

CFCI Summit

Session documentation

This document summarizes the key topics, insights and next steps arising from the CFCI Summit held from 15 to 18 October, 2019 in Cologne, Germany.

Track:	Participation
Title of session:	Inclusion of the most vulnerable and marginalized children in participatory processes
Date and time:	Thursday 17 October 2019, 10.30-12
Facilitator and resource persons:	Session leads: Johanna Laaja and Mario Volpi Facilitator: Oliver MacDonald Track lead: Gerison Lansdown
Name of rapporteur:	Johanna Laaja and Mario Volpi

Main topics and ideas discussed:

Objective:

The objective for this workshop was to explore what kind of mindset, methods and policies ensure meaningful participation for every child.

Definition:

Starting with the definition of what is meant by **the most vulnerable and marginalized children**. It's a very diverse definition which doesn't need to be a statistical or a predefined status. If a child has the experience of being excluded and feeling vulnerable that is enough to pay special attention to their needs and participation. Everyone must own their own narrative.

In every city or community, we have children who have special needs or who are excluded or discriminated against. We have children with disabilities, children who come from a migrant background or a low-income family, children who are discriminated because of their or their families' ethnic or social origin, religion, language, gender identity or other personal characteristics.

When talking about equality and inclusion it should be emphasized that the non-discrimination principle in the CRC does not mean identical treatment for everyone. For example, it can require extra effort or resources to engage the most vulnerable children in participatory processes, but this effort can and should be encouraged.

Identifying:

The first important step in a Child Friendly City is **to identify individual children and groups of children who may demand special measures to ensure that their rights are fulfilled**.

We need **to identify ways that exclude some children** from participation. It can be language

barriers, physical obstacles, wrong methods or narrow gender roles that exclude some children. Break the barriers and obstacles to participate!

Change of mindset:

We are invited to change our mindset and our vision on children with vulnerabilities. The context where children come from or their personal characteristics is never a reason to leave anyone behind or unheard. Children with vulnerabilities have the same potential, energy, creativity as all children. The challenge for us is to develop channels, opportunities and public policies to reach them, listen to them and make their voices count.

Key insights, good practices and lessons shared:

Adolescents and Youth Voices

Participation is always a challenge. Participation for vulnerable adolescents and youth is a biggest challenge if the cities and communities do not create conditions, spaces and initiatives to listen to them and take into consideration what they are telling.

Three young people presented their point of view:

Gelson Henrique, Brazil

“I am a 20 years old youth living in Campo Grande, West Zone of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. I’m a student of Social Sciences at the Federal Rural University of Rio de Janeiro, which is a public college located in Baixada Fluminense, a region where public policies are lacking and have very high levels of violence. I started to participate when I was 15, when I started to work at the Secretariat of Social Assistance and Human Rights of the state of Rio de Janeiro. Joining five colleagues we created the CIJoga - Itinerant Youth Caravan, which aims to encourage young people from slums and outskirts to start participating more politically and socially. Making them understand themselves as a power, realizing that our knowledge is also wisdom and has to be taken into account, because we live the public policies. I work with, learn and live with, to make us have a friendlier city. In Brazil, there is a black, slum and peripheral youth that is moving structures through the breaches and hacking the situation. This is place from where I speak, I’m one of those. There will be no way to make or look for any social change, whether in Brazil or in the world if they are not communicating and building with us, because they tried and saw that it does not work. In my speech what I want to show is, I am NOT ALONE, I am speaking here, for myself and several "I's". Thank you!”.

Bui Thi Hau, Viet Nam

“I’m 14 and as a blind girl who has lived in an orphanage in Ho Chi Minh City (Viet Nam) I would like to share my feelings. With an aspiration to learn and helping my blind friends to learn about trees and animals in the surrounding environment, thanks to my friend’s introduction, I’ve got to know Upshift- Generation Unlimited (GenU) initiated by UNICEF. I led a team to develop a project proposal on facilitating the learning of blind children about the surrounding environment. Luckily, the project was shortlisted as one of the top 12 initiatives. I could enjoy 4 day training at Sihub. At the beginning, many people gave me criticism and did not believe that the project could win. However, with thanks to teachers and many other friends, I and my team could refresh our motivation and kept going to develop the project. We conducted a survey to assess the needs of

blind kids which helped to form the project. As a result, our project won among the top 6 projects. Many challenges still stay ahead, I'm still practicing to sign financial documents as a project management but my energy and motivation stays strong. I would like to send a message to everyone that people need to motivate children with disabilities to build their confidence. Children with disabilities need love and support to be normal and useful”.

Virginia Ossana, Argentina

In her intervention, member of META - a movement that works to achieve inclusive development in Latin America - spoke about the barriers to achieving the inclusion of children and youth with disabilities in participatory processes, giving examples drawn both from her own experience and those of other members of META. She closed her intervention by providing some suggestions on how to overcome those barriers, including:

1. Reaching out to children and youth with disabilities,
2. Designing an inclusive communication strategy campaign,
3. Ensuring the physical accessibility of venues where participatory processes are celebrated,
4. Ensuring accessibility in a broad sense, which comprises not only the physical aspects, but also those communicative and attitudinal in nature.

The session also included group work activities. In one of those activities group members were asked to share what aspect of the summit they considered the most useful, and the group made up by the speakers of the session agreed that, in future editions, the event would benefit from a wider diversity of visions specially given visibility also to non-European perspectives.

All contributions from group work can be found [here](#) (Google Drive), answering questions:

1. To enable everyone a chance to participate, it is important to...
2. What are the best practices ensuring the participation of the most vulnerable children?

Key insights:

Integrate, don't separate (importance of inclusion e.g. inclusive education).

Listening to the most vulnerable children, creating enabling conditions for inclusion. Welcoming everyone as they are. Creating different ways and various methods to participate. Delivering messages in a simplified manner.

Look for abilities not disabilities!

It's important to have a safe space / place which responds to the needs of everyone.

Become aware of vulnerable children and the important knowledge they have and approach them where they are (like school, ngo etc.)

Focus on the institutional mechanisms to implement participation.

Some practical good practices (mainly from Eija Ruohomäki, City of Oulu):

The Living Library is a tool that seeks to challenge prejudice and discrimination. The Living Library, books are people. Reading a living book equals conversation. Personal life stories are of great

importance!

Experts by Experience Programme in the City of Oulu, Finland

In Finland all schools have a statutory equality promotion plan and an gender equality plan that are updated every three years. This is a participatory process where especially the most vulnerable children should be heard.

Next steps and action points (when applicable):

Recommendations/ Actions	Person responsible	Target Date
1. Create or collect material to strengthen CFC's capability to identify and strengthen the voice of vulnerable children and to identify and remove obstacles excluding them of participation	CFCI team PFP?	Spring 2020
2. To create guidelines and strategy for inclusive participation and communication (use of plain language, sign language, brail etc)	CFCI team PFP?	Spring 2020
3. Reach out to most vulnerable children in all processes	Everyone	Continuous