

CFCI Summit

Session documentation

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

Track:	Participatory cities
Title of session:	Child participation: Influencing decisions and policies in schools and communities II
Date and time:	Thursday 17 th of October 13:30-15:00
Facilitator and resource persons:	Gerison Lansdown, Ana Isabel Guerreiro and Deji (RedZebra)
Name of rapporteur:	Ana Isabel Guerreiro and Gerison Lansdown

Main topics and ideas discussed:

This session followed-up to the session on child participation training and aimed to deepen participants' understanding of meaningful participation and explore in particular, institutionalised forms of child participation, such as student councils, child and youth council and child/youth parliaments.

Mr. Dominguez, Mayor of Los Realejos, Spain, gave a presentation on the development of the CFCI in his city and in particular on the importance of child participation. The children and youth council has been established as part of the initiative and the discussions are thematic, giving children the chance to discuss different aspects of their lives.

Children and young people and mayors representing the countries of Switzerland, Belarus, Israel and Colombia presented their views and experiences of participating and implementing actions through the various institutions of child participation.

Key insights, good practices and lessons shared:

Some of the main insights shared during the session include:

1. The CFCI is an opportunity for significant change and improvement in communities – examples were given of more accessible and subsidised transport, democratic schools, appropriate timings of traffic lights, playgrounds designed by children, re-routing of traffic, more green spaces, children mapping their movements to provide insight into where to site facilities, cleaner streets;
2. In order to implement meaningful and inclusive child participation a comprehensive process must be in place, including:
 - Integrated and different platforms providing children opportunities to participate, including the most marginalised;
 - Thinking creatively about how to elect/select young people on to councils or committees – through schools, through social media, by working through NGOs working with particular groups of children eg children with disabilities, refugee and asylum seeking children, children in the care system. The question was

- raised as to whether it is appropriate to allocate dedicated spaces for children from more marginalised communities or groups to ensure their opportunities for participation.
- The need for processes which are structured, supported and properly integrated into the municipality decision-making processes;
 - Capacity building and awareness-raising for children and adults on what meaningful participation means and how it takes place, as well as, on the Convention on the Rights of the Child;
 - Building in the necessary legislation, regulations and policies to institutionalise participation as a right and not just a 'favour' being offered to children
 - Ensuring that meaningful participation is not about one-off events, that it is relevant to children's lives, that budgets are allocated and that children and young people are appropriately informed and receive feedback on the processes they participate in.
3. It is essential to recognise that real participation involves children, young people and adults learning from each other, between and with each other. It is a mutual process. Good communication, willingness to listen and learn respectfully is vital.
4. Child participation is a win-win investment not only for children and young people, but also for all members of the community. Children and young people have huge creativity and innovative ideas to offer if the opportunities are made available.
5. Children will be motivated to participate if they consider that they are being taken seriously and can genuinely make a difference. One suggestion provided was to label every change initiated by children to ensure that the changes they were making to the community were visible and acknowledged.

Next steps and action points (when applicable):		
Recommendations/ Actions	Person responsible	Target Date
1. Reach out to all children in the community not just those who are most accessible	Mayor but in collaboration and dialogue with children	On-going
2. Act on the proposals made by children - asking their views and then disregarding them will promote disenchantment and resentment. If it is not possible, always feed back and explain why	Mayor and municipal officials	On-going
3. Ensure regular contact between children and officials in order to build trust, confidence and understanding	Mayor and municipal officials	On-going