved. (Council of Europe, 2016b:99).

An **indicator** is a unit of measurement supporting the assessment of progress being made towards the achievement of a result or objective. (Council of Europe, 2016b:100).

Intervention refers to the subject of the Evaluation. (OECD/DAC Evaluation Network, 2019:5).

Member States indicate the states that are parties to the Council of Europe. In cases where this definition refers to the Member States of the European Union, this is specified in the text.

Monitoring is a continuing function that uses systematic collection of data on specified indicators to provide management and the main stakeholders of an ongoing development intervention with indications of the extent of progress and achievement of objectives and progress in the use of allocated funds. (OECD, 2002:27-28).

Outcome is a change in behaviour or practice as consequence of an activity. (Council of Europe, 2016b100).

Output is an end product or service directly resulting from a project activity. (Council of Europe, 2016b:100).

Risk refers to any internal and external factors with the potential to harm projects and their objectives and which may be addressed by the project. (Council of Europe, 2016b:100).

A **stakeholder** is considered as anyone who has the responsibility, capacity or opportunity to work on child participation. While it is indeed acknowledged that children, adolescents and young persons – as well as their families and communities – do have a stake in child participation policies and practices, the term "stakeholder" (also referred to as "informant" or "respondent" in the context of data collection) here indicates adult representatives of institutions or organizations, as well as independent experts.

Primary data are new data created via first-hand collection. (UNICEF, 2015a:4). A source of primary data can be a document written, or an interview/focus group discussion recorded during the field work; or a document obtained as raw data (i.e. which has not been analyzed, assessed or published) directly from the individual or organization that produced it (such as: statistics on victims of trafficking; eye-witness testimonies; legislative drafts: etc.)

The **results chain** is the causal sequence for a development intervention that stipulates the necessary sequence to achieve desired objectives beginning with inputs, moving through activities and outputs, and culminating in outcomes, impacts, and feedback. In some agencies, reach is part of the results chain. (OECD, 2002:33).

Secondary data is information gathered from pre-existing sources or databases. (UNICEF, 2015a:4).

Youth/Young persons are those persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years. While recognizing that the definition of youth is more fluid than other definitions (as it essentially refers to the period of transition from childhood to adulthood) and may change with circumstances -

LATTANZIO
KIBS

especially with the changes in demographic, financial, economic and socio-cultural settings - for the purpose of this Report, the definition that uses 15-24 age cohort as youth is maintained. (UNESCO, no date; UNDESA, no date).

Executive summary

The Project "Strengthening National Child Participation Frameworks and Action in Europe" has been implemented by the Council of Europe and six country partners in five countries in Europe (Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs – Czech Republic; Ministry of Justice – Finland; Ministry of Education and Children[1] – Iceland; Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities[2] and Social Protection Institute – Slovenia; and National Commission for the Promotion of the Rights and the Protection of Children and Young People – Portugal) between April 2021 and June 2023. The Project's goal was to strengthen child participation mechanisms and practices across Europe at national and local levels. The intervention was funded by the European Commission Directorate-General Justice and Consumers.

An end-of-project Evaluation was commissioned to Lattanzio KIBS and undertaken by an independent Evaluator between March and June 2023. The Evaluation aimed to identify lessons learnt, good practices, and indicate potential for follow-up to the intervention. The evaluation methodology envisaged a non-experimental evaluation design, and a qualitative analysis with some quantitative analysis elements. It comprised desk-research and stakeholders' interviews involving: Council of Europe and Partners' representatives; External Experts; and children and young people who participated to Project activities. The Evaluation main findings, conclusions and recommendations have been analyzed and consolidated in the present Evaluation report.

The OECD/DAC evaluation criteria (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability) have guided the Evaluation, and have been applied in order to review the extent to, and the approaches through which the Council of Europe and their implementing partners attained the Project's objectives, achieved the expected results, and implemented the activities envisaged within the timeline. In compliance with the Evaluation terms of reference, an additional evaluation criterion has been applied, which is "added value". The cross-cutting themes of human rights, equity and gender equality have been integrated into the above-criteria.

The main limitation of the Evaluation exercise is that, due to time and resources constraints, the Evaluator could not visit Project sites nor speak to children and young people directly. Other limitations include: the lack of involvement of stakeholders external to the Project, which restrained the breadth of perspectives on the intervention; and the lack of a comprehensive process and impact monitoring system, which limited the possibility to fully assess the attainment of the Project's expected results.

Among the main findings, the Evaluation uncovered that, albeit a child rights situation analysis and needs assessment did not inform the Project design, the intervention was firmly grounded in the Council of Europe's policy priorities and programs, and appeared very relevant and timely in relation to the policies and priorities set out by partners in the five member States that took part in the action.

The analysis of the Project logic exposed that the logical links between the problems addressed and the objectives were not sufficiently clear. Objectives were often phrased as activities, did not expressly stated the hoped-for changes in the lives of children and young persons, and were not sufficiently specific nor measurable. However, the overall Project logic appeared clear in that countries involved in the intervention have been selected and grouped up according to their advancement on the realization of children's right to participation, and activities have been structured accordingly and meant to be mutually reinforcing.

Among the most relevant aspects contributing to the Project's added value, the application of a tested model to enhance child participation – primarily embodied in the Council of Europe Child

---

[1] Since May 2022. Due to a change in the Government structure and mandates in Iceland, the Ministry of Education and Child replaced the Ministry of Social Affairs in the Project partnership.
[2] The Ministry of Social Affairs in Slovenia joined the Project in June 2021.

LATTANZIO
KIBS

Participation Assessment Tool ('CPAT') – appears to have been key in this regard and in relation to the Project's success more broadly.

The Evaluation uncovered several areas of progress in relation to the accomplishment of a series of results. Children and youth's involvement in the Project attained most quality standards for safe and meaningful child participation; it appears to have contributed to enhancing children's self-confidence, and to have been mostly suitable to children's age and maturity, as well as needs and preferences. The involvement of marginalized groups of children and young persons is an area on which Project partners have placed much effort and achieved good results, although these appear more prominent concerning the consultation of children and young people through focus groups, and conversely more modest when it comes to the selection of children and youth members of the Child and Young People's Advisory Team. Child safeguarding is an area in which, albeit further work is required at both Council of Europe and country partners' level, the Project achieved remarkable success in raising stakeholders' awareness and initiating the process of developing child safeguarding policies and procedures.

Along with the several positive aspects highlighted in this Report that partners, experts and children pointed at regarding the Project's effectiveness, some weaknesses have been identified, which appear to have affected the overall Project's performance in a cross-cutting manner. These concern: the lack of a consistent planning process and, consequently, workload predictability; and the limited interaction, coordination and communication between the national and European components of the intervention.

The Project design phase apparently did not entail the creation of a baseline. Process and outcomes indicators did not feature in Project documents, fact that surely limited the possibility to regularly measure progress towards intended results. Despite that, the Evaluation could identify some early signs of (largely intended) positive impact. As testified by several respondents, national partners' capacity on managing child participation initiatives appears to have increased as a result of the Project. Further, children as well as partners felt that child participation has become more central in their respective country contexts, and children and young people who were involved in a more continued manner deemed that they have acquired a set of new skills thanks to their participation, which they can use in the future (including: communication and inter-personal skills; presentation and public speaking; English language knowledge; and an increased awareness of how child participation is dealt with in diverse countries and contexts).

Albeit the budget shared with the Evaluation Team was not sufficiently detailed to fully assess the intervention's cost-effectiveness, some considerations could be made. In particular, the amount allocated to cover the Council of Europe's management costs – equaling about one third of the total direct costs – appears somehow disproportionately high; whereas the amount assigned to cover the six Project partners costs (about one fourth of the total) appears low in relation to the overall budget and to the amount of work sustained by partners.

In terms of sustainability, whilst country partners expressed their determination to carry on several components of the work started in the framework of the Project - also by linking these to broader and longer-term strategies and policy developments in respective countries - the sustainability of the European-level activities and outcomes was somehow more difficult to assess, especially because most of the related deliverables were yet to be finalized at the time of the Evaluation. However, it appears that the sustainability of this component will largely rely on the Council of Europe's continued leadership in the area of child participation.

Among the Evaluation's key recommendations, devising more attention and resources to the Project design phase was prominently addressed to the Council of Europe and partners, who are also encouraged to engage children and young people already at this point in the project lifecycle. Similarly, it was recommended to the Council of Europe to strengthen the planning, coordination and communication aspects in future interventions involving multiple countries and partners. Further, the Evaluation Team recommended to the Council of Europe to undertake systematic

work to actively spread the resources produced by the Project beyond the countries who participated in the intervention, and to retain its leading role in the further implementation of the CPAT process, supported by the newly devised tools produced in the framework of the Project.

LATTANZIO
..KIBS

1 Background and Introduction

1.1 Introduction

The Council of Europe promotes child participation in line with international and European standards, in the broader framework of its commitment to promote children's rights. The Organization places strategic emphasis on the participation of children and puts it at the core of its children's rights agenda[3]. The adoption of the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers' Recommendation on the participation of children and young people under the age of 18[4] is testimony to the significance attached by Member States to the right of children to participate in decision-making, recognized therein as both a fundamental right and a general principle. (Council of Europe, 2016a:5).

In the framework of its Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2016-2021), the Council of Europe has devised a number of tools and developed practical experience in their application. These tools include the Child Participation Assessment Tool ('CPAT'), which contains a structured, systemic multi-stakeholder approach to evaluate national child participation mechanisms, and has been used by several EU Member States to assess the level, scope and quality of implementation of child participation against a set of indicators. (Council of Europe, 2023a:1; Council of Europe, 2016:4-5).

A group of Council of Europe Member States came together and developed the "Strengthening National Child Participation Frameworks and Action in Europe" Project ('CP4Europe Project'). The Project aims at strengthening child participation mechanisms and practices across Europe at national and local levels. Funded by the European Commission ('EC') Directorate-General Justice and Consumers ('DG JUST'), the Project started on April 1st, 2021, and was due to end on March 31st, 2023. A no-cost extension was requested in December 2022, and approved by the donor organization, until June 30th, 2023.

Envisaged as a contractual obligation under the grant agreement signed between the Council of Europe and the EC DG JUST, an end-of-project Evaluation was commissioned to Lattanzio KIBS, a consultancy company providing high-quality monitoring and evaluation services through the work of its Monitoring & Evaluation Business Unit. According to the evaluation Terms of Reference ('ToRs'), the overall objective of the Evaluation was to identify lessons learnt, good practices, and indicate potential for follow-up to the intervention.

The Evaluation has been carried out by an independent consultant (hereinafter referred to as 'Evaluator') between March and June 2023. The Evaluator has been supervised and supported by Lattanzio KIBS Monitoring & Evaluation Head of Business Unit and Project Manager. Collectively, these three individuals are referred to as 'Evaluation Team' throughout this Report. The Evaluator's main counterparts at the Council of Europe during the Evaluation have been the CP4Europe Project Manager and Project Assistant.

This Evaluation Report summarizes the main results of the Evaluation process. It is divided into two main components, and related sections and sub-sections. The first part (sections 1 to 4) provides an overview of the Project and the context, and of the Evaluation approach and methodology. The second part (section 5-6) presents the Evaluation's main findings, as well as the conclusions and recommendations drawn upon such findings. A series of Annexes contain relevant information and documentation.

---

[3] Briefing with the CP4Europe Project Manager and Project Assistant, 21.02.2023; https://www.coe.int/en/web/children/participationhttps://www.coe.int/en/web/children/participation; CM/Rec(2012)2.
[4] CM/Rec(2012)2.

LATTANZIO
..KIBS

1.2   Overview of the context

Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child ('UN CRC') says that children have the right to form their own opinions on all matters concerning them and obligates decision makers to take these opinions seriously and into account. This provision and principle recognises that children are not merely passive recipients entitled to adult protective care, but they are subjects of rights who are entitled to be involved, in accordance with their evolving capacities, in decisions that affect them, and have the right to exercise growing responsibilities for decisions they are competent to make for themselves.

Since the UN CRC was adopted in 1989, thousands of initiatives have evolved in all regions of the world to create space for children and young people to begin influencing the laws, policies, services and decisions that affect their lives. However, the full realization of children's right to participation continues to be hindered by many long-standing practices, cultures and attitudes, as well as by political and economic barriers. Moreover, even when children and young persons are offered opportunities to engage, the quality of child participation may be sometimes poor.

The above applies to the European Union ('EU') area as well. Article 24 of the EU Charter for Fundamental Rights states that children may express their views freely, and that such views shall be taken into consideration on matters which concern them in accordance with their age and maturity (EU, Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, 2000, art.24). Over the past decades, "thanks to the amazing work of children and their advocates and efforts by many organizations supporting child participation", considerable steps ahead have been made in recognizing that "the right to participate is important not only as a right and a general principle but also because taking children's views into account in decisions and actions that affect them brings significant immediate and long-term benefits for children and communities". (Council of Europe, 2020b: 7, 15).

According to recent research commissioned by the EC, there is "a wide range of children's participation mechanisms at the international and European levels, and at national, regional and local levels across EU [Member States]", facilitated through a number of structures and stakeholders. Children's councils and parliaments, as well as Ombudspersons for children, exist and are operational in the large majority of the EU. (Janta et al., 2021: III).

However, obstacles and challenges to child participation in Europe still exist. Allegedly, whilst an almost equal participation of boys and girls has been achieved, this is not the case in relation to children's age: current mechanisms favor the involvement of older children (usually over 12 years of age), with mechanisms for involving younger children remaining relatively rare. Challenges persist also as for the involvement of marginalized children, including children belonging to ethnic minorities, children with disabilities, and children from disadvantaged family backgrounds. Reaching geographical balance in terms of children's involvement also requires improvement. Only a few participation mechanisms found in the EU Member States were initiated by children, whereas the largest majority are adult-initiated. (Janta et al., 2021: III-IV).

Moreover, formal monitoring and evaluation is lacking regarding the majority of participation mechanisms in place, with the resulting lack of evidence of their impact. Lack of evidence also concerns "the transformative effect of participation on the level of skills, confidence, empowerment and self-efficacy among children who take part in participatory processes." The above-study concludes that "children's participation is still not perceived and implemented as an integral and fundamental part of policy-/decision-making processes. It is still often not embedded in all policy areas, but is rather a topic in itself or an add-on. It is still not a continuous process, but is only targeted at specific activities or stages." (Janta et al., 2021: IV-V).

Among the main obstacles to achieving effective child participation in the researched countries, the above-study identified "societal views and attitudes about children, their competences and abilities

to participate (in other words, a 'tokenistic' approach)". Access to information on participation mechanisms and opportunities, especially in light of diverse linguistic capacities, was also mentioned among key barriers, especially for the participation of children from vulnerable backgrounds. Children consulted in the research lamented that adults do not trust that they have the capacity to contribute, and identified a blatant power imbalance between adults and children, expressed in particular in the lack of accountability and follow up to participation initiatives they are involved in. (Janta et al., 2021: VI).

Recent research conducted by the Council of the Baltic Sea States about children and youth's role in building resilient societies in the Baltic Sea Region confirmed that "for participation to be effective, this must become embedded in institutions and processes that influence children's everyday lives and grounded in sustainable and steady resources. Participation needs to be regarded as a regular, ongoing process and not as a one-off event, and it should be appropriately supported and evolve throughout different life stages, including through access to information and capacity building opportunities for children and youth." The study concluded that cultural resistance to children and youth's engagement constitutes the single most important factor hindering children and young persons' participation in building resilient societies, in Europe and beyond. (Di Maio, 2023: 7, 32).

1.3   Profile of the Project evaluated

Against the backdrop highlighted above, the CP4Europe Project was initiated is in continuity with the work previously undertaken by the Council of Europe in the area of child participation, as well as child-friendly justice. In particular, between 2014 and 2022, assessments to measure progress in fulfilling children's right to participation – by applying the CPAT - had been conducted in: Bulgaria, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Malta, Romania and Slovenia.

According to the Proposal, Project countries have been selected on the basis of a set of criteria, and with the aim to provide for a balanced geographical coverage, as well as complementarity in terms of strategies and approaches. These are: Czech Republic, Finland, Iceland, Slovenia and Portugal. Moreover, these countries were assessed to be at different stages in terms of fulfillment of children's right to participation - with Finland and Slovenia at a more advanced stage, having already implemented the CPAT assessment - above. (Project Proposal, Annex 1B, p.2).

The Project was implemented under the lead and coordination of the Council of Europe in partnership with the following organizations:
- Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs – Czech Republic;
- Ministry of Justice – Finland;
- Ministry of Education and Children[5] – Iceland;
- Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities and Social Protection Institute – Slovenia; and
- National Commission for the Promotion of the Rights and the Protection of Children and Young People – Portugal.

In addition to the implementing partners, a pool of technical experts supported the implementation of the Project across the target countries and at the European level, by fulfilling a series of specific tasks.

The Project's main goal was that "children across Europe find multiple opportunities to participate in individual decision-making processes through stronger child participation mechanisms and practice at the national and the local level." (Evaluation ToR, p.2).

---

[5] Since May 2022. Due to a change in the Government structure and mandates in Iceland, the Ministry of Education and Child replaced the Ministry of Social Affairs and Children in the Project partnership.

LATTANZIO
■■KIBS

The Theory of Change ('TOC') for the Project was included in the Evaluation ToR, as well as in the Project Proposal (Annex 1 B), and is enclosed here below:

Table 1. Project's TOC

Impact:		
Children across Europe find multiple opportunities to participate in individual decision-making processes through stronger child participation mechanisms and practice at the national and the local level.		
Intermediate outcome 1: Children benefit from stronger child participation frameworks and action in selected EU/Council of Europe member states serving as models to contribute to further dissemination of resources and good practice across Europe.	**Immediate outcome 1.1:** Improved knowledge and awareness on child participation mechanisms and practice and the need for strengthening them in three of the partner countries (Action Group 1: Czech Republic, Iceland, Portugal)	**Output 1.1.1.** Recommendations from assessments of child participation mechanisms and practice carried out according to CPAT available in 3 countries
		Output 1.1.2. Authorities, professionals and children are sensitized on the need for and opportunities of child participation
		Output 1.1.3. Policies, tools and resources are developed or adapted, including an action plan leading on to further national activities consolidating child participation mechanisms
	Immediate outcome 1.2: Strengthened capacities and resources of authorities and professionals in all partner countries to carry out child participation activities for improved law and policymaking and service provision (Czech Republic, Finland, Iceland, Portugal, Slovenia)	**Output 1.2.1.** Based on recommendations, child participation action is carried out or stepped up at different levels (national, regional, local) and in different settings (political, social, educational, judicial, healthcare-related etc.) in all partner countries
		Output 1.2.2. Specific resources and tools are being developed to foster quality child participation activities in the country (national strategies, handbooks, checklists, training materials etc.)
		Output 1.2.3. Specific groups of professionals are being trained to implement child participation activities and training programmes incorporated into regular curricula for relevant professions in partner countries.
Intermediate outcome 2: Children across Europe benefit from the dissemination of good national practice in terms of child participation mechanisms and action, through the development of model resources and tools made available to stakeholders in all five participating EU/Council of Europe member stated and promoted via a European network and platforms.	**Immediate outcome 2.1:** Good practices identified and lessons learnt and consolidated in all partner countries and shared across Europe	**Output 2.1.1.** Recommendations for legislative changes to consolidate child participation practices available within selected partner countries or provided to them through external support
		Output 2.1.2. Knowledge and guidance on child participation practices made available to be replicated at national and local level in partner countries and in other European

LATTANZIO
..KIBS

		countries.
		Output 2.1.3. European resources developed and made available to all interested countries for further dissemination of good practice (model strategies and other resources, including handbooks, checklists and training modules)
	Immediate outcome 2.2: A European "child participation leadership network" set-up to support peer exchanges and further development of child participation mechanisms and good practices across Europe.	**Output 2.2.1.** A European "child participation leadership network" is formally set-up and equipped to function over a longer time period
		Output 2.2.2. The tools for regular peer exchanges within the European network are being created, (e.g. a web-based platform, list of resource persons, regular events etc.)
		Output 2.2.3. Good practices, training and tools are further adapted and disseminated amongst all EU/Council of Europe member States involved as Project partners

The main approaches to the achievement of the Project's results, contributing to the overall Project's goal, include:

- "A **systemic view** of children's life situations, which is sensitive to specific needs in being heard and consulted about decisions concerning them (e.g. children with disabilities will have specific needs and so will children of poor families or ethnic minorities who tend to be discriminated and are seldom heard);
- A **multi-stakeholder approach**, under which a maximum of stakeholders is involved in the Project, into the national dialogue surrounding it and the concrete activities to be developed;
- A **sustainable approach**, under which child participation opportunities are not sought as one-off events, but which tries to anchor child participation as a human right among the general public, in institutional systems and the capacities and knowledge of relevant professionals working with children;
- An **experimental approach**, under which the aim will not be to develop theoretical frameworks for child participation, but to enter right into the practice and develop child participation mechanisms and practice "bottom-up";
- An **imminently participatory approach**, ensuring that stakeholders do not only speak about child participation but will practice it straight away during the Project." (Project Proposal Annex 1B, p.7).

The main envisaged Project components are the following (Project Proposal, Annex 1B, p.4-5):

- **Management and coordination** (Work package – 'WP' - 1), with the aim to organizing and coordinating the work under the Project, to regularly measure progress and adjust work plans, and to maintain internal exchange and communication for a sustained impact.
- **CPAT Assessments** (WP 2, 3 and 4). This component envisaged the adaptation, launch and carrying out of national assessment processes using the CPAT in three countries: Czech Republic, Iceland and Portugal (grouped together as "action group 1").

LATTANZIO
▪▪KIBS

- **Development of national child participation mechanisms and tools** (WPs 5 and 6). Two participating countries, Finland and Slovenia (referred to as "action group 2"), had already undertaken and concluded CPAT assessments in 2019. They were therefore included in the Project as pilot countries, to showcase the positive impact of such assessment on national dialogue and dynamics about child participation, and to further develop concrete activities to enhance child participation.
- **Provision and development of European resources** (WP 7). This component focused on making existing key tools at the European level available for the Project, and on providing training to national partners on how to use them (notably the CPAT and the new Handbook for Professionals on child participation, both published by the Council of Europe).
- **Set-up of a European "child participation leadership network** (WP 8), intended as a network including all 5 Project partner countries, the Council of Europe and relevant Directorates of the EC, and to be further enlarged to include other countries beyond the core group, for a total of at least 12 members.

The overall budget estimated for the Project was of 950.374 Euros (Project Proposal, Annex 2, p.1).

Throughout the implementation period, three amendments were requested by the Council of Europe and approved by the EC DG JUST, as it follows:

- The first amendment was made in June 2021, and it involved a change in partnership, with the addition of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities in Slovenia as the direct financial beneficiary;
- The second amendment took place in May 2022, following a government-level change in Iceland, where the newly established Ministry of Education and Children took over responsibility for children's affairs (and consequently also for the CP4Europe Project, hence replacing the Ministry of Social Affairs and Children in the Project partnership);
- Finally, the third amendment concerned a 3-months no-cost extension of the Project's duration (mentioned earlier in this Report).

LATTANZIO
..KIBS

2 Purpose, objectives and scope of the Evaluation

2.1 Evaluation purpose and intended users

As stated in the ToR, the purpose of the Evaluation was "to identify lessons learned, good practices, and indicate potential for follow-up". The Evaluation – as per ToR - will "offer an independent assessment of the overall Project measured against the objectives and indicators as set out in the theory of change and logical framework". (Council of Europe, 2023a:3-4).

The intended primary users of the Evaluation are the EC DG JUST, funder of the intervention. The secondary audience of the Evaluation include partner countries, experts, and children involved in the Project. (Council of Europe, 2023a:3). It is suggested that the Council of Europe be also regarded as one of the primary users of the Evaluation, although this was not expressly stated in the ToR.

The main intended uses of the Evaluation suggested by the Evaluation Team are the following:

- Enhance sharing understanding of strengths and assets, as well as areas for improvement, of the work on child participation undertaken by Project partners;
- Support decision-making of the primary intended users regarding future interventions on child participation;
- Promote accountability towards children and young persons, as well as other relevant stakeholders of the Project, through timely and adequate sharing of the Evaluation results.

Based on the above suggestions, it is recommended that the main intended users engage in a discussion, with the aim to fine-tune the Evaluation's possible uses and related modalities.

2.2 Evaluation objectives and scope

The following Evaluation objectives were specified in the Evaluation ToR:

- "Assess the extent to which the project has attained its stated objectives based on the indicators/deliverables as defined in the project documents;
- "Evaluate the efficiency of the project management set-up, including monitoring and reporting systems;
- "Assess the sustainability of project deliverables, as well as the implementation and follow-up of its recommendations by country partners;
- "Estimate the degree to which the project's outputs will continue to have an impact in the future;
- "Recommend possible lines of action and further activities for future assistance and improved sustainability." (Council of Europe, 2023a:4).

According to the ToR, the Evaluation temporal scope encompassed almost the full Project timeline, from inception of activities on April 1st, 2021, through to (almost) its end on June 30th, 2023[6]. In assessing the intervention against the relevance criterion, the Evaluation has also considered the Project design phase. The Evaluation is intended to be a summative evaluation, as it aims to determine the worth of the Project at the end of its implementation phase.

The geographical scope of the Evaluation covered the five participating countries: Czech Republic, Iceland, Finland, Portugal and Slovenia.

---

[6] As specified elsewhere in this Report, the Evaluation has been carried out between 1st March and 23rd June 2023; the data collection phase ended on May 9th, 2023.

LATTANZIO
..KIBS

2.3   Evaluation limitations

The Evaluation brings a number of limitations. First of all, due to time and resource constraints, the data collection was confined to Project Staff and external experts, and to some of the children and young persons involved in the Child and Young People's Advisory Team ('CAT'). The Evaluation did not engage directly with other stakeholders, such as other children who were involved in some of the Project's activities – but who are not members of the CAT; the families of all children who were involved or otherwise in contact with the Project; other organizations and independent experts working in the field of child participation in Project countries and/or at EU level.

Similarly, due to time and resource constraints, the Evaluator did not visit any Project sites, nor did she meet any stakeholders in person. The online modality inevitably creates some distance. However, remote interviews allowed to reach larger number of stakeholders than it would have been possible in 12 days of in-person data collection.

The Evaluator did not have the opportunity to consult with children and young persons directly. FGDs with CAT members were organized and facilitated by Project partners in four Project countries[7]. This was mostly due to the limited time availability of both partners and children and youth, all of whom were busy with finalizing Project deliverables and planning the upcoming final Conference. Actually, FGDs were in some cases conducted by partners on the side of regular CAT meetings. The above modality of consultation of children and young persons created some inconsistencies in the data collected: for example, in the minutes from two out of the four FGDs held, participants' answers have been grouped up in bullet-points, and not specified according to who said what during the discussion. Further, it is believed that participants' answers may carry a degree of bias, since they were called to assess the results and quality of activities that were implemented by the persons interviewing them for the Evaluation purposes.

As highlighted later in this Report (see "Project logic") – the phrasing of Project's objectives and TOC in the Project documents was not sufficiently clear and accurate. This circumstance did not allow a full assessment of whether such objectives have been achieved, and to which extent. Similarly, the lack of a structured and comprehensive impact monitoring system, along with the lack of a baseline for the Project considerably hindered the possibility to assess outcomes and impact in a systematic manner. Moreover, at the time of the data collection, nearly half deliverables were still being finalized. In any case, due to the Evaluation timing, the extent to which the Project's impact could be assessed would have been limited, because it was too early to identify the lasting changes produced by the Project in the personal and professional spheres of the intended beneficiaries. Nevertheless, the Evaluation managed to highlight some contributions to impact, as well as early signs of impact, and evidence of perceptions of future impact shared by relevant stakeholders (see below, "Impact").

3   Evaluation Framework

3.1   Evaluation Criteria and Key Questions

As detailed in the ToR, the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability) have guided the Evaluation: this is a set of complementary criteria that – along with relevant cross-cutting themes – has been considered in combination, in order to ensure that the Evaluation covered all areas of the intervention considered. (OECD/DAC Network on Development Evaluation, 2019). In compliance with the Evaluation ToR, an additional evaluation criterion has been applied, which is "added value": this is defined as "the ability of the Council of Europe, through its specific approach, composition and working methods to make a significant contribution." (Council of Europe, 2020a:9). It also encompassed professional competence,

---

[7] Czech Republic, Finland, Iceland and Portugal.

LATTANZIO
..KIBS

organizational and financial competence, and networking competence, displayed by the Council of Europe in the framework of the Project.

In line with the ToR, the Council of Europe Evaluation Guidelines (Council of Europe, 2020a) and the UNEG guidelines and standards on evaluation (UNEG, 2014; UNEG, 2017), the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria have also been integrated with the cross-cutting themes of human rights, equity and gender equality. The Evaluation Team committed to respect and promote these themes and values throughout all stages of the Evaluation.

The Evaluation criteria have been applied in order to review the extent to, and the approaches through which the Council of Europe and their implementing partners attained the Project's objectives, achieved the expected results, and implemented the activities envisaged within the timeline. Each criterion is briefly described at the outset of the corresponding section in the Main Findings.

A set of key questions structured the Evaluation and was applied to compare findings against the criteria. These questions also guided the interviews and discussions with selected stakeholders during the data collection phase, as well as the desk review of Project documents and relevant literature. A detailed set of sub-questions has been developed to further break down and specify the information needs related to each key Evaluation question. These are enclosed in the Evaluation Matrix (Annex V).

4 Evaluation Methodology

4.1 Overall approach to the Evaluation

In line with the Evaluation ToR, the methodology for the Evaluation envisaged a non-experimental evaluation design, and a qualitative analysis with some quantitative analysis elements.

Quantitative data have been largely provided by the documents examined as part of the desk review, and aimed to assess the breadth of the Project implementation and scope, with the aim to both complement the qualitative data, and to situate these in the broader context in which the Project has been undertaken.

Qualitative data have been initially collected as part of the desk review, and gathered in greater depth during the data collection phase through interviews and focus groups. Qualitative data analysis has involved the identification of themes, coding, clustering similar data and drawing the most important points. Starting from respondents' descriptions, qualitative data analysis moved to a more theoretical level of coding, in adherence to the Evaluation criteria and questions. However, to the extent possible, respondents' terms have been included into the text.

The Evaluation methodology has been articulated around three main phases: inception phase; data collection; and analysis and report writing.

Inception phase

The Evaluation detailed approach and methods, as well as sub-questions and tools, have been elaborated during this phase. During the inception phase, an inception meeting with the Council of Europe Project Team was planned and carried out, with the aim to share all required documents, contact details. During the first phase of the Evaluation, a desk research reviewed existing Project documents, as well as relevant reports, studies, news articles, policy and legal documents, and other available data regarding child participation in the countries targeted by the intervention (and in Europe more broadly). The main aim of the desk-review was to set out the internal and external context in which the Project was implemented. At the end of the inception phase, an Inception Report was submitted and approved of by the Council of Europe.

During the inception phase, the Evaluation Team carried out scoping interviews with the Council of Europe Staff knowledgeable about the Project, in order to obtain clarifications on facts and on the documents reviewed, and/or to ask for additional documents to be covered by the desk review.

Activities and outputs of this phase included:

- **Desk-review** of documents provided by the Council of Europe and of other relevant documents selected by the Evaluator;
- Finalization of evaluation **methodology**;
- Elaboration of the Evaluation **sub-questions**;
- Elaboration of **data collection tools**;
- Identification of adult **key-respondents** (largely suggested by the Council of Europe) and **establishing contact** with them in order to schedule phone/skype-interviews;
- Identification of **children to be involved** in the data collection phase, and **arranging for FGDs** with them, in close cooperation with the Council of Europe and implementing partners;
- **Inception briefings** with the Council of Europe Project Team;
- Production of an **inception report**.

Data collection

The Evaluation exercise aimed to actively involve all key Project stakeholders. Based on information collected during the inception phase, these include:

- Staff of Project partners involved in the Project;
- External experts who developed key resources for the Project;
- Children who were members of the Children and Young People's Advisory Team ('CAT');
- Council of Europe (current and former) Staff who worked for the Project;
- Other key Staff members from the Council of Europe working on children's rights and on child participation specifically;
- EC DG JUST Project Officer.

Individual interviews with adult key informants were central to the data collection. These were selected in close consultation with the Council of Europe. In total, 25 adult stakeholders were involved in individual and group interviews. Some respondents have been interviewed in pairs or small groups, mostly upon their preferences, as collectively they felt that they were in the position to answer all questions to be covered by the Evaluator. Interviews have been conducted online.

In addition to individual interviews with adult key informants, FGDs with children have also been key to data collection. In total, 10 children and youth members of the CAT have been involved in four FGDs, divided per country. During the inception phase, several options were discussed as for how to most effectively and appropriately involve children during data collection. Based on thorough discussions between the Council of Europe, implementing partners and experts, all FGDs were conducted by partner Staff members, and minutes were sent to the Evaluation Team. The Evaluator provided a dedicated set of guidelines on ethics and on how to organize and carry out a FGDs to the individual children and young people involved in the Evaluation process, which is enclosed in Annex VI to this Report.

The EC DG JUST Project Officer decided not to participate in interviews since, at the stage of the data collection, many Project deliverables were still in a pending status, and upon the consideration that "the European Commission will run its own evaluation of the project after the

LATTANZIO
■■KIBS

submission of the final technical reports, deliverables and financial statements", thereby answering the questions posed by the present Evaluation at that point in time[8].

The full list of adult and child respondents is included in Annex II to this Report.

Adult respondents were offered choice concerning the way in which information and quotes from the interview can be attributed to them. Around half participants opted for full attribution (name and surname, position, organization or institution), while the remaining part preferred to remain anonymous. In order to make sure that the anonymity of this latter group is ensured, the Evaluation Team – in agreement with the Council of Europe – decided to quote all adult respondents as "Project Team Member" followed by a number, based on a numbering system linking the two that has been retained only by the Evaluation Team. (When quotes or attributions relate to a specific country context or Project Partner, numbering above has been omitted, in order to prevent identification).

Concerning children and young persons, their names have been replaced with pseudonyms or initials, and any details of their stories that may lead to them being identified have not been used.

Activities and outputs of this phase included:
- Performing **online interviews** with selected respondents in project countries;
- Carrying out **FGDs** with children involved in the Project;
- Collating inputs from interviews and FGDs, and producing **detailed transcripts**.

Analysis and writing up of the report

Data gathered through desk-review, individual interviews and FGDs have been analyzed and are presented in this Evaluation Report. The Project performance has been assessed – to the extent possible - against the criteria previously identified.

Activities and outputs of this phase included:

- Producing an **Evaluation Report**;
- Highlighting and describing evaluation **findings**, identifying **good practices** and **achievements**, as well as **questionable practices** where margin of improvement exists;
- Providing **recommendations** for future programming, as well as advocacy and policy initiatives, by the Council of Europe, their partners and other stakeholders;
- **Debriefing meeting** with the Council of Europe Project Team.

4.2 Data collection instruments

The data collection instruments have been devised in adherence with the Council of Europe's Template for interview/focus group guide (Council of Europe, 2020a:49-50). In addition, their application has been guided by existing best practice standards on ethics and on participation in research of both adults and children. More detailed guidelines to ensure safe and meaningful participation of children in the data collection process have been elaborated by the Evaluator as part of the inception phase, and have been shared with partners facilitating FGDs in countries - after being cleared with the Council of Europe Project Staff (Annex VI).

FGDs have been semi-structured, open-ended and based on a set of questions drawn upon the Evaluation key questions and sub-questions presented in the Evaluation Matrix, with the possibility for new relevant questions and issues to be explored during the FGD.

---

[8] E-mail correspondence between the EC DG JUST Project Officer in charge of the Project, and the Council of Europe Project Manager, dated April 17th, 2023.

LATTANZIO
.∎.KIBS

The set of questions prepared for each FGD aimed to cover the different Evaluation key questions and sub-questions. Especially when the time at their availability was limited (for example, half-an-hour at the end of a regular CAT meeting), Project partners were advised to and supported by the Evaluator in prioritizing among questions. Suggested guiding questions for FGDs with children and young persons are enclosed in Annex IV.

Similarly to FGDs, individual and group interviews with key informants have been semi-structured, open-ended and based on a set of questions drawn upon the Evaluation key questions and sub-questions presented in the Evaluation Matrix, with the possibility for new relevant questions and issues to be explored during the interview. A list of such guiding questions is enclosed in Annex IV.

5   Main Findings

5.1 Relevance

Relevance
Relevance is defined as "the extent to which the intervention objectives and design respond to beneficiaries, global, country, and partner/institution needs, policies, and priorities, and continue to do so if circumstances change". (Council of Europe, 2020a:8).

Under the relevance criterion, the Evaluation assessed the coherence of the overall Project design with the problems and needs it set out to address. The Evaluation also looked at whether the TOC provided an effective framework for monitoring progress and impact, and for the Evaluation Team to understand the Project's logic and in articulating clear connections between inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes and impact. Part of the TOC assessment focused on ascertaining whether, and to which extent, the Project implementing partners shared understanding about how changes would happen and their own roles in bringing about such changes[9].

Adherence of the Project to beneficiaries and partners' needs and priorities

The Project appears to be **very relevant to the Council of Europe's policies and priorities**, and to have continued to be so throughout the entire implementation phase.

One of the priorities set out by the Council of Europe's Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2016-2021) is "*p*articipation of all children". (Council of Europe, 2016c:4). The Strategy commits the Council of Europe to "provide guidance on how to embed child participation in practice in a systematic manner and in all contexts relevant for children." In particular, according to the Strategy, the Council of Europe shall "support member States in using the Council of Europe's Child Participation Assessment Tool as one means to measure progress towards fulfilling the rights of children to participate in matters concerning them." (Council of Europe, 2016c:13). Thus, the Project appears fully in line with the Organization's priorities in the area of children's rights. Moreover, with its multi-stakeholder approach, and by applying the CPAT as a key tool, the Project set out to assess the level, scope and quality of child participation in an all-encompassing manner, and to "facilitate exchange of experience on rights-based child participation" – as mandated by the Strategy (Council of Europe, 2016c:13) – by building upon the assessments' results. The focus on child participation is confirmed in the current Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2022-2027)[10] (Council of Europe, 2022: 9-11).

---

[9] While the focus of the present Evaluation was on the TOC as a product, it is acknowledged that the process of developing it, especially the scope and quality of the participatory engagement, can make a significant difference to the ownership of the TOC and of the Project among the Council of Europe and partners, and this also brings consequences to the Evaluation itself.

[10] The current Strategy considers "giving a voice to every child" as one of the Organization's six priority areas on children's rights, as well as a cross-cutting issue in the realization of the Strategy.

LATTANZIO
∎∎KIBS

The Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2016-2021) identified exclusion and discrimination as a major outstanding challenge in fulfilling children's rights. Among the children considered as belonging to "the most vulnerable and marginalized groups", the Strategy mentioned, in particular: children with disabilities, children without parental care, children from minorities including Roma children, children on the move or otherwise affected by migration, children deprived of liberty, children living and/or working on the streets and children of imprisoned parents." (Council of Europe, 2016c:7). The Organization's commitment to promoting social inclusion of all children is reiterated by its current Strategy on the Rights of the Child, with the pledge to step up efforts in ensuring "that all children have access to the same means and services to achieve the best attainable standard of living." (Council of Europe, 2022: 19). The Project design envisaged the purposeful involvement of children who are discriminated against. In the Project summary, it is stated that "*p*articular attention will be paid to vulnerable groups of children that may need special support, such as children with disabilities, from ethnic minorities or migrant children."[11] Similar references are found throughout the Project proposal documents. Besides wording in Project proposal documents, it became clear during interviews and FGDs that Partners were minded, from the outset of the Project, to reach out to children from different background, especially disadvantaged ones, and to promote their participation (See below: "Involvement of marginalized children and young persons").

The Project design appears overall coherent with the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers' Recommendation on the participation of children and young people under the age of 18[12]. The Recommendation, among others, recommends to member States to "encourage the exchange of knowledge and of good practice […] at local, regional, national and European levels", which the Project set out to do (Work Packages 7 and 8 in particular)[13]. Among the measures included in the above Recommendations, the Committee of Ministers encourages member States to "undertake periodic reviews of the extent to which children and young people's opinions are heard and taken seriously in existing legislation, policies and practices"[14], which is a key objective of the Project under consideration. The Project's design is consistent with the Recommendation also in that it aims to pursue "the participation of children and young people with fewer opportunities, including those who are vulnerable or affected by discrimination, including multiple discrimination"[15]. The degree to which realization of this principle was achieved in practice is discussed further below in this Report.

The Project design does not seem completely in line with the Committee of Ministers' Recommendation at issue when it comes to the role of parents and other caregivers. The Recommendation underlines the "fundamental role in affirming and nurturing the child's right to participate, from birth onwards"[16], of parents and carers. Accordingly, it calls on States to "encourage parents and carers through legislation and parent-training programmes to respect the child's or young person's human dignity and her or his rights, feelings and opinions". Among the different stakeholders targeted by the Project, parents and families (and more broadly, children's communities) do not appear to feature notably. This component could be bolstered in future interventions. Similarly, the Recommendation stresses that "*t*here is no age limit on the right of the child or young person to express her or his views freely", and that "all children and young people, including those of pre-school age [and] school age" should be given the opportunity and space to be heard. The Project did not specifically set out to overcome existing barriers to participation affecting younger children. However, one partner representative[17] stated that some of the Project's deliverables tackled participation practices involving children as young as in pre-school age, thus indirectly addressing barriers to participation for children of very young ages.

---

[11] CP4Europe Project Proposal, Annex 1, p.3.
[12] CM/Rec(2012)2.
[13] CP4Europe Project Proposal, Annex 1, p.30-33.
[14] CM/Rec(2012)2.
[15] CM/Rec(2012)2.
[16] CM/Rec(2012)2.
[17] Project Team Member #24

LATTANZIO
..KIBS

The Project is, reportedly, also relevant to the policies and priorities set out by partners in the five Member States that took part in the action. The Council of Europe Steering Committee for the Rights of the Child (CDENF), an intergovernmental platform of the Council of Europe to support and follow the implementation of the Strategy for the Rights of the Child, has always placed child participation high on its agenda, since the majority of the Council of Europe 47 member States always expressed interest in this matter[18].

All partners were very vocal about the need to enhance child participation in their countries. "Child participation was not developed in [our country]", a partner representative stated. "This was a big issue."[19] As it emerged from virtually all interviews with Project partners, the Project was perceived as very timely in the countries in which it was implemented. In Finland, for example – where the Project idea was shaped around the findings from the previous CPAT assessment - synergies were created between the Project activities and two relevant policy processes (the National Democracy Programme and the National Child Strategy). In Portugal, thanks to the support of local entities[20], partners felt that the Project was taken much further than they had imagined. As a partner representative stated, "child participation is one of the major topics across several strategic policy documents in [our country] in the fields of education, social protection etc."[21] In some cases, partners actively promoted the Project idea towards the Council of Europe and through the CDENF. As one partner representative stated, "to the question 'Why did you decide to join the Project', I should better answer that we were amongst the most interested parties!"[22]

The Project's target groups included professionals working with and for children in the target countries, civil society organizations, Government decision-makers at all levels, and – last but not least – children and young people[23]. Due to the lack of a comprehensive needs assessment and situation analysis undertaken at the outset of the Project, the relevance of the Project design to these groups of beneficiaries could hardly be assessed directly. It appears that the Project was designed out of an ongoing and close consultations between the Council of Europe and the prospective implementing partners[24], and that "the needs were identified at inter-governmental level."[25] Therefore, the perspectives of the other target groups were not sought for directly as part of the Project design phase. A needs assessment is presented in a very succinct manner in the Project proposal[26] and, albeit some further analysis might have been derived from the CPAT assessments previously undertaken in two out of the five participating countries (see above, "Introduction"), admittedly, no proper needs assessment was undertaken when the Project idea was conceived[27].

Nevertheless, as it will be described later in this Report, children who took part to in the Evaluation process appeared to regard the Project as a very needed contribution to advance the realization of child participation in their respective countries[28]. Therefore – albeit indirectly– the Evaluation could observe that the Project seems relevant also to children and young persons.

Finally, the Project appeared to have maintained the degree of relevance described above throughout its implementation, also in light of external changes occurred during this phase.

---

[18] CP4Europe Project Proposal, Annex 1B, p.2.
[19] Project Team Member #11
[20] Members of the National Commission for the Promotion of the Rights and the Protection of Children and Young People, that is the Project implementing partner in Portugal.
[21] Project Team Member #24.
[22] Project Team Member #8
[23] Project Team Member #5; Project Team Member #6.
[24] Project Team Member #5.
[25] Project Team Member #6.
[26] Project Proposal, Annex 1B, p.2.
[27] Project Team Member #5; Project Team Member #1.
[28] See below: "Children and young persons' participation to the Project".

LATTANZIO
..KIBS

Namely, the COVID-19 pandemic does not appear to have altered the Project's goal and – as far as this can be assessed – its objectives and deliverables.

Project logic

Some aspects of the Project logic appear clear. Countries involved in the intervention have been grouped up according to their advancement on the realization of children's right to participation. Activities are structured accordingly and meant to be mutually reinforcing.

The overall goal is rather clear, in that it states the change that the Project aspires to contribute to in the long term ("Children across Europe find multiple opportunities to participate in individual decision-making processes through stronger child participation mechanisms and practice at the national and local level" - Project Proposal, Annex 1B, p.4 and following). However, it does not clearly express what is expected to change *in the lives of* children and young persons.

In terms of making explicit links between problems and objectives, the Project design, overall, did not achieve a sufficient level of clarity. The needs assessment is presented rather briefly in the Project documents, and the identification of problems in the contexts where the intervention was planned is not sufficiently articulated. Consequently, the links between the problems that the Project is trying to address and its objectives do not appear very well-defined.

Albeit generally clear, some objectives are rather phrased as activities; for example: the general objective under WP1 ("the objective is to maintain weekly contacts with each of the 5 partner delegations, organize regular video meeting […]"); some specific objectives listed under WP3 ("the key objectives in Finland will be to develop methodologies, collect good practices and develop training materials […]"; similarly: "The key objectives in Slovenia will be to prepare a specific national Handbook on children's participation as a basis for developing training material and training courses, checklists for improving child participation in specific contexts […]"). In some other cases, objectives have been phrased rather as outputs (this is the case for most objectives under WP4). Some objectives appear to be "SMARTer". These are, namely, some country-level objectives envisaged under WP1 ("to ensure good coordination of children's rights policies at governmental level"). However, even these objectives are not sufficiently specific, in that they do not quantify the intended total reach of children and other beneficiaries targeted, nor do they specify the settings where changes are supposed to occur and the geographical limits of the planned interventions. Objectives do not appear easily measurable: words like "strengthen", "amplify", "step up" and similar, do not specify (from which) to which level is the intervention expected to change the existing situation.

As described further below in this Report ("Impact"), process and outcomes indicators did not feature in Project documents, with the exception of some quantitative targets enclosed in the Project Proposal (Annex 4). As explained by the Council of Europe, the Organization usually utilizes an internal project management software to monitor progress; however, in the case of the CP4Europe Project, data were not regularly updated within such tool[29].

The Theory of Change ('TOC') for the Project (Project Proposal, Annex 1 B, p.6-7) does not sufficiently articulate how change processes are expected to unfold as a result of the intervention. It is presented as a table representing a result chain to be read from right to left. It includes intended outcomes and outputs whose achievement should contribute to the realization of the Project's overall impact/goal. Connections about how a type of event is linked to (a list of) other types of events are not included. No assumptions are presented in the document. Reference to factors in the external context that might help or hinder change is not featured in the context of the TOC, while the three key risks that the Project might have faced during implementation are presented elsewhere in the Project Proposal - with related mitigation actions (Annex 1, p.35). No

---

[29] Council of Europe Project Team Member.

LATTANZIO
..KIBS

narrative description of the TOC accompanies the table. From discussions held with the different parties involved in the Project, it appeared that the TOC was not regarded as a guiding document - providing a common understanding and reference as for what the Project was aiming to change and how.

5.2 Added Value

Added value is defined as professional competence, organisational and financial competence, and networking competence. (OECD, 2021:24).

The CP4Europe Project set out to build on lessons learnt and planned to implement a tested model. Indeed, the CPAT tool had been applied in ten countries prior to the Project implementation. This element is considered to have brought a noticeable added value to the Project, in that it displayed an innovative yet sufficiently consolidated approach to promoting child participation in Europe. In addition to that, the Project appears to be in continuity with the Council of Europe's experience and expertise in promoting not only child participation but also child-friendly justice[30].

Regarding the selection of Project countries *and* partners, these appear to have occurred simultaneously during the Project design phase. The Project proposal generally states that countries "have been selected via their national delegations to the CDENF, based on a set of objective criteria"[31]. Albeit these are not clearly listed in the Project documents, from the Project Proposal and the interviews with key stakeholders, it appears that criteria for selecting both countries and partners included: a) Expression of interest and commitment to child participation; b) Availability of resources to co-finance the action, and of capacity to reach out to children (directly or through national and local partners); c) Geographical balance across member States of the Council of Europe (North-East-South-West); and d) Balanced combination of more advanced and less advanced countries in terms of child participation[32], and subsequent complementarity in terms of approaches and activities.

When asked how those specific Project partners were identified, respondents generally agreed that, since these were the institutions representing national delegations at the CDENF, they were "natural partners" for the Project. Furthermore, sometimes they were able to also involve other suitable partners – as in the case of Slovenia[33]. However, CDENF representatives were allegedly also asked whether they had other potential partners to recommend, who might have been more suitable and qualified to join the Project[34]. Thus, the choice of both countries and partners appears to have brought some distinctive advantage to the Project, in combining a balanced geographical spread, a varying level of realization of children's right to participation, and a steady and shared commitment to work in this area.

According to some respondents, the Council of Europe's capacity to leverage on Governments was a crucial asset for the Project's success. "Compared to even larger NGOs", one respondent stated, "there is no hierarchy level within a State that [the Council of Europe] cannot access"[35]. Moreover, since the Council of Europe is a standard-based organizations, Member States are obliged to abide by such standards, and this was regarded as a decisive advantage in the implementation of the work on child participation – and on children's rights more broadly[36]. The Project Team's composition, made of the Council of Europe as a prominent organization promoting

---

[30] Project Team Member #1.
[31] Project Proposal, Annex 1 B, p.2.
[32] Project Team Member #1; Project Team Member #5; Project Team Member #6.
[33] In Slovenia, the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, representing the country at the CDENF, proposed and obtained to include in the partnership also the Social Protection Institute.
[34] Project Team Member #5.
[35] Project Team Member #4.
[36] Project Team Member #4.

LATTANZIO
■■KIBS

children's rights, Government institutions, and enriched and supported by external technical expertise, is regarded as a remarkable added value of the intervention.

Across the interviews and FGDs, adult respondents resolutely identified some key strengths and assets brought to the Project by the Council of Europe. First, several stakeholders agreed about the fact that the Council of Europe's approach to child participation, in particular the CPAT (Council of Europe, 2016a) and the Handbook for Professionals (Council of Europe, 2020b) were a distinctive advantage of the Organization, and therefore of this Project. "The CPAT is a very good tool. The EU is acknowledging that", one respondent stated[37]. Other partners echoed that "the tools provided by the Council of Europe – the CPAT, the Handbook – were excellent"[38] and it was very useful to the work done at country level on child participation[39]. Moreover, as one respondent stressed, Project partners had the opportunity to consult with the experts who had designed the CPAT on how to apply this tool, which was seen as very helpful[40].

---

[37] Project Team Member #18.
[38] Project Team Member #24.
[39] Project Team Member #11.
[40] Project Team Member #11.

LATTANZIO
..KIBS

5.3 Effectiveness

Effectiveness refers to "the extent to which the intervention delivers, or is likely to deliver, results in an economic and timely way". (Council of Europe 2020a:9).

The Evaluation tried to measure the extent to which the Project achieved its objectives and results, as per relative importance. This encompassed any differential results across the target groups, with particular reference to the most marginalized children, families and communities in the targeted countries (in line with the equity principle). The timeliness of activities completion and outputs production was also assessed.

The Evaluation uncovered several areas of progress in relation to the attainment of a series of results. As it will be detailed in this section, these areas relate to: children and youth's participation in the Project; the involvement of marginalized groups of children and young persons; child safeguarding; and – to some extent – the production of deliverables envisaged by the Project. Along with the several positive aspects highlighted in this Report that partners, experts and children pointed at regarding the Project's effectiveness, some weaknesses have been identified. They appear to have affected the overall Project's performance in a cross-cutting manner; it appears therefore necessary to clarify these pitfalls, to better situate some limitations to the otherwise positive achievements of the intervention.

Workload and work plan

One weakness of the Project that virtually all concerned parties seem to agree upon is the lack of adequate planning. There is a series of possible reasons that explain this circumstance.

First of all, several changes in the Project Management Team at the Council of Europe seem to have hindered effective coordination, communication and planning. In total, four Project Managers[41] and two Project Assistants rotated on the Project at the Council of Europe, over the 27 months of implementation. While all partners understood that this circumstance was not planned for, and related to legitimate changes in personal and professional plans, the discontinuity that ensued certainly affected the Project's management and planning. "The coordination was a challenge for the whole Project. The Project Manager changed several times. I would say there was a lack of Council of Europe-partners coordination. It was quite poor. We were not satisfied, honestly"[42], one respondent plainly stated.

Secondly, there seemed to be some uncertainties about what the Project wanted to undertake to contribute to its goal and attain its objectives, namely regarding the European-level deliverables. Allegedly, work plans concerning this latter group of activities, in particular, started to become clear only after the Project's mid-term Conference. "There was a lack of coherent, integrated vision. It was not clear what we were trying to achieve"[43], according to one respondent. Another respondent similarly stated that it was only after the latest Council of Europe Project Manager came onboard that everyone "began to get a vision of the Project as a whole"[44], whilst another one stated that "an overall workplan was lacking."[45] This circumstance affected both partners and experts.

Project partners in countries were unclear (to some extent even during the Evaluation data collection phase) about what exactly is expected of them, namely concerning their contribution to European-level deliverables. The shared feeling expressed by partners' representatives throughout interviews was that they did not know what was precisely required of them, when would requests

---

[41] For a total of five different "shifts", as one Project Manager went on maternity leave at some point, was replaced, and came back to leave again after a while.
[42] Project Team Member #14.
[43] Project Team Member #20.
[44] Project Team Member #17.
[45] Project Team Member #16.

LATTANZIO
..KIBS

for contributions be directed at them, and what would these entail. This resulted in an excessive workload being placed on the Project Team members at the national level, and subsequent fatigue and stress. "We were surprised when things came up. First response was fear. One recommendation for a future similar project would be to set up an advisory board among partners, so that everyone is informed about respective responsibilities"[46], one respondent suggested. "I do not have the overall picture. I still cannot figure exactly what is expected of us"[47], another respondent honestly admitted.

Some partners felt that they had not really signed up to the amount of work that the Project required: As one respondent put it, "it should be clarified what would be our tasks in the States. We did not expect to be involved in some other tasks, with the money and time that implied."[48] Another respondent confirmed: "I think the Project became bigger than anyone expected, really."[49] Similarly, one interviewee concluded: "So, in my view, the only constraint that compromised the Project's success was the huge amount of tasks, unexpected, in a hurry, in a rush."[50]

For their part, external experts involved in the Project also felt – at least some of them – that it was unclear what was expected of them. "What was stressful to me was not so much the timeframe, or the relationship with the Council of Europe. It was not knowing what was expected"[51], one respondent said. According to another expert, at the Cork Conference plans were still not fully clear, as during that event "many things were presented, but these were just proposals, what we should be doing, rather than precise deliverables. It was all very loose, very fluid."[52] According to another respondent: "It wasn't at all clear before [the Cork Conference]. Rather than having a request on deliverables, it seemed to be the other way around, that we had to say what the Project should be doing."[53]

The above uncertainties were compounded by the contractual mechanisms through which the external experts' work was organized. As part of the data collection, the Evaluation Team could trace a total of 17 external individual experts/organizations involved in the Project, whose work was divided into 44 different "purchase orders". This means that each expert received, on average, about 2.5 different contracts throughout the Project duration, some of which related to a very few tasks and corresponding working days[54]. The Council of Europe explained that this was simply done in line with their own finance and administrative requirements[55], in order to make contracts with external experts "easily manageable"[56], also in terms of monitoring deadlines[57].

While some experts did not seem to have a problem with such *modus operandi*, some others admitted that it created uncertainties, and failed to see the reasons why their work had to be arranged this way: "Had we had at the beginning of the engagement a contract with a set amount of time, different deliverables, perhaps payments coming in different instalments of course, but… we had no guarantee. We did not know whether there was going to be money"[58], one expert remarked. Another expert pointed to the fact that the lack of clarity about what contribution was expected of them, and at what point in time would it be required, constrained their possibility to contribute to the Project: "Well, it is of course good to have a big pool of experts that the Project and the Governments can rely upon. At the same time, it was not clear at all when our involvement

---

[46] Project Team Member #8.
[47] Project Team Member #7.
[48] Project Team Member #8.
[49] Project Team Member #7.
[50] Project Team Member #13.
[51] Project Team Member #22.
[52] Project Team Member #20.
[53] Project Team Member #17.
[54] This aspect will be discussed further below, under "Synergies between different actors and components".
[55] Project Team Member #4.
[56] Project Team Member #2.
[57] Project Team Member #3.
[58] Project Team Member #20.

LATTANZIO
..KIBS

was going to take place. It was only at the end of the summer last year that the previous Project Manager told us 'Oh, we are going to ask [your organization] to do this and that…' It would have been easier for our planning to know what was ahead. It did not go this way, and this made us reduce the tasks we were asked to contribute at some point, because we lacked capacity in that particular moment."[59] However, the overall impression was that most experts were relying on informal discussions and agreements, as well as on their previous good cooperation with the Council of Europe, in order to overcome the uncertainties and indefiniteness related to the fragmentation of their tasks among multiple purchase orders.

Generally, experts appeared to be very aware about the fact that their requests of inputs directed to partners were often perceived as yet an additional task to be handled by them, on top of their national-level activities. "The experts were working on some different activities, and they were constantly in their own box, soliciting partners to jump in, without having an overarching idea around the Project"[60], one respondent effectively summarized. Thus, some external experts seemed to be torn between their determination to be as inclusive as possible in their work – and to effectively reflect partners and children's inputs into the deliverables they were responsible for – and some reluctance to add yet one more piece of work on the shoulders of national partners.

According to some respondents, the dearth of in-person meetings during the implementation phase[61] might partly explain the lack of a shared vision and planning described above. "We were not meeting face-to-face, which might have added confusion"[62], one respondent suggested. "Maybe for future activities and projects, there need more project meetings in person. We missed that. Meetings online were only on deliverables"[63], another respondent echoed. While this was an understandable pitfall in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent restrictions, it was felt that, nevertheless, this aspect should have been prioritized more[64].
In conclusion, it appears that a clear vision and a proper work plan was developed over the course of implementation, rather than being in place from the outset. "In the end" – one respondent stated, "I believe we will have some positive, concrete deliverables that will be beneficial. Despite a chaotic beginning, we managed to put things into shape, to get clarity, deadlines, deliverables."[65] "The pieces of the puzzle are coming together now"[66], another respondent confirmed.

The difficulties related to work plan and workload highlighted above reverberated also on two other aspects reviewed by this Evaluation: the synergies that were (or were not) created between the different parties involved in the Project and its various components, and the production of the deliverables. These will be examined in the following two paragraphs.

Synergies between different actors and components

Overall, the Project Team's composition, which involved the Council of Europe, government institutions and also external experts on children's rights and on child participation, was regarded as bringing considerable added value to the intervention[67]. While among some actors and Project's components, cooperation and synergies were effectively created, this was not the case for some other parties involved and components entailed.

Albeit this was not emphasized significantly across the interviews, some partners reported to have had fruitful exchanges and interactions with the other Project partners, and to have learnt from

---

[59] Project Team Member #18.
[60] Project Team Member #22.
[61] Project Team Members met in person only on occasion of the mid-term Cork Conference, held in May 2022.
[62] Project Team Member #20.
[63] Project Team Member #8.
[64] Project Team Member #8.
[65] Project Team Member #20.
[66] Project Team Member #17.
[67] Project Team Member #18; Project Team Member #4. See also above, "Added value".

LATTANZIO
..KIBS

those exchanges. "I do feel that we have exchange of good practice!"[68], one respondent said. The Evaluation Team had a general impression that the relationships and cooperation among country partners were overall good and informative as part of the Project.

The cooperation among external experts appears to have been overall good. Virtually every task of the Project that was externalized, envisaged the contribution of more than one expert. They seem to have worked, at least in most cases, in a peaceful and mutually supportive atmosphere. This appears even more remarkable, considering the way in which their work has been structured (see above, "Work plan and work load"). One factor that likely contributed to the good cooperation among external experts is the fact that several of these individuals had already worked with each other and with the Council of Europe in the past, on the very issue of child participation (both on the CPAT tool and assessments, and on the Handbook for Professionals, and possibly also in other ways that this Evaluation could not ascertain in detail). Thus, on the one hand, they could rely on established working relationships, and – in uncertain moments during the Project implementation – even lean on each other for reassurance and support[69]. On the other hand, they were rather motivated to continue the work on child participation that they trusted was effective. Even in the face of fragmented work tasks assignment, they could rely upon an established good cooperation with the Council of Europe. As one expert explained, "most of us had long-standing relationships with the Council of Europe, so it was actually the relationship which sustained the work instead of the contract itself."[70]

Experts and partners' interactions, on the other hand, appear to have been more problematic. While all concerned parties generally spoke rather highly about each other in terms of professionalism and expertise, and there were – as one respondent put it – "good feelings among the partners and experts"[71], partners admittedly did not work very much with external experts, besides providing inputs to what were perceived mainly as "the Council of Europe's activities". As one partner declared: "Experts were a contribution not to national level, but to Council of Europe activities. They were there to ask for our contribution to Council of Europe activities."[72]

It was not possible to ascertain whether capacity building of country partners was foreseen as a specific objective of the Project. On the one hand, the Council of Europe seems to have had this in mind as an intended aim: "We knew that national partners needed extra-expertise", one respondent stated. "We knew this Project would be expert-intensive."[73] Since "all deliverables were produced based on consultations with partners", another Council of Europe representative felt that "the consultative process overall was also part of building capacities as nothing was really developed without the partners' green light."[74]

Partners, however, seem to have perceived things slightly differently. While they overall recognized that external experts brought considerable expertise on child participation and related issues, and that they had genuinely good intentions, as one respondent explained, "the Council of Europe has hired quite many different external experts. It was a good thing, surely, but it added to confusion: we received loads of messages and requests. I am sure each experts acts good, means well."[75] Another partner representative stated: "They were developing materials and asking our opinion on those. This process, I do not see it as capacity building for us. It was work for us!"[76]

Some partners did not even have the chance to get to know all the external experts involved in the Project. To the question about how the collaboration with external experts was structured, one

---

[68] Project Team Member #7.
[69] Project Team Member #17; Project Team Member #20.
[70] Project Team Member #22.
[71] Project Team Member #4.
[72] Project Team Member #12.
[73] Project Team Member #5.
[74] Project Team Member #6.
[75] Project Team Member #14.
[76] Project Team Member #8.

LATTANZIO
..KIBS

partner representative said: "I worked only with [three experts]. I did not even know that there are other experts. The ones we worked with were very helpful about kids' involvement. But I did not even know that there were other experts I could, for example, go for advice or help…"[77] Another respondent similarly stated: "We were not in contact with all of them. It was an immense number of tasks coming up. Some tasks have to do with national practices or good practices. It is a lot of work!"[78]

Indeed, some respondents stated that, even knowing that the Project was benefiting from external experts on child participation, they did not know how to effectively involve them in their national-level activities: "I have been thinking, in the beginning," one partner representative explained, "about how to use the international experts for our activities, but it was challenging. I could not think about activities in which to involve them in order to create added value. Their input was more on Council of Europe-led activities."[79] Similarly, another respondent admitted: "They were telling us all the time 'Use our experts!', but I didn't know how to involve them in national activities."[80]

In sum, while external experts undoubtedly brought a high level of expertise to the Project, and they tried to carry out their respective tasks in a very professional and inclusive manner, it appears that their role was perceived by partners as confined to the European level, often as an add-on to their already substantial workload, and that synergies with activities at national level were the exception rather than the rule. In other words, it seems that experts were not put in the position to provide more help and technical support to national partners in achieving their national-level deliverables.

And in fact, the above situation is also closely related to the (perceived, at least) usefulness and potential impact of Project deliverables. One of the Project's ambitions was to produce "a range of new European resources and tools" – based on national-level experiences and deliverables - and to "reinject" these into the Project[81], so to benefit country partners and potentially also other countries. However, this aim was realized only to a rather limited extent. While on the one hand the need to contribute inputs to European-level deliverables in a compressed time-frame was regarded as a problem by virtually all partners' representatives interviewed as part of this Evaluation (see above, "Work plan and workload"), even at the time when the Project is about to end, national partners seemed not really able to assess the value of what they largely perceived to be "Council of Europe's deliverables".

When asked whether they believed that the European-level resources that they were requested to contribute to will bring a benefit to the partner countries – and hopefully beyond -, a partner representative openly answered: "I don't know… It is probably too early to say. At national level, we could make direct links and synergies, and that was great. At the European level I am not so sure, and some outputs are not ready yet."[82] Another respondent explained: "I think the problem is that the majority of partners did not understand what were the European level deliverables. I did not see a connection with our national level activities."[83]

As anticipated in the previous paragraph, the timing of the production of Project deliverables (especially the European-level ones) appears to have substantially undermined the possibility for national partners to benefit from them, and also to appreciate their usefulness. This was regarded by several partners and experts alike as a missed opportunity of this Project.

Production of deliverables

---

[77] Project Team Member #7.
[78] Project Team Member #12.
[79] Project Team Member #14.
[80] Project Team Member #24.
[81] Project Proposal, Annex 1B, p.5.
[82] Project Team Member #14.
[83] Project Team Member #24.

LATTANZIO
..KIBS

As of the beginning of May, when the data collection phase of the present Evaluation had practically ended, 16 out of 45 expected Project deliverables were still in progress. Several of the pending deliverables were substantial ones, including action plans and tools at national level, as well as all European-level resources. This circumstance made it difficult to assess the quality of Project's outputs. At the same time, the Evaluators' capacity to look in details at all deliverables already submitted was limited by both language barriers and lack of time. A series of observations about the deliverables already produced at the time of the Evaluation could, however, be made.

At the national level, partners appeared largely satisfied about the deliverables they have produced or are finalizing. In the Czech Republic, partner representatives expressed satisfaction about the Action Plan they have produced: reportedly, this document was based on the CPAT assessment results and has the potential to involve a large number of relevant stakeholders, and to be "the framework to follow" on child participation in the country[84]. In Finland, the Project partner explained how the online training course on how to consult with children in legislative drafting, targeting public officials, is a quality product that can be accessed widely in the country; the same goes for the Consultation Guide for law drafters, which they managed to amend with Project documents, including a section on child participation[85]. In Portugal, the White Paper was, in the respondents' words, "very rich", with "very rich information from institutions and from children"[86]. In Slovenia, the adaptation of the Council of Europe's Handbook for Professionals to the national context was regarded by partners as a successful process and achievement of the Project: partners collected inputs from several professionals, working with children in different circumstances (including marginalized groups of children), and they adapted the Handbook to make it suitable and applicable to their specific context. In Iceland, the Project provided the opportunity and platform to carry out a large number of child consultations throughout the country, providing the basis to enact permanent consultation mechanisms at ministerial level[87].

One deliverable envisaged as part of the Project that was common to all country partners is the production of a child safeguarding policy, that each partner was committed to adopt prior to involving children and young persons in activities. As it will be discussed later (see below, "Child safeguarding"), this is considered as a remarkable output of the Project, leading to potentially significant outcomes in the realization of children's right to protection. Actually, virtually all partners – being aware of the areas in which work would still be needed – sounded intentioned, at times even determined, to carry on the efforts in the area of child safeguarding initiated in the framework of this Project.

At European level, all deliverables were still in draft form at the time of the Evaluation. Some of them are regarded as particularly promising. The Guidelines for Developing a National Children's Participation Strategy, which has benefited from reviews by several experts, appears now to be a solid and comprehensive guidance document. Similarly, some respondents spoke very well about the Outcome Indicators, as in their views, these were very needed to complement the 10 output-level indicators that the CPAT is currently based upon[88]. Some children and young persons involved in the Evaluation process had a high opinion of the child-led campaign, which they describe as a demanding piece of work, which in the end led to positive results that they were enthusiastic about[89]. As one participant summarized: "The work on the campaign was very nice. We didn't always quite understand what we were doing, but the result was a pleasant surprise and we could also see a lot of our suggestions in the result, which was nice."[90]

---

[84] Czech Republic Project Team Members.
[85] Finland Project Team Members.
[86] Portugal Project Team Members.
[87] Iceland Project Team Member.
[88] Project Team Member #1; Project Team Member #17; Project Team Member #20.
[89] Child/young person 4, 14 years old; Child/young person 5, 23 years old; Child/young person.
[90] Child/young person.

The mid-term Project Conference, organized in Cork in May 2022, was frequently referred to as a turning point across interviews with adult respondents. Albeit – as highlighted above ("Work plan and work load") – there were still uncertainties at the Cork Conference, this event appears to have created a bond among some Project participants, to have raised their commitment to the Project, and to have been a very enjoyable occasion to listen to children and young persons in presence. "We really tried to break the walls of the conference"[91], one participant recalled. For some experts, it was an opportunity to meet for the first time, fact which benefit their subsequent cooperation on the Project[92]. One partner also expressed deep appreciation of the way the Council of Europe welcomed the child and young participants to the Conference, and stressed that "the Council of Europe Staff were absolutely excellent in their interaction with children"[93].

About one third of children and young persons involved in the Evaluation, for their part, expressed mixed feelings about the Cork Conference[94]. One participant described the event as an opportunity for children and youth to voice their opinions about their rights. She also said that at the beginning she was worried to travel without her family, but then she was "OK, because I trusted the adults with whom I was". And it was worth the travel, as the Cork Conference "changed my life and my future", in her words[95].

Conversely, a few children and young persons said that they regard the Conference as one of the less successful activities.[96] According to another participant, the Conference "was not child-friendly in terms of the speakers that all spoke way too long and too 'adult'"[97]. Another participant also complained about the "days that were too long"[98].

The Project's final Conference, planned in Strasbourg on 5-7 June 2023, is expected to be child-friendly and give prominence to children and young people's inputs, views, and participation. Project Team Members together with members of the CAT and experts have been working on the organization of this event for some months. Albeit the Evaluation process will be nearly finalized by the time of the final Conference, it is expected that the Project Team will build on the results and lessons learnt from the mid-term Conference, to make this event even more inclusive, tailored and relevant to children and young persons – as well as to any other participant.

One of the European-level activities that several respondents referred to is the "creation of a web-based platform for networking purposes, peer exchanges and access to key resources". (CP4Europe Project, Deliverables, Ethics, DMP, Other Reports, 10 May 2023). Such platform should "provide resources such as guidelines, training materials, videos, etc. for both professionals and children, and facilitate exchanges of lessons learned and good practices around child participation." (CP4Europe Project, Draft concept for external website development). In order to ensure complementarity and avoid duplication, the above platform should be linked to the EU Child Participation Platform, which aims to connect existing child participation mechanisms at local, national and EU level, and to involve children in the decision-making processes at the EU level[99]..

Some respondents see real potential in the web-based platform to be created by the Project. "I believe it will be very useful", one participant stated. "The countries who want to undertake the CPAT assessment and policy developments following that, can rely on countries who have already undertaken it."[100]

---

[91] Project Team Member #6.
[92] Project Team Member #16.
[93] Project Team Member #1213.
[94] However, not all children who participated to the Evaluation had attended the Cork Conference.
[95] Child/young person 6, 17 years old.
[96] Child/young person 5, 23 years old.
[97] Child/young person.
[98] Child/young person.
[99] https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/rights-child/eu-childrens-participation-platform/about-eu-childrens-participation-platform_en
[100] Project Team Member #1.

LATTANZIO
..KIBS

However – as highlighted elsewhere (below, "Sustainability") – there are still uncertainties regarding the platform's future sustainability. Moreover, the fact that this deliverable is being produced at the very end of the implementation phase did not allow country partners to fully appreciate its potential usefulness (see above, "Synergies between different actors and components").

Children and young persons' participation in the Project

Children and young persons were involved in Project activities mainly through their participation in the CAT, and in the framework of FGDs that were held at national level to consult on the CPAT assessments, and/or on the production of different Project deliverables.

Regarding the point of engagement, it seems that children and young persons got involved at the implementation stage of the Project cycle. Albeit to a limited extent, children have been actively involved also during the (current) Evaluation phase. As far as respondents knew, children and young persons were not directly involved at the stage of Project design. While it is too early to say whether children and young people will be involved in following up and acting upon the Project's results, a number of them will participate to the Project final Conference (June 2023), which might be a very suitable opportunity to plan further actions based on the Project, also involving children and young persons.

Concerning the level of involvement of children and young persons, the Project has largely entailed forms of consultative participation. This was mostly the case for the many children and youth involved in FGDs at the national level. The Project also aimed to achieve a collaborative level of child participation. This concerned the children and young persons who were involved in the mid-term Conference and later became members of the CAT. Indeed, whilst the conference and the activities in which child and youth members of the CAT became involved were initiated by adults, there seems to have been a fair degree of shared decision-making, through which children and young persons could exert their influence over processes and outcomes of any given activity. Probably, had the CAT's duration been longer, its members could have been given even more agency in deciding and planning on activities to undertake.

Some aspects of the quality of child participation throughout the Project were assessed, albeit sometimes to a limited extent, while other ones could not be ascertained during the Evaluation. Actually, feedback from children and young persons who participated to the Project activities has not been systematically collected and documented throughout the Project implementation (and this relates to the lack of a broader impact monitoring system for the Project – see below, "Impact"), and the Evaluation entailed consultation with a limited number of children and youth involved in the Project. For example, Evaluators were not able to establish whether children and young persons had been clearly informed upfront about the purpose of their involvement, the scope of their participation, the extent to which they would be able to influence ongoing decision-making processes - and hence the potential impact of the activities they were about to engage in. Based on the information provided by some adult respondents, it seems that these aspects could have been analyzed in greater depth at the Project design stage. When asked about the purpose of involving children and young persons in the Project, one respondent stated that it was primarily for credibility: "Not involving children in a child participation project would be meaningless!" Further, it was "to also send a message to member States: involving children is complex, but it is feasible."[101] Another respondent stated that "the whole idea was to hear from [children] as important stakeholders."[102]

Child and youth participants involved in the Evaluation stated that they were given the opportunity and time to consider their involvement in the different activities entailed by the CAT membership.

---

[101] Project Team Member #6.
[102] Project Team Member #5.

LATTANZIO
..KIBS

Allegedly, children and youth's other commitments – such as school, homework, family and friends time, sports etc. – were sufficiently respected and accommodated in the CAT meetings schedule. When asked whether it was difficult to reconcile her commitments with Project's activities, a young participant answered: "No, it wasn't difficult because I have ideas and my friends can give me ideas and my family also tries to help because I can do things in the Project. And I can also do my homework without problems."[103] Another child said that, albeit he had to adjust his schedule, "it hasn't been to hard" for him to attend meetings[104]. Similarly, another CAT member explained: "We prioritized the Project above other things. The online meetings were also held on Friday afternoons as per our request because that made it possible to attend them without needing to skip school."[105]

One respondent's words confirm the above, and that children felt free to choose whether or not they would like to participate, and also to opt out of some activities: "I am very pleased with how free the Project program was", she said. "Nobody forced me and I could choose the activities I wanted to be involved in. I had a lot of freedom in what I wanted to get involved in. I am truly very grateful for that."[106] Similarly, another participant stated that, although it was initially challenging for her to balance engagement across different activities (Project activities and studying, making friends etc.), "the activities were not so time-consuming that it could not be reconciled, I think it was acceptable. It was rather voluntary. I liked that one could say one did not have time for something."[107]

However, granting children the possibility to reconcile Project activities with other commitments was not always an easy task for those in charge to organize their participation. As one respondent explained, "there is a tendency to be over-optimistic in terms of timeline for involving children. There was an excellent commitment to involve children, but the organization of things needs more time."[108] In another respondent's opinion, "the number of activities, the amount of workload and the number of sessions [with child members of the CAT] was higher than we would have ever expected." When asked whether this had been problematic for the organizers or for the child and youth participants, the above respondent stated: "Both. Children are busy! They have other activities. Plus it entailed a very high amount of work from our side. It's being a lot. Sometimes, it is not easy to have all children available for sessions."[109]

The Evaluation could not really ascertain to which extent children felt that they were provided with opportunities to express their views freely. However, partners' attitudes, along with some firm statements provided by children themselves, have been encouraging. When asked whether he thought that everyone was welcome at the CAT, and that each member's opinion was given the same weight and importance, one child respondent resolutely stated: "Yes, I do. I think that everybody's opinions have been heard and taken into account in documents [referring to the CPAT child-friendly version] and now with travel arrangements [to attend the final Conference]."[110] Speaking about herself, another child stated: "Everyone tried very hard to make me feel good and able to express myself and to make everyone understand me. Especially at the beginning [when] there was a [linguistic] barrier."[111] Two other participants confirmed: "It never seemed to me that anyone would behave like a in condescending way", one girl said. "It looked like no one's opinion was more important. There was no one who had more influence than others."[112] The other girl echoed: "I agree with [the other girl]. Nobody evaluated us by age, experience or anything by any other parameters. It felt good."[113]

---

[103] Child/young person 6, 17 years old.
[104] Child/young person 7, 14 years old.
[105] Child/young person.
[106] Child/young person 4, 14 years old.
[107] Child/young person 5, 23 years old.
[108] Project Team Member #19.
[109] Project Team Member #12.
[110] Child/young person 7, 14 years old.
[111] Child/young person 4, 14 years old.
[112] Child/young person 4, 14 years old.
[113] Child/young person 5, 23 years old.

LATTANZIO
..KIBS

The Project set out to mainstream gender throughout the whole action, to pay attention to gender inequality patterns in society affecting girls more than boys, and recognizing that boys have an active role to play in breaking stereotypes. The Project committed partners to ensure that boys and girls were given a voice and were equipped with capacities and confidence to challenge existing gender-based discriminations in child participation. (Project Proposal, Annex 1B, p.16). During the Evaluation, the gender dimension did not come up as a very prominent aspect of the Project. Gender-disaggregated data were not provided to the Evaluation Team concerning the involvement of children in the consultative FGDs held throughout the implementation phase. Project Team Members seemed aware of the need to give boys and girls equal chances to participate, and to address gender-based discrimination, but they did not refer to specific strategies that they had enacted to address the gender dimension of discriminatory attitudes and practices girls (or boys) may be subjected to in enjoying their right to participate.

Albeit the CAT was set up only in Autumn 2022, the Evaluation gathered the impression that **the quality of children and youth's participation evolved over time, and that participants have been empowered and reached an increased level of confidence while engaging in the Project**. Two respondents provided an impressive account in that regard, concerning two children they had been working with together: "Yes, I noticed an improvement. In the beginning, [the children] were always very interested in participating. For [name of the girl], it was not her first step. She had been involved in the previous phase and in Cork. She loved to be in consultations. For [name of the boy], who is in residential care, he was also very enthusiastic in first meetings, but as sessions were coming up, he started to be more interested and taking these more seriously. He would prepare with materials we sent them before each session. He feels so empowered! Sometimes, [name of the girl] tries to say something and he speaks up, so we have to make him understand that it is OK to have different opinions."[114]

One of these two children, also involved in the Evaluation, testified this empowering process. He said: "For me, I can imagine that I can improve the world for children and young persons because, you already know, they are very important for the future. My dream is that children explain about children, what is so important, what they will represent in the future. Now they are children."[115] Another respondent stated: "Yes, it became easier to speak our minds as we got further along in the Project. We also grew closer as a group and felt more comfortable with each other, and therefore it was easier to debate things and come to a mutual conclusion. It also helped when we started to recognize the other participants in the online meetings. In general, the participation became easier as we went on."[116] One child appeared to be very aware of her progress. She said: "I was confident that I could speak my mind. Over time, I began to speak more of my opinions. I can say absolutely everything and others will somehow take it. Gradually, I became more confident about myself."[117]

The Evaluation tried to ascertain whether the involvement of children and young people in the Project has been relevant to their lives and the context in which they live. While the opinions of all the children and youth involved in consultative FGDs could only be guessed indirectly, based on partners' enthusiastic feedback on such participation and what it meant for children, **Project activities seem to have been overall relevant for the children who enrolled in the CAT**. Child members seem to be genuinely interested in working on enhancing child participation in their national contexts and beyond, as they perceived a need to do that. "The Project is useful for those countries that are not so progressive in child participation", one participant stated[118]. Similarly, another participant stated: "It is an important Project, given that participation is an underestimated topic in [our country]."[119]

---

[114] Project Team Members.
[115] .,Child/young person 7, 14 years old.
[116] Child/young person.
[117] Child/young person 4, 14 years old.
[118] Child/young person.
[119] Child/young person 5, 23 years old.

LATTANZIO
..KIBS

CAT members seem to really have seen the Project as a unique opportunity to widening child participation, as well as to make themselves heard: "I joined the CAT because it bothered me that no one listened to me. Suddenly, I felt that my opinion and point of view were being listened to. It was a great feeling"[120], one child declared. Another participant explained: "To me, it is important to participate because children need to say the things they need and adults need to know [how] to help improving the world for children to be happy; therefore it is important to involve children in the Project."[121]

As one participant highlighted, participation might be underestimated by children and youth themselves, bringing one more reason to join this Project: "In [our country], young people aren't so interested in participating, in making influence. Maybe because they think that everything works well enough and there are no problems or because they think that they should put more effort in school or hobbies than in activities like this."[122] Some children felt that they had been involved in ways that were appropriate to their capacities and interests, and that they had something to bring and to contribute: "I was interested in gaining experiences of participation and making impact on a larger scale", one child stated. "I have done quite a lot of advocacy work in [my country] and I was interested in international-level participation and influencing."[123] Similarly, another respondent stated: "I wanted to share the skills [on child and youth participation] that I have learnt in my country also abroad."[124]

Some children and young persons were interested in joining the Project also because it entailed an opportunity to work with the Council of Europe, and to improve their English-language skills. In general – as one respondent put it – "The international element made it extra-exciting".[125]

While most children and young persons who took part in the Evaluation seem to regard the activities that were proposed to them as adequate to their age and maturity, as well as skills and interests, a few participant provided a mixed feedback, and this had mostly to deal with age range and age groups. As one respondent explained, speaking about the CAT: "The group had mixed ages, so it's not always the same for everyone and this makes it difficult, to make things relevant for all ages. This is a big age group which is difficult when the group is so small and it makes it difficult to connect with children that are far from you in age."[126] S/he went on, suggesting that "it is important to find a balance and to – maybe – divide the group more by age. It's also not good to have a smaller age-group because it's important to hear from children of different ages, but maybe split up the work more so children of similar age are engaging more."[127]

In abidance to quality standards for child participation, the involvement of children and young persons should be supported by training opportunities for the adults who facilitate such involvement. It **appears that the Project did not provide for training and preparation of adult facilitators prior to engagement with children**, **except for the important area of child safeguarding – see below, "Child safeguarding", nor for ongoing support throughout such participation**. According to one respondent, since the Council of Europe have their standards on child participation, member States were obliged to follow such standards.[128] However, as confirmed by another respondent, experience and expertise on working with children inevitably varies across countries, partner organizations, as well as individuals involved in the Project.[129] The Project seems to have relied on the fact that partners would abide by the standards set out by the

---

[120] Child/young person 4, 14 years old.
[121] .,Child/young person 6, 17 years old.
[122] Child/young person.
[123] Child/young person.
[124] Child/young person.
[125] Child/young person.
[126] Child/young person.
[127] Child/young person.
[128] Project Team Member #4.
[129] Project Team Member #1.

LATTANZIO
..KIBS

Council of Europe, but even with the best of their intentions, they might have failed at times to do so, and – as admitted by one interviewee – "it is extremely complicated to have a decentralization of responsibility towards children and to be able to control that."[130]

The Evaluation could not really assess whether after participation children and young people have been, and will be, provided with feedback on how their views have been interpreted and used, and whether and how they have influenced any outcomes. These data have not been systematically collected as part of the Project. While some partners and experts are planning on providing feedback to children about the Evaluation findings, for instance, more broadly this aspect seems to have been left to partners and experts' sensibility and initiative, rather than planned for as a required component in the Project - in order to ensure accountability towards children and young persons involved. However, since many Project's deliverables have been produced with inputs from children and youth, it is likely that at least the members of the CAT were kept up-to-date about developments concerning those products during the implementation phase, and will presumably have an opportunity to reflect on those aspects on occasion of the Project's closing Conference.

Finally, the Evaluation aimed to assess the quality of involvement of children and young persons in the Project against two other criteria: inclusiveness, and safety and security. These very important aspects are discussed in the next two paragraphs.

Involvement of marginalized children and young persons

The Project proposal documents did envisage the involvement of children who are discriminated against. Whilst such documents did not offer concrete and specific measures to challenge existing patterns of discrimination in child participation, during the implementation phase, **partners appear to have tried hard to honor their commitment, and to reach out to the most marginalized groups of children and youth. However, things seem to have worked rather differently for the larger consultations through FGDs, and the setting up of the CAT.**

Concerning the involvement of children and young people in ad hoc consultations (FDGs), children and young persons who were involved represented a noticeable variety of backgrounds and experiences. Alongside "mainstream children", the Project involved: children from national minorities; children from ethnic minorities (namely Roma children); children from sexual and gender minorities; deaf children and children with other physical or mental disabilities; children who were clients of the child protection systems, including sexually abused children and child victims of domestic violence; children in institutional care facilities; children in contact with the law; and children on the move[131]. One respondent underlined that they also tried to reach geographical balance, by involving children from "remote areas of the country, [who] said that this was the first time they were really heard on something."[132]

While admitting that it was a challenging process, and that sometimes they wish they had reached out to larger number of children, partners sounded very satisfied of their accomplishments in terms of inclusivity. Reaching out to children in vulnerable situations "was one of the main objectives of the Project in [our country]", one respondent explained. "It was challenging, but we managed. […] The number is not very high, but…"[133]

When they assessed that the institution they represent was not in the right position to reach out to and involve children and youth directly, partners approached NGOs[134] or other institutions[135] that

---

[130] Project Team Member #5.
[131] Information provided by Council of Europe and Project partners' representatives during interviews.
[132] Project Team Member #13.
[133] Project Team Member #14.
[134] This was the case in the Czech Republic, in Finland and in Slovenia.
[135] As it was the case in Portugal.

were, in their views, more suitable to do so. As one respondent explained: "We had no experience on how to involve children in such a systematic way. We tried to be very careful. We approached organizations who were already working with children. Initially, we did not dare to go straight to children ourselves."[136] However, the above-respondent also said that at a later point of implementation, and thanks to the experience gained through the Project, they did feel confident to approach children themselves.

Some partners even acknowledged, during the interviews, that some groups of children and young people were not (or not sufficiently) involved in the CP4Europe Project, and are planning to fill in this gap in their future activities. Partner representatives in one country explained: "There are some children that we weren't able to reach, and that we are now trying to involve through [a different] project. Smaller children (preschoolers); also more children with institutional care experience; children in hospitals…"[137]

Partners and experts' opinions about the composition of the CAT are quite different from the above. Most respondents highlighted the fact that the very idea of setting up a children and youth advisory team came up quite abruptly, at some point during the Cork Conference. Albeit in more than one country partners managed to enroll children from vulnerable background, all other partners stated that – had they had more time, including the opportunity to discuss in greater depth the selection criteria – they would have tried to reach out to and include children and young persons bringing a much more diversified range of experiences and backgrounds to the CAT.

Due to the limited time, partners approached children and young persons with whom they had already established contacts, and/or those who were already active at the national or local level. As one partner representative admitted, "we wouldn't have selected them the way we did. There was no proper time to ensure equal opportunities." […] Due to the shortness of time, we went for the easiest solution. […] We had to select very fast. Suddenly, the activity rushed in."[138] Similarly, another respondent recalled: "Then in Autumn 2002 came the request: to add more children to the CAT"[139], in addition to the ones who had attended the Cork Conference in May 2022. As highlighted previously in this Report (see above, "Workload and work plan"), the lack of a proper planning process appears to have hindered the achievement and/or scope of some Project's hoped-for results.

Along with time, the selection criteria set out to enroll children in the CAT were – as one respondent put it – "quite demanding. They had to be fluent in English; to be younger children; to have already been active in the CP4Europe Project; to belong possibly to vulnerable groups. And the timeline was very tight." When asked whether they had the chance to input into the selection criteria for the CAT, the above-respondent answered that they had made some comments via e-mail, but "they were kind of given. In principle, I support them. But they were not very realistic under the circumstances."[140] Similarly, another respondent stated: "As for the CAT, the problem all the time is that if you engage children in an international project, you will not have children from vulnerable backgrounds. They have to speak English well, be able to travel…"[141]

One more limitation concerning inclusiveness is that the Project appears to have largely confined child participation to older children and young persons. As one respondent confirmed, "possibly some younger children were involved, but this was the exception rather than the rule."[142] At least as far as the CAT membership is concerned, participation appears to have been limited to (pre-) adolescents and young adults[143]. However, as one respondent noted, as part of the production of

---

[136] Project Team Member #11.
[137] Project Team Member #11.
[138] Project Team Member #12.
[139] Project Team Member #7.
[140] Project Team Member #14.
[141] Project Team Member #20.
[142] Project Team Member #1.
[143] Project Team Member #1.

LATTANZIO
▪▪KIBS

national-level deliverables (and possibly also European-level ones), professionals working with younger children – as young as of kindergarten age – have been actively involved. Thus, indirectly, the Project is hoped to benefit also the participation of younger children[144].

Child safeguarding

The Project Proposal recognizes that "it is of utmost importance to create safe spaces for children and provide them with reporting opportunities (and information about them) in order to protect children and prevent any safety issues." It also states that "all partners of the present project have their own child safeguarding policies or are in the process of developing them."[145] In the list of deliverables, a child safeguarding policy for each participating country is included[146].

At the outset of the Project, the Council of Europe had in place the Child Rights Division's child safeguarding policy, which had been adopted in April 2018 (Council of Europe. Directorate of Anti-Discrimination, 2019:15). As clarified during interviews, the above-policy only applies to the Child Rights Division. At the time of the Evaluation, the process for developing a child safeguarding policy applicable to the whole Organization was under way.

The Council of Europe has a Code of Conduct in place. This is a clear and concise guide of what is and is not acceptable behavior or practice when employed with the Organization. It is grouped up into different sets of standards. It is considered as legally binding upon all Staff members, and breaches may lead to disciplinary sanctions. Moreover, it is expected that all those involved with the Organization's activities will uphold the values and respect the standards set out in the Code of Conduct, "to the extent that they are applicable to them". (Council of Europe, 2023b:4). This presumably includes consultants, volunteers, individual contractors, personnel of partner organizations, etc. The Code of Conduct also applies to Staff members' private life, to the extent that private conducts might affect the Organization as well. Albeit several parts of the above-Code of Conduct are relevant to child safeguarding (namely: the obligation to respect international and national laws; the imperative upon Staff members to avoid any action that would result in unnecessary risks for any other persons; etc.), the Code of Conduct does not contain explicit provisions concerning what is acceptable and unacceptable behavior with regards to children.

Project partners in countries reportedly did not have their own child safeguarding policies in place prior to the Project[147]. By the time children were first involved in the Project, each partner had developed their own policy, as it was a deliverable required in the Project. While it was not possible – due to time limitations and also language barriers – to assess the conformity of all policies in place to minimum quality standards for child safeguarding, this is regarded as a significant achievement of the intervention.

Admittedly, specific risks related to child safeguarding were not assessed as part of the risk identification and management for this intervention. As one respondent stated, "partners may have conducted specific risk assessments at the outset of the Project; however, for sure these were not updated on a regular basis."[148] Reportedly, there were, indeed, attempts to undertake risk assessments covering child safeguarding (notably during the Cork Conference), but it was not done systematically.[149] This was openly regarded by some as a weakness of the Project on the child safeguarding front, and is considered as a "lesson learnt". Allegedly, for the final Conference, a child safeguarding risks assessment is being undertaken.[150]

---

[144] Project Team Member #24.
[145] Project Proposal, Annex 1B, p.16
[146] Project Proposal, Annex 1, p.7-11
[147] Information provided by country partners' representatives during the interviews.
[148] Project Team Member #1.
[149] Project Team Member #6.
[150] Project Team Member #3.

LATTANZIO
..KIBS

Neither the Council of Europe (or its Child Rights Division), nor the Project Partners, seem to have appointed a designated Focal Point (department or person) for child safeguarding within their respective organizations[151]. As explained by one respondent, "a focal point was appointed for each particular event we organized as part of the Project."[152] This suggests that the policy has yet to fully percolate within these organizations and their structures, for them to appoint a stable child safeguarding focal point carrying the responsibility for the overall development and implementation of the child safeguarding policy.

Similarly to the focal point (above), respondents appeared generally hesitant about the child safeguarding procedures in place. The Evaluation focused, in particular, on complaint and reporting procedures applicable to the Project, and on the extent to which these were known to children, young persons, their families, communities and other external stakeholders involved in the Project. Several Project Team Members seemed somehow unsure about such procedures: "I am checking on the website… but I do not recall…"[153], one respondent stated. "That was supposed to be part of the process [of developing a child safeguarding policy]", another respondent said[154]. Other interviewees were more cnfident about the existence of complaint and reporting procedures. In particular, one respondent clarified: "In our child safeguarding policy, there are five or six parts, there is also a part explaining how to raise a concern and how to file a complaint. There are the phone numbers and contact details of people etc."[155] Another respondent explained that they inform children – among other things - about their rights, about what must everyone do to respect them, and whom they might contact in case there is some problem.[156]

Concerning the way the complaint and reporting procedures were made easily available and accessible to children and young persons, as well as their parents and other relevant adults, it seems that partners did their best to inform children as much as they could. In most cases, the answer provided by respondents about how this information had been conveyed was that they would "send the policy to every participant in advance of an event, and ask him or her to sign it."[157] Another respondent similarly stated that "a child-friendly package was sent to them [ahead of the Cork Conference], wherein the child safeguarding policy was also explained."[158]

However, even though at times, or by some partners more than others, children and young persons were informed about the child safeguarding policies, the minimum standards of behavior they were entitled to expect from project team members, and whom to contact in case they had a concern to raise or a complaint to make[159], it appears that this aspect of putting child safeguarding measures in place would need further work, along with the development of other sets of relevant procedures, which most organizations seemed not to have developed at the time of the Evaluation. These include: whistleblowing, recruitment, induction/training[160] procedures, as well as programming guidelines – including on risk identification and management for safe programming – and partnership arrangements guidance on child safeguarding.

Virtually all respondent encouragingly stated that they/the organization they represent intend to

---

[151] Project Team Member #4;
[152] Project Team Member #3.
[153] Project Team Member #14.
[154] Project Team Member #6.
[155] Project Team Member #11.
[156] Project Team Member #12.
[157] Project Team Member #11.
[158] Project Team Member #1.
[159] This aspect was touched upon only lightly during the Evaluation FGDs with children and young persons, and it could be covered only with some groups of children and youth, mostly due to lack of time to engage them in a more in-depth discussion on how safe they felt as part of the Project. The few participants who provided inputs on that, however, seemed to know whom to turn to in case something bothered them.
[160] While systematic training on child safeguarding does not seem to take place at any of the organizations involved in the Project, at the outset of the implementation phase the Council of Europe did deliver a training on child safeguarding to partners. (Project Team Member #5; Project Team Member #6).

LATTANZIO
..KIBS

take forward the work on child safeguarding, beyond the Project's duration. This will be discussed further below (under "Impact" and "Sustainability").

Key-factors and Project's components that determined or constrained its success

One factor that contributed to the Project's achievements which emerged very clearly from the interviews is the timeliness of the intervention. As highlighted previously in this report ("Adherence of the Project to beneficiaries and partners' needs and priorities"), the Project was perceived as very timely in the countries in which it was implemented. This circumstance appears to have kept country partners' motivation high throughout the whole Project lifecycle. Partners does not seem to have regarded the Project as just one more source of funding for their activities; on the contrary, they sounded convinced about the relevance of the intervention, and motivated to implement it at their best capacity.

Also related to the above, Project Teams at country level have remained steady throughout the whole implementation phase. This emerged as another factor of success, also balancing the changes occurred at the Council of Europe Project Management level (see further below). In Slovenia, according to partners' representatives in that country, they had already been cooperating on children's rights and other areas for a long time, so this partner was meant to be there from the beginning[161]. In Iceland, where there was a change in partnership to the Project, the internal handover and communication between the two institutions was reportedly smooth and comprehensive[162].

As highlighted by one respondent, one of the key-factors contributing to the Project's success was the fact that the intervention relied upon high-quality tools and a tested approach on child participation[163]. As one respondent enthusiastically declared: "We got a great opportunity to learn a lot. Events, materials, toolkits… It is great that they are also on child-friendly versions, which makes them easy to use. That enabled us to jump over some years in developing child participation!"[164] Indeed, virtually all respondents frequently referred to the CPAT and the Handbook for Professionals as the elements that either made them decide to join the Project in first place, and/or were to be considered as a solid basis for its success. This factor was reinforced by the fact that the external experts involved in the Project had first-hand knowledge of the CPAT and other of the above tools (which some had even directly co-authored and/or implemented previously), or were anyways very familiar with the Council of Europe's work on child participation, and appeared very committed to take this work forward.

Some factors appear, conversely, to have limited the Project's potential success and achievements. As the majority of respondents interviewed as part of the Evaluation highlighted, the lack of a proper and widely agreed-upon work plan, and the consequent work pressure and delay in producing some deliverables appears to have constrained the usefulness that these deliverables could have brought to the Project, as well as their future sustainability (see above, "Workload and work plan").

Changes at Council of Europe Management level was also reported as a factor limiting the Project's potential. While everyone understood that life circumstances and legitimate personal choices determined that, it was still regarded as a problem, hindering effective coordination, communication and planning (see above, "Workload and work plan").

Interestingly, the COVID-19 pandemic – whose impact on the Project the Evaluation was specifically required to analyze – does not seem to have been determining in limiting the success of the intervention. While some respondents noted that the lack of more frequent in-person

---

[161] Information provided by the Slovenia Project Team.
[162] Information provided by the Iceland Project Team.
[163] Project Team Member #8.
[164] Project Team Member #11.

LATTANZIO
KIBS

meetings among the Project Team has, in their view, limited the creation of a team and of a common vision for the Project (see above, "Workload and work plan"), several respondents – when asked to which extent had the pandemic limited the intervention – stated that they would not regard this as a decisive element. One respondent explained: "It was challenging a bit for the organization of FGDs. We were at that time learning how to communicate online, which was not much the case in [our country] until that moment… So the challenge was how to make it attractive for children, how to gain their attention. However, we were learning also how to make FGDs in person, so it was not a huge complication the COVID for us, I would say."[165]

Another respondent even said that the COVID-19 restrictions were not a problem at all: "One of the issues that we thought it would be a constraint, the pandemic, in our case it was not! We managed to do all consultations, online, in a hybrid way, and of course in person whenever it was possible"[166].

Further, while as understandable the uncertainties related to the pandemic had to be taken into consideration at the Project design stage[167], the Council of Europe seem to have effectively taken the lead in addressing the situation since the outset of the Project, particularly concerning the impact on the participation of children and young persons to the different activities envisaged. At the inception meeting, the experts who had designed the CPAT tool were invited, and answered partners' questions about how to best reach children belonging to vulnerable groups in the pandemic context. They provided guidance and examples of good practice[168].

---

[165] Project Team Member #11.
[166] Project Team Member #13.
[167] Project Team Member #3.
[168] Information provided by a Council of Europe representative.

LATTANZIO
■■KIBS

5.4   Efficiency

> Efficiency is defined as "the extent to which the intervention delivers, or is likely to deliver, results in an economic and timely way". (Council of Europe, 2020a:9).
>
> This criterion is normally used to measure the outputs – qualitative and quantitative – achieved as a result of inputs. It assesses whether the most efficient approach has been used, in light of feasible alternatives in the given context.

The Project budget shared with the Evaluation Team is not sufficiently detailed to fully assess the intervention's effectiveness. In particular, resource allocation in terms of working days is not disclosed, nor is the detail of sub-contracted budget lines available.

However, some general considerations could be made.

About one third of total direct costs have been allocated to cover the costs of Council of Europe's Staff in charge of Project management. Such amount appears somehow disproportionately high, also in light of the following considerations. First, around another 33% of the overall direct costs have been allocated to sub-contracting, which – for most part (190.510 out of 286.835 Euros) has been used to produce the European-level tools, whose production was thus entrusted to external experts. Secondly, the central-level planning, communication and coordination of the Project appears to have been one of the major pitfalls consistently highlighted throughout the Evaluation interviews.

One fourth of the budget has been allocated to cover all direct costs of the other six Project partners. While this amount seems to be low in relation to the other budget shares, as well as to the actual work sustained by partners, it is unclear whether costs have been evenly distributed among partners. Actually, three partners have received the exact same amount of money (Portugal, Czech Republic and Iceland), fact which does not seem to account for local differences in unit costs of Staff, other services and goods the Project had to make use of. Partners' costs are not detailed either.

Sub-contracting costs appear somewhat high in light of expected deliverables and of the overall budget. Whilst the number of working days and the fees allocated to each expert/organization sub-contracted as part of the Project do not appear excessive, the overall high costs seems to be mostly related to the excessive fragmentation of the work on the European-level deliverables, as highlighted above in this Report ("Synergies between different actors and components"). This approach appears not very cost-efficient. Furthermore, almost 50.000 Euros allocated for "Consultancy support (prepare work meetings)" - out of the total of sub-contracted costs - appears excessive as well, also in light of the amount assigned to cover the costs of the Council of Europe's Project Assistant (116.370 Euros).

In light of the dearth of data about the total reach of the Project in terms of beneficiaries across the various target groups, and of a comprehensive impact monitoring system for the intervention (see below, "Impact"), it appears also difficult to assess whether the overall budget is appropriate in light of the size, scope and concrete impact expected from the Project.

LATTANZIO
..KIBS

5.5 Impact

Impact generally refers to "the extent to which the intervention has generated or is expected to generate significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects". (Council of Europe, 2020a:9).
In light of the aims, timing and timeline of the Evaluation, the extent to which the Project's impact could be assessed was limited, because it was too early to identify the lasting changes produced by the Project in the personal and professional spheres of the intended beneficiaries. Nevertheless, to the extent possible, the Evaluation succeeded in highlighting contributions to impact, as well as early signs of impact, and evidence of perceptions of future impact shared by relevant stakeholders.

The Project design phase apparently did not entail the creation of a baseline. The Evaluation Team could not trace a set of variables selected as indicators to measure changes as a result of the Project activities. Clear plans to regularly and periodically collect data in order to compare progress achieved against the baseline were not located either, nor were these referred to by respondents during interviews and focus groups.

Process and outcomes indicators did not feature in Project documents, fact that surely limited the possibility for the different parties involved in the intervention to regularly measure progress towards intended results.

In the absence of the above-elements, it proved difficult to assess outcomes and impact in a systematic manner as part of the Evaluation exercise. Furthermore, at the time in which data collection was taking place (April 2023) for the purpose of the Evaluation, reportedly 20 out of 45 deliverables were still to be finalized. However, some early signs of impact were/could be identified.

National partners' increased capacity on managing child participation initiatives was reported by several respondents, and this is regarded as a sign of positive, intended impact. One of them stated: "We had no experience on how to involve children in such a systematic way. We tried to be very careful. We approached organizations who were already working with children. [...] Later, we got in contact directly with these children."[169] Another respondent asserted: "The Project has been very helpful for us, internally. It highlighted the necessity to have more child-friendly information within the system. To develop that as a skill within different bodies."[170] Thus – according to respondents – the Project brought an increased awareness on the importance of child participation within the institutions they represent. "There was a lack of information on child participation within the ministries", another interviewee said. "This is one of the reasons why we joined the Project."[171] Another respondent declared: "The Project brought child participation into the ministries. Before, we had children speaking at different kind of events. [...] Other ministries are starting to see the value of having child advisors integrated within the institutions. [...] We are constantly getting requests from other ministries who want to include children into their decision-making."[172]

Another sign of positive, intended impact, is that children as well as partners felt that child participation has been brought more central in their respective country contexts. As one participant to a FGD held in the framework of the Evaluation stated, the Project "helped to make sure kids felt heard."[173]

Although this was not an expressed aim of the intervention, the Project appears to have increased knowledge about child safeguarding (and their awareness about the importance of adopting robust child safeguarding policies and measures) within partner organizations, and potentially beyond. This is regarded as an unintended, positive impact. One respondent explained: "Yes, we created

---

[169] Project Team Member #11.
[170] Project Team Member #7.
[171] Project Team Member #15.
[172] Project Team Member #7.
[173] Child/young person.

such a policy according to the examples from the Council of Europe and other countries. It was very interesting for us. From that moment, we are using it also for other focus group discussions and events with children. We use it also as an awareness raising tool on the safety of children. […] We were also asked to share the policy with other institutions. They were inspired!"[174] Another respondent stated that, beyond the one adopted for the Project, they now "have to prepare a child safeguarding policy for the Ministry, since we are going to involve children also in other activities."[175]

Albeit this affect a small number of individuals, children and young people who took part in the Project as members of the CAT felt that the Project supported them in developing a range of skills and, in many cases, they could already anticipate that such skills would be useful for them in future.

More than one CAT member stressed that participation in such activities helped them improve their English language skills: "I improved my English, it helped me a lot"[176], one girl stated. Another girl echoed: "For me, it was also the English. It is surely a big shift and it's a challenge."[177]

Other children answered that the experience with the CAT helped them improve their communication and inter-personal skills. For example, a child stated: "I improved my communication skills with strangers, which helped me a lot. When I don't know people, I get nervous, and the Project helped me a lot not to react that way."[178] Another girl stated that the Project helped her "to understand other people, to learn also to be a calmer person, to listen to others' opinions. Those were the main things that changed me. At school and in my personal life, it is important to have learnt [those things] because it is always good to learn how to be with others better."[179]

Related to the above, some participants stressed that their presentation and public speaking skills had improved: "We have developed public speaking and debate skills as we have had some opportunities to present our work or our opinions through the Project and our work with the Ministry"[180], one respondent highlighted. According to another participant, they could master the above skills also working remotely/online with other children and young people. "I am sure that these skills will be useful in the future in studies or working life", he stated[181].

In general, children and young people who joined the CAT were glad to have been exposed to the way child participation and children's rights are dealt with in other countries, by institutions but also by other children and youth. One respondent said: "I have learnt about other young people and how young people in other countries are maybe more eager to participate and make an influence on matters than in my own country."[182] Another participant echoed: "I have learnt how these things work in other States and how they think about these things."[183] That learning seems to have further motivated them to engage on those topics. As one respondent explained: "Through the CP4Europe we have also gotten the opportunity to work more closely with the Ministry in [our country] and this has been a great opportunity to further our interest in human rights."[184]

Indeed, it seems that the Project has provided an opportunity for some children and young persons to acquire skills that, based on their self-perceptions and views, they will be able to rely upon also

---

[174] Project Team Member #11.
[175] Project Team Member #8.
[176] Child/young person 4, 14 years old.
[177] Child/young person 5, 23 years old.
[178] Child/young person 4, 14 years old.
[179] .,Child/young person 6, 17 years old.
[180] Child/young person.
[181] Child/young person.
[182] Child/young person.
[183] Child/young person.
[184] Child/young person.

LATTANZIO
..KIBS

in their future – fact which points to potential long-term positive, intended impact. As one young respondent stated: "How we use the skills beyond the Project is very personalized depending on what our future goals are, but in general these are definitely good skills to have in life."[185]

5.6   Sustainability

> Sustainability refer to "the extent to which the net benefits of the intervention continue, or are likely to continue". (Council of Europe, 2020a:9).

At the time of the present Evaluation, there were no plans to continue the Project as such in the future, after the project-specific funding is over. However, some activities of the Project are likely to continue at both the national and European level.

At country level, all respondents sounded determined to carry on the work on child participation started in the framework of the Project, and partners seem to have taken ownership of the Project's overall concept and approach. In Finland, partners intend to maintain and regularly update the online training on how to consult with children in legislative drafting, targeting public officials. In Iceland, the national partner is eager to keep working on the process for setting up children and young people's advisory bodies within the ministries, and they stated that some financial resources to that purpose are secured for the coming two years. In Czech Republic, partners have already started to work on a broader project to improve the child protection systems in the country, through which they intend to include and carry on most of the activities they started in the framework of the CP4Europe Project (FGDs with children; providing information to them; training on child participation; etc.)[186]

These above are just some examples, but most likely national partners have in mind to continue other activities, which they did not have the time to describe during the interviews held as part of the Evaluation.

While some partners seemed to have specific plans on how to take forward the work on child safeguarding started in the framework of the Project, in other cases just a general wish or idea was presented. As it will be reiterated in the recommendations (below), this is an area of work in which it would be very important and beneficial to sustain the work started thanks to the CP4Europe Project.

The one activity that will not continue beyond the Project, for sure not in its current shape (a team of children and youth from five different countries, holding meetings and implementing activities at the European level), is the CAT. Albeit children and young persons who were involved seemed to really value this opportunity, and whilst several of these children were already active at country level and will probably continue to engage on child participation, the group as such will be dissolved at the end of the intervention. The reasons why this activity will not continue concern, on the one hand, the resources required, primarily in terms of Staff's time, to support the group's activities.

As highlighted above ("Workload and work plan"), several respondent stated that they have been struggling to keep up with the tight schedule and the workload that – especially after the CAT was set up, but not only because of that – the Project demanded of them, which forced some of them in particular to add some Project-related activities on the top of their full-time job schedule, or to delay some other activities and tasks falling outside the Project. As one respondent clearly stated: "To be realistic, I don't think it will continue as such. There are these young people we may contact in

---

[185] Child/young person.
[186] Information provided by national partners' representatives during interviews.

LATTANZIO
.∎KIBS

future, but we do not have resources to support the CAT."[187] Another respondent from a different Project country similarly stated: "The CAT was very active. CAT members are children who were and are very active, not only in the CP4Europe Project. As for the CAT, honestly, I do not think it will survive. But the work on child participation will not end here."[188]

On the other hand, several respondents expressed reservations on the CAT composition and the way in which members were selected. While they enjoyed working with each and every child and young person in the Team, they felt that the selection process did not offer equal opportunities to a wider number of children and young persons, including those coming from disadvantaged backgrounds, to participate. One partner representative clearly stated: "If you ask me what I would like, I would not like to continue the situation that did not work the right way. We decided [about the CAT composition] in a hurry, in the middle of the summer. The advisory group should have time to offer fair chance and equal opportunities to participate. This was not the case."[189]

Even partner representatives who said that they are minded to continue the work with the children and young people who are members of the CAT in their country, are planning to change and expand its composition. As one respondent illustrated: "We selected them from our previous cooperation with children. We chose the easily-reachable children for us, I have to say. But we made a good basis for the future. We are planning to have a public – although restricted – call and to involve these groups at national and also regional level in our Ministry." In this respondent's words, the CAT set up was limited, indeed, "but it opened the process. Now, through snowball, we aim to involve other children."[190] However, when asked about financial sustainability, another respondent from the same partner institution had to admit that "it would be a bit hard for us, as we don't have enough budget."[191] Another respondent stated that the partner institution that joined the Project intends to maintain the group of CAT members at national level beyond the Project: "We want to continue to have child advisors. We are currently looking at this with the children."[192]

At national level, partners in several cases anchored some actions undertaken in the framework of the Project to broader policy measures that are likely to address child participation and children's rights in the medium- or long-term.

In Finland – as already envisaged in the design stage and explicitly stated in the Project Proposal[193] - "*t*he process and action following the CPAT assessment in 2019 is closely linked to the implementation of the National Democracy Programme and the National Strategy for Children". During the interview, partner representatives confirmed that, and expressed satisfaction for having created synergies with those two broader policies under way in the country[194]. In the Czech Republic, according to the respondent, there are some "big changes in the child protection system" that are being prepared, and they intend to involve children and have them consulted on the matter.[195] In Slovenia, one partner representative stated that they intend to embed child participation in the process of school curricula reform that will be led by the Ministry of Education. Besides the specific examples above, national partners appeared to generally see the Project as one step in a broader strategy to pursue child participation in their countries in the longer run.

Regarding the European-level activities and outcomes, it was somehow more difficult to assess their sustainability. Among other measures, the Project set out to provide "a European online tool serving as an exchange and dissemination platform for good national and European practices."[196]

---

[187] Project Team Member #14.
[188] Project Team Member #8.
[189] Project Team Member #13.
[190] Project Team Member #11.
[191] Project Team Member #10.
[192] Project Team Member #7.
[193] Project Proposal, Annex 1B, p.4.
[194] Project Team Members from Finland.
[195] Project Team Member from the Czech Republic.
[196] Project Proposal, Annex 1B, p.3.

LATTANZIO
KIBS

As highlighted above, though, such web-based platform is still pending finalization, and its sustainability appears to some extent uncertain. One of the partners in Slovenia committed to take over the platform at the end of the Project, which is regarded as a promising element for sustainability. However, this partner representatives themselves admitted that they have not yet secured all funds to maintain the web-platform, even because they do not know precisely how much money and work this will entail[197]. On the other hand, a Council of Europe Project Team Member informed us that they have allocated internal budget to secure the domain website for the next five years, which presumably covers part of the expenditures.

Albeit no clear plans in that regard were heard throughout the data collection phase, partners and external experts believed that the work on virtually all European-level deliverables currently being finalized should be taken forward. More generally, several respondents were vocal about their hope that the Council of Europe will "continue its efforts to advance child participation in its member States"[198], particularly through supporting the continuation of the CPAT assessment process. As one respondent admitted, "I believe it would be really difficult [to continue the CPAT process otherwise]; there is need for someone to give some support, even at a minimal level."[199] Another respondent felt that the Council of Europe should continue to support CPAT assessments, to engage more governments, and to provide ongoing support to encourage the collection of data on impact, now that the outcomes indicators are about to be released thanks to the Project.[200]

In sum, while the Council of Europe reportedly is "in the process of brainstorming on what comes next" and is determined to "continue the promotion of the CPAT model", partners and experts believe that, to ensure the sustainability, replicability and scaling-up of the CPAT and its ancillary resources, several of which have been produced in the framework of the CP4Europe Project, the Council of Europe's steady engagement, leadership and support are an essential requirement.

---

[197] Information provided by representatives of one of the two Project partners in Slovenia during interviews.
[198] Project Team Member #21.
[199] Project Team Member #18.
[200] Project Team Member #20.

LATTANZIO
..KIBS

6 Conclusions and recommendations

6.1 Project Logic and Design Process

The present Evaluation highlighted that, during the Project design phase, an analysis of the situation of children and their rights - in particular to child participation – was not systematically undertaken. While the Project was perceived as very needed and timely by most adult and child/youth stakeholders interviewed, the lack of a child rights situation analysis and needs assessment, on the one hand, constrained the possibility to set out the extent to which children's right to participation was being realized - and outstanding obstacles in fulfilling it -, and to assess the relevance of the intervention in relation to the needs and priorities of its ultimate beneficiaries (i.e. children and young people). On the other hand, the lack of a participatory situation analysis and needs assessment restrained the scope and level of engagement of children and young persons as part of the Project itself – as they were not part of the design stage – as highlighted above when discussing children and young people's participation in the Project.

Further, the Evaluation concluded that, while the logic of the intervention is to some extent clear, the Project design, overall, did not achieve a sufficient level of clarity in terms of making explicit links between identified problems and objectives to be attained. Moreover, objectives were often phrased as activities, and/or not enough specific nor measurable. The Evaluation also noted that the Project's TOC did not sufficiently articulate how change processes are expected to unfold as a result of the intervention, nor was it regarded as a guiding document by the Project Team.

Finally, the Project design phase apparently did not entail the creation of a baseline, and there was no comprehensive impact monitoring system to track progress in achieving the given objectives. This circumstance considerably constrained the possibility to assess early signs of impact, and will most likely limit the possibility to successfully carry out an impact evaluation at a later stage.

R1 - high priority: The Council of Europe and Project partners should plan for and carry out a comprehensive child rights situation analysis and needs assessment at the outset of any forthcoming intervention aimed to enhance the fulfillment of children's rights, also by using the CPAT and related tools. Such analysis could either focus on a specific set of countries, and on a given sector (namely, child participation), or be conducted in the framework of a broader situation analysis on children's rights. Along with the Staff of the organizations preparing to design an intervention, this exercise should encourage the active input and participation of all concerned children – including those belonging to vulnerable groups - as well as their carers, relevant decision-makers and professionals, and other key stakeholders, throughout the whole process.

R2 - high priority: It is recommended to the Council of Europe and to Project partners that the Project design phase entails a more careful identification of: the goal that the intervention is aimed to contribute to; the objectives it aims to achieve, conceived in terms of changes in the lives of children and young persons, and phrased in a way that makes them specific and measurable; and of a range of activities, outputs and outcomes required to achieve the objectives. It is recommended that the Project design documents more clearly illustrate the causal link between the above components of the intervention – in particular, making explicit the links between identified problems and intended objectives in light of external and internal factors that could influence the intended achievements.

R3 - high priority: A comprehensive impact monitoring system, including baseline assessment, should be set up and applied throughout the whole Project lifecycle of future interventions, in order to assess the broader, long-term changes that happen as a result of the intervention. Such system should include: impact indicators; means of verification; protocols for measuring indicators; and a monitoring plan – detailing who measures each indicator, how often, who analyses data collected and how to present these.

6.2   Efficiency and Effectiveness

Along with several positive achievements identified, the Project's effectiveness resulted particularly constrained with regard to two inter-related aspects: the planning process, and the interaction between the European and the national levels of work (exemplified in the interaction between external experts and country partners). While one single or clear factor leading to these problems was not pinpointed, an analysis of the Project's budget further compounded the limited efficiency and effectiveness of the above aspects of the intervention – casting out the possibility that these were due to lack of sufficient financial resources dedicated to Project management. The Evaluation also noted that the work of external experts appeared to have been excessively fragmented, and that partners had received a proportionally low amount of resources in consideration of the activities they had responsibility for, especially those entailing direct work with children and young people. Finally, the Project budget shared with the Evaluation Team is not sufficiently detailed to fully assess the intervention's cost-effectiveness.

R4 - high priority: It is recommended to the Council of Europe to strengthen the planning, coordination and communication aspects in future interventions involving multiple countries and partners. This should lead to a predictable and manageable amount of work for all parties involved in the Project, especially local partners. In particular, activities and outputs should be timed to maximize their potential impact throughout the Project's lifecycle. It is also recommended to prioritize and promote ongoing dialogue and communication among the different parties involved in order for them to align respective work plans and mutual expectations.

R5 - medium priority: The Council of Europe is advised to rationalize the division of work among the different Project Team Members, and to externalize specific, clearly envisaged tasks to external actors, based on clear engagement contracts, ideally covering the whole Project duration or anyways longer timespans. Should the Council of Europe further support multi-country child participation projects, it is recommended to allocate more resources to national partners, in order to allow them to fully undertake activities involving children and young people, whilst central-level management input should be restrained to a lower proportion of the overall Project budget. It is also recommended to the Council of Europe to embed a more detailed cost analysis in the Project management practice in future.

The Project achieved remarkable success in consulting children and young people as part of the CPAT assessment and in the framework of follow-up activities in all participating countries. The features of children and young people's involvement in the Project met several good practice standards. In particular, the quality of children and youth's participation appears to have evolved over time, and to have empowered participants, who displayed an increased level of confidence while engaging in the Project.

Understandably, considering the varying starting level of experience and expertise of national partners in the area, the Project achieved a largely consultative level of child and youth participation – with some collaborative elements mostly related to the CAT – and engaged with children and young people at the stage of the implementation, after the design of the intervention had already taken place. However, both the Council of Europe and country partners strived to ensure the participation of at least some children to the Evaluation process, which is commendable. Moreover, all partners demonstrated a tangible commitment to meaningfully and safely involving children from diverse backgrounds, including those coming from the most marginalized and vulnerable groups of the population.

At the same time, the involvement of children and young people in the CAT appears to have been significantly more limited, namely in terms of ensuring equal opportunities and diversity representation at the board.

R6 - medium priority: It is recommended to the Council of Europe and national partners to continue working in line with standards for safe and meaningful child participation, and to strengthen the areas in which more quality could be attained. In particular, it is recommended to

expand the involvement of children and young persons in the framework of their future interventions, be these focused on child participation or on any other measures likely to have an impact on children. It is also recommended to carry on the remarkable efforts to reach out to the most marginalized groups of children and youth, to involve children and young people at an earlier stage of the Project lifecycle, and to expand the level of participation towards more collaborative, and even child-led forms of engagement – as appropriate to each case and action.

The CP4Europe Project provided a noticeable contribution to advancing on child safeguarding for the institutions who partnered for it. Child safeguarding policies were developed in each Project country. All implementing partners' representatives showed good awareness of the importance of protecting children and young persons from violence, abuse, neglect or exploitation that may come at the hand of professionals working with and for them, and hence of developing a solid child safeguarding policy and procedures.

Partner institutions had to develop their own child safeguarding system during – approximately – the first year of Project implementation. This is regarded as a relatively short time-frame for such a complex task, considering also that the level of guidance offered within the Project was highly professional but light/minimal. The Council of Europe and partners did their best to put in place some procedures to file a complaint and to raise a concern regarding child safeguarding. They also strived to make these procedures known and accessible to the children and young people involved in the Project, as well as to adult stakeholders. However, this aspect needs to be strengthened in future. Moreover, other relevant child safeguarding procedures seem to be mostly missing or underdeveloped. These include: whistleblowing, recruitment, induction/training procedures, as well as programming guidelines – including on risk identification and management for safe programming – and partnership arrangements guidance concerning child safeguarding.

R7 - medium priority: It is recommended to the Council of Europe and to partner organizations to complete the roll out of their child safeguarding policies. In particular, they should upgrade complaint procedures, with the active involvement of children, their families and communities in the process, and device tools and modalities to make such procedures widely known and easily accessible by all concerned parties, above all children and young people. The other above-mentioned sets of procedures need to also be designed (or, where existing, assessed and upgraded if required), and need to be integrated throughout each organization's systems, processes and operations, to make these really safe for children. All safeguarding measures should be subjected to ongoing monitoring and periodic review.

6.3   Follow-up and sustainability

The Evaluation highlighted that, albeit European-level deliverables produced in the framework of the Project seem to have a potential for legacy, their sustainability is still somewhat uncertain. Many of these resources are being finalized in the very last months of Project implementation and, except for some exceptions (notably the web-based platform), there do not seem to be clear plans on how to further use these resources.

R8 - high priority: The Evaluation Team recommends that the Council of Europe undertakes systematic work to actively spread the resources produced by the Project beyond the countries who participated to the intervention. Moreover, it is recommended that the Council of Europe retains its leading role in the further implementation of the CPAT process, supported by the newly devised outcome indicators, the child-friendly version of the CPAT, and the other guidance and tools produced in the framework of the Project.

LATTANZIO
..KIBS

7   Annexes

Annex I: Bibliography

Documents provided by the Council of Europe between 09 February and 7 March 2023 as part of the Evaluation dossier[201]:

Council of Europe (2023a) "Strengthening National Child Participation Frameworks and Action in Europe". Final Evaluation. Terms of Reference. No place: Council of Europe.

Council of Europe. Directorate of Anti-Discrimination (2019) Building a Europe for and with Children. Child safeguarding policy. Children's Rights Division. Unpublished.

CP4Europe Progress Report, 01 April 2021-31 May 2022.

CP4Europe Project Proposal, Annex 1.

CP4Europe Project Proposal, Annex 1B.

CP4Europe Project Proposal, Annex 2.

CP4Europe Project. "Strengthening National Child Participation Frameworks and Action in Europe". Draft concept for external website development.

CP4Europe Project. Establishing the CP4Europe Project Child and Young People's Advisory Team (CAT), 06 September 2022.

Crowley, A. (Dr), Lansdown, G. (2022) *Child Participation Assessment Tool. Implementation Guide.* Strasbourg: Council of Europe.

IICRD (2022) *Campaign Concept Note*. Unpublished.

Raluca Verweijen-Slamnescu (2023) Nothing about us, without us (Working title). Guidelines for meaningful and effective engaging children in decision-making processes. Unpublished.

Recommendation CM/Rec(2012)2 of the Committee of Ministers to Member States on the participation of children and young people under the age of 18.

Sandra Roe Research (2023) Strengthening National Child Participation Frameworks and Action in Europe – CP4Europe. Guidelines for developing a National Children's Participation Strategy or a Participation Strategy within a National Children's Rights Strategy. Unpublished.

Other documents and web sites consulted by the author:

Council of Europe (2016a) Child Participation Assessment Tool. Indicators for measuring progress in promoting the right of children and young people under the age of 18 to participate in matters of concern to them. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.

Council of Europe (2016b) *Project Management Methodology. Handbook.* Strasbourg: Council of Europe.

Council of Europe (2016c) Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2016-2021). Strasbourg: Council of Europe.

---

[201] A larger number of documents has been provided by the Council of Europe, but was not encompassed by the desk review for the purpose of the Inception Report writing.

LATTANZIO
■■KIBS

Council of Europe (2018) *Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2023*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.

Council of Europe (2020a) *Council of Europe Evaluation Guidelines*. (no place): Council of Europe.

Council of Europe (2020b) Listen – Act – Change. Council of Europe Handbook on children's participation. For professionals working with and for children. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.

Council of Europe (2020c) Human Rights Approach. Practical Guide For Co-Operation Projects. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.

Council of Europe (2022) Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2022-2027). Children's Rights in Action: from continuous implementation to joint innovation. Strasbourg: Council of Europe.

Council of Europe (2023b) *Code of Conduct*. No place: Council of Europe.

Crowley, A. (Dr.), Larkins, C. (Prof.), Pinto, L.M. (2020) Listen – Act – Change. Council of Europe Handbook on children's participation. For professionals working for and with children. Strasbourg: CoE.

Di Maio, M.A. (2023) Pre-study on the Role of Children and Youth in Building Resilient Societies in the Baltic Sea Region. Stockholm: Council of the Baltic Sea States.

European Union, Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, 2000/C 364/01.

Janta, B., Bruckmayer, M., de Silva, A., Gilder, L., Culora, A., Cole, S., Leenders, E., Schuurman, M., Hagger-Vaughan, A. (2021) *Study on child participation in EU political and democratic life. Final Report*. Luxembourg: European Commission.

Lansdown, G. (2018) Conceptual framework for measuring outcomes of adolescent participation. New York: UNICEF.

OECD (2002) Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management. (no place): OECD.

OECD (2021) Applying Evaluation Criteria Thoughtfully. Paris: OECD.

OECD/DAC Network on Development Evaluation (2007) *Framework for Professional Peer Reviews.* (no place): OECD

OECD/DAC Network on Development Evaluation (2019) Better Criteria for Better Evaluation: Revised Evaluation Criteria Definitions and Principles for Use. (no place): OECD.

Save the Children (2014), A Toolkit for Monitoring and Evaluating Children's Participation. Booklet 3. How to measure the scope, quality and outcomes of children's participation. London: Save the Children.

Save the Children (2021) The Nine Basic Requirements. For Meaningful and Ethical Children's Participation. (No place): Save the Children

UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC), *General comment No. 12 (2009): The right of the child to be heard*, 20 July 2009, CRC/C/GC/12, available at: https://www.refworld.org/docid/4ae562c52.html [accessed 2 March 2023]

UN OHCHR (2006) Frequently Asked Questions on a Human Rights-Based Approach to Development Cooperation. New York & Geneva: UN OHCHR.

UN WOMEN (2014) Gender Mainstreaming in Development Programming. (no place): UN WOMEN.

LATTANZIO
..KIBS

UNESCO (no date) *What do we mean by "youth"?* (no place): UNESCO.

UNICEF (2015) UNICEF Procedure for Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation, Data Collection and Analysis. (no place): UNICEF.

United Nations Evaluation Group (2008) *UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System*. (no place): UNEG.

United Nations Evaluation Group (2014) Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations. New York: UNEG.

United Nations Evaluation Group (2017) *Norms and Standards for Evaluation*. New York: UNEG.

United Nations Evaluation Group (2020) *Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation*. (no place): UNEG.

United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development. (no date) *Definition of Youth*. Available at: https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/documents/youth/fact-sheets/youth-definition.pdf

Welty, E., Lundy, L. (2013) Listening and Empowering: Children in Science Communication. A children's rights-based approach to involving children in decision making. JCOM 12(03).

WHO (no date) *Adolescent development*. Geneva: WHO.

LATTANZIO
KIBS

Annex II: List of participants in individual interviews and FGDs

Key-adult respondents interviewed during focus groups and interviews:

- Alice Hagger-Vaughan/Eurochild, External Expert
- Anna Braco, Project Officer, Council of Europe
- Anne-Laure Baulieu, Project Manager, Council of Europe
- Catherine Larkins, External Expert
- Célia Chamiça, Senior Officer, National Commission for the Promotion of the Rights and the Protection of Children and Young People, Portugal
- Gerison Lansdown, External Expert
- Katjuša Nadižar Habjanič, Family Directorate, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, Republic of Slovenia
- Kristyna Jůzová Kotalova, Position, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, of Family Policy and Protection of Children's Rightsand transformation of services for families and children, Czech Republic
- Laura Kuusio, Senior Specialist, National Child Strategy, Ministry of Social Affairs and the Protection of Children and Young PeopleHealth, Republic of Finland
- Célia Chamiça, Senior Officer, National Commission for the Promotion of Rights and the Protection of Children and Young People, Republic of Portugal
- Liisa Männistö, Senior Specialist, Ministry of Justice, Republic of Finland
- Luis Manuel Pinto, External Expert
- Magali Moreau, Project Assistant, Council of Europe
- Maren Lambrecht, Secretary, Current Affairs Committee, Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, Council of Europe
- Matouš Korbel, Position, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, of Family Policy and Protection of Children's Rights and transformation of services for families and children, Czech Republic
- Mieke Schuurman/Eurochild, External Expert
- Raluca Verweijen-Slamnescu/Solid Change, External Expert[202]
- Roberta Ruggiero, External Expert
- Ružica Boškić, Secretary, Minister Officer, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, Republic of Slovenia
- Sónia Lourenço Rosa, Head of the International Relations Unit, National Commission for the Promotion of the Rights and the Protection of Children and Young People, Portugal
- Stéphanie Burel, Policy Advisor, Trafficking in Human Beings Division, Council of Europe
- Talia Raufman/International Institute for Child Rights and Development, External Expert
- Tinna Rós Steinsdóttir, Senior Advisor, Ministry of Education and Children, Republic of Iceland
- Urban Boljka, Social Protection Institute, Position, Republic of Slovenia
- Zahuri Gasparyan, Head of Cooperation Unit a.i., Council of Europe

Children and young persons involved in FGDs[203]

- Child/young person 1 (18 years old)
- Child/young person 2 (16 years old)
- Child/young person 3 (17 years old)
- Child/young person 4 (14 years old)
- Child/young person 5 (23 years old)
- Child/young person 6 (17 years old)

---

[202] Provided inputs via e-mail.

[203] Children and young persons' real names have been replaced with numbering. Countries of origin and other details that may lead to their identification were not included in the Report.

LATTANZIO
..KIBS

- Child/young person 7 (14 years old)
- Child/young person 8 (17 years old)
- Child/young person 9 (17 years old)
- Child/young person 10 (14 years old)

LATTANZIO
..KIBS

Annex III – Detailed Evaluation timeline

In line with the Evaluation ToRs and the Consultancy Agreement, the Evaluation has been carried out over between 1st March and 23rd June 2023, for a total of 30 working days.

The time has been assigned to each Evaluation phase as it follows:
- Desk-research and writing up the Inception Report – 10 days, home-based;
- Data collection – 8 days, home-based;
- Analysis and writing-up report – 12 days, home-based.

The Evaluator held the primary responsibility for the Evaluation. She has also be liaising with the Council of Europe about all technical issues and contents related to the Evaluation. The Evaluator slightly exceeded the number of working days estimated for the accomplishment of each Evaluation phase of an average of 1-2 days for each given phase.

Lattanzio KIBS provided quality assurance through the whole Evaluation process, and assisted the Evaluator with a range of tasks, including: administrative support; peer review of intermediate, draft- and final deliverables; note-taking; and other related tasks. They communicated with the Council of Europe concerning any contractual and financial aspect related to the Evaluation.

The detailed timeline of the Evaluation is enclosed below, and has been compiled according to the template indicated by the Council of Europe.

Evaluation Planning					
Strengthening National Child Participation Frameworks and Action in Europe (CP4Europe) – Final Evaluation	Who	Planned Date	Actual Date	Comments	Relevant Links
Preliminary Work					
Desk research/ Concept note					
Draft ToR					
Final ToR and Tender File					
Consultation of suppliers and selection					
Start of contract with consultant					
Inception Phase					
Initial Analysis of Available Documentation	M.A. Di Maio	Week 24 February-10 March			
Scoping interviews	M.A. Di Maio	Week 6-10 March			
Inception Report 1	M.A. Di Maio	Week 13-17 March			
DIO comments for Inception report sent	Council of Europe				
Inception Report 2	M.A. Di Maio	Week 20-24 March			
Inception report sent to reference group					
Comments received from reference group					
Reference group meeting 1					
Final Inception report	M.A. Di Maio	Week 27-31 March			
Data Collection and Analysis					
Scheduling IIs & FGDs	M.A. Di Maio	Week 3-7 April			

LATTANZIO
..KIBS

Remote Interviews & FGDs	M.A. Di Maio	Weeks 10-28 April			
Data analysis	M.A. Di Maio	Weeks 1-12 May			
Report and Action Plan					
First Draft report	M.A. Di Maio	Week 22-26 May			
DIO comments for draft report sent	CoE	Week 29 May-2 June			
Second Draft report	M.A. Di Maio	Week 5-9 June			
Draft report sent to Reference Group					
Comments received form Reference Group					
Reference Group meeting 2					
Final Evaluation Report	M.A. Di Maio	Week 19-23 June			
Management Response					
Draft Management response sent					
Final Management response received and published					
Publication of Final Report					

LATTANZIO
..KIBS

Annex IV – Main Evaluation Tools

Guiding Questions – FGDs with children and young persons

1) Do you think that the CP4Europe Project was useful? To whom? How much?
2) Did you feel that the activities you were involved in were the right match for your age and interests? (If yes/no, why?)
3) What would you assess as the most successful, and on the contrary, the least successful activities, and why?
4) Why did you decide to join the CAT?
5) Once you have been invited to join the CAT and the CP4Europe Project, to which extent could you decide upon what activities to do (and not just how to do them)? Will you please give me some examples?
6) Was it difficult to reconcile this Project with your other activities and commitments (school; homework; sport; family and friends; etc.)? Could you share some examples?
7) Did you feel that your participation to the Project changed over time, and if yes, how? [For example, if they felt more and more confident, etc.]
8) Did you feel that everyone was welcome at the CAT, and that each member's opinion was given the same weight and importance? (If yes/no, why? Could you please make some examples?)
9) In case something bothering happened, would you have known where to go for support?
10) What do you think that you learnt thanks to your participation to the Project? How do you think you can apply this knowledge and skills beyond the Project?
11) What will happen to this group [of children and youth members of the CAT] in future? Will you meet again? Do you plan to do further work together (if yes how)? Also involving CAT members in other countries?
12) Should the Council of Europe, their partners, or other organizations, do some other project promoting children and youth's participation in future, what should they change, what should they improve, and what should they keep because it worked very well?

Guiding Questions – External Experts

Relevance
1. Were the overall workload and work plan realistic?
2. Was the Project design sensitive to beneficiaries' varying needs based on their age, gender and other diversity aspects?

Added value
3. What were, in your opinion, the strengths of the partnership, and what it weaknesses?
4. How was it to work with different Project managers at the Council of Europe?

Effectiveness
5. Did you work with children who are members of the CAT, or also with other groups of children?
6. Did you involve the most marginalized children? Who were these? How did you manage to reach out to them?
7. What were the main internal and external factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the Project objectives?
8. What measures have been taken to adapt to the COVID-19 pandemic, and how would you assess them?

Efficiency
9. How would you assess the approach implemented in this Project to sub-contract deliverables to experts, also in different purchase orders?

LATTANZIO
..KIBS

Impact

10. Has the Project brought about stronger child participation frameworks and actions in participating member States? If yes/no/partly, what made you state so?
11. Has the Project brought about recognized good practices in terms of child participation mechanisms and actions, based on model resources and tools? If yes/no/partly, what made you state so?
12. How did the COVID-19 pandemic limit (or, conversely, support) the achievement of the Project's outcomes?
13. How would you assess the measures undertaken by the Project to face the COVID-19 situation?

Sustainability

14. To which extent and how did you work with Project implementing partners in countries (besides the Council of Europe)? How did you divide up roles and tasks as part of such cooperation?
15. Was capacity building of local partners part of the process?
16. *Specific question about how the deliverable they were responsible for will be applied or used in future and where, by whom, how*

Guiding Questions – Council of Europe Project Managers

Relevance

1. Did the Project build on lessons learnt or tried and tested models (CPAT and assessments)?
2. How did you undertake a needs assessment as a basis for your Project design? (Desk-research; consultations with stakeholders, including children of different age groups; other). Any written record of needs assessment(s) on which the Project design is based?
3. Who were the Project's target groups?
4. Were children consulted during the needs assessment and/or the Project design stage?

Added value

5. How did you select implementing partners? What were their strengths and weaknesses compared to other potential partners in the Project?

Child Safeguarding

6. We understood (from discussion with the current Project Manager) that a) The Council of Europe has a child safeguarding policy that applies only to the Child Rights Division; and that b) At the outset of the Project, partners in countries had to yet develop their child safeguarding policy (expected outputs of the Project itself). Were these policies produced? (Copy available?) Did partners follow the Council of Europe's child safeguarding policy? Were they trained on child safeguarding (when and by whom?) Did you have any child safeguarding cases (concerns raised or complaints filed)?
7. Did the Council of Europe and partners have a designated department/person (focal point) responsible for the overall development and implementation of the child safeguarding policy?
8. Did the Council of Europe and partners have in place a Code of Conduct for staff and associates? Do all staff and volunteers need to sign the code of conduct before starting their job? Do they know what happens in case the code of conduct is broken or not followed correctly? Do they receive training on child safeguarding?
9. Were children, young persons, their families and other relevant adults involved in the Project (teachers etc.) informed about the existence of the child safeguarding policy and its consequences (namely, how to raise a concern or to file a complaint)? If yes, how were they informed? Was there a complaint procedure in place?
10. Were risks specifically concerning child safeguarding assessed, reviewed, monitored and addressed as part of the Project?
11. What child safeguarding procedures do the Council of Europe and partners have in place?
12. Did the Council of Europe and partners put in place any internal or external audit procedure for monitoring child safeguarding? If yes, which ones?

Child Participation

LATTANZIO
..KIBS

13. When did you engage with children as part of the Project?
    o Situation analysis
    o Project design and planning
    o Implementation
    o Monitoring
    o Evaluation
    o Acting on findings?
14. What was the purpose of involving children and young persons in the Project?
15. How did the Project make sure that all partners staff and consultants attained the highest child participation standards? (Guidelines provided – when, by whom? Training?)
16. How did you make sure that the CP4Europe Project did not overlap with other ongoing similar interventions at national and European level? Did the Project reach out to/build synergies with other similar interventions?

Effectiveness
17. Have activities been carried out according to the plan?
18. Have outputs been produced according to the plan?
Outputs/deliverables:
19. Could you list the outputs produced by the Project in terms of deliverables? (*Specific questions on the different deliverables expected*)
WP 1 Project Management and Coordination
17. How often did you e-meet with Project partners?
18. How many Steering Committee meetings did you hold?
19. To which extent did the Project become unitary action, more than the sum of national interventions, and how?

Impact
20. Did the Project envisage an impact monitoring system? Are there impact monitoring reports available?
21. Has the Project brought about stronger child participation frameworks and actions in participating member States? If yes/no/partly, what made you state so?
22. Has the Project brought about recognized good practices in terms of child participation mechanisms and actions, based on model resources and tools? If yes/no/partly, what made you state so?
23. When was the Project idea and design developed (in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic)? What measures were embedded in the Project design in order to face uncertainties and potential limitations brought about by the COVID-19? Did you modify or integrate such measures during the implementation phase?
24. How did the COVID-19 limit (or conversely, support) the achievement of the Project's intended outcomes?

Sustainability
20. As a key element of sustainability and continuation, the Project set out to provide "a European online tool serving as an exchange and dissemination platform for good national and European practices." Did this expected output materialize? How? How many countries joined? How is it functioning? What do you aim to beyond the Project concerning this outcome?
21. Will the CAT remain operational?
22. To which extent and how did Experts work with implementing partners in countries? How were their roles and tasks divided as part of such cooperation? Was capacity building of local partners part of the process?
23. What is the Council of Europe planning to do next with the CPAT and the outcome indicators and the child-friendly version? Will the Organization retain a coordination/guidance role in the assessment at country level, or will it be left to the initiative of member States?

LATTANZIO
..KIBS

Guiding Questions – CP4Europe Project Donor (European Commission)

<u>Relevance</u>
1. Was the CP4Europe Project in line with the priority needs of the groups targeted? If yes/no, why?
2. How would you assess the way in which the Project's implementation strategies took into account the COVID-19 uncertainties? Did these strategies remain relevant to beneficiaries' needs?

<u>Added value</u>
3. What was in your view the partnership's comparative advantage towards other European and national actors working in the area of child participation?
4. Did the Project bring innovative solutions compared to other interventions in the area of child participation?
5. To what extent was the Project complementary, harmonized and coordinated with other interventions funded by the EC on child participation?

<u>Sustainability</u>
6. What will happen to the Project's outputs and results?
7. Does the EC intend to build upon the CP4Europe Project's achievements? If yes, how?
8. Is the Project in line with current policy documents by the EC in the area of child participation addressing outstanding problems in the long term?

Guiding Questions – Country Partners

<u>Relevance</u>
1. Why did your organization/institution decide to join the Project?
2. What assets and strengths did you think that you would bring to the Project?

<u>Effectiveness</u>
1. How did you select the children who would be involved in the Project? (Age-groups; how did you identify and reach out to them; boys/girls ratio; etc.) Did you set criteria? Did you have a competitive selection procedure, or did you select them upon nomination?
2. Did you specifically target children who are discriminated against? How?
   (Children out of school; children belonging to ethnic minorities; children on the move; children with disabilities; children from poor families; younger children; children who are gay, lesbian or transgender)
3. Are there groups of children that you would involve (or in greater numbers), should you undertake a similar intervention in future?
4. What can you tell me about the quality of child participation over time: did this change/improve? Did children and young people feel more confident?
5. Did partners regularly collect feedback from children about their involvement in the Project? If yes, how? How often?
6. Did you work with parents and other relevant adults/gatekeepers (school teachers etc.) before and during children's involvement? How?
7. I understood (from discussion with the current Project Manager) that at the outset of the Project, partners in countries had to yet develop their child safeguarding policy (expected outputs of the Project itself). Were partners' child safeguarding policies in English, or also translated into local languages? (May I have a copy of it?)
8. Did you have any child safeguarding cases (concerns raised or complaints filed)?
9. Did you have a designated department/person (focal point) responsible for the overall development and implementation of the child safeguarding policy?
- Did you have in place a Code of Conduct for staff and associates?
- Do all staff and volunteers need to sign the code of conduct before starting their job? Do they know what happen in case the code of conduct is broken or not followed correctly? Do they receive training on child safeguarding?

LATTANZIO
..KIBS

- Were children, young persons, their families and other relevant adults involved in the Project (teachers etc.) informed about the existence of the child safeguarding polivy and its consequences (namely, how to raise a concern or to file a complaint)? If yes, how were they informed? Was there a complaint procedure in place?
- Were risks specifically concerning child safeguarding assessed, reviewed, monitored and addressed as part of the Project?
- What child safeguarding procedures do you have in place?
- Did you put in place any internal or external audit procedure for monitoring child safeguarding? If yes, which ones?

WP 1 Project Management and Coordination
- How often did you exchange with the Project Coordinator?
- To which extent did the Project become unitary action, more than the sum of national interventions, and how?

WP 2 CPAT assessment Czech Republic
- What the adaptation of CPAT to the national level consist in? Output(s)?
- Who were the children involved in FGDs as part of the assessment? Members of the CAT? Age ranges? How selected? How many? Boys/girls? How many FGDs?
- Whom did you provide feedback to about the outcomes of the Assessment? (Children too)?
- I understood (Project Proppsal, Annex 1, p.16) that the Assessment would result in an evaluation report and an action plan. What will happen to the Action Plan? (Did different stakeholders buy in/take responsibility for the Action Plan? How was the Plan articulated? How long is it supposed to last? Resources to implement it? Linked to other policies and/or practices at national level?)
- How about the national, two-fold objective: strengthening capacity of "all actors included in support and preventive system to reflect the opinions of children in their activities"? And "empowering children and families by strengthening their awareness of their rights and of the importance of their opinion, in particular vulnerable children (in institutional care facilities)"?
- What were, in your views, the key factors that determined or constrained the Project's success? (How about the COVID-19 specifically? How would you assess measures undertaken by the Project to adapt to the situation created by the pandemic?)

WP 3 CPAT assessment Iceland
- What the adaptation of CPAT to the national level consist in? (Iceland did not have this among activities)
- Who were the children involved in FGDs as part of the assessment? Members of the CAT? Age ranges? How selected? How many? Boys/girls? How many FGDs?
- Whom did you provide feedback to about the outcomes of the Assessment? (Children too)?
- I understood (Project Proposal, Annex 1, p.18) that the Assessment would result in an evaluation report and an action plan. What will happen to the Action Plan? (Did different stakeholders buy in/take responsibility for the Action Plan? How was the Plan articulated? How long is it supposed to last? Resources to implement it? Linked to other policies and/or practices at national level?)
- How about the national, three-fold objective: Develop a comprehensive national policy and action plan on child participation; Ensure good coordination on children's rights policies at governmental level; create accessible and child-friendly information on child participation for children and authorities in consultation with children?
- What were, in your views, the key factors that determined or constrained the Project's success? (How about the COVID-19 specifically? How would you assess measures undertaken by the Project to adapt to the situation created by the pandemic?)

WP 4 CPAT assessment Portugal
- Who were the children involved in FGDs as part of the assessment? Members of the CAT? Age ranges? How selected? How many? Boys/girls? How many FGDs?
- Whom did you provide feedback to about the outcomes of the Assessment? (Children too)?

LATTANZIO
■■KIBS

- Portugal-specific objective: White Paper – how does this relate to the Assessment report? Was it an Action Plan? (Did other stakeholders buy in? How long is it supposed to last? Resources to implement it? Linked to other policies and/or practices at national level?)
- What were, in your views, the key factors that determined or constrained the Project's success? (How about the COVID-19 specifically? How would you assess measures undertaken by the Project to adapt to the situation created by the pandemic?)

WP5 National child participation mechanisms and tools in Finland
- Who were the children involved in the consultations, how many, age ranges, boys/girls, and from minority groups? What did you consult them about? Outcomes? Were they (also) members of the CAT?
- What do consulted children expect from the outcomes of their consultations?
- What publications did you produce?
- What is the "Challenge campaign"?
- What were, in your views, the key factors that determined or constrained the Project's success? (How about the COVID-19 specifically? How would you assess measures undertaken by the Project to adapt to the situation created by the pandemic?)

WP6 National child participation mechanisms and tools in Slovenia
- Has the Handbook been published? Is it an adaptation of the Council of Europe Handbook for Professionals on Child participation or…?
- How about the "Checklist for involving the most marginalized children"? And the "Policy guidance"?
- Who were the children involved in the consultations, how many, age ranges, boys/girls, and from minority groups? What did you consult them about? Outcomes? Were they (also) members of the CAT?
- What do consulted children expect from the outcomes of their consultations?
- What were, in your views, the key factors that determined or constrained the Project's success? (How about the COVID-19 specifically? How would you assess measures undertaken by the Project to adapt to the situation created by the pandemic?)

WP 7 Provision and development of European resources
- How many new "European resources and tools" were developed and "re-injected into the Project"? (Compare with Project Proposal, Annex 1, p.30).
- Did you provide trainings? To whom and on what? (Project Proposal, Annex 1, p.30).

Sustainability
- Is any of the activities or outcomes of the Project linked to policies at national level (e.g. child rights strategy etc.)?
- Was the CPAT assessment undertaken in your country aligned with the UNCRC reporting process? (If yes, how?)
- To which extent did you work closely with the external experts hired by the Project?
- What will happen to the CAT in your country?
- Is your organization, or other actors, committed to take forward some activities or outcomes of the Project? If yes, which ones/how?

LATTANZIO
..KIBS

Annex V – Evaluation Matrix

The proposed Evaluation matrix covers the following contents:
- **Evaluation criteria**. Evaluation questions are grouped and organized by Evaluation criteria. These include cross-cutting themes;
- **Key Evaluation questions**. These are derived from the ToR and could not be refined based on the desk review and initial discussions with the Council of Europe during the inception phase, as they constituted a non-changeable part of the Evaluation ToR. A total of 15 Key Evaluation questions is included in the Evaluation Matrix.
- **Sub-questions**. Sub-questions further specify and break down the information needs related to each Key Evaluation question. These informed specific questions in the data collection instruments. Since they are rather detailed, sub-questions also served as benchmarks that has been used in making the assessment for each Evaluation question and criterion.
- **Data sources**. These indicate how the Evaluation questions will be informed. Rather than just listing items such as "Project documents" or similarly, to the extent possible, more specific information has been provided in this column, which also distinguishes between priority data sources and back-up/additional sources.
- **Data collection tools**. This column indicates the relevant data collection tools that will be used to look for the data and information needed to answer each of the questions.
- **Means of triangulation**. This column aims to explain how data acquired will be triangulated, in order to identify any inconsistencies in information. Triangulation will be used to ensure the accuracy of the Evaluation findings, analysis and interpretation, and to assist the Evaluator in overcoming any biases or weaknesses associated with a particular tool. Where additional sources are not easily available (e.g. lack of reliable monitoring data in a particular country or area; no studies to provide background situation on specific themes; etc.), means of mitigation will be sought, and limitations will be clearly explained in the Evaluation Report.

Table 2. Evaluation Matrix

Evaluation criteria	Key Evaluation questions	Sub-questions	Data sources	Data collection methods	Means of triangulation
Relevance	1. To what extent the CP4Europe project objectives and design responded to children's needs and priorities in terms of child participation, taking into consideration children's age, gender, vulnerabilities (e.g. disabilities, children on the move, children belonging to national minorities, etc.), etc.?	1.1. Were a clear child rights situation analysis and a needs assessment carried out systematically and analytically with the participation of key-stakeholders (including children) to ensure a firm basis for Project design?	Project Proposal; Council of Europe Project Manager(s) and Policy Advisor on Human Rights; EC Project Officer.	Desk review; Individual Interviews	Information from Project documents will be compared against views and perceptions shared by interviewees.
		1.2. Did the Project design clearly show what was expected to change for children?	Project Proposal and TOC	Desk review	Review of materials against existing standards for best practice in Project

Evaluation criteria	Key Evaluation questions	Sub-questions	Data sources	Data collection methods	Means of triangulation
					management.
		1.3. Did the Project reflect the target groups priority needs?	Needs assessment documents[204]; Project Proposal; Council of Europe Project Manager(s).	Desk review; Individual Interviews	Information from Project and other documents will be compared against views and perceptions shared by interviewees.
		1.4. Was the Project design (i.e. approach, activities, delivery methods) sensitive to beneficiaries' varying needs based on their age, gender and other diversity aspects?	Needs assessment documents; Project Proposal; Implementing Partners; Children and young people; Experts; EC Project Officer.	Desk review; Individual Interviews; FGDs	Information from Project and other documents will be compared against views and perceptions shared by interviewees.
		1.5. Were goal and aims clearly identified and defined to provide vision and direction to the project design?	Project Proposal and TOC; Council of Europe Project Manager; Implementing Partners.	Desk review; Individual Interviews and/or FGDs	
		1.6. Were objectives 'SMART'? Were they formulated in a way that allows the Organization to track if the project is being successful?	Project Proposal and TOC; Project Reports; Council of Europe Project Manager.	Desk review; Individual Interviews	Information from Project (and other) documents will be compared against views and perceptions shared by interviewees.
		1.7. Was there a clear logic and coherence among problems identified, goal, objectives, activities and expected outcomes?	Project Proposal and TOC; Council of Europe Project Manager.	Desk review; Individual Interviews	Information from Project (and other) documents will be compared against views and perceptions shared by interviewees.
		1.8. Were the overall workload and the work plan realistic?	Project Proposal;	Desk review;	

---

[204] This refers to both Council of Europe/Project documents, as well as to external documents collected by the Evaluator.

Evaluation Report

Evaluation criteria	Key Evaluation questions	Sub-questions	Data sources	Data collection methods	Means of triangulation
			Project Reports; Council of Europe Project Manager(s) and Project Assistant; Implementing Partners; Experts.	Individual Interviews and/or FGDs	
	2. To what extent the CP4Europe project objective and design responded to the partners' needs and priorities in terms of child participation at both national and local levels??	2.1. To what extent and through what means were the needs of the beneficiaries, especially the most vulnerable ones, assessed throughout the Project implementation?

2.2. To what extent were strategies adjusted throughout the implementation (namely in light of: COVID-19 outbreak; donor interest; feedback from the field; collective reflections of partners; etc.)? | Project amendments; Project Reports; Council of Europe Project Manager(s); Implementing Partners.

Project amendments; Project Reports; Council of Europe Project Manager(s); Implementing Partners; EC Project Officer; Children and young people. | Desk review; Individual Interviews and/or FGDs

Desk review; Individual Interviews; FGDs | Information from Project (and other) documents will be compared against views and perceptions shared by interviewees. |
| | 3. To what extent the intervention addressed children's and partners' needs and priorities in terms of child participation at both national and local levels? | | Project amendments; Project Reports; Council of Europe Project Manager(s); Implementing Partners; EC Project Officer; Children and young people. | Desk review; Individual Interviews; FGDs | Information from Project (and other) documents will be compared against views and perceptions shared by interviewees. |
| **Added value** | 4. To what extent the CP4Europe Project had a clear comparative advantage vis-à-vis other European and national actors implementing similar child participation initiatives/interventions? | 3.1. Did the Project bring innovative solutions, and/or displayed shortcomings compared to other, similar interventions? | Project Proposal and TOC; Council of Europe Project Manager(s); Implementing Partners; EC Project Officer.

Council of Europe Project Manager(s); | Desk review; Individual Interviews and/or FGDs

Individual Interviews and/or FGDs | Information from Project (and other) documents will be compared against views and perceptions shared by interviewees. |

Evaluation criteria	Key Evaluation questions	Sub-questions	Data sources	Data collection methods	Means of triangulation
		3.2. To what extent the CP4Europe project objective and design responded to partners' strengths and assets? 3.3. Were partners' strengths and assets crucial in achieving the Project's objectives and results? Which ones? 3.4. Did the coordination and networking efforts by the Council of Europe significantly improve the national- and local-level results brought about by the Project?	Implementing Partners. Implementing Partners,	Individual Interviews and/or FGDs.	Views and perceptions shared by interviewees will be compared
	5. What were the shortcomings compared to other implementers and why?		EC Project Officer Project Proposal and TOC; Council of Europe Project Manager(s); Implementing Partners; EC Project Officer. Council of Europe Project Manager(s); Implementing Partners. Implementing Partners	Individual Interviews and/or FGDs	Information from Project (and other) documents will be compared against views and perceptions shared by interviewees Views and perceptions shared by interviewees will be compared
Effectiveness	6. To what extent the CP4Europe project achieved its objectives and results, including any differential results across the different groups of children involved in the project as well as	6.1. To what extent were the stated objectives achieved? 6.2. Have activities been carried out according to the plan? 6.3. Have outputs been produced			

Evaluation criteria	Key Evaluation questions	Sub-questions	Data sources	Data collection methods	Means of triangulation
	partners?	according to the plan?			
		6.4. Which activities or outputs have been changed and for what purpose? Has this helped in achieving the Project's objectives and intended results?	Project Proposal; Project Reports; Council of Europe Project Manager(s); Implementing Partners	Desk review; Individual Interviews and/or FGDs	Information from Project documents will be compared against views and perceptions shared by interviewees.
		6.5. Were the most marginalized and socially excluded children be reached by the Project? Did the intervention put in place specific measures to proactively involve these children at each stage in which child participation is envisaged? Which ones?			
		6.6. Were activities implemented gender-sensitive, i.e. did they take into account the different needs and wishes of boys and girls? Were boys and girls given equal opportunities to participate in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the project and its results? How?			
		4.2. Did children participate in the design, implementation, monitoring and/or evaluation of the Project?	Project Proposal; Project Reports; Council of Europe Project Manager(s); Impact monitoring system documents; children and young persons; implementing partners; Experts;	Desk review; Individual Interviews and/or FGDs	Information from Project (and other) documents will be compared against views and perceptions shared by interviewees.
		4.3. What was the level of their participation in each of these phases (consultative; collaborative; child-led, none)?			
		4.4. Did child participation practices within the Project meet			

Evaluation criteria	Key Evaluation questions	Sub-questions	Data sources	Data collection methods	Means of triangulation
		minimum quality standards?	Standard-setting documents on child participation[205]		
		4.5. Did the Project envisage the adoption and effective implementation of robust policies and procedures to keep children safe/child safeguarding procedures, including the concrete possibility for children themselves to voice concerns or to raise complaints in a safe way?	Project Proposal; Project Reports; Council of Europe and Implementing Partners' child safeguarding protocols; Council of Europe Project Managers; Implementing Partners; Children and young people; Experts.	Desk review; Individual Interviews; FGDs	Information from Project (and other) documents will be compared against views and perceptions shared by interviewees.
		4.6. Where risks to the safety and well-being of children, their families and communities thoroughly anticipated and addressed? Were measures envisaged to mitigate identified risks?	Project Proposal; Project Reports	Desk review	Review of materials against existing standards for best practice in Project management.
	7. To what extent the Covid-19 context prevented or enabled the achievement of objectives and results?	7.1. What were the main internal and external factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the objectives?	Council of Europe Project Manager(s); Implementing Partners; Experts; Children and young persons.	Individual Interviews and FGDs	Views and perceptions shared by interviewees will be

Evaluation criteria	Key Evaluation questions	Sub-questions	Data sources	Data collection methods	Means of triangulation
		7.2. To which extent and how have the facilitating factors been utilized in advantage of reaching the Project results?	Council of Europe Project Manager(s); Implementing Partners	Individual Interviews	compared
		7.3. What measures have been taken to cope with the challenges, and how they helped to overcome the situation? In particular, to which extent and how has the Project adapted to the changing context due to the COVID-19 pandemic in order to reach the planned objectives?	Project Reports; Project Amendments; Council of Europe Project Manager(s); Implementing Partners; Experts.		Information from Project documents will be compared against views and perceptions shared by interviewees.
Efficiency	8. To what extent the resources and time allocated for the CP4Europe project were adequate?	8.1. Was the project budget appropriate? Too high or low? 8.2. Was the implementation strategy, including monitoring and evaluation, accurately reflected in the budget?	Project Proposal; Project Reports; Project Budget; Project Amendments	Desk review	Review of materials against existing standards for best practice in Project management.
	9. To what extent the CP4Europe project delivered expected results in an economic and timely way?	9.1. Were the objectives achieved at a reasonable and proportionate cost? 9.2. How economically were resources/inputs (staff, money, expertise, time, partners etc.) converted into results?	Project Proposal; Project Reports; Project Budget; Project Amendments	Desk review	Review of materials against existing standards for best practice in Project management.
	10. To what extent the Covid-19 pandemic affected both resources and time allocated for the CP4Europe project and to what extent the mitigation measures taken by the Council of Europe enabled to deliver expected results in an efficient way?	10.1. What budget relocations were made and why? 10.2.Did budget relocations result in higher efficiency of the Project? How?	Project Proposal; Project Reports; Project Budget; Project Amendments; Council of Europe Project Manager(s)	Desk review; Individual Interviews	Information from Project documents will be compared against views and perceptions shared by interviewees.

Evaluation Report

Evaluation criteria	Key Evaluation questions	Sub-questions	Data sources	Data collection methods	Means of triangulation
Impact	11. To what extent the CP4Europe project generated significant positive and/or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects? 12. What worked well and what did not work well, and why, and what were the best practices and lessons learnt?	11.1. Has appropriate attention been given to developing a robust evidence and involving reliable impact monitoring, and reporting procedures based on a robust impact monitoring system and plan? 11.2. Do Project implementing partners perceive that (positive or negative) changes were achieved – as a result of the Project – in terms of: • Stronger child participation frameworks and actions in participating member states? • Recognized good practices in terms of child participation mechanisms and actions, based on model resources and tools? What do they base the above-perception on?	Impact monitoring documents; Council of Europe Project Managers Council of Europe Project Manager(s); Implementing partners	Desk review and Individual Interviews and/or FGDs Individual Interviews and FGDs	Information from Project documents will be compared against views and perceptions shared by interviewees. Views and perceptions shared by interviewees will be compared
	13. To what extent the Covid-19 situation prevented the CP4Europe project to generate significant positive and/or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects and to what extent the mitigation measures taken by the Council of Europe enabled to generate positive and/or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects?	13.1. Did the COVID-19 pandemic affect the achievement of the Project's outcomes? If yes, how? 13.2. What measures were envisaged in the Project design in order to mitigate the uncertainties and potential limitations brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic? 13.3. Were the above-mitigation measures effective?	Council of Europe Project Manager(s); Implementing partners	Individual Interviews and FGDs	Views and perceptions shared by interviewees will be compared
Sustainability	14. What is the likelihood that the benefits from the	11.1. Is the practice likely to be continued after the project-specific	Council of Europe Project Manager(s);	Individual Interviews and FGDs	

Evaluation Report

Evaluation criteria	Key Evaluation questions	Sub-questions	Data sources	Data collection methods	Means of triangulation
	CP4Europe project will be maintained?	funding is over? 11.2. What are the measures linked to a policy intended to address the problem in the long term? 11.3. What are the main factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of sustainability of the project?	Implementing Partners; Experts; Children and young people Council of Europe Project Manager(s); Implementing Partners;	Individual Interviews and/or FGDs	Views and perceptions shared by interviewees will be compared
	15. What is required from the Council of Europe, partners and children to ensure that the benefits of the project continue?	12.1. Have Project partners taken ownership of the Project's concept and approach? 12.2. Are other stakeholders likely to continue some of the activities initiated by the Project? 12.3. Will the CAT or other practices directly involving children continue after the Project?	Implementing Partners; Experts; Council of Europe Project Manager(s); Implementing Partners; EC Project Officer	Individual Interviews and/or FGDs	Views and perceptions shared by interviewees will be compared

Annex VI – Guidelines for Focus Group Discussion with children and young persons

FGDs Guidelines_CoE
Approved Version.doc

LATTANZIO
..KIBS