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Children and young people's standards for their
meaningful participation in global events

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Organisations accompanying and supporting the child participatory process for standards developed by children and young people:



Introduction

Children have the right to be heard and listened to in all matters affecting them, as described in Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The right to participation should be respected, and not only considered as a privilege for a very small number of children. Children and young people are often under-represented in decision-making in global events on policy and practice issues that concern them. Even when they are involved, there is inconsistency in the quality of the process, including who has the chance to participate, and whether or how they are heard.

This is why we have come together to develop standards that describe how we should treat children and young people in global events and how we should listen to them. We have developed these standards to promote children's rights and respect for their views, and to build more fair and inclusive processes so that children and young people like us can be involved and heard.

We are a group of 8 young people aged 12 - 18 years from Bolivia, Guatemala, Indonesia, Wales, Zambia, and Zimbabwe who came together online through regular calls between February 2025 and April 2026. We are students and representatives of children and young people's initiatives and organisations who want to make a difference in our communities and our world. We are part of a global movement that believes children have rights to share their views and be involved in decisions that affect them at all levels.

Drawing on our own experiences of participating in global, regional, and national events, we have shared our experiences, discussed, and learned from one another. We have also reviewed and listened to the views of other children and young people through two surveys and through an online global event.

Together, we have created standards for a positive experience for everyone, dwelling on the experiences that we had before, during, and after global events. This included what went wrong, what went right, and what should continue. During the surveys and the online global event with a wider group of young people, in particular, we heard that after the global events, there was not enough feedback to children and young people, nor sufficient follow-up actions.

We have worked with adult organisations and used our creativity to raise awareness and inspire change. The logos of organisations that supported our task group and the development of our standards are included on the second page.



Photo: A child advocate (Nepal) and adults participating in the Global Gathering of Working Children, Rwanda, January 2023.



Wider contributions

Of children and young people through surveys and an online event:

Before our task group started, an initial survey was organised in 2024 that engaged 124 children and young people (62% female, 38% male)¹. They were aged 8 to 24 years from 125 countries across Africa, Asia, Europe, and Latin America. 56% of the children and young people surveyed had participated in at least one global event between 2014 and 2024. Those who had participated in a global meeting shared their feedback on their participation. They shared whether or not they felt safe and included, and whether the meeting made sense. Those who had not been invited, shared reasons why. All the participants shared suggestions to improve the meaningful participation of children and young people. The second survey was organised in May 2025. 89 children and young people from a diverse range of countries engaged in the survey (67.5% female, 30% male, 2.5% preferred not to say). 74% of the young people had participated in at least one global event. The participants shared responses on how they were selected. They also shared about whether they actively participated at different stages (planning, during, and after the event), and the quality of their experiences. The global event was organised in September 2025. Over 65 children and young people from Africa, Asia, Europe, and Latin America, as well as adult allies, were involved. Group work during the event allowed participants to share their experiences and suggestions for what should and should not be done, before, during, and after global efforts for meaningful participation of children and young people in global events.

¹ <https://childrightsconnect.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/child-participation-in-global-events.pdf>

What are the aims of our standards, and how can they be used?

Our standards are created by children and young people based on our direct experiences and insights to promote children's participation rights. Our standards also build upon existing models and standards such as the Lundy Model¹ (Space, Voice, Audience, Influence) and the nine basic requirements from the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child.²

We call on organisations working with children and young people and people organising global events to apply these standards - before, during, and after the global event - to ensure children and young people are seriously listened to.

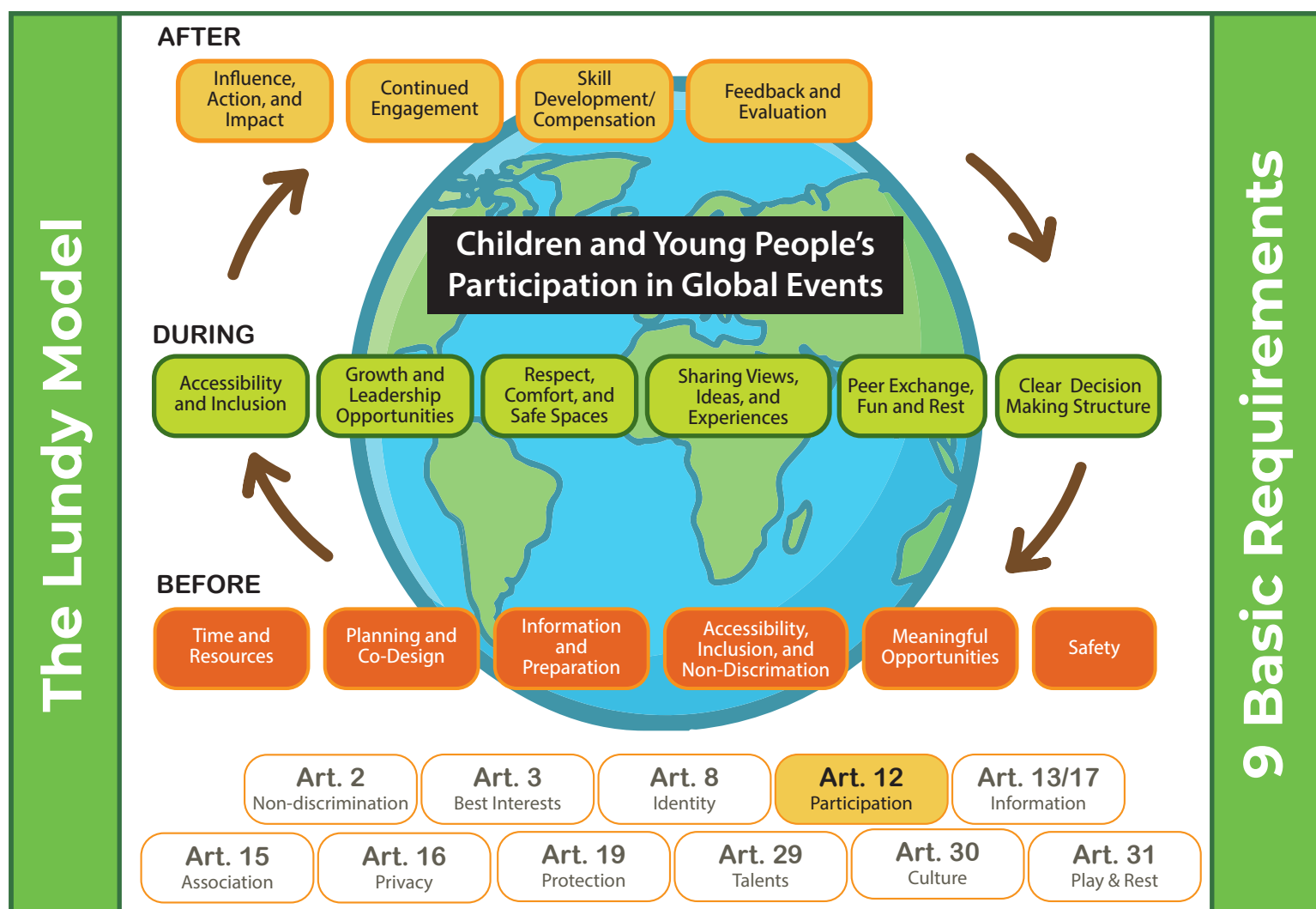
You can use the standards as a guide to inclusively and meaningfully engage children to shape a better world. The standards provide concrete actions to involve children and young people in ways they feel comfortable and provide opportunities for them to share their views and ideas in global events.

¹ Lundy, L. (2007). 'Voice is not enough: Conceptualising Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child', British Educational Research Journal, 33(6): 927-942.

² UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. General comment No. 12 (2009): The right of the child to be heard. CRC/C/GC/12. The basic requirements outline participation that is i) transparent and informative, ii) voluntary, iii) respectful, iv) relevant, v) child-friendly, vi) inclusive, vii) supported by training, viii) safe and sensitive to risk, and ix) accountable.

The Standards

To help summarise the key themes within the standards, we have created a visual. The visual captures the before, during, and after of meaningful participation of children and young people in global events, whilst also highlighting other approaches that have inspired our recommendations.



Our standards reflect child rights articles in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) that must be considered and promoted for inclusive and safe participation of children and young people in global events, namely:

- Non-discrimination (CRC Article 2)
- Best interests (CRC Article 3)
- Identity (CRC Article 8), culture and language (CRC Article 30)
- Express views freely and be heard (CRC Article 12)
- Access to information (CRC Article 13, 17)
- Freedom of association and peaceful assembly (CRC Article 15)
- Privacy (CRC Article 16)
- Protection (CRC Article 19)
- Develop talents and prepare for a responsible life (CRC Article 29)
- Rest, leisure, and play (CRC Article 31).

We hope the visual can be used as an introduction to our standards and can help people to understand how the different elements fit together.



Drawing created by Shekinah (young person from Zimbabwe):
"This is a drawing of a boy and inside his head there is a lesson. This drawing shows that we children have a lot to say. We can express ourselves and advocate in whatever way we want to. Children of different ages, whether disabled or abled, can express their views through drawing or speaking. When there are global meetings, we should ensure that children have the opportunity to express their views safely and comfortably."–Shekinah.

Before



Time and Resources:

- Start preparations in advance, ensuring there are enough resources to support children and young people's participation.
- Recognise that children and young people's participation in global events is a process, it includes information sharing, preparation, and follow-up.
- Create child-friendly materials and share useful resources with relevant adults before the event, especially those who haven't worked with children before, to ensure they understand how to support appropriately.
- Plan and budget for:
 - Translators and interpreters in various languages to ensure children and young people can share their views in the way that works for them.
 - Internet data and access to gadgets for inclusive online opportunities.
 - Travel costs for children and young people and their guardian (or support adult). This includes passport, visa, flight, accommodation, and other associated costs.
 - Compensation of children and young people who are part of core planning teams and/or key resource persons for the event, wherever possible. Compensation may be in different forms, such as providing a financial stipend, vouchers, training and/or certificates.
- If budgets are limited, prioritise funds for fair and inclusive online participation of children and young people from different countries and backgrounds.

Planning and (Co-)Design:

- Develop an understanding of the target group for the event, asking questions like is this a child- or youth-led event, or an intergenerational event?
- Focus on topics that affect children and young people to avoid potential bias.
- Establish guidelines for clear feedback mechanisms, adult support, training and global networking.
- Have intergenerational preparation to contribute more diverse experiences—before, during, and after— and make sure that attention is given to children and young people's views.

- Involve children and young people in the planning and design of the event, including setting the agenda and discussion topics, planning activities, and involving them in facilitating task groups.
- Encourage and support creative ways for children, young people, and adults to work together, including planning for fun activities.

Information and Preparation:

- Develop and share clear information with children and young people and with their parents and caregivers about the global event and about how they can participate. This information should be shared with parents and caregivers, children, and young people at least 6 months before the global event.
- Share the information in various languages, including formats that are accessible to children and young persons with disabilities, so that everyone has a clear understanding of what they have to do during the event.
- Hold preparation meetings and training for children and young people before the global event, to promote everyone's roles and duties.

Accessibility, Inclusion, and Non-Discrimination:

- Have a fair selection process to invite children and young people who may be from less privileged backgrounds, from rural backgrounds, not just from cities. Involve minorities and support them to prepare and participate.
- Collaborate with local child-focused organisations to reach, inform, and actively engage children and young people from less privileged backgrounds.
- Encourage governments to include children and young people in their delegations, especially children and young people from less privileged backgrounds.
- Ensure the event is accessible to all. This includes promoting gender equity and including children and young persons with disabilities by providing adequate infrastructure and support.
- Discuss and plan ways to equally include children and young people from marginalised groups, including children and young people of different genders, ages, and backgrounds.
- Think about and break down barriers that some children and young people face and find ways to address them. For example, some obstacles to children and young people's participation in global events include: lack of awareness or information, biased selection, lack of previous participation in similar events, not having a passport or visa, and no funding. For online participation, some children and young people do not have the resources to participate in a virtual event.
- Have a conversation with children and young people prior to the event about accessibility and any reasonable adjustments they may need.
- Hold meetings among children and young people for them to choose who will represent them in the global event.
- Try to organise global meetings during weekends, at least partially, so that children and young people don't miss too much school.

- Make sure the events are financially accessible to everyone, either by fully funding or partially funding the attendees, especially for children and young people in economically unstable situations.
- Support in-person and online participation. For online participation make sure children and young people have access to smart devices and data packages, so that more children and young people can participate in global events.

Meaningful Opportunities:

- Provide opportunities for more children and young people to participate in global events relevant to them. Share information widely, to give more children and young people a fair chance to attend, rather than only sending information to leaders.
- Allow children and young people to express themselves, to choose what to say and how they want to say it.
- Promote leadership roles of children and young people to help achieve a balance of power.

Safety:

- Assess risks and develop a plan to address the risks.
- Plan for a safe and child-friendly global event. Book child-friendly and accessible venues.
- Have a safeguarding policy and think about a medical team.
- Create a safe online environment. Establish strict safety protocols, like parent consent, secure platforms, and monitoring to protect children from inappropriate consent or interactions.
- Inform children and young people how their data, information, and the views they share will be used both internally, within an organisation, and externally, including on social media.



Photo: Child Advisory Committee member (Rwanda) co-moderating the global event that was co-organised by the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child to formally launch General Comment No.26 on children's rights and the environment with a special focus on climate change. Switzerland, 2023.



Long-Term Planning:

- Leave planning to the last minute.
- Consider children and young people's participation to be a single event, but rather a process.
- Keep children and young people out of the planning or scheduling.
- Allocate roles in an unfair or forced way.

Appropriate Information:

- Provide children and young people with too little information.
- Share too much information or communicate in a complicated or overwhelming way.

Inclusive Invites:

- Exclude children and young people due to budget limitations, or only invite very few children and young people.
- Keep the selection process secret (for example, not informing other members of the same organization).
- Centralize everything in a single participant and not open spaces for participation or involvement for new members, thus denying the right to participate.
- Favour children and young people from certain genders, age groups, or backgrounds, such as privileged children from big cities, or those with good grades.
- Just involve the same children and young people.
- Overlook that internet access may be a challenge for some children and young people.

Our common ground, where all voices are heard, is built on shared standards.

We express our truths, hopes, and identities through words, colors, and meaningful symbols.

Through thoughtful design and clear expression, we make the invisible visible.

*Let's create a world that is visible, understandable, and welcoming to all —
a world with space for both of us, and for everyone.
Where no one is left behind —
regardless of ability, background, or voice.*

Amanda (Indonesia)



We are children, we are light, with rights that make us strong and happy.

We want to play, learn and grow, without fear, without pain, without tears.

We have the right to education, health and love, to be protected and to have a home.

We want to be heard, we want to be seen, we want our rights to be respected.

We don't want to be exploited, we don't want to be mistreated, we want to be treated with dignity and respect.

We want to grow up in a fair and equitable world, where we all have opportunities and rights.

We are the future, we are the hope, we are the children who dream and who fight.

We want our rights to be recognised, We want to be treated as human beings.

Penélope (Bolivia)

During



Accessibility and Inclusion:

- Provide financial support and other types of assistance for children and young people who need it to participate online and/or in-person.
- Make sure there are translators and interpretation in various languages so that children and young people can share their views in their own language, ensuring they understand the topics and can communicate more easily.
- Ask speakers to speak slowly so the interpreter can follow.
- Consider and respect time zones, as children and young people live in different parts of the world.

Growth and Leadership Opportunities:

- Support children and young people's active participation and support them to take on leadership roles as moderators and speakers in main events, as well as in children's forums and side events.
- Provide children and young people with certificates so their contributions are recognised.

Respect, Comfort, and Safe Spaces:

- Encourage everyone to be kind so the children and young people will be more comfortable speaking up and sharing their opinions.
- Make sure the environment is safe and comfortable for everyone. Take into account children and young people's worries and insecurities, and how they can affect them during the global event.
- Provide children and young people with a safe space to share their views openly, connecting them with the right people who can create change or put their ideas into practice.
- Apply safeguarding policies for in-person and online participation.
- For online participation, implement strict safety protocols, like parent consent, secure platforms, and monitoring to protect children and young people from inappropriate consent or interactions.



Photo: A young person from Bosnia & Herzegovina participating in a panel discussion during the 6th Forum of the Global Network of Religions for Children (GNRC) from Arigatou International. Abu Dhabi, November 2024.

- Provide support for children and young people within these often high-pressure environments. In particular, consider the potential impacts on children's health and privacy.
- Ensure that children and young people are able to give, or decline to give, informed consent to any associated media or social media opportunities, and that they have a say in what is shared about them.
- Assess risk before posting identifiable or sensitive information about children and young people on social media or engaging with media outlets.
- Act respectfully and value children and young people's opinions and views.

Sharing Views, Ideas, and Experiences:

- Prioritise children and young people's voices, let them speak and share their views and ideas first, not after adults.
- Have space for children and young people to meet and share among their peers, and also have joint spaces for dialogue among children, young people, and adults.
- Provide children and young people from different backgrounds enough time to share their opinions and experiences, create and deliver their presentations.
- Allow different ways for children and young people to creatively express their views and share their views in person or online, and share their stories, such as art, drawing, drama, music, pictures, stories, songs, videos, polls, not just speaking.
- Use interactive online methods, like Mentimeter (online quiz, polls), interactive white boards, and break-out groups for children and young people to express their views in different ways.
- Actively listen to children and young people's views.

Peer exchange, Fun and Rest:

- Provide more opportunities for fun and relaxed interactions between children and young people. Encourage creative expression of views through music, art, drama, games, or other ways.
- Give time for the young participants to talk to each other, provide social spaces for children and young people to interact and connect with their peers for cultural exchange, and to organise themselves.

Clear Decision-Making Structure:

- Use a predetermined structure to make decisions and communicate how and why decisions were made.
- Allow children and young people to make some decisions (with support).



Risk of Adult-Centrism:

- Center participation on adults.
- Allow the adult's agenda to be the focus of the event, where they hold the majority of the power.
- Have many more adults than children and young people, as children and young people may feel awkward sharing their opinions.
- Make children and young people feel small and unimportant by not involving them.
- Have disproportionate time divisions between children and young people and adults in events (giving more time to adults than to children).
- Judge children who may be shy or nervous to share their opinion.
- Include adult-centred evening events that serve alcohol.
- Influence what children and young people share by writing their speeches or preparing statements without their input.

Privacy, Safety, and Accessibility:

- Have no translation or interpretation. Some affected children are not participating as they feel discouraged when they do not speak another language fluently, but they often face problems that need to be heard.
- Take photos of children and young people without their permission or that of a parent/carer.

- Put children and young people in dangerous situations.
- Share quotes, images, or stories about children and young people without their informed assent/consent. If a topic is sensitive or could bring additional risk to the young person, consent should be explicit, and the right to decline the opportunity should be made clear. As appropriate, parents/caregivers/supporting adults should also be consulted.

Respect and Listening:

- Give children and young people insufficient time to prepare and express their views.
- Put a lot of pressure on children and young people to express themselves in a way that causes anxiety, be disrespectful about children and young people's opinions or make them feel uncomfortable based on what they have shared.
- Use children and young people's ideas in a tokenistic way, not authentically listening to their views or taking their ideas seriously.
- Be in a hurry and ignore children and young people's questions.
- Try to keep children "in line" or interact with them in a disrespectful or patronising way.
- Be harsh on children and young people (e.g., do not yell).



Photo: A child advocate (Ethiopia) and adults participating in the Global Gathering of Working Children, Rwanda, January 2023.

After



Do:

Influence, Action, and Impact:

- Try to implement what has been said in the global event and try to educate others about what they have learned (e.g., about the global event issues, such as global warming or climate).
- Make sure children and young people's views are really heard and applied. Make sure there is real impact and action from adults.
- Share written feedback on any action points or recommendations from the event in a timely manner - what happened as a result of conversations and the views shared? Why did this happen?
- Have a product or draft of what has been discussed to show that the organizers have been listening and have taken the children seriously.
- Hold leaders accountable. Monitor and ensure every stakeholder is accountable.

Continued Engagement:

- Have regular video calls and group follow-ups to ensure concrete actions and to report on the impact and effects of the work carried out.
- Keep the children and young people informed about what happened to their views and ideas after the event, exploring how and why decisions were made.
- Share opportunities for children and young people to stay involved in the dialogues and actions.

Compensation and Development:

- Provide skill development or other forms of compensation for their engagement.

Evaluation and Feedback:

- Give children and young people the chance to share feedback, to evaluate, and share their experience of the event. Ensure that positive and negative responses are taken note of for future events.
- Ensure adequate follow-up, including meetings and surveys with children and young people and their networks.
- Ensure that children and young people can access a feedback forum.



- End children and young people's engagement straight after the event with no follow-up, communication, or feedback.
- Provide no status report of what was discussed and what actions were taken. This makes children and young people feel like their voices are not truly heard and their ideas will not be responded to.



Photo: Young speakers from across the world give their remarks in a panel discussion during the 6th Forum of the Global Network of Religions for Children (GNRC) from Arigatou International. Abu Dhabi, November 2024.



Additional organisations endorsing the standards made by children and young people:

Organisations that endorse agree with the standards developed by children and young people. They are committed to promoting them and to making sincere efforts to apply them.

- Centro Ecuménico de Integración Pastoral (CEIPA), Guatemala
- Centre for Services and Information on Disability (CSID), Bangladesh
- Children's Voice Today (CVT), Rwanda
- Children-Women in Social Service and Human Rights (CWISH), Nepal
- Facilitator for Change (FC), Ethiopia
- Global Youth-Led Movement on Ending Violence Against Children
- Ifejant, Peru
- Institut International Des Droits de l'Enfant
- Learning for Well-being Foundation, Global
- Movimiento de niñas, niños y adolescentes trabajadores (MOLACNNATS), Latin America and the Caribbean
- National Institute of Women Child & Youth Development (NIWCYD), India
- Organización de Prominnats, Peru
- Pastoral Social Caritas (PASOCAP), Bolivia
- Proteknôn Foundation for Innovation, Global
- Pusat Kajian dan Perlindungan Anak (PKPA), Indonesia
- Terre des Hommes Netherlands
- The Canadian Coalition for the Rights of Children/ La Coalition Canadienne pour les Droits des Enfants
- Vigyan Foundation, India
- Voice of Children (VoC), Nepal
- Welfare of Children and Youth (WCY), Kenya

Does your organisation want to endorse these standards that have been created by children and young people?

If you are part of a child, youth, intergenerational or adult organisation that would like to endorse these standards, please email:

CYP.Standards@proton.me

An updated document of organisations endorsing the standards will be shared on

<https://dialogue-works.com/>