



COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Guidelines for Implementation of Child Participation

**In the 2nd thematic monitoring round of the Lanzarote Convention on
“The protection of children against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse
facilitated by information and communication technologies (ICTs)”**

**Contributions by children should be submitted to
lanzarote.committee@coe.int by 1 April 2019**

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1. Introduction

The [Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse](#) (hereinafter “the Lanzarote Convention” or “the Convention”), which entered into force in July 2010, requires criminalisation of sexual offences against children. The Parties to the Convention are required to adopt specific legislation and take measures to prevent sexual violence, to protect child victims and to prosecute offenders as set out in the Convention.

The Committee of the Parties to the Convention, the “[Lanzarote Committee](#)” was established to monitor whether Parties effectively implement the Lanzarote Convention. The [monitoring of the Lanzarote Convention](#) takes place in rounds, each round concerning a theme and all Parties are monitored at the same time.

The Lanzarote Committee always seeks and values the views of the [civil society](#), [national human rights institutions](#) and other stakeholders on the implementation of the Lanzarote Convention in the Parties to the Convention.

In addition, as other international human rights instruments, the Lanzarote Convention requires Parties to “encourage the participation of children, according to their evolving capacity, in the development and the implementation of state policies, programmes or other initiatives concerning the fight against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children” (Article 9 (1)). The involvement of children in the work of the Committee can also be firmly based on the priorities of the [Strategy for the Rights of the Child \(2016-2021\)](#) and the [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](#).

The present document encompasses background information and guidelines aiming to support child participation in the 22nd monitoring round of the Lanzarote Convention. This round focuses on challenges to be met and promising practices to be followed to ensure the protection of children against sexual exploitation and sexual abuse facilitated by information and communication technologies (ICTs). The [questionnaire](#) for this monitoring round, adopted in June 2017, seeks information on the situation in Parties with respect more specifically to the protection of children against the criminal exploitation of child self-generated sexual content (in particular sexually explicit images and videos).

The child participation outlined in these guidelines may be carried out by state authorities, civil society organizations or any other relevant stakeholder.

2. Participation of children

Child participation means that children, any person under the age of 18 years old, individually or in groups, have 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 should be given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity. The rights of children and young people to participate applies without discrimination on any grounds including race, ethnicity, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, disability, birth, sexual orientation or other status. Particular efforts should be made to enable participation of children and young people with fewer opportunities, including those who are vulnerable or have special needs.

Child participation in the work of the Lanzarote Committee shall be child-centred, inclusive, voluntary, meaningful, transparent and sustainable. The best interests of the child shall be the primary consideration throughout the whole process of child participation from the preparations until the follow-up of the activities. Particular attention shall be dedicated to respect the privacy of the child and to inform and obtain the consent of the parents/caretakers in accordance with the national legislation. Also national data protection and confidentiality rules shall be followed strictly.

Voluntary participation means that children can decide whether to express their views or not, or to exercise, in any other form, their right to be heard. Nevertheless, if they do so, their views shall be given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity. Children shall be enabled to participate in the work of the Committee and shall be provided with the protection called for in the given context and situation.

In order to be able to participate meaningfully and genuinely, children and young people should be provided with all relevant information and offered adequate support for self-advocacy appropriate to their age and circumstances. Children and young people who exercise their right to freely express their views must be protected from harm, including intimidation, reprisals, victimisation and violation of their right to privacy. Children and young people should always be fully informed of the scope of their participation, including the limitations on their involvement, the expected and actual outcomes of their participation and how their views were ultimately considered.

3. Guidelines for child participation

3.1. Preparation of the consultations

In line with the Council of Europe standards on child participation, the child participants of the consultations should be selected through an open call and volunteer to take part in the process and share their views on the topic. Children should be given ownership over the process; in order to do that, they need to be informed about the framework, the objectives and the topic of the consultation in advance. Their parents should be fully informed and give their consent in accordance with the domestic legislation (in a written form if prescribed by domestic law).

Besides the motivation of the children applying through the open call, a number of factors need to be considered when planning the composition of the consultation groups including group size, age, gender, language (including sign language) and special needs of children. The present methodology is suitable for children between the age of 11 and 18 years old, but it is appropriate to compose groups with closer age range (for example children between the age of 11-13, 14-18 according to cultural context of the country). The involvement of children in vulnerable situations and from various backgrounds is encouraged to ensure representation of all children's experiences, ideas and thoughts in the child participation process. Gender balance should be taken into account as well.

Child participation in the monitoring of the Lanzarote Convention by the Lanzarote Committee is encouraged in the form of consultation in small groups with the support of an adult who facilitates the consultation as a process (facilitator). Therefore, it is advisable to choose a facilitator who has experience working with children, preferably via non-formal education means, and has a good knowledge of children's rights, child participation and the focus of the monitoring itself (i.e. online sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children). Also, the facilitator should accept and use a child-centred approach of the process and demonstrate a high degree of self-awareness.

The facilitator's role is crucial:

- to create a safe and comfortable environment for all members of the group,
- to prepare and present the framework and scope of the consultation to children,
- to keep the consultation focused on the topic of interest while ensuring that all children have the opportunity to contribute and
- to provide support for the children to gather and express their views and opinions in a comprehensive way which is capable for interpretation for adults.

The facilitators need preparation: they should get familiar with the Lanzarote Convention and the work of the Lanzarote Committee and also read the original [questionnaire](#) sent out to the state authorities within the framework of the current monitoring round. The questions in the session outlines to discuss the questionnaire with the children are only suggestions and are aimed at supporting the facilitator to prepare the consultations. These questions should be adapted in terms of language, child-friendly tone and particularities of the country concerned and eventually could be also be complimented. The “Children’s questionnaire” shall be translated into the language spoken by the children in order not to exclude children without knowledge of the English or French languages.

As the form of the children’s replies is not defined and eventually will be decided by the group itself, the facilitator should be prepared to support the children in drafting the replies in various forms such as in a letter, in drawings, posters or recording video(s) or voice message(s). This approach is supported by the practice of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, which welcomes child submissions in any form reflecting the children’s views and recommendations in the same vein as reports or other forms of information from stakeholders.

Before the consultations it is also important to check the replies of the state authorities published [online](#), in particular those given to the questions which will be discussed with the children because they could provide the facilitator with background information.

You should also make a plan about how you want to inform the child participants involved in the consultations about the results of the monitoring later on (children will raise this question). Such results will come in the form of a Committee report (analysis of the situation and recommendations). The report should be adopted by the end of 2019 (and published on the [website of the Lanzarote Committee](#) thereafter). Providing feedback to the children about how their views were ultimately taken into account is of crucial importance otherwise they could question the importance of their involvement.

[Publications and materials produced by the Council of Europe](#) to prevent sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children are at your disposal and available in [several languages](#).

3.2. Implementation of the consultations

The consultation should take place in a child-friendly and preferably neutral environment where the children feel safe and comfortable. The session outlines in this chapter are indicative but it is advisable to keep the structure itself: to start with an introductory session before discussing the topic and the questions and to finish with a closing session. The facilitator decides whether the various sessions may take place during one day only or whether they should be split over more days.

For the facilitators to keep in mind during the consultation:

- Children should have the ownership over the whole process so they should decide on all aspects of the consultation. The role of the facilitator is to keep the focus of the discussion and support them to respect the frameworks given.
- Ensure that the children understand why they are being consulted and the extent of the outcomes of the consultation.
- Raise open question in order to avoid influencing their answers. You can help with further questions to support their thinking and brainstorming around the issues.
- You can start with a general discussion at the beginning of each session but always keep in mind that the topic of the monitoring round is self-generated sexually explicit and sexual images of children and related ICT facilitated sexual coercion and/or extortion.
- Child sexual abuse and sexual exploitation being a sensitive topic, it is better to start the discussion about the situation in general. Be prepared to support children in case any child shares personal experience. When you set the house rules make sure that the group includes a rule that anyone can leave the room at any time.
- If you feel it appropriate, you can allow the children to also seek and use information from sources other than what is provided by the facilitator, including information and communication technologies.
- Always respect the domestic legislation on child protection and code of conduct of professionals working with children including rules related to data protection and privacy rights, professional secrecy and reporting obligations.

TABLE OF SESSIONS			
No.	Title of the session	Aim of the session	Duration
SESSION 0	Introductory session	To get to know each other (facilitator/participants). To get the group started and build group dynamic and trust.	30-45 minutes
SESSION 1	Children's rights, protection against sexual violence, the Lanzarote Convention	To introduce the topic of children's rights, the protection of children from violence. To inform the children about the Council of Europe, the Lanzarote Convention and the work of the Lanzarote Committee. To inform the children about their role in the monitoring work of the Lanzarote Committee, the scope of their participation, including the opportunities and limitations on their involvement, the expected and actual outcomes and how their views are going to be ultimately considered.	45-60 minutes
SESSION 2	Online specific risks	To understand the focus of the consultation: the risks that may result from self-generated sexual images: sexual extortion and sexual coercion.	45-60 minutes
SESSION 3	Discussing the Children's questionnaire	To decide on the working methods of the group: how they prepare the replies to the questions and in what form. To go through the questions with the children and give clarifications if needed. To facilitate the preparation of the replies of the children.	120-150 minutes
SESSION 4	Closing and evaluation	To evaluate the consultation process with the child participants. To close the consultations and clarify/establish the next steps.	30 minutes

SESSION 0

TITLE OF THE SESSION	Introductory session
DURATION	30-45 minutes
AIMS	To get to know each other (facilitator/participants) To get the group started and build group dynamics and trust
SPACE AND TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS	Room with movable chairs and tables, comfortable and relaxing environment
PREPARATION	Prepare the room for children to sit comfortably in a circle which is a prerequisite for equal participation for everyone.

Suggestions

1. In case of a group of children who do not necessarily know each other, it is important to start this session with name games and/or icebreakers. If the children already know each other, an ice-breaker could still be useful to get the participants into the mood of a consultation group.
2. For ice-breakers and starters you consult on Council of Europe's [Composito – Manual on human rights education for children](#).

SESSION 1

TITLE OF THE SESSION	Children’s rights, protection against sexual violence, the Lanzarote Convention
DURATION	45-60 minutes
AIMS	<p>To introduce the topic of children’s rights, the protection of children from violence.</p> <p>To inform the children about the Council of Europe, the Lanzarote Convention and the work of the Lanzarote Committee.</p> <p>To inform the children about their role in the monitoring work of the Lanzarote Committee, the scope of their participation, including the opportunities and limitations on their involvement, the expected and actual outcomes and how their views are going to be ultimately considered.</p>
SPACE AND TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS	Room with movable chairs and tables, comfortable and relaxing environment, equipment to screen videos.
PREPARATION	Prepare the room for children to sit comfortably in a circle which is a prerequisite for equal participation for everyone. Also choose the material you want to use to present the Lanzarote Convention and the work of the Lanzarote Committee.

Suggestions

1. Start a discussion with the children about children’s rights in general:

- Who is a child?
- What are children’s rights? Can you give examples?
- How to protect children from violence?
- What are the opportunities and risks/dangers of the online world for children?

This discussion will provide the facilitator with the opportunity to get to know the members of the group and also to get familiar with the level of knowledge about the topic as well as the language and wording used by the children in this context. The latter is quite important as the model questions for the children’s questionnaire are only suggestions and need to be adapted to the group, country and context.

You can find activities to discuss children's rights with children in the Council of Europe's [Comasito – Manual on human rights education for children](#).

2. Explain to the children that the Council of Europe is an international organization aimed, among other things, at protecting children from violence, particularly from sexual abuse and exploitation all over Europe. Highlight that in order to achieve this aim, the governments of the Council of Europe, prepared a document called Lanzarote Convention which includes obligations for the governments, including the one of their home country, to protect children from sexual violence. You can use the child-friendly [materials](#) prepared by the Council of Europe to introduce this topic to the children.

3. The next step is to inform the children about their role in the monitoring of the Lanzarote Committee, the scope of their participation, including the opportunities and limitations on their involvement, the expected and actual outcomes and how their views are going to be ultimately considered.

a. Explain to the children what the Lanzarote Committee is and highlight that it is currently examining whether States protect their children against online sexual abuse and exploitation. Highlight that the Committee would highly appreciate children's views on this topic. There are therefore a few questions for them to answer in order to help the Committee in its work.

b. Make the children understand that they have the ownership over the whole process: they can decide on all aspects of the consultation. The facilitator's role is to help them keep the focus of the discussion, respect the framework and provide support if needed.

c. The outcome of the consultation is the set of replies given by the children to the questionnaire. Be prepared to inform the children on the way in which their contribution will be transmitted to the Lanzarote Committee (who will send the replies and when).

d. Tell the children that the Lanzarote Committee will take into account their replies when it will examine the situation in their countries. Highlight that this examination will take a long time because the Committee meets three times a year and has to examine the situation in 42 countries. Once all has been examined, it adopts a report with recommendations to the countries. These recommendations will be based also on the children's views and opinions as submitted in their replies to the questions.

SESSION 2

TITLE OF THE SESSION	Online specific risks
DURATION	45-60 minutes
AIMS	To understand the focus of the consultation: the risks that may result from self-generated sexual images: sexual extortion and sexual coercion.
SPACE AND TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS	Room with movable chairs and tables, comfortable and relaxing environment, equipment to screen videos.
PREPARATION	Prepare the room for children to sit comfortably in a circle which is prerequisite for equal participation for everyone.

Suggestions

Introduce the risks of self-generated sexual images and online sexual coercion and extortion as a topic. You can do so by simply starting a conversation about these issues but you may also screen awareness-raising videos for example:

- Between the age of 11-14: [Sheeplive](#) project, particularly the awareness-raising video called "[Coatless](#)" about the risks of self-generated sexual images;
- Between the age of 13-18: Europol campaign [Say No](#) particularly the awareness-raising video about online sexual coercion and extortion;
- For all age groups check whether the [Safer Internet Centres](#) in your countries have any relevant material.

It is important to know that both the terms "coercion" and "extortion" are used in the questionnaire because in some countries "extortion" is a crime only if the benefits expected refer to money or property while when the offender demands more self-generated sexual content or sexual favours it is considered "sexual coercion".

The table below contains the definitions used in the questionnaire sent out to the governments to help the facilitators explain these issues to the children.

Terminology	In the context of the present questionnaire
“child”	any person under the age of 18 years;
“sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children”	behaviour as referred to in Articles 18 to 23 of this Convention;
“self-generated sexually explicit images and/or videos”	any material that visually depicts a child engaged in real or simulated sexually explicit conduct or any depiction of a child’s sexual organs made by the children themselves on their own initiative;
“self-generated sexual content”	images, videos and other material depicting a child in a sexual suggestive way (e.g. naked or semi naked posing in order to provoke some sexual arousal”) made or apparently made by the children themselves on their own initiative;
“sexting”	sharing self-generated sexually explicit images and/or videos and/or self-generated sexual content through information and communication technologies (ICTs);
“information and communication technologies (ICTs)”	all technical means used to handle information and aid communication, including both computer and network hardware as well as necessary software such as mobile phone, tablets, digital cameras, and any other smart devices;
“ICT facilitated sexual coercion and/or extortion”	using self-generated sexually explicit images and/or videos and/or self-generated sexual content to procure a sexual gain (mainly new images or videos or sexual favours), financial gain or other personal gain from the child or any other person under a particular threat (mainly posting previously acquired images and/or videos online).

SESSION 3

TITLE OF THE SESSION	Discussing the Children's questionnaire
DURATION	120-150 minutes
AIMS	To decide on the working methods of the group: how they prepare the replies to the questions and in what form. To go through the questions with the children and give clarifications if needed. To facilitate the preparation of the replies of the children.
SPACE AND TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS	Room with movable chairs and tables, comfortable and relaxing environment, materials and resources children can use (paper, pen, pencil, scissor, computers or digital device with access to internet).
PREPARATION	Prepare the room for children to sit comfortably/and or for small groups and also the materials and resources for their disposal.

Suggestions

1. Support the group in deciding how it would like to proceed with the preparation of the replies in particular:
 - in what form they will prepare their replies (e.g. text, drawing, video, etc.),
 - how they will share the preparation of the replies among each other and whether they will need any help from the facilitator (the whole group may work on all questions or it may split in small groups focusing on one question),
 - whether they have everything they need to prepare the replies.
2. Below you can find model questions for the children along with the original questions. As mentioned above, these questions should be adapted in terms of language, child-friendly tone and particularities of the country concerned and eventually could be also complimented with other questions during the preparations of the consultations.

Children's questionnaire

Question on Prevention with focus on education

Excerpt from the Questionnaire of the Lanzarote Committee

Question 3. National curriculum

Does national curriculum (primary and secondary schools, and vocational education) include awareness-raising about the risks of:

- a) self-generated sexually explicit images and/or videos?
- b) self-generated sexual content?

Suggested questions for discussion with the children:

Have you heard about any rules for taking pictures of yourselves and sharing them?

Did you talk at school about what kind of risks there are if you make naked/half naked pictures or videos of yourselves and share them with someone online?

If yes, during which subject/class? Who talked about this, your teacher or the school psychologist? Or someone who came to your school just to talk about this topic?

If you did not discuss this topic at school, do you think you should talk about it? Is there a subject/class where you think you can talk about it?

Question on Prevention with focus on awareness-raising activities

Excerpt from the Questionnaire of the Lanzarote Committee

Question 1 Awareness-raising or educational activities/tools/materials/measures

1.1. Are there awareness-raising or educational activities addressed to children, about the risks they face when they produce and/or share:

- a) self-generated sexually explicit images and/or videos?
- b) self-generated sexual content?

1.2. Are there awareness-raising or educational activities specifically targeting children as bystanders/observers of other children producing and/or sharing:

- a) self-generated sexually explicit images and/or videos?
- b) self-generated sexual content?

1.3. Are there awareness-raising activities addressed to parents and persons who have regular contact with children (teachers, psychologists, health care professionals, etc.) about the risks children face when they produce and/or share:

- a) self-generated sexually explicit images and/or videos?
- b) self-generated sexual content?

→ Please specify which entities carry out the above-mentioned awareness raising or educational activities (questions 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3) and how they coordinate their action.

→ Please share links to awareness-raising or educational materials (e.g. booklet, video, smartphone application, manual on non-formal education, tool-kit, internet tools) produced for the above mentioned activities (questions 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3).

Suggested questions for discussion with the children:

Can you think of any campaign or awareness raising activities (like an advert, advertisement, poster, cartoons, videos) that explain the risks of making naked/half naked pictures or videos of yourself/children themselves? What was the campaign about?

To whom was the campaign message addressed? You/children, your parents, your teachers?

Where did you hear about/visualise the campaign? TV, radio, newspapers, internet or at school?

What did you learn from the campaign?

What do you think others learned from the campaign?

Did you like the campaign? Yes, no? Why? Is there anything you would have done in a different way?

Question on Protection

Excerpt from the Questionnaire of the Lanzarote Committee

Question 6. Assistance to victims

6.1. What specific reporting mechanisms, helplines are in place to ensure that child victims of exposure online of:

- a) self-generated sexually explicit images and/or videos are provided with the necessary support, assistance and psychological help?
- b) self-generated sexual content are provided with the necessary support, assistance and psychological help?

Suggested questions for discussion with the children:

What would you do if someone misused the naked photo of yourself that you sent to him/her earlier? If he/she asked for more photos or to meet you in person, what would you do? What if he/she asked for money not to share your photo with your parents or friends: what would you do?

What would you tell a friend who asks for your help if he/she shared his/photo and is being threatened?

Would you tell anyone? Friends, siblings, parents, teachers, police?

Who do you think could help you? Where would you look for help? What kind of help would you need or want?

Do you know if there is a helpline in your country? What is the number? What can the helpline help you with? What do you know about them?

3. Finalise the replies with the children.

SESSION 4

TITLE OF THE SESSION	Closing and evaluation
DURATION	30 minutes
AIMS	To evaluate the consultation process with the child participants To close the consultations and repeat what the next steps will be
SPACE AND TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS	Room with movable chairs and tables, flipchart, papers, pens and pencils
PREPARATION	Prepare the room for children to sit comfortably in a circle and also the necessary materials for the evaluation activity.

Suggestions

1. Gather the children in a circle for the closing session. Thank them for their work and confirm that their replies to the questions will be sent to the Lanzarote Committee and repeat how you will follow-up on the results of the monitoring with them.
2. It is also advisable to evaluate the consultations as a process with the children with non-formal means since this is the best way to get direct feedback from them. You can use one of the following methods:
 - Ask them to write two positive and negative experiences on the participation in different papers and then gather all the positive and all the negative ones on the wall or in a flipchart. Depending on the group, you can summarize and read them out or ask the participants to place their paper and explain.
 - Prepare backpack or luggage pictures or drawings (A4 size) and ask the children to write everything inside the bag, which they take home from this participation. Then they can read it out or place in the middle of the circle and you can read it out together.

3.3. After the consultation

The views and opinions of the children shall be submitted to the Secretariat by email (lanzarote.committee@coe.int) by 1st April, 2019. If the submissions cannot be attached to an email (posters, flipcharts, etc.), please contact the Secretariat for instructions.

The submission shall be in one of the official languages of the Council of Europe, namely English or French, or accompanied with English or French translations or explanations (for example in case of posters).

The submission should contain a short description of the composition of the group, including relevant details of the working methods agreed upon by the children. Please ensure that the children having participated in the consultations shall not be identifiable neither by name nor by face.

For any advice or clarifications concerning the Lanzarote Convention's 2nd monitoring round, do not hesitate to send an email to the Secretariat (lanzarote.committee@coe.int).