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UNICEF Child Friendly Cities and Communities Initiative



The Child-Friendly City Initiative in Germany

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Methodological note

The case-study follows methodological guidelines developed as part of the CFCI Toolkit Development project. Country selection for case-studies resulted from a call for expression of interest addressed to all National Committees carrying out CFCI and attention to documenting a diversity of experiences in order to inform the CFCI Toolkit.

The visit took place in March 2016 in three cities, Potsdam, Wolfsburg and Hanau, with an additional afternoon spent at the headquarters of the Child-Friendly Communities Association, who manages the CFCI in Germany. Main criteria for the selection included: size, geographic location, length of engagement with the CFCI, accessibility with public transportation, and commitment by municipal staff to ensure adequate preparation for the visit.

All the actors who participated in the process were keen to present the work related to CFCI implementation and there was openness in discussing the decisions taken.

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The study was developed by Ana Isabel Guerreiro, International Consultant. It is part of the CFCI Toolkit Development project commissioned to Rights On, as one of five case-studies elaborated to inform the development of the toolkit. The project was led by the Advocacy and Innovative Partnership Unit in the Private Fundraising and Partnership Division of UNICEF, managed by Marta Arias and Louise Thivant with the permanent support of Andrés Franco and Sally Burnheim.

Executive Summary

The Child Friendly City Initiative in Germany was created in 2012 through an agreement between the National Committee and the Non-Governmental Organisation *Deutsches Kinderhilfswerk e.V.*. An ad hoc independent association was created and is responsible for the overall implementation and daily management of the CFCI. The CFCI first started as a pilot project in six cities and later an extra set of six cities joined the process. The cities have different characteristics and range between 8.249 and 1.016.679 inhabitants. The CFCI implementation framework was informed by the 9 building blocks, but focuses on four themes. The accreditation process follows a four-year cycle, whereby the first year is dedicated to carrying out a comprehensive situation analysis on the situation of children in the city, followed by the preparation of an Action Plan. Upon adoption of the Action Plan, cities are attributed the CFCI 'seal'. There are mid-term and final evaluations to assess compliance and impact of the measures carried out.

The initiative is funded through resources from the National Committee, the *Deutsches Kinderhilfswerk e.V.* and a membership fee for participating cities. There are five people working in CFCI implementation.

Child participation is one of the pillars of the CFCI in Germany. In parallel to carrying out the situation analysis, municipalities have to apply a questionnaire with children aged 10 to 13. These results are combined with those from the situation analysis and serve to inform the development of the Action Plan. A number of cities engaged in the CFCI have set up a Children's Council, although in several places, both children, young people and municipal officers favour project-based participation.

Vulnerable groups are identified in the situation analysis and should be considered in the Action Plan, however they have not been targeted specifically. The refugee crisis has had an impact in CFCI implementation at local level and has been taken into account in its actions.

Capacity building is an integral part of the CFCI framework and has been integrated in Action Plans and CFCI implementation locally, as well.

The German CFCI presents an interesting case and provides insight to how National Committees can address key strategic questions and how to go about developing a CFCI framework.

1. Development of CFCI in the country

In its Action Plan of 2007, the UNICEF National Committee for Germany stated that it would target the State, Federal and local levels in its future actions. The National Committee believed that the CFCI would be a good way to raise awareness and implement child rights at local level in the long run. The CFCI was seen as a vehicle to translate the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its principles and related literature into a language that could be used locally. It was also seen as a means to create a sustainable network that could potentially facilitate advocacy from the local level to the Federal level. The awareness raising and networking efforts should create a platform of knowledge and dialogue about the CRC and how to implement it.

For the development of the goals and process, the National Committee Head of Child Rights Advocacy and Education was in contact with the CFCI Secretariat at the UNICEF IRC and UNICEF PFP, as well as with the Spanish, Swiss, Italian and the French National Committee. In terms of exchange with other National Committees, at the very beginning, there was a meeting in Berlin with the pilot CFCs and a representative from the Swiss National Committee was present. Later in the pilot process, there was another workshop where a representative from the Swiss National Committee was present. The end model of the CFCI in Germany has taken some elements of the Swiss and Spanish CFCI model.

The CFCI association stated that there was limited guidance from UNICEF at international level and that the development of the CFCI in Germany was 'learning by doing'. Representatives of the CFCI association were in Geneva in 2014 at a meeting on CFCI, where various National Committees were represented. On that occasion the need for more exchange between CFCIs was discussed.

There are 11.313 municipalities in Germany and the administration processes vary considerably between Federal States and administration levels, i.e. national, federal, district or local. Before the association was founded, the six pilot cities had already been selected. The aim was to have a variety of cities, including 2 small, 2 medium and 2 larger-size cities; and that these would be geographically distributed across the country, in order to understand what works in different contexts. The CFCI association stated that experience has demonstrated that in cities with up to 150,000 inhabitants, the effectiveness of the group responsible for implementing the CFCI is not highly influenced by the size of the city. In general, in smaller cities, the process runs more smoothly, because there is less bureaucratic work.

The CFCI in Germany started with piloting the process and tools, which included six cities, with a variation of inhabitants between 27.000 to 1 million, with the following participating cities:

1. Senftenberg: 27.000 inhabitants, of which 3.200 under 18 (12,6%);
2. Weil am Rhein: 29.918 inhabitants, of which 5.429 under 18 (18,2%);
3. Hanau: 88.637 inhabitants, of which 15.982 under 18; (17,6%);
4. Wolfsburg: 121.237 inhabitants, of which 18.699 under 18 (15,3%);
5. Regensburg: 135.520 inhabitants, of which 19.308 under 18 (14,3%);
6. Cologne: 1.016.679 inhabitants, of which 168.367 under 18 (16,5%).

Currently, the German CFCI covers an extra set of six municipalities, namely:

1. Algermissen: 7.803 inhabitants, of which 1.501 under 18 (18,24%);
2. Amelinghausen: 8.249 inhabitants, of which 1.664 under 18 (18,79%);
3. Potsdam: 163.668 inhabitants, of which 26.948 under 18 (16,47%);

4. Remchingen: 11.600 inhabitants, of which 2.199 under 18 (18%);
5. Taunusstein: 29.230 inhabitants, of which 5.148 under 18 (17,61 %);
6. Wedemark: 29.744 inhabitants, of which 5.244 under 18 (17,63%);

2. Management of CFCI

Management of the initiative

The CFCI in Germany was created in Spring 2012 through an agreement between the UNICEF National Committee for Germany and the Non-Governmental Organisation *Deutsches Kinderhilfswerk e.V.*. The development work was carried out between the two organisations and it took approximately five to six years for the CFCI to take off. An ad hoc organisation - the *Kinderfreundliche Kommunen e.V.* – Child-Friendly Communities Association (hereafter CFCI association) was established for the coordination and implementation of the CFCI in Germany with an office in Berlin and Cologne. Unlike most National Committee countries in which the CFCI is implemented, in Germany the implementation is not carried out by the National Committee but by this association. Throughout the process the CFCI association is supported by the National Committee and the *Deutsches Kinderhilfswerk e.V.*; and decisions have to be taken by all three organisations.

The team working for the CFCI association is made-up of five people with the following background: one full time education expert, one expert in urban planning (30 hours/week), one part-time officer which is specialising in child rights (15 hours/week), one part-time officer specialising in regional studies responsible for the website (15 hours/week) and one freelance sociologist/teacher responsible for the evaluation of the pilot-municipalities.

The National Committee Head of Child Rights Advocacy and Education, the Executive Director of *Deutsches Kinderhilfswerk e.V.* and the CFCI association team meet every 6 weeks, discuss the current state of affairs and make pending decisions together. The National Committee and the *Deutsches Kinderhilfswerk e.V.* receive the CFCI association's end-of-year reports. Twice a year, the CFCI association reports to the executive boards of the National Committee and the *Deutsches Kinderhilfswerk e.V.* and once a year to its own executive board. The Head of Child Rights Advocacy and Education and the Head of the *Deutsches Kinderhilfswerk e.V.* provide inputs on various aspects of CFCI implementation and all the key decisions are taken together between the CFCI association, the *Deutsches Kinderhilfswerk e.V.* and the National Committee. It makes the process slower, because all organisations have to analyse and reflect about decisions, but the CFCI association values the support and joint decision-making. There is a regular contact between all organisations, but the association is responsible for all management and implementation of the CFCI. During the case study visit, it was clear that the National Committee has a deep trust in the work of the *Deutsches Kinderhilfswerk e.V.* organisation, with whom they had worked for many years, including the head of the CFCI association team, who is a former Executive Director of the *Deutsches Kinderhilfswerk e.V.*

The National Committee Head of Child Rights Advocacy stated that the volume of work is substantial for the number of people involved in the management and implementation of the CFCI. Though this applies only to the volume of work with the current number of participating municipalities. Although the National Committee managed to outsource the CFCI, there are still limited resources both from its side and the *Deutsches Kinderhilfswerk e.V.* for managing and supporting the CFCI. If possible, the National Committee Head of Child Rights Advocacy said it would be good to have an officer in the Advocacy team who would be able to deal with the CFCI. With more financial resources, the fees for the municipalities could be dropped, or even give a financial incentive for them to become active, and the National Committee or the CFCI association could produce more and better information material for trainings, awareness raising, or other (e.g. videos). More financial resources would also facilitate more exchange between the stakeholders, e.g. in an annual national workshop.

Depending on its size, the participating municipality has to pay between €4.000 and €16.000 yearly for 4 years. In the second round of implementation, the fee decreases to half. The National Committee and the *Deutsches Kinderhilfswerk e.V.* provide additional funds for running the CFCI. In 2012 and 2013, the Ministry for Urban Planning supported the development of a child participation game, which is often used within the situation analysis at the very beginning of the process; and the Ministry for Family Affairs gave a small fund for the development of the situation analysis' questionnaires. The total expenditure of the CFCI has increased from €84.000 in 2012 to €122.000 in 2015. One has to bear in mind that, unlike other national CFC Initiatives, the salaries for staff are provided by the CFCI association and not the National Committee. The increase of expenditure is due to the doubling of number of participating municipalities. The contribution from the municipalities as part of their fee has increased from €30.000,00 in year 1 to €120.000,00 in year 4, as in year one not all pilot municipalities had signed the agreement yet. National Committee Head of Child Rights Advocacy stated that it has been very difficult to access private donors to fund the CFCI.

The National Committee Head of Child Rights Advocacy stated that the National Committee structure makes it difficult to invest in the CFCI and therefore it will be difficult to sustain the CFCI in the long run if the National Committee is not the one running it. Usually, the National Committee in Germany launches the initiatives, which are then adopted by the State. In this case, it will not happen. This is why it would be crucial for current CFCs to get specific funds (from Federal State or European level) to implement it in the long-term.

The National Committee does not evaluate the work of CFCI association, however it is planning to evaluate the CFCI. The main aim of the evaluation would be to show that there is a real benefit in implementing the CFCI.

Linkages made with other National Committee initiatives

The National Committee has only one other platform initiative – the rights respecting schools platform -, which is also in a pilot phase. The two platforms have not been strategically aligned at a higher level.

Support provided by the CFCI association to municipalities

Capacity building

The CFCI association developed two basic documents in collaboration with the National Committee, the *Deutsches Kinderhilfswerk e.V.* and the experts:

- A Guidance Document around the four themes highlighted in the situation analysis (situation of the child in the city, regulatory framework, child participation and information and public relations). This is given to the cities that may become interested in the CFCI, as a way to inform them about what it is about;
- Official principles for implementing the CFCI, following the same four themes.

The *Deutsches Kinderhilfswerk e.V.* has developed a training package on child participation facilitators (in general, not for the CFCI specifically). The CFCI association recommends municipalities to take part in it, but it is only delivered upon request of the municipality.

Networking

Twice a year the CFCI association organises a two-day workshop with exchange opportunities and inputs from various external experts, in which representatives from all municipalities take part. Every time, a different city hosts the workshop. The workshops are always centred on a specific topic, with presentations from external experts; group discussions; presentation of different activities by the CFCs and a visit to places of interest.

A recent important feature of the network meetings is that the CFCI association brings the results from the internal evaluations, which encourages municipalities to carry out the work. The CFCI association believes that this is also an interesting exercise, because it enables municipalities to identify common problems and solutions. The municipalities explain the process, challenges, why certain areas have been achieved and others not, etc. The CFCI association believes that it is a very useful activity and is planning to do it at all following workshops.

Networking has happened both within and outside the existing network of CFCs, with other municipalities that are interested in joining the CFCI. These municipalities want to hear experiences about existing CFCs and how the CFCI is implemented. CFCs have visited municipalities that have an interest in joining the CFCI to tell about their experience. At the time of the case-study visit, the CFCI coordinator for Hanau was soon going to visit another municipality to present their CFCI, which was set up by invitation.

Management of the participation in the CFCI at city level: CFCI structures and organization

In each municipality, there is/are one to three focal person/people and the CFCI association is in contact with them over the whole duration of the initiative. The focal person/people are the main coordinator of the CFCI on site.

Good Practice from Potsdam – Partnerships for CFCI implementation

In Potsdam, the Youth Welfare Office of the municipality decided that it would be essential that the *Stadtjugendring* (an NGO and umbrella organisation, representing 24 youth organisations working at city level) was to be involved in the CFCI and contribute to its implementation. The CFCI and coordination for the process in Potsdam is promoted by the Youth Welfare Office, who involved the *Stadtjugendring* as a strong local partner for youth work to support and realize the different steps for CFCI. The *Stadtjugendring* is concerned with engaging with other organisations, too: it is planning to draft the Action Plan in collaboration with the Youth Office and to present and discuss the first proposal with other organisations working in Potsdam, with children and young people themselves and with political and administrative officers.

The CFCI association requires for a Steering Group to be established by the municipality at the very beginning of the process, at the latest during the development of the Action Plan. It is usually made up of between 10 and 25 people, including stakeholders from various fields/sectors within the municipality. Children are usually represented in the Steering Group. Importantly, the agreement signed by the municipality when applying to becoming a CFC includes a statement saying that a Steering Group will be set up.

The CFCI association stated that it is quite challenging to involve non-traditional child sectors. The topic of the last networking meeting, which had been suggested by the Office of the Commissioner for Children in Wolfsburg, was how to set up a Steering Group. Some of the questions raised were 'who should coordinate and participate in the Steering Group'; 'how self-sufficient should it be and under which mandate' and 'how should the exchange take place, i.e. via telephone?' Some of the suggestions included to appoint one focal coordinator in the Steering Group and to further appoint one contact person from each department, who is at the top of the hierarchy, to be nominated by the mayor or city council, or heads of departments.

The challenge of how to engage with different sectors was also reflected in the findings from the discussions with CFCs.

In Wolfsburg, the Steering Group was set up in 2015. One meeting was held, where all department heads of the municipality attended. At present, the Office of the Commissioner for Children, who is the CFCI coordinating unit, is defining procedures for the work of the Steering Group and planning processes. The procedures and implementation process will probably address a lower level (i.e. the operational level). A challenge mentioned by the stakeholders during the case-study visit is to really engage with all departments, because many feel that the CFCI or child rights are not of their concern. To overcome this, the Office of the Commissioner for Children promotes raise awareness activities and tries to show the advantages of the work.

In Potsdam, the Steering Group is being established at two levels:

- An administrative group made-up of directors/heads of department, which will meet twice a year;
- A service delivery-level group, which will meet on a monthly or two-month basis and meet twice a year with the administrative group.

The CFCI coordinating unit is planning to give specific topics to each meeting, so that they can really bring in the different sectors (i.e. one dedicated to school, one to traffic organisation and so on). The idea is to raise awareness of different sectors of what is their role in the CFCI and why it is important for them to participate. A facilitating element is that the NGO Stadtjugendring with its Children and Youth Office has already been working for 10 years with the municipality to develop and improve participation processes. So they have a good experience of working with different partners in different fields, where they have established strong contacts. However, the coordinator stated that cross-sector collaboration is essential but it is hard work to make other sectors understand why they should be participating and they have had their difficulties in bringing on board essential departments, which have not understood nor valued the issues at stake and have been more reluctant to participate.

Child rights advocacy and education, dissemination and awareness-raising

Child rights advocacy and education is targeted in the CFCI implemented and is referred to as Information and public relations. The CFCI association stated that the CRC is not already known and understood locally and that it is not clear for the municipalities what they have to carry out in relation to the national legal provisions of the CRC, especially in relation to other child-related binding acts. There is not a monitoring and evaluation system for municipalities in relation to the CRC and often the municipalities are not aware of it and its principles. Information and public relations is one of the four topics of the administration questionnaire.

Good practice from Wolfsburg – Training municipal officers

In Wolfsburg, the third measure of the Action Plan 2014-2018 is 'Awareness-raising and capacity building', which includes:

- Ensure awareness of children's rights among adults and children;
- Make the principles and provisions of the CRC widely known; and
- Promote children's equal status as rights-holders.

As part of this measure, an internal programme organised in May 2015 for 22 municipal employees from different departments, including training on the CRC and the CFCI.

Good practice from Hanau – Training teachers

A training programme was organised for teachers in February 2016 with the duration of seven hours and with the participation of around 20 teachers coming from all primary schools in Hanau.

Good Practice – Child Rights suitcase – Regensburg and Weil am Rhein

The suitcase is available at the children's office in the municipality and they make it available to teachers to use in schools (classes 4-7 and 7-10) and kindergarten level. The suitcase contains various ideas and methods of how to discuss with children appropriately about children's rights.

In addition to the awareness raising actions adopted by CFCs, it was clear from the case-study visit that the CFCI coordinating units and other cities that are interested in joining the network also try to learn about how to implement the CFCI and child rights at local level. In February 2016, the regular CFCI network meeting was organised in Potsdam. This presented an opportunity for the local group to learn from other cities of how they are implementing the CFCI. Furthermore, the CFCI coordinator in Potsdam stated that she would value and is missing another CFC, which is closer to the characteristics of Potsdam, particularly another regional capital, with a closer number of inhabitants and administrative structure.

The CFCI association believes that there have been changes in terms of organisational learning and awareness on child rights during the implementation of the CFCI. For example, in Weil am Rhein and Algermissen the municipalities are planning to include the guidelines of the CFCI into the guidelines of the city. The deputy mayor in Hanau stated that 'the existing view on the needs and perspectives of children in the traditional child sectors have certainly always been stronger, but it is possible to see the knowledge growing in other departments dealing with more technical issues, as well. It is not as strong as the sectors dealing with children, but it is also there. (...) Child participation has increased and the concept of child rights has grown in importance, so the understanding on child rights should be growing, too.'

Additionally, there is a newsletter every 2-3 months, where the CFCs are informed about available trainings and other matters of interest. The National Committee and the Deutsches Kinderhilfswerk e.V. provide the CFCI association with educational materials, which are provided to CFCs on various occasions, including in the networking meetings.

The CFCI association is starting to collect good practices at national level (i.e. on urban and traffic planning that offer better conditions in urban spaces, bicycle pathways or examples on planning projects developed with the participation of children). These will be made available to current CFCs.

In terms of communications, the CFCI is on the website of the National Committee and it has its own website, which is very rich in information (www.kinderfreundliche-kommunen.de). The CFCI website also includes an internal section, where Child-friendly Cities (CFCs) can access and download relevant documents.

Cross-sectoral coordination

In Hanau, the stakeholders stated that cross-sector cooperation in the city was very easy from the start, partly because it was a top-down approach: the mayor, deputy mayor and another key leader in the administration said this was a key area of intervention and each department nominated a representative. At present, all departments are still represented and working, which is a very positive sign. In Wolfsburg, the stakeholders also mentioned the fact that a top-down approach was applied and that there was support from the mayor, which facilitated the implementation of the CFCI. In general, stakeholders in different CFCs seem to recognise a top-down approach as beneficial. Indeed, often people mention this as key to the success of the CFCI. From an external perspective, the support of the mayor seems to be a real advantage when there is already prior knowledge about child rights programming among those that provide for or deliver the services.

Setting up new Structures

As aforementioned, the CFCI association in Germany only requires municipalities to set up a Steering Group. However, as part of the CFCI, different structures have been set up in different CFCs. For example, in Wolfsburg, the Children's Council was set up and there are plans for establishing a cross-sector health network. At the same time, municipalities seem to be taking advantage of existing offices and programmes. In Wolfsburg, the Office of the Children's Commissioner had been set up in 2000 and it is acting as the coordinating unit for CFCI implementation in the city. As part of the Action Plan 2014-2018, the Office has enhanced its competencies and staff and it is using its position to bring child rights into the agenda. In Hanau, a previously extinguished unit for children – the Child and Youth Office – was re-opened in the context of the CFCI implementation. In Regensburg, a children's advisory board has been set up; the Child Rights Agency was expanded; and the "Safehouse for people in need" and the "Islands for children in need" concepts were developed. In Senftenberg, the children's and youth parliament was strengthened through a fund. In Weil am Rhein, there has been the establishment of an Office of the Ombudsperson for Children. In Algermissen, the Office of the Ombudsperson will be established.

External Experts

The CFCI association has arrangements with a pool of external experts from various fields, (all closely related to children's rights) to consult and support the participating municipalities. The expert panel consists of experts from various backgrounds such as urban planning, public health, education system etc. They work mainly on a voluntary basis, they get a symbolic remuneration of €500 a year and travel expenses paid.

With the pilot communities, the experts were consulted on every city, but there was no concrete allocation of the experts to one municipality. With the second set of participating municipalities, three experts have been referred to each municipality, which they can contact for consultation, so the experts are more knowledgeable about the local situation and can better advise within the process. The CFCI association finds that the experts support the municipalities significantly.

The CFCI association stated that the municipalities are often 'shy' about accessing the pool of experts and need a push from their team. The CFCI association has not defined guidelines for CFCs to facilitate their engagement with the experts and has left it to the municipalities to decide, which often poses challenges. The organisation encourages the use of the Pool of Experts at specific times. The National Committee Head of Child Rights Advocacy stated that the existing pool of experts does not include the experts that had been targeted initially, possibly because the highly prominent child rights experts would have to receive payment or see a real benefit in participating in the CFCI. On the other hand, the CFCI association has demonstrated high satisfaction with the experts involved.

In Hanau, there was one visit by one of the experts, who lived in a nearby village, who therefore knew the context and the local stakeholders found his contribution useful. The experts also provided recommendations, which the stakeholders used for the Action Plan. The stakeholders said that there were little resources for implementing the CFCI, so this was probably the most they could get out of the experts.

In Wolfsburg, the stakeholders stated that there is a strong relationship with the experts, however they mostly seem to be using their support at specific events, i.e. when launching the children's council.

Additionally, there is an online pool of experts for more specific topics, which the municipalities need consultation on. With this latter group of experts, it is up to the municipalities to contact the experts, discuss and agree with them how they will pay them.

Good practice – Child participation in the expert commission

The expert commission includes children and young people from the pilot municipalities. Five pilot municipalities named two adolescents to the expert commission at the beginning of the initiative in Germany. They were also invited to some steering group meetings, but only in their respective municipality. Currently, there are around five to six active children between the age of 15 and 18. With the second set of participating municipalities this concept changed. From now on, new adolescents from other municipalities will not be referred to the expert commission. Instead, they are taking part in the steering groups of each municipality.

3. Accreditation process

A city interested in becoming a CFC has to apply for participating in the initiative. After that there is a formal agreement between the city council and the CFCI association. The whole process cycle consists of two main parts. The first part, which takes around one year, consists of a comprehensive analysis of the situation of children in the municipality and the preparation of an Action Plan. The following three years consist of the implementation of the Action Plan. After the four years (in total), the municipality can extend the process for another three years, starting with a situation analysis, which is a more compact procedure, in comparison to that carried out in the first round.

The main step in the first year is an analysis of the child rights situation in the municipality through the application of two questionnaires. During the first two years, the six pilot cities tested two versions of the questionnaires.

Questionnaire for the municipalities administration

One of the two questionnaires is for the municipality's administration. It is a detailed questionnaire, which covers the following sections:

- **General section: Statistics:** statistical profile of the municipality, including the following key issues:
 - Well-being, health status, schooling, child care, after-school activities, migration, check-ups carried out with school-aged children, etc.);
- **Part one: Best Interest of the Child,** including:
 - City-wide children's rights strategy and guidelines in place;
 - Conditions for child care, inclusion and integration;
 - Facilities for play and recreational activities;
 - Health system and prevention measures;
 - Child rights and living conditions for children with disabilities and refugee children;
 - Urban planning, mobility and traffic system;
 - Protection and safety.
- **Part two: Regulatory framework,** in line with the building blocks, this section addresses existing structures, procedures and legislation, which consistently promote and protect the rights of children, including:

- Existence of a children’s rights unit or coordinating mechanism;
- Representation of interests, i.e. child advisory committee;
- A children’s budget: financial resources and self-determined budget for children;
- Independent advocacy for children: supporting NGOs.
- **Part three: Child participation** in municipal bodies, including:
 - Administrative proceedings, monitoring and feedback processes;
 - Methods and forms of implementation;
 - Topics for local participation;
 - Self-organised participation projects;
 - Possibilities for raising an objection by children and complaints mechanisms available.
- **Part four: Information and public relations**, including:
 - City children’s report;
 - Monitoring and data collection;
 - Availability of information;
 - Child-friendly language and dissemination;
 - Indicators of a welcoming culture for children and young people locally.

The CFCI association prepares the report based on the situation analysis in the first six months after signing the agreement.

Reflection from Potsdam – questionnaire for administration

“The questionnaire for the administration includes ‘yes or no’ answers, which in itself is quite political, as the achievement in most areas is somewhere in between. (In the case of Potsdam), the administration answered more ‘no’ questions, to make the CFCI-related work more demanding (*NGO Stadtjugendring*).”

The Action Plan

With the results of the three procedures described above, the CFCI association and the external experts discuss with the municipality, in an official consultation, possible actions to include in the Action Plan. This consultation brings together different groups of stakeholders and around three external experts. In some cases, the National Committee has participated in the consultations. After the consultation and building on the questionnaires, the CFCI association prepares a report for the municipality, with comprehensive recommendations for measures regarding the following Action Plan, highlighting particularly important areas for intervention. The report is structured according to the four themes used in the administrative questionnaire. External experts also give their input for the development of the recommendations.

The Action Plan constitutes the heart of the German initiative. During the pilot phase, the duration of the Action Plan was four years. For the following participating municipalities, the Action Plan has been designed for three years. It includes measures, related budget, responsible people and a timeframe. The municipality’s city council officially adopts it. The CFCI association, its executive board, the National Committee and the *Deutsches Kinderhilfswerk e.V.* verify and agree/disagree the Action Plan.

Upon adoption of the Action Plan, the CFCI association hands over the CFCI Seal, which is used by the city during the three or four years of implementation of the Action Plan. It is a very official and public event. The National Committee, local politicians, the media and other stakeholders are invited to the ceremony. The process between application and finalising the Action Plan takes approximately 1 year.

At the end of the 3 or 4 years, if the municipality wants to keep the CFC Seal, it has to carry out another questionnaire (more compact version), develop a new action plan for 3 years and has to pay half of the fee paid in the first round. At the end of this second round, the municipality can keep the seal on an indefinite basis. From then on, the municipality has to write a report to the CFCI association every three years about the ongoing further development.

4. Core components

The original UNICEF CFCI 9 building blocks have been taken into account in the preparation of the overall CFCI implementation and the situation analysis in particular, but put into the four themes highlighted in the accreditation section. The reason for this was that the 9 building blocks were found not to be equally applicable across cities and therefore the CFCI association decided that it made more sense to distribute it like it is.

Although the 9 building blocks are not targeted specifically, the situation analysis questionnaire includes a self-assessment section for administration on the 9 building blocks. The administration is supposed to answer 'How important are the 9 building blocks at local level?' and 'How have the 9 building blocks been implemented so far?'

5. Child Participation

Child participation in the National Committee's approach

One of the key areas for the CFCI accreditation process in Germany focuses on child and adolescent participation. In parallel to carrying out the situation analysis, municipalities have to apply a questionnaire with children aged 10 to 13. Questions cover the following dimensions: participation in the family, in school and at local level; access to information; recreation and play; self-perceived health; practice of sports; safety (in roads, public transport, etc.); eating habits; violence (i.e. bullying and awareness on how to help children who have been a victim of abuse); and perception of quality of life in the city. The last question is 'if you were a mayor of your town, what would you like to do for young people?' The questionnaire includes a section on demographic data on the children who have answered the survey. When the questionnaire is done with children, they receive a child-friendly version of the CRC.

The CFCI association prepares a report on the children's questionnaire and gives it back to the municipality. So in total two separate reports are prepared based on the two questionnaires aforementioned.

Reflection from Potsdam – questionnaire for children

After the implementation of the children's questionnaire and during the consultation with the CFCI association, the local group responsible for implementing the questionnaire raised the following questions:

- The questionnaires were completed with different primary schools all over Potsdam, therefore they were able to reach different groups of children. At the same time, particular groups of children, such as disabled children and refugee children were not able to participate because the questionnaire was not applied in specialised schools for disabled children or refugee classes/ homes;
- The questionnaire method is in German only and it has not been adapted to those with special needs or in other languages;

The CFCI coordinating unit intends to develop a questionnaire for young refugee children.

As a third part of the situation analysis, the CFCI association requires municipalities to engage with children of other age-groups. For the first six pilot cities, the CFCI association prepared a special game together with 15 adolescents coming from the pilot cities: the *Stadtspielerjugend* game. The board game is played by four to six people per board, on which a simplified city map of the respective municipality is displayed. The aim of the game is to collect ideas from children and youth via a model construction of their city.

Good Practice from Potsdam – Situation analysis with children

The NGO Stadtjugendring who is part of the implementing body in the CFCI in Potsdam carried out the children's questionnaire with 427 children between 10 and 12 years of age from 7 schools. Following the questionnaire, the NGO organised a workshop on the rights of the child with the children from the municipality, as a means to raise their awareness on the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

A separate workshop was organised with 17 students (class/school representatives) with the purpose to explore 'if you were the mayor of Potsdam, what would you do to improve Potsdam?' After collecting their ideas, the children voted on 6 ideas and then 6 working groups were established to further explore the issues. The children worked on how to develop concrete measures for implementing their goals.

As a third activity for carrying out the situation analysis with children and taking into account that the CFCI questionnaire targets only young children, the NGO adapted the questions to an older age group; the questionnaire was then uploaded online and received 142 replies from children and young people. Most children were aged between 12 and 17 years old (87%), whilst 10 % were aged between 18 and 26 and 2% older than 26. In the field of participation, the young people found it important to participate in the development of the city, at home, school and leisure time and to be able to participate via the internet. They favoured more internet and project based participation, rather than being part of youth parliaments. 80% wish to have a budget for young people, which they can use and implement themselves. Regarding children's rights, they found article 19 the most important.

Child participation in CFCI management at city level

In terms of the country context, in Germany, there are few legal provisions at state and federal level on children's right to participation and it differs in every Bundesland. School laws are also regulated on the federal level (Bundesländer) and there is no uniform regulation regarding the structures of participation in school. In some Bundesländer e.g. Berlin, it is binding to have a student council from grade 3.

The CFCI in Germany follows the experience of the *Deutsches Kinderhilfswerk e.V.* and the National Committee and uses their pool of methods and materials. Municipalities have existing practices and structures, so the CFCI association's approach so far has been to work from what the municipality is already doing. The CFCI association stated that ensuring child participation in the long-term is challenging, for various reasons: managing the child parliaments is costly, the need to ensure interesting topics and allocating time for children to participate. What seems to be working the most is when the municipality gives money that can be used by the children for single projects. One of the reasons is that this requires less time-commitment from the children.

Findings from the situation analysis on available structures and other child participation mechanisms and activities	
An existing Child and Youth Office	Wolfsburg (part of the city administration); Hanau (part of the city administration); Potsdam (supported by NGO).
An existing Office of the Ombudsperson for Children	Wolfsburg (part of the city administration, full-time); Hanau (part of the city administration, full-time); Algermissen (part of the city administration); Weil am Rhein (part of the city administration, part-time); Cologne (part of the city administration, full-time).
Regular surveys carried out with children and young people	Wolfsburg, Hanau, Regensburg, Cologne Weil am Rhein, Senftenberg, Algermissen, Remchingen Amelinghausen, Taunusstein, Wedemark and Potsdam .
Regular participation of children and young people in urban planning	Wolfsburg, Regensburg, Hanau, Potsdam, Taunusstein (city-landscape); Weil am Rhein, Senftenberg, Wedemark, Amelinghausen, Algermissen, Cologne (especially playgrounds).
Budget for management by children	Senftenberg, Regensburg, Wedemark, Taunusstein (bound to the Children's Advisory Board); Amelinghausen (not bound to any entity but available for everyone to apply for).

In Wolfsburg, the children's questionnaire was carried out in 2013 in schools and youth clubs for children aged 10-12. Approximately 400 children participated. One interesting result from the questionnaire was that younger children were more aware of participation mechanisms available than older children. In the CFCI Action Plan 2014-2018, four of the nine actions identified have a specific focus or include child participation, including:

- Vocational training for moderators on child and youth participation;
- Consulting with children in the planning process of playgrounds in the city (playground concept);
- Setting-up a Children's Council for children aged 8-13; and
- Setting-up regular youth consultation and youth forums.

The Children's Council was set up in Autumn 2015 and it is currently made-up of 30 children (17 girls, 13 boys) in the age range 8-13. The procedure for participation in the Council was open: all children in school received a flyer about the summer holidays, where an application for the Children's Council was included. The children are elected for a period of one year. So far the Children's Council does not have a municipal budget. However, the Citizens Foundation of Wolfsburg decided to donate €5.000 to the Children's Council for the current period. They meet once a month in two groups. There are several children from a migrant background and from different districts of the city. The migrant children were not targeted specifically, but applied voluntarily. The stakeholders who participated in the discussion during the case-study visit stated that this is because there is integration in the city.

The Office of the Commissioner for Children is responsible for organising the meetings. The children decide on which topics to address and the office organises them. Topics have included refugee crisis and playgrounds.

Good Practice from Wolfsburg – Discussing administration and politics with children

At the time of the case-study visit, the topic that had been identified for discussion at the next Children's Council meeting was administration and politics. The Office of the Commissioner for Children had distributed brochures to children on how the administration works and was planning to organise a role play with the children to show how decision-making takes place at the municipal level.

After the children meet and take discussions, the Office of the Commissioner for Children is responsible to bring the issues, which the children have decided on, to the administration. The stakeholders in Wolfsburg stated that child participation has influenced decision-making, for example in the planning of playgrounds, however in regular decision-making it is not as easy.

Two children that participate in the Council were present at the discussion held during the case-study visit. In relation to their motivation for participating, the children stated:

'I think it is important that children talk to the city council and should have a say about what they want to do, because children think in a different way.'

'I want to participate in my own town and want adults to know about what I need.'

Both children stated that they were very happy about how things are running. The children confirmed that they receive feedback about how their decisions were taken.

From an outsider's (consultant) perspective, during the discussions, the Office of the Commissioner for Children showed real know-how about child participation and how to promote a Children's Council. There seemed to be a good balance between providing guidance and support (i.e. preparing the sessions and informing children in advance in relation to the themes to be discussed), giving space to children (who are the ones deciding which topics to discuss); and empowering them both by making their voices heard and keeping them informed about how their decisions have been taken forward. There is also reflection about how to enhance child participation further, including how to engage with different groups of children and different participation methodologies.

In Wolfsburg, children can vote from when they are 16 years old in local elections.

In Hanau, there was no participation structure available at municipal level at the time the CFCL started and there was a clear decision not to create a child participation structure as such (i.e. a children's parliament or advisory board), but rather ad hoc projects on a regular basis. This was both based on the children's inputs in the survey, where children stated that they rather wanted to participate in single projects but not in long-term structures like child parliaments; and the fact that the municipality said it was not something it could guarantee at the time. However, some child participation-related actions have taken place in the context of the CFCL implementation, namely:

- The municipality made a budget available for children in 2015 of €1.000 and it had planned to increase it in 2016;
- An ad hoc youth assembly took place in October 2015 under the title 'Tolerance and Human Rights', which had decided by the children and young people;
- 2 young people participate in the Steering Group, who have been participating from the time the questionnaires were administered, namely in the consultation that took place prior the adoption of the Action Plan.

One of the girls present at the stakeholders' discussion during the case-study visit is a member of the Steering Group and also a UNICEF Junior Ambassador. She started participating when she was 15 years old and came from the youth council of the local branch of the Children for a Better World organisation. She stated that she feels she has a mission 'to help children understand how they can improve their own situation'. She usually participates in the meetings of the Steering Group. She receives information in advance about what will be discussed. She stated that she is able to follow the discussions and feels that her opinion is taken into account. She was present at the meeting of the expert commission in Cologne and they were open to her opinion. In terms of the CFCI, she was able to contribute in the development of the children's survey and the Stadtspielerjugend game, by participating in the meetings and accompanying the implementation process. She says that the Child and Youth Office, which was set up as part of the CFCI implementation, has had an important role.

Good Practice from Hanau – Child-led participation

The Federal State Law of the region where Hanau is located, provides that every school must appoint a school council. In Hanau, children have decided to create a structure at municipal level, bringing together representatives from all the school councils in the city to discuss pertinent issues.

In Potsdam, the coordinating association for CFCI (Stadtjugendring) stated that there is no legislation on child participation neither at city or regional level, which presents a challenge because when there are changes at municipal level, there is some time to 'convince' newcomers to see the advantage and importance of child participation. However, in the case of Potsdam, she believes that the situation has changed and that there is more openness now. An office on youth participation was established 10 years ago and there are planned guidelines and a concept on participation for different groups, which should be integrated in local legislation. She believes that the CFCI implementation might facilitate this process.

6. Equality and non-discrimination

The administration questionnaire is very comprehensive and identifies various groups of vulnerable children and young people, for example, refugee children, children with disabilities, teen mothers, drug and alcohol addicts, juvenile delinquents, children and youth with psychological problems, children with migrant background, children and youth living in sheltered housing and children and youth affected by poverty. Vulnerable groups should also be considered in the Action Plan, but have not been targeted specifically as far as was possible to verify.

The CFCI association has dedicated one network meeting to refugees in November 2014, prior to the current refugee crisis. In terms of activities targeting refugee children in the context of CFCI implementation, the Children's Council in Wolfsburg discussed the refugee crisis and the children decided to support refugee children in buying toys and

supplies; they promoted a day for activities for refugee children; and before Christmas they spent a day baking Christmas cookies with the local refugee children.

The refugee crisis has had an impact on the CFCI because it is a real challenge for municipalities. In some cases, it has slowed down the implementation of the CFCI Action Plan, especially where the focal points for CFCI have been directly involved in the management of the refugee crisis (i.e. in planning and provision of accommodation, food and integration). In Wolfsburg, one of the measures in the Action Plan, namely the establishment of a cross-sector health network, has been postponed to 2017, because there are now new priorities in the city concerning the refugee crisis. In Hanau, the stakeholders mentioned that the refugee crisis puts a lot of pressure in the system, namely the child and day care system; and this has slowed down the implementation process of the CFCI.

Currently, it is often the case that when the CFCI association is in contact with municipalities that are interested in joining the CFCI, they say that they are not able to cover the costs, because they are already investing a significant amount of money towards managing the reception of refugees.

7. Partnerships

The CFCI association is collaborating with several organisations in Germany, including: the umbrella organisation for municipality bodies on the interest of the child (i.e. child and youth offices) and the network for facilitators for child participation, however there is no formal agreement. The CFCI association also keeps regular contacts with other organisations, such as the National Coalition of the Rights of the Child and a new office for monitoring and evaluation of child rights established within the National Institute on Human Rights. This collaboration is used for different purposes, such learning exchanges, inviting experts for the CFCI expert pool, to present the CFCI to other stakeholders, etc.

The CFCs have also established external partnerships for the implementation of the CFCI. In Hanau, the deputy mayor stated that the CFCI is an example that cooperation beyond the strict remit of the city is crucial, including private actors, those responsible for schools, etc. To really implement child rights at local level a voluntary basis is essential (the regulatory environment is not sufficient). For example, the training on child rights in schools was presented at the meeting of headmasters, which includes representatives of the administration level that is responsible for schools (higher than local level and whose permission is necessary). The Steering Group also includes members from outside the administration, including a private foundation, whose representative was at the discussion during the case-study visit.

The CFCI association has taken no specific steps to promote business sector engagement.

8. Monitoring and evaluation

The situation analysis and the Action Plan are the main instruments for carrying out monitoring and evaluation of the CFCI implementation at local level. For monitoring the implementation progress of the Action Plan, the CFCI association sends a table via email every 6-8 months to each municipality. The CFCI association prepares internal reports based on the inputs received from the municipalities. These results are shown and discussed at the Network Meetings (see below).

There is a mid-term evaluation and a final evaluation. The first mid-term evaluation will take place in Hanau during Summer 2016. The mid-term evaluation consists of two parts, one internal (report about achievements, improvements to be carried out by the municipalities and improvements to be carried out by the CFCI association) and another part is an event with children and young people that demonstrate how the municipality is working to involve them. The municipality is free to define the event. This has been challenging for the municipalities and shows the relations between municipalities and children.

If the measures included the action plan have not been carried out at the end of the process, the city council has to justify it, including in their final report. If they take part in the extension of the initiative they have to integrate the according measures into the new action plan.

9. Key lessons learnt

The German CFCI is unique in that it is run by an independent association, which was established ad hoc in a partnership between the National Committee and another NGO. The participatory approach and the structured CFCI implementation process also provide valuable lessons learned of particular relevance for the development of the toolkit:

- *When deciding to establish a partnership to manage and/or implement the CFCI, it is crucial to assess who will be the partner and what are the terms of the partnership.* The partner of the National Committee - the *Deutsches Kinderhilfswerk e.V.* - has a long-standing experience on municipal work in the ground, which is considered a success factor in the initiative. There is trust in the partnership, major decisions are taken together and everyone contributes with knowledge and resources.
- *It can be challenging to explain what is meant by the CFCI to municipalities.* The CFCI association stated that it is challenging to explain that the whole CFCI development and implementation process is not about single projects for children, but a general comprehensive change on the understanding and implementation of child rights at all levels of the municipality. Some municipalities question why they should invest such a large fee for becoming part of the CFCI instead of investing it in a specific project. Engaging with the municipalities is therefore a strategic process.
- *The importance of taking time to test, learn and act accordingly.* The CFCI association would advise other countries that are just starting to develop the CFCI, to give enough time for the preparation of the tools. In Germany, the tools were developed and piloted with the pilot cities and the CFCI association itself was 'learning by doing'.
- *The value of a participatory approach.* Being in close contact with the municipalities keeps the CFCI alive and encourages municipalities to take action and report on a more regular basis.