



Building a Europe
for and with children

Construire une Europe
pour et avec les enfants

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

WEBINAR

Professionals working for the participation of children: “Listen – Act – Change”

*Getting it done the right way: practical guidance for professionals
to involve children meaningfully and safely*

When, where and how?

When: Thursday, 21 January 2021 - 14:30-16:00 hrs (CET)

KUDO platform: <https://vmeeting.coe.int/ad/221113774491> (copy into Google Chrome)

Working languages: English and French

Organised by: Children’s Rights Division of the Council of Europe

Any question to: children@coe.int

The challenges of child participation

Children value being heard by adults regarding the challenges they are facing, and adults need to hear them to provide the right responses: children's first-hand experience on the issues hindering the enjoyment of their right to participate is the most insightful evidence that policy makers dispose to guide their work. At the same time, children do not want to be heard only when it comes to solving problems. They want to be part of the solution, the developments and projects from the very start. Children have proven to be powerful agents of change strengthening society's democratic values, if given the opportunity. This is the reason why child participation should always be regarded as an ongoing process, which is not about "unilateral" listening, but rather organised as a dialogue involving adults and children who co-produce influence and change.

Despite being pushed high on the agendas of the Council of Europe and many of its member states, children's participation in all matters that affect them, in practice, is still an objective to be achieved. In some cases, policy-related discussions are considered "adults' business" and do not leave any room for children's inputs. In others, child participation activities are fragmented and mostly take the form of a one-off event, failing to seriously engage children throughout the whole process.

What is the webinar about?

To fill some of these gaps and better respond to the needs of today's children, the Council of Europe has developed the **Handbook on children's participation for professionals working for and with children**, to support professionals of various backgrounds in implementing the [Council of Europe Recommendation on the participation of children and young people under the age of 18](#) and Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The Handbook to be launched on 21 January 2021 is a practical step-by-step tool which explains the concept of child participation in theory and in practice, while guiding professionals through its implementation in different settings. In particular, it sets the ground for developing participatory environments in institutions working with children or providing services to them – schools, early childhood education centres, hospitals and others – and reaching out to children in different ways, both individually and collectively.

The webinar will launch the Handbook, with the participation of the three authors, as a comprehensive learning tool and collection of good practices and guidance to be applied in any context where adults work with children. The online event will bring together the experts who have prepared the Handbook, children and interested professionals to discuss the importance of child participation in decision making and explore some of the possible ways forward.

Programme – Thursday, 21 January 2021 – 14:30 – 16:00 (CET)

14:30	<p>Opening by the moderator Bruce Adamson, Children and Young People’s Commissioner Scotland</p>
14:35	<p>Preliminary remarks Regína Jensdóttir, Coordinator on the Rights of the Child Head of the Children’s Rights Division, Council of Europe</p>
14:40	<p>Overview of the Handbook Presentation by Dr Anne Crowley, International child participation consultant, to set out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aims and purpose of the Handbook • Presentation of the content and structure of the Handbook • Participation as a process • How to use the Handbook to make child participation a reality?
14:50	<p>* Interactive session 1: Individual Children <i>Introduction by Professor Cath Larkins</i>, University of Central Lancashire (UK) <i>Audience interaction:</i> “What are you doing to reach out to children in the context of Covid-19?”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion • Chat statements / provision of examples
15:05	<p>* Interactive session 2: Collective participation <i>Introduction by Dr Anne Crowley</i>, International child participation consultant <i>Interaction with professionals:</i> Marie Gibbons & Caroline Duignan, Roscommon Children & Young People's Services Committee (Ireland)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion • Chat statements
15:25	<p>* Interactive session 3: Participatory Environments Introduction by Luis Manuel Pinto, Learning for Well-being Foundation <i>Interaction with a young activist:</i> Konstantinos Papachristou, Board Member of Learning for Well-being Foundation, Former Member of the Eurochild Young Advisory Group, Reporter for COVID Under 19</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion • Chat statements
15:40	<p>Final session: Taking things forward <i>Audience interaction:</i> “What are the next steps you can take to implement child participation?”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributions from the audience, guided by the moderator • Chat statements • Opinion polls
15:55	<p>Closing remarks by the Children’s Rights Division and the moderator</p>
16:00	<p>The end</p>