Children’s Participation
How To Involve Children in Decision-Making
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FOREWORD FROM GLOBAL CHILD FORUM

AT THE 2018 Global Child Forum at the Stockholm Royal Palace, two young workers from Indonesia took the stage. They made the 6,000-mile journey to bring a message to the corporate audience. With poise and passion, they spoke about the need for business to listen to children. Kezia and Fauza said, “We hope our voice will be heard and our work will be appreciated. Children are also part of business – as consumers and workers, including indirect workers who help their parents do their work at home. We want you to improve the quality of lives for children, especially us, the working children.”

We did hear Kezia and Fauza. And, in response, launched a project to better support companies who are ready to integrate children’s views into their operations and communities.

What followed was a series of webinars and conversations about the meaning of child participation in business: what does it mean to engage with children on business topics? How can companies ensure that their engagement is done appropriately? What can business and youth get out of the process? And, above all, how can child participation in business better our world?

OUR TWO-YEAR EXPLORATION of such topics has culminated in this guide.

We have all seen the power of the young generation – from the students in Parkland, Florida who pushed to demand gun-control legislation, to today’s “Fridays for Future”, started by Sweden’s Greta Thunberg, demanding climate action. Increasingly, the young people at the forefront of these movements are no longer content to just push for change from the fringes of power. They are driving change themselves, either through the democratic process or by spearheading movements that command the world’s attention.

And this is their right as enshrined in the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child, an international agreement, which underscores the importance of engaging with children and youth. While this is their right, listening to young people – and engaging with them – is our privilege.

AS HM QUEEN SILVIA OF SWEDEN, co-founder of Global Child Forum said, “This young generation has shown us that they are ready to make change happen – to raise their voices, engage in meaningful dialogue, and contribute with their energy and innovation. But they can’t do it alone. We need to be their partners, making change happen.” Children’s Participation: A Guide for the Corporate Sector, is intended to help you understand how to be that partner.

We look forward to hearing how you have worked with this guide, involved children in your business, and the impact that you have achieved.

Cajsa Wiking
Secretary General
Global Child Forum
2. Children’s participation 2020

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“You are teaching children from a young age that they have a voice, and that their ideas can contribute and create something out of them.”
Section 1

PROVIDING A PATHWAY FOR BUSINESSES

Foreword written by Global Child Forum’s Child and Youth Advisory Group for the project on Children’s Participation in Business.

WELCOME TO GLOBAL CHILD FORUM’S guide on children’s participation in business. This guide was created in consultation with corporate leaders in children’s participation in business, leading researchers in this field, as well as children and youth who are equally affected by businesses’ actions. We hope that the guide will help empower you to take action to ensure children are respected in business.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) underscores the importance of engaging with children. Under the Convention, children have the right to express their own opinions, to have those opinions heard, to be protected from abuse and exploitation, and to have their privacy protected. The CRC guides the philosophy that children are independent human beings with unique abilities to contribute to their communities. More than ever, resources such as this are needed to ensure children’s rights are being protected in business. The CRC has inspired and guided us throughout this project.

Children need to be protected from exploitation or harm by businesses. But that is not enough. Children have the right to participate, and businesses benefit from the active participation of children. Children have fresh, unique viewpoints and perspectives that may not be offered by adults. Children can provide unbiased, honest opinions that are less clouded by discriminatory thinking and are enhanced by their unbridled creativity. Businesses that don’t embrace children’s ideas are at a disadvantage.

IN FACT, CHILDREN’S participation in business is not a one-way relationship but a symbiotic one. Involving children and youth – whether through focus groups, volunteering, or formal employment – teaches them to exercise their rights to participate and speak up. Children’s contributions are recognised, and involvement gives them an important sense of accomplishment in the world. This builds children’s confident and teaches them that their ideas are heard and valued. Participation...
Children’s participation 2020 has impacts both within and outside of business: it grows relationships, and children become successful individuals as a result. Further, businesses are in a unique position to provide resources to help grow the next generation of leaders. Much like education, involving children in business is an investment that will pay dividends both for humanity and the economy. The earlier children develop essential soft skills such as teamwork, the better. If businesses mentor young people, these mentees become potential future employees and active, caring citizens in society.

**WHEN CHILDREN ARE** actively empowered to create change in businesses, businesses benefit both in the present and the future. Similarly, children’s participation in business is an investment in children’s growth through the unparalleled knowledge businesses can provide children.

We hope that this guide will challenge both individuals and businesses to question their involvement with children. What do you know about children’s rights? Have you positively involved children in your business? If your involvement is lacking, then why? What can you do to change that?

We also hope that this guide will provide a pathway for businesses to seriously consider valuing children’s opinions in their lives. From Australia to Zimbabwe, businesses everywhere face a risk of exploiting children, which only heightens the need for this resource to be read and implemented on a global scale. Children’s issues are not simply local, they are global, and need to be emphasised everywhere in society, especially within our businesses. By putting into action the principles in this resource and sharing it with other businesses, you are one step closer to creating a fairer society for children.

**THE ACTIONS OF** companies noted in this resource will crystalize the importance of children’s participation in business. These businesses are living proof that, when children are incorporated meaningfully into corporations, everyone benefits in regard to tangible profits and the intangible development of human capital. It makes simple economic sense to invest in children.
Section 2

WHO SHOULD USE THIS GUIDE?

CHILDREN’S PARTICIPATION: A GUIDE FOR THE CORPORATE SECTOR is primarily directed to sustainability teams within multinational corporations with an interest in advancing children’s rights in business and that play a key role in advancing the Sustainable Development Goals. The guide, of course, can be useful to smaller companies who also wish to involve children. It also supports the general business case for children’s participation in business decision-making. It is designed to assist those businesses beginning to explore how children’s participation in business decision-making can positively influence their organisation and operations, as well as the children impacted by them. The guide also supports businesses that have already started to integrate children’s participation into their operations and are interested in improving and expanding their efforts and learning from other businesses.

THE GUIDE IS aimed both at industries that directly engage with children as consumers as well as industries that do not directly sell or market their products to children. As a member of the project’s Business Advisory Group said, “Involving children is an intelligent way of engaging your current and future customers in your business. You get a fresh view of both the now and the future.”

“Businesses want to keep up, to have fresh and original ideas. Children are key to doing that.”
Child and Youth Advisory Group Member
Section 3

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This guide is a result of a year-long project, designed to explore children’s participation in business organisations and their activities.

The project was shaped by three questions:

1. In what ways do businesses understand and practice children’s participation in their organisations and activities?
2. What can we learn from examples of children’s participation in businesses?
3. What kind of support do businesses require to ensure an ethical and rights-based approach to children’s participation in their organisations and activities?

Two groups were established to advise on this project. The Child and Youth Advisory Group was composed of eight members, aged 15 to 21, with diverse backgrounds. This group met three times (both in person and virtually) in Toronto, Canada. The Business Advisory Group was comprised of six members from multinational corporations who had interest in and experience with children’s participation in their organisations. These companies were located in different regions of the world. The Business Advisory Group met virtually twice over the duration of the project and communicated by email at other key stages.

The project had three components:

1. An electronic survey was distributed through the Global Child Forum listserv. Responses were received from 26 individuals. Simple descriptive statistics were generated along with thematic qualitative analysis.
2. Two case studies of children’s participation in business were subsequently identified, through the survey and the advice of the Business Advisory Group. There were six interviews with key adults who facilitated these case studies, and key documents were considered.
3. Two webinars were held: one to share initial considerations and key questions for businesses and another to share initial findings, provide examples and explore safeguarding.

Throughout the project, serious consideration was given to ethical issues such as informed consent, confidentiality and ensuring the wellbeing of participants. Ethics approval for the project was given by Ryerson University’s Research Ethics Board. This guide is an outcome of the project. It is divided into three sections (see below).

In this guide, a ‘child’ is a person below the age of 18, a designation which broadly follows Article 1 of the CRC.

Part I: Introducing Children’s Participation in Business

Part I examines children’s participation in business operations as a human right. Using the framework provided by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the 10 Children’s Rights and Business Principles developed by UNICEF, Save the Children, and the UN Global Compact, this section considers how children’s participation can be understood and includes definitions, forms, and models.

Part II: Planning for Children’s Participation

A framework of questions businesses can pose when initiating participation activities is introduced here. Key issues, identified as challenging for many businesses, are considered. Examples include: recruitment of youth participants, youth representation and inclusion; how best to involve children; safeguarding and ethics; and impact and feedback.

Part III: Learning from Examples: lessons from businesses to other businesses

Two case studies undertaken with businesses on their participation activities are considered. The case studies discuss the ‘business case’ for child participation, sketch out how activities were undertaken, and examine the challenges and learnings from these activities.

“...The guide will make others recognize children need a voice. It’s going to highlight the hidden issues that children are exposed to, then it is going to reinforce the need for children to be involved.”

Child and Youth Advisory Group Member
Introducing Children’s Participation in Business
Why should children participate in business?

Children’s participation in all matters that affect them is a fundamental human right. It applies to individual children, making decisions about their own lives. It also applies to groups of children, influencing decisions for themselves and their communities.

Businesses have responsibilities to respect children’s human rights and can take voluntary actions to advance these rights as part of their corporate social responsibility and sustainability efforts. Children encounter businesses as young workers, family members of employees, consumers, and community members. Thus, children are key stakeholders for businesses now and are positioned to be business employees and business leaders in the future.

For these reasons, 10 Children’s Rights and Business Principles have been articulated by UNICEF, Save the Children, and the UN Global Compact (2012). To advance these Principles, the Global Child Forum has developed its Pledge for Children’s Rights and Business. These complement the more general UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the CRC. The CRC, the most ratified human rights treaty in the world, outlines children’s civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. The CRC has four general principles which underpin the 10 Children’s Rights and Business Principles. These four principles are: non-discrimination; the best interests of the child; survival and development; and children’s participation.

“It’s a win-win for children and the business. You’re driving engagement with children.”

Child and Youth Advisory Group Member
UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights Guiding Principle No 18 calls on businesses, in order to gauge human rights risks, to ‘involve meaningful consultation with potentially affected groups and other relevant stakeholders, as appropriate to the size of the business enterprise and the nature and context of the operation’.

There are, businesses report, a host of advantages that result from involving children – and risks when they do not:

- Learning from children’s views, experiences and skills. Children can offer fresh perspectives, reflect on their own contemporary experiences and those of their peers, and contribute a range of informal and formal knowledge and skills. In short, children can provide different perspectives from those of adults, thereby helping businesses see opportunities, make improvements and avoid mistakes.

- Children are consumers now and will continue to be in the future. Over one-quarter of the world’s population is under the age of 18. Children purchase now. Use products and services now. Influence their peers and families now. They will also be the customers of the future. Their participation has value and can contribute to the success of a business.

- Current employees are often parents; their children are future employees. Family-friendly work environments improve employee recruitment, retention, and satisfaction, and understanding what creates family-friendly work practices – from children’s perspectives – can benefit children and their careers. And because children eventually become workers (indeed, older children may already be working or engaged in skills training), businesses which invite their participation are investing in future workforce development.

- Advancing the reputation and image of a business. On the one hand, meaningful and ethical engagement with children can make businesses aware of issues before they become problems and, where problems exist, provide insight as to solutions. On the other hand, inauthentic engagement with children can lead to criticism and even backlash from the children involved and their friends, family, and community.

“Consult children about the possible effect of the product/advertisement before launching them.”
Young person consulted in the Philippines

“Children are often very involved and passionate about the topics relevant to businesses. The world is now very aware of great child activism, and how children possess critical knowledge, access to information, and visibility in society. For example, parents and legal guardians care about the environment, but they are not necessarily as informed and dedicated to this topic and others as young people.”
Business Advisory Group Member

I have seen that having children’s engagement and participation can definitely help strengthen our employee motivation.”
Business Advisory Group Member

“Advancing the reputation and image of a business. One the one hand, meaningful and ethical engagement with children can make businesses aware of issues before they become problems and, where problems exist, provide insight as to solutions. On the other hand, inauthentic engagement with children can lead to criticism and even backlash from the children involved and their friends, family, and community.

“It is crucial to understand how young people view the world, as there are some business risks when not including children in decision-making and activities. For example, businesses may not intend to alienate children in their efforts but could cause children to feel as though the businesses are not respecting and incorporating their interests. Companies need to engage children’s participation to avoid these critical risks.”
Business Advisory Group Member
Hearing, understanding and responding to children’s concerns and views is a component of corporate social responsibility. Involving children can highlight and mitigate risks to human rights and other business obligations. Constructive engagement can build both trust and long-lasting relationships with children, their families and their communities, avoiding unnecessary grievances and reducing potential community conflict.

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Business Advisory Group Member

Children stand to benefit from participation. Children report gaining confidence and skills as a result of meaningful participation. They appreciate being heard and receiving honest feedback about what happens next, even when action based on their views is not possible.

ADULTS MIGHT HAVE concerns as to whether they have the skills and experience necessary to ensure high quality child participation experiences. In fact, the evidence base on children’s participation suggests that careful attention should be given to issues such as safeguarding, meaningful participation and avoiding tokenism. These issues will be explored more fully in the sections below. But the evidence base shows that, provided there is a respectful, rights-based approach, an organisational commitment and partnerships with those who have the requisite skills and experience, making a start brings benefits in the longer term. This guide provides resources and examples to support that trajectory.

“When children’s ideas contribute to businesses, it helps to build children’s confidence.”

Child and Youth Advisory Group Member

“I have this loyalty to the business now. I want to stay with them.”

Child and Youth Advisory Group Member, after participating in the business

“In China, a company included young people in an art competition to support young people to connect and light the COVID-19 together. This brought the community together and collected ideas and perspectives of children who are all impacted by the pandemic creating an impactful and emotional influence on the community.”

Business Advisory Group Member

8. CHILDREN’S PARTICIPATION 2020
THE UN COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD describes participation as “... ongoing processes, which include information-sharing and dialogue between children and adults based on mutual respect, and in which children can learn how their views and those of adults are taken into account and shape the outcome of such processes.”

This definition underlines the importance of mutual respect between children and adults, of ensuring children know how their views are taken into account, and that children’s views should have some impact on decision-making.

5.1 Forms of children’s participation in business

Children’s participation can take many forms. Children may join together as activists to protest a particular issue, sign a petition, or set up a social media campaign. They can use grievance or complaint procedures to draw attention to a potential problem. They can submit their views through, for example, an online survey, consultation groups or programme activities, to influence or make decisions. Children can express their views in a variety of ways, from writing to creative arts to research. They can take up roles from expert advisers to researchers to consumers. There is no single mode of participation; rather, multiple modes may be useful for businesses and children.

HOW MIGHT CHILDREN PARTICIPATE IN YOUR BUSINESS?

A variety of approaches have been tried by organisations within the corporate and other sectors.

By serving on Advisory Committees on specific aspects of your business (e.g. corporate social responsibility), Telia Company partnered with the World Childhood Foundation to ensure that children’s rights are integrated into their sustainability agenda (see section 9).

By being involved in agenda-setting days, helping set action priorities for your business in relation to children’s rights. Such events have been used by organisations such as Investing in Children, Durham, and Young Edinburgh Action to involve hundreds of children in setting strategic priorities for subsequent participation work.

Participating in monitoring and evaluation. As part of A Toolkit for Monitoring and Evaluating Children’s Participation, organisations piloted the tools and then reported children and young people’s reflections on them.

Being included on projects relevant to children, which children can undertake in partnership with your business. The Dutch Banking Association partnered with the Missing Chapter Foundation to support children researching banking issues (see section 7.2).

Assessing or developing products and services through involvement in focus groups or surveys. Children’s IKEA held focus groups with children to develop new lamps (see section 8).

Providing feedback, complaints and accountability mechanisms that are child-friendly and inclusive for children. In the public sector, the Children’s Commissioner for England worked with children, young people and professionals in health and education settings to develop common principles for child-friendly complaints.

Participating when corporate codes of conduct are being developed or revised as they relate to business engagements with children. UNICEF (2013) produced a guide to support developing such codes of conduct.
10. Children’s participation 2020

Participating as members of your board or by contributing as observers. The British Youth Council has 13 young people aged 25 and under as their Board of Trustees, responsible for the Council’s strategic direction. The Learning for Well-being Foundation, registered in The Netherlands and active around the world, has five youth members on its Board of Directors.

Contributing their views on child rights business assessments when changes are being considered. UNICEF supported a project for children’s rights to be integrated into due diligence by international large-scale mining companies. Kuoni, an international travel company included children’s views in their human rights impact assessment in Kenya.

5.2 What are children’s rights?
The CRC specifies a number of participation rights for children. Perhaps the best known is Article 12(1), which requires decision-makers to take children’s views seriously: “… to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.”

Other participation rights relevant to businesses are Article 13 (freedom of expression), Article 14 (freedom of thought, conscience and religion), Article 15 (freedom of association and peaceful assembly) and Article 17 (access to information).

ALSO HELPFUL TO businesses are the nine requirements to implement Article 12, as set out by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in their General Comment on Article 12 (2009).

Processes should be:
1. Transparent and informative
2. Voluntary
3. Respectful
4. Relevant
5. Child-friendly
6. Inclusive
7. Supported by training
8. Safe and sensitive to risk
9. Accountable (which involves feedback to children and evaluation)

These requirements set out an implementation framework that businesses should consider in their own participation activities with children.

5.3 Models for children’s participation
Practitioners and academics have developed a number of models over the last three decades in order to clarify the meaning of participation, to interpret how the right to participate is translated into practice and to understand how children effectively engage. Professor Laura Lundy’s model of participation is a useful way to understand children’s participation. Its key components are found in Figure 1 (on the following page).

As explained in the model, Space requires that children be given safe, inclusive opportunities to form and express their views. Voice ensures that children are facilitated to express their views. Audience requires that children’s views be listened to. Children’s views then should have influence, being acted upon as appropriate.

A rights-based approach requires that all rights must be considered holistically. Accordingly, participation rights need to be considered with other rights within the CRC, and with other human rights treaties. Children’s rights to participation, for example, need to be considered alongside their rights to prevention, provision and protection.
Lundy’s Model of Participation

Lundy’s Model of Participation as included in Ireland’s National Strategy on Children and Young People’s Participation in Decision-Making 2015–2020

**Space**

**HOW:** Provide a safe and inclusive space for children to express their views.

- Have children’s views been actively sought?
- Was there a safe space in which children can express themselves freely?
- Have steps been taken to ensure that all children can take part?

**Voice**

**HOW:** Provide appropriate information and facilitate the expression of children’s views.

- Have children been given the information they need to form a view?
- Do children know that they do not have to take part?
- Have children been given a range of options as to how they might choose to express themselves?

**Audience**

**HOW:** Ensure that children’s views are communicated to someone with the responsibility to listen.

- Is there a process for communicating children’s views?
- Do children know who their views are being communicated to?
- Does that person/body have the power to make decisions?

**Influence**

**HOW:** Ensure that children’s views are taken seriously and acted upon, where appropriate.

- Were the children’s views considered by those with the power to effect change?
- Are there procedures in place that ensure that the children’s views have been taken seriously?
- Have the children and young people been provided with feedback explaining the reasons for decisions taken?
Planning for Children’s Participation
OUR PROJECT SURVEY suggested that businesses are involving children in a range of different ways including:

- Children advising on particular issues
- Children being involved in product design
- Participation by children on platforms provided for them outside a particular business
- Engaging with activist children who are taking independent actions to influence business

However, the majority of business respondents had not involved children in decision-making. The project survey suggested the most common barriers to children’s participation are lack of buy-in from senior management and children not being identified as stakeholders in the business’s materiality analysis. These two barriers are important to consider in the early stages.

In getting started on involving children, you and your organisation may find it helpful to consider the questions below. At the end of this guide (see section 10), you will find the same list of questions along with references to the sections in this report that address them each individually.
**Key considerations**

- For what purpose is your business involving children?
- What is already known within your company about children’s views? If children are to be involved, what will their participation add to what is already known? How can your business build on what is already known?
- Is your business committed to responding to children’s views and perspectives? Who will be responsible for doing so in your business?
- How will children know what your business’ response is to their views?
- If your business is inviting children to participate, which children are invited and why? Are you unnecessarily excluding children due to factors such as language and communication needs, age, geography or gender? What cultural practices, beliefs and norms should you consider?
- Are the spaces for children’s participation safe, inclusive and comfortable for children? Have you considered the potential risks to children – before, during and after their participation? How will you address them?
- Have children been provided with the necessary information and opportunity to develop their views?
- Do children know that their participation is voluntary and that they can withdraw if they wish? Do you have the appropriate consents from the children (and from guardians, as needed) to participate? Have you agreed with children about how their data will be used, their anonymity and confidentiality?
- What costs are there for the children who participate and their families? How will your business recompense such costs and recognise children’s contributions?
- Is your business ensuring all children involved have the opportunity to participate and to have their views given due weight? What happens if children do not say what you want to hear?
- How will your business monitor and evaluate children’s participation?
- Has your business committed the time, finances and other resources to ensure that children’s rights are upheld throughout the participation activities?

“There needs to be careful and overall consideration of the engagement of young people. A business may think that young people are participating... but do young people feel like they are really participating?”

Child and Youth Advisory Group Member
Children are a heterogenous group. As is the case with adults, children have a range of cultural, socio-economic and educational backgrounds. They have different identities based on aspects such as race, religion, sexual orientation, gender and disability, and differing life trajectories. Thus, before a business considers supporting children's participation, it is well worth asking ‘which children are you looking to involve – and why?’

WHY DETERMINES WHO. If your business is seeking to develop a particular service or product, involving children who might potentially use that service or product would be useful. If your business wants long-term advice from children, you need to consider what range of expertise the business would benefit from and which children might bring that expertise. Your business might need the perspectives of a broad range of children of employees in order to identify what makes for a family-friendly environment, and thus a broad representative sample of those children will be needed. Or your business may be investing in a complaints procedure that is developed in collaboration with a small group of young people over time. You would then look for diversity within the smaller group in order to encourage innovation and avoid discrimination. Later, you could have a wider consultation with a larger sample of children. In short, who you involve needs to match the purpose of the participation. After all, one of the key requirements of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child is to ensure that participation is relevant to the children you involve.

There is no perfect form of participation and different approaches suit different children. A time-intensive programme will exclude children who have busy schedules. An on-line survey will not include those with limited digital access. An exciting, active and noisy environment may be fun for some children but disabling for others. Any form of participation will include some children and potentially exclude others. Nevertheless, taking an anti-discriminatory approach and focusing on diversity is necessary to meet children’s rights to participate. Sometimes this will take extra effort – adaptations, special out-reach to children, their families and supporting organisations, and resources – but ultimately, focusing on the diversity of the children who are participating will increase the likelihood of meeting the activity’s goals.

“How do you make sure that you capture a diverse group of children’s views – different backgrounds, different nationalities, different family backgrounds – and to make sure that we have this picture that represents all groups of children?”
Business Advisory Group Member

“Why determines who.”
Child and Youth Advisory Group Member

“How will you focus on not only just youth, but diverse youth?”
Child and Youth Advisory Group Member

SECTION 7
Issues for businesses getting started with, or expanding, children’s participation
Quite often, forums of children cannot be considered truly representative as defined by democratic principles. Children in such forums cannot be said to ‘represent’ other children in a democratic sense. However, this is not necessarily a limitation. Perhaps your company’s involvement with child participation simply requires a statistically representative sample of children, or children having a certain area of expertise, or includes children engaging with your business at their own behest with their own issues.

Age, ability, and maturity are issues to take into account when establishing this dialogue. It is possible to interact with younger children or children with disabilities, which may benefit from the services of additional professionals. If the goal is to include children with particular backgrounds and identities, there is no shortage of practitioners who can support a child of any age in participating. Examples include practitioners who work with very young children and community workers skilled in engaging ‘hard to reach’ young people. There are toolkits and successful projects that have engaged children with disabilities, survivors of violence or abuse, those who were once involved in criminal activities, and others who come from migrant backgrounds. If access to this expertise is not available within your organisation, take advantage of supporting organisations with the expertise to ensure your recruitment and practices are inclusive. Child and youth groups are potentially invaluable in advising you on such matters. Numerous toolkits are available, including those in the section 11 on Helpful Resources.

When recruiting children, attention must be given to the consent to participate. The law may not allow a child to consent on their own behalf, in which case formal informed consent must be received from their legal guardian. Age thresholds for consent differ, so the actual legal situation pertaining to your particular child participants must be determined. Even if a child can consent on their own behalf to participate, it can be worthwhile to provide information to a child’s parents or carer; they then have the ability to support the child in their participation. A children’s rights approach requires that it is actually the child who agrees to participate, even when a guardian has already granted formal consent.

When it comes to recruitment and assistance relating to child participation activities, partnering with a community group, or other organisations, in an ongoing way has advantages – building on expertise and past experience to facilitate participation that is inclusive, meaningful and ethical. Furthermore, such partnerships can ensure that children are supported before, during and after their participation – which is particularly important if you are not going to be investing in long-standing engagement with the children.

7.2 Methods for involving children

There is no single right way to involve children in an activity or issue. A useful approach is to revisit the intent of the participation. Are there particular questions your business wants answered? What is the aim of the participation? In the process of posing such questions and making use of creativity and innovation, methods suited to your organisation’s particular goals can be developed.

Children will approach participation in different ways. Some will be more comfortable than others in a given space. They will have different communication styles. Methods of participation should take such factors into account while also recognising that children have schedules, obligations and
needs in addition to what is required of them to participate. You can begin to address this by asking supporting organisations and the children themselves for their preferences and needs. Consider whether it’s possible to maintain some flexibility. Some examples:

- If children are leading a campaign, is there the means to allow children to opt in and out at different times so that they can remain involved?
- If a child does not want to participate in one activity, are there options for them to make their contribution through an activity that better suits them?

It is important to recognise all the participation rights children have, including the right to receive as well as give information. Information is needed so that children can give informed consent to participate (see above), and also in order for them to be able to make an informed contribution during their participation activity. As expressed by this mantra in the field of children’s rights: It is not whether the child lacks the competency to participate – it is whether the adults supporting that participation have the competency to facilitate the children’s participation.

“It works well with the conversation approach... I think there are different types of input you can get from kids, whether it’s having a conversation about a really specific topic or about how a company approaches an area and getting input directly on that. But then I think there’s also the space of just getting children’s visions and hopes on the future, and what the future looks like.”

Business Advisory Group Member

WHEN APPROACHING CHILDREN’S participation, it’s important to consider how the views and learnings from the children’s participation activities will be documented, analysed and put to use. Looking at such matters early on – during the planning phase – ensures that such considerations are integrated through-out the process from beginning to end.

Planning whether and how the participation will come to an end is important for the business and for the children involved. Children may wish to continue to participate. Perhaps it is possible to offer additional opportunities – children mentoring other children or taking on other activities – which allow them to develop further participation skills and respect for their contributions.

There are a large number of checklists available in participation toolkits looking at matters to consider when engaging children in participation activities. (See section 11 on Helpful Resources for toolkits.) These can be useful – and encouraging – particularly when you are unfamiliar with participation activities involving children.

7.3 Safeguarding and ethics

Safeguarding includes attention to the risks when engaging with children and young people and how not to expose children to harm. According to UNICEF, safeguarding encompasses “the prevention of physical, sexual and emotional abuse, neglect and maltreatment of children by employees and other persons whom the company is responsible for, including contractors, business partners, visitors to premises and volunteers”.14
This is an important start – though there are additional considerations:

- The NSPCC, a UK child protection agency, includes not only protection from harm but also promotion of children’s welfare and better outcomes. From a children’s rights perspective, safeguarding includes the protection, prevention and promoting of children’s rights.\(^{15}\)

- The UK Collaborative for Development Research highlights a wider range of individuals to consider in the process of practicing safeguarding, such as, other potentially vulnerable people, adults experiencing domestic abuse, as well as employees and volunteers working with children and young people. Arguably, an effective safeguarding requires a holistic consideration of the range of stakeholders involved.\(^{16}\)

- Keeping Children Safe notes the "...responsibility that organisations have to make sure their staff, operations, and programmes do no harm to children, that is that they do not expose children to the risk of harm and abuse, and that any concerns the organisation has about children’s safety within the communities in which they work, are reported."\(^{17}\)

Put concisely, safeguarding refers to all actions a business takes to keep children and others safe from harm as a result of any direct or indirect contact with the business. It involves a careful consideration of the possible risks and preventive measures to mitigate the risks. In essence, businesses need to consider and take action to safeguard children in their activities.

For each participation activity, measures for child safeguarding are recommended, including:

- Developing a code of conduct to ensure that the company and its employees or affiliates understand and take action to prevent and respond to child abuse, including: physical abuse, sexual abuse, commercial exploitation, online abuse, and neglect.\(^{18}\)

- Embracing the principle of ‘Do No Harm’ to children, respecting their rights and taking into consideration their cultural contexts to ensure that all businesses' actions and decisions are inspired by child safety.\(^{19}\)

- Building a culture of zero tolerance for all forms of child abuse and exploitation, including clear and transparent reporting mechanisms and disciplinary actions regardless of people’s position or reputation within the companies.\(^{20}\)

- Providing ongoing child safeguarding training to staff members and affiliates in order to provide knowledge and tools to understand and tackle root causes of child abuse and to promote the implementation of behaviour protocols.\(^{21}\)

- Ensuring that reporting tools are in place and immediate actions are taken to respond and to support children in case of abuse and exploitation.\(^{22}\)

- Conducting child safeguarding risk assessment to identify the potential threats that the engagement of staff members and affiliates with children might pose and provide guidance to minimise those risks.\(^{23}\)

To reiterate, there is explicit advice available on what an effective safeguarding policy should include, as provided in the cited references here.

### 7.4 Significance of decision-making and feedback to participants

"We are very clear in the beginning of every workshop what we are doing with the information provided by children. We share the results with the teachers and give feedback. We show how the input and information given is being utilised, how useful it is, and how it makes the world better. Then, they can ask questions about the process."

Business Advisory Group Member

Most children participate in activities because they want to make a difference.\(^{24}\) They give their views because they want those views to have an impact on decisions being made. Therefore, they stand to become frustrated if they are not informed as to what decisions have been made and how their contributions have influenced those decisions. Children are often sharply
aware that adults are tokenistic about involving them, where consultation is a ‘tick box’ rather than a meaningful activity. This raises several points for your business to consider.

**AS ASKED IN** section 6, what commitment does your business and, in particular, the relevant decision-makers have to considering children’s contributions? Will the decision-makers take children’s contributions seriously and weigh them in decision-making? What resources can be available, and over what time, to implement any decisions as a result? Are constraints and possibilities shared with children from the start of their engagement, so they are informed of the parameters and opportunities?

Children can produce ideas about not only problems but also solutions. Often, participation activities consult children about the former but neglect to include them in addressing the latter. Are there opportunities to engage children in developing, implementing, and monitoring solutions? For successful examples of various initiatives, please refer to the accompanying case stories.

**CLEAR, PROMPT AND** honest feedback and dialogue between decision-makers in your business or elsewhere and the children who are participating is essential. With sufficient information, children are able to understand that not all of their ideas can be advanced or that doing so may take some time. Initial feedback given in a timely way signals respect for children’s participation, with subsequent feedback then provided as needed.

“It is important (for businesses) to think about superficial participation versus meaningful participation. Getting children to volunteer for a marathon that your company is hosting would be more superficial than actually having children involved in the decision making process. Then the company is providing resources to also help children grow as leaders themselves.”

Child and Youth Advisory Group Member
Learning by Example: 
_lessons from other businesses_
Case Study:

**IKEA and children’s participation**

Inter IKEA Group is the group of companies that connects IKEA franchisees with range development and suppliers, and aligns the overall IKEA strategic direction. The IKEA vision is “to create a better everyday life for the many people”. This case study is based upon a joint interview with one employee from Children’s IKEA and one from the Inter IKEA Group. All quotes are from that interview.

**Why does IKEA involve children in their business?**

“We want to involve and engage with children because they are the stakeholders of our business, we have a big impact on them, we can learn from them, be creative with them.”

“It is a no-brainer! How can you develop products for kids without talking to kids?”

“Children have the right to be heard, and as a business we have a responsibility to listen to them. Understanding their needs and dreams better also of course enables us to develop better products.”

IKEA has a long history of promoting children’s rights, particularly ensuring that they produce safe products that supports children’s development, and working to prevent child labour and promote the rights of young workers in supply chain. At the end of 2017, the company undertook an assessment of their strengths, weaknesses and gaps related to children’s rights and created a ‘IKEA Children’s Rights Roadmap 1.0’ which outlines IKEA’s priorities for moving forward with children’s rights. Children’s participation was
recognised as an area where the company has a big impact on children but where there was a potential for improvement on how to strategically involve children and young people.

**How does IKEA involve children in their business?**

“As IKEA, we made a commitment to respect children’s rights throughout our operations, which then means we have a responsibility to engage with children and promote their right to be heard.”

Children’s IKEA, the global product development department for children’s products at IKEA of Sweden AB. There are two main ways that Children’s IKEA involves children.

**FIRSTLY, CHILDREN’S IKEA** runs focus groups where they meet children face to face to give input on specific products or ideas. These focus groups have so far taken place in Sweden and in Shanghai, China. Sometimes Children’s IKEA co-workers, as they’re referred to by the company, meet the same children several times and, other times, staff meet them just once. These meetings involve groups of children, sometimes with their parents and other family members, such as siblings. There is no fixed age range for these focus groups as it depends upon the product. The focus groups enable Children’s IKEA to meet children in person and ask them to test, touch and feel products. The most successful focus groups have taken place in the exploration phase, where children are asked about their specific needs connected to their room or to specific situations, and they would share their favourite or ideal products. However, the limitation is that they are focused on one product and connected to a specific product development process and as such does not allow for a dialogue over time with the group of children.

Children’s IKEA has worked with a market research company to develop a Global Children’s Panel. The panel is made up of children aged 8–14 in China, Germany, and the UK, who are recruited by the external partner organisation. About 12 children from each country are recruited across these ages with gender representation. There is some consideration of socio-economic background in recruiting children, although this could be developed further. Through the panel the business can begin to understand the panel members’ everyday lives and learn more about their hopes, dreams and needs.

All direct interaction with the children happens through the research company. Children’s IKEA sets monthly tasks which panel members respond to in writing, photos or videos. Children’s IKEA can log in to the portal to see the responses and also get monthly reports of the responses. The children stay with the panel until they are 14 so some of them have been involved for 3 years.

**Safeguarding**

When Children’s IKEA started involving children in their work through the panel and labs, co-workers admit that they underestimated the complexities of safeguarding and ensuring privacy with children. To address it, they engaged external as well as internal expertise into the work and began to build competence, as well as strengthen safeguarding routines and processes. They now see safeguarding and participation as inter-connected responsibilities in their work – meaningful participation has to be responsible.

All Children’s IKEA co-workers who work with children complete a training session that examines the importance of children’s participation as well as how to facilitate such interactions with children. When they run focus groups with children there is always a teacher present to support the IKEA staff and children.

Inspired by the pilot initiative in Children’s IKEA, Inter IKEA Group is now developing a Child Safeguarding Policy and planning for training for all co-workers working in direct contact with children. As Children’s IKEA has a workforce which is very diverse and with different international backgrounds, one of the things that has been challenging is securing background checks for employees working with children. To overcome this challenge, Children’s IKEA created a legal statement outlining the guidelines that staff are required to sign before they work with children. On Inter IKEA Group level, they are now exploring ways to enable more robust child safeguarding practices, including child safeguarding screening processes.

**What were the benefits to IKEA of involving children?**

“In terms of children’s impact on IKEA... the overall conversation on children, children’s rights and involvement of children has matured as a business.”

In some cases, the impact of and reason for involving children is very clear, such as product development for children. One example was developing new lamps. Children’s IKEA asked the Global Panel members to share pictures of their favourite lamps in their homes and to browse the internet for other examples of what they liked, and explain why they liked it. They found that one of the most important factors for the children was feeling comfortable and feeling safe. The children then created a brief for the designer who developed 9 different ideas. Global Panel members voted for the one they liked the most and the one that received the most votes was the one that was produced. Other impacts are not related to a specific product but are still tangible. For example, Children’s IKEA co-workers noticed that children
often talk about stress in their lives, related to multiple pressures about how they should live their lives. These types of inputs build a wider understanding of children’s lives, enabling Children’s IKEA to be more sensitive to the specific needs of children in their product development efforts.

**INVOLVING CHILDREN HAS** impacted how co-workers view children and in turn this has changed the ways that co-workers communicate with children, the ways that co-workers organise showrooms and the ways co-workers develop products.

Children’s IKEA co-workers feel strongly that interactions with children have an impact on the overall operation of the business. The impact of children continues to positively influence the mindset of co-workers to provide a higher level of care and authenticity to their customers.

"[The benefit is not] only about the products, but affecting the full operation of the Children's IKEA - it becomes more true and it becomes real... I think it is connected to us interacting with children much more."

"[As a result of getting to know children over time] we understand that children are dynamic people with full lives. And I think that is a direct learning from interacting with children."

Finally, the success of the work done in Children’s IKEA is now having impact in the total IKEA network, with safeguarding guidelines being developed and children's participation being explored as a direction for all parts of the IKEA value chain, from supply chain operations to franchisees/retail/customer meeting points.

**What were the challenges for IKEA of involving children?**

Children's IKEA is the department in which children’s participation is most developed and where the connection to business is highly tangible. It can be easier to understand why children’s participation is important when you can see the direct impact of children’s involvement on a product for children. It is inevitable that there will be different levels of knowledge about children’s participation and different priorities in different departments of IKEA and between IKEA and their partners. One exciting challenge now is how to ensure that children are meaningfully and strategically involved with the other parts of IKEA value-chain where the impact might be less obvious.

**Advice to other businesses**

- It is important to have strategic commitment at the highest level in the business. For IKEA, it is important that senior managers signed off the children’s rights roadmap - it does not mean that the implementation work is without challenges, but having the strategic commitment is key for the direction of travel.

- It is not enough to just be committed to children’s participation, you need a structure, routines and safeguarding routines in place.

- The safeguarding requirements might at first seem overwhelming and complicated, but they are an important prerequisite for all interactions with children. Your business has a responsibility to ensure that the strong safeguarding practices are in place as a foundation that will enable you to create meaningful and engaging involvement opportunities for children.

- Implementing children’s participation in your business requires a learning curve. Though there may be challenges and mistakes, it is important to focus on the rights children have and the positive impact participation can have for both children and the business.

- Building partnerships with other organizations, who have expertise of working directly with children, means that you can bring in the right people and open up new opportunities. Many organizations are very skilled and knowledgeable about involving and engaging with children, and bringing in the views of children.

- To me, the internal conversation has been a learning curve. Child’s participation is a specific topic, and I would say that though we have strong examples, but we still have a long way to go, and that is the plan."

- "There are a lot of opportunities to work together. Yes, you need the competence and insights internally, but also bring in the right people [from child rights-based organisations] who have the right expertise."

- Make sure you have people in place who are committed to children’s participation and have the skills and capacity to support meaningful involvement.
Why does Telia Company involve children in their business?
Telia Company takes children’s online safety very seriously and has adopted the “Children’s Rights and Business Principles”, developed by Save the Children, UNICEF and UN Global Compact, as a framework for their work to empower and protect children online. Telia Company has partnered with World Childhood Foundation since 1999 to work on children’s rights issues to ensure that children’s rights are integrated into their sustainability agenda.

“Children are not directly our customers, but their parents and the schools are the customers. The children are actively the users of our services. Therefore, it is Telia Company’s responsibility to work with children’s rights in a strategic and systematic way across our footprint.”

How does Telia Company involve children in the business?
Telia Company is keen to ensure that children’s participation is meaningful and useful rather than a mechanical ‘tick-box’ exercise. They want a transparent process to collect children’s views and ensure that these views have an influence across the business. To this end, Telia Company conducts a Children’s Advisory Panel (CAP) on a chosen topic each year to gather insights from children about their online lives.

Previous topics include:
- Children’s online lives
- Privacy online
- Health and well-being online
- Online gaming
- Digital learning

Recruitment, representation and inclusion
Each CAP includes children from seven countries: Sweden, Finland, Norway, Denmark, Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia. Telia Company works closely with the World Childhood Foundation and local Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in the countries involved as well as a market research organisation to recruit children to the study.

Children are often recruited through schools via the local NGOs, as most NGOs already have an ongoing relationship with different schools. Telia Company seeks to work with schools in different geographic
areas (including urban/rural) and with different socio-demographic populations. The CAP materials are translated into local languages, including minority languages.

The age group of children involved varies depending upon the topic. There are a minimum 100 children from each of the seven countries involved in the workshops.

**How to involve children and young people - methods**

There are two stages to each CAP:

1. A digital questionnaire, which takes between 5-10 minutes for the child to answer.
2. A 90-minute interactive and co-creative workshop module that is delivered in schools by Telia Company staff and staff from children’s rights organisations. During the co-creative workshops, qualitative insights from children are collected and later analysed and summarized by the research organisation. Telia Company staff elect to facilitate and support the sessions. This stage is invaluable because Telia Company staff gain a rich understanding of children’s experiences. Due to Covid-19, CAP on digital learning was fully digital in 2020.

“The first time we did workshops with the children we wanted them to tell us what their lives online were like. We created a fictitious story that everything on Earth was destroyed and disappeared, with only a few humans left. The internet was broken and the children got tasked to fix this because the adults had other tasks like building houses and hospitals. We asked the children, based on your experiences, what were the most important things on the internet?”

“We really found out that only asking questions is not really the best way, because we as adults don’t know what to ask … the involvement with children should be broader than asking children ‘What do you think about this specific service?’ but opening up more towards children’s experiences, challenges, and the opportunities they see in their lives online.”

**Safeguarding and ethics**

Telia Company collaborated with World Childhood Foundation and Save the Children to formulate a child safeguarding policy that all employees and volunteers working with children must follow. For example, in Sweden, all volunteers are required to pass a criminal record check and receive training on how to safely engage with children.

It is important that the CAP process be transparent. They do not give marketing information to children nor do they highlight Telia Company services when they are carrying out the CAP. It is also essential that consent from the parents of the children who participate is obtained. During workshops in school classes, the teacher is always present.
Impact on decision-making

Interviewees had no doubt that the insights gained through CAP have impacted many aspects of the business. One example is the CAP that looked at online gaming (see full 2019 report 📌). A key message was that children wished their parents were more interested and involved in their gaming.

Outcomes of this CAP include:
- Information about children’s views in various channels that reached over 200,000 people on Telia Company’s initiative to positively impact children.
- Resources for families developed with Save the Children, looking at how to understand children’s experiences in online gaming, how to talk to your children and support them in responsible online gaming. This served to increase trust within Telia’s customer base.
- Responsible online gaming guidelines for Telia Company. As Telia Company continues to increase its involvement in e-sports and gaming, it will be doing so with the benefit of guidelines for responsible digital gaming developed in conjunction with Save the Children Finland. The guidelines ensure that Telia Company approaches these services responsibly and takes children's experiences into account.
- A successful campaign encouraging parents to get involved in gaming with their children.

What were the benefits to Telia Company of involving children?

Benefits to the business are many and include:
- Improved understanding of children as users of Telia Company’s services.
- Improved services and online experiences for children.
- Inspiration and content for new resources for schools and families.
- Improved Telia Company staff motivation and commitment to children’s rights.
- Opportunities for Telia Company to share their research with peers and be seen as experts in this field.

“...to understand, because it helps our future business, sustainability and grows into the business demand.”

“Through their participation, [Telia Company staff who volunteer to work with CAP] also learn and become excited about children, children's rights, and protecting children online. Every year, we have more and more employees who have actually been involved in this work.”

“You can build your image and brand around it. I think, for us, families and children are very important target groups. I am sure that we can use the insights to be more credible for this target audience. We can also engage in society discussion about certain issues that concern us and are relevant and related to our business.”

What were the challenges for Telia Company of involving children?

The main challenge initially was convincing everyone in the business that it was a good idea. The child rights focus prior to CAP had been protection, and some people worried that involving children would be unethical and possibly manipulative. To overcome this challenge, Telia Company had many discussions with the management staff to consider the ethical issues and risks involved in engaging children in the business.

AT TIMES, TELIA COMPANY and World Childhood Foundation have wanted to focus on different topics or different approaches to the work. However, both partners are clear that their open partnership and shared learning has ultimately strengthened the project. ✴️

Advice to other businesses

“...To be daring... try it! You will be able to see how valuable it is. Start small, you do not need to have 1000 participants ... Also, be open to listening to children. Don’t just do it to get that tick in the box, but really listen to them and try to understand their perspectives. It will be so valuable, and you can use it in many ways to improve the business and lives of children.”

“We are future proofing our business. We as adults do not understand how children use the internet. And that is something that we need
MEANINGFULLY AND ETHICALLY involving children in businesses is an exciting journey which demonstrates a company’s commitment to enhancing, practicing and protecting children’s rights. In Section 6, we suggested a number of questions that could be useful for you to start with. The guide has aimed to provide pointers and suggest resources that can assist you as you answer these questions.

For what purpose is your business involving children?
See foreword and section 4 for the business case for children’s participation. See section 7 for purposes for involving children in business and the suggestion of first answering the ‘why’ of participation before you address ‘who’ to involve and ‘how’ to do so.

What is already known about children’s views? If children are to be involved, what will their participation add to what is already known? How can your business build on what is already known?
See the example in section 7.2, where the Dutch Banking Association undertook a series of participation projects, building up knowledge from one year to the next based on children’s own research and analysis.

Is your business committed to responding to children’s views and perspectives? Who will be responsible to do so in your business? How will children know what your business’ response is to their views?
See discussion of how to avoid tokenism and ensure feedback to participants in section 7.4. Refer to the case study in section 8. IKEA staff noted the importance of senior managers ‘signing off’ on the planned activities so there is strategic commitment.

SECTION 10
Taking action – the next step
If your business is inviting children to participate, which children are invited and why? Are you unnecessarily excluding children due to factors such as language and communication needs, age, geography or gender? What cultural practices, beliefs and norms should you consider?

See discussion of recruitment, representation and inclusion in section 7.1. See the case study in section 9, where Telia Company made deliberate decisions on how to involve a range of children, appropriate to the topic.

Are the spaces for children’s participation safe, inclusive and comfortable for the children? Have you considered the potential risks to the children – before, during and after their participation – and how you will address them?

See discussion of safeguarding and ethics in section 7.3. See the case studies in sections 8 & 9, where both IKEA and Telia Company emphasised the importance of addressing ethical and safeguarding issues from the start. Having strong safeguarding practices (including policies and training) are a prerequisite for meaningful ethical participation and can serve to reassure management about risk.

Have children been provided with the necessary information and opportunity to develop their views?

See section 7.2 on how this should be integrated into the way you involve children. Partnering with organisations which are familiar with how to inform and support children’s participation can ensure this is done effectively.

“Do not take advantage of us, we ask you to be responsible, do not support us because you feel pity for us, instead, support us because we deserve it, we purchase your products and services, but we ask you to invest in our development. We do not want gifts, we want you to be responsible.”

Young person in Peru25

Do children know that their participation is voluntary and that they can withdraw if they wish? Do you have the appropriate consents from the children (and from guardians, as needed) to participate? Have you agreed with children about how their data will be used, their anonymity and confidentiality?

See section 7.1 for discussion of issues of consent for children and their legal guardians. See toolkits and resources on ethics in section 11, for advice on how to ensure informed consent from children.

What costs are there for the children who participate and their families? How will your business recompense such costs and recognise children’s contributions?

See the website Ethical Research Involving Children (ERIC), listed in section 7.1, for advice on how to appropriately recognise the costs of children’s participation for children and their families.

Is your business ensuring that all children involved have the opportunity to participate and have their views given due weight? Is your business offering different ways for children to participate? What happens if children do not say what you want to hear?

See the case studies in sections 8 and 9 which consider how a range of children can participate and how to ensure their views are given due weight.

How will your business monitor and evaluate children’s participation?

See the resource Involving Children and Young People in Evaluation and the Toolkit for Monitoring and Evaluating Children’s Participation, listed in section 11, for suggestions on how to monitor and evaluate children’s participation.

Has your business committed the time, finances and other resources to ensure that children’s rights are upheld through the participation activities?

See the case studies in sections 8 and 9 to learn how IKEA and Telia Company supported participation activities through staff training and time, as well as by forming partnerships with specialist organisations familiar with working with children directly.

“As adults, we understand what openness and curiosity means. So, if I turn this around, I wonder, what can children teach the management team of international businesses about what curiosity means, and what openness means… Young people can teach us to look at it from a different angle.”

Business Advisory Group Member
Helpful resources

In addition to this guide, there are other resources which can support you as you engage with children’s participation, some of which can be found below.

**Business and Children’s Participation: How businesses can create opportunities for children’s participation**
This guide aims to inspire businesses and civil society organisations interested in respecting and supporting children’s rights and, specifically, the child’s right to be heard.

**Consultation Package and Facilitator’s Guide: Child and adolescent participation: Reviewing the draft General Comment on State Obligations regarding Children’s Rights and the Business Sector**
This resource pack offers tools, information and ideas for consulting with children and collecting their views on the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child’s General Comment relating to ‘State Obligations regarding Child Rights and the Business Sector’.

**Children’s Rights in HRIA (Human Rights Impact Assessment): Marginalised or mainstreamed?**
The importance of children’s rights in relation to human rights impact assessments (HRIA’s) by business is discussed in this practical handbook. The chapter by T. Collins includes consideration of children’s participation and opportunities to involve them, and also identifies pertinent principles and tools.

**Toolkit for Monitoring and Evaluating Children’s Participation**
Advice through this series of toolkits is available as to how to involve, monitor and evaluate an organisation’s activities. Its approach is more widely applicable to participation activities generally.

**How Business Affects Us: Children and young people share their perspectives on how business impacts their lives and communities**
This UNICEF, Global Compact and Save the Children (2012) report describes the results of global consultations about business and its impacts with over 400 young people from 7 to 17 years of age around the world. This report led to the subsequent Children’s Rights and Business Principles (UNICEF, Global Compact and Save the Children, 2012a, 2012b) identified earlier in the report.

**The Relationship between Children’s Rights and Business**
Written by Tara Collins, this paper discusses two critical questions: how can child rights influence the roles and efforts of business; and how can business respect and support the implementation of child rights?
Lundy’s model
This model conceptualises the key components of Article 12 of the CRC and connects them to children’s involvement in decision-making processes. Ireland Department of Children and Youth Affairs, National Strategy on Children and Young People’s Participation in Decision-Making 2015–2020 (17 June 2015), p. 21.

Children Make Their Voices Heard
This manual produced by World Vision provides standards, methodologies and tools for facilitators to partner with children in order to provide them with opportunities to actively engage in activities at the grassroots, national or global levels.

Engaging Stakeholders on Children’s Rights: A tool for companies
This tool offers guidance to companies on engaging stakeholders on children’s rights as part of enhancing their standards and practices at both the corporate and site levels.

Steps for Engaging Young Children in Research
Two publications – a guide and a research toolkit – outline how to involve young children in activities. While written particularly for practitioner researchers and academics, they are applicable to many aspects of participatory practices.

Children’s Rights and Business Workbook
Produced by Global Child Forum, this document provides a practical step-by-step guide for companies on how to incorporate children’s rights into existing business processes using available human rights guidance. The guidance is based on the two key authoritative standards regarding business and children’s rights: The United Nations Guiding Principles (UNGPs), and the Children’s Rights and Business Principles (CRBPs).

Child Participation: From Rights to Reality
This resource was developed by Kids Rights and Universiteit Leiden to recognize the 10th anniversary of the International Children’s Peace Prize. The report defines the concept, and its significance is explored in relation to child development and the welfare of society as a whole.
What Next? Ways forward for children’s and young people’s participation
This research study presents a review of the key theoretical perspectives and practice in relation to children and young people’s participation.

Ethical Research Involving Children (ERIC)
ERIC provides evidence-informed guidance for researchers and others wishing to ensure their research respects the rights, dignity and wellbeing of children and young people, regardless of context. It covers research and participation activities around the world, case studies, and the opportunity to ask questions of colleagues.

Children are everyone’s business: A practical workbook to help companies understand and address their impact on children’s rights
This workbook was developed by UNICEF to help businesses understand and address their impact on children in the workplace, marketplace, community and the environment.

Involving Children and Young People in Evaluation
This resource, designed by Participation Works, aims to introduce ideas about evaluation and provide opportunities to practise some of the skills needed for evaluation activities.

So you want to consult with children? A toolkit of good practice
This toolkit offers advice, ideas and guidance for involving children in consultations at national, regional and international levels. Its intent is to provide organisations with useful material for involving children in discussions about issues that affect them.

(See section 7.3 for references to safeguarding policies)

Article 15 Toolkit
This resource pack was developed by UNICEF, CERG, Save the Children and World Vision to support the capacity of children to participate in decision-making in partnership with adults.

General Comment No.12
This is an authoritative interpretation of Article 12 of the CRC, from the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child.

Voice against Violence: Standards for Engaging Young People
Young experts articulate their own standards for participation activities. These young people have experienced domestic abuse. As a result, their standards for working with young people on sensitive issues are particularly insightful.
Endnotes


GLOBAL CHILD FORUM
Founded in 2009 by the Swedish Royal Family, Global Child Forum is a leading forum for children’s rights and business dedicated to innovative thinking, knowledge sharing and networking. Global Child Forum believes in the power and responsibility of business, working in partnership with all parts of society, to create a prosperous, sustainable and just society for the world’s children. In addition to forums, Global Child Forum delivers research perspectives, best practices and risk assessment tools designed to unlock opportunities for business to integrate children’s rights into their operations and communities. For more information, please visit: www.globalchildforum.org.

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