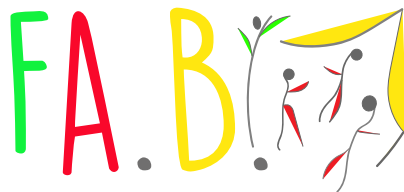


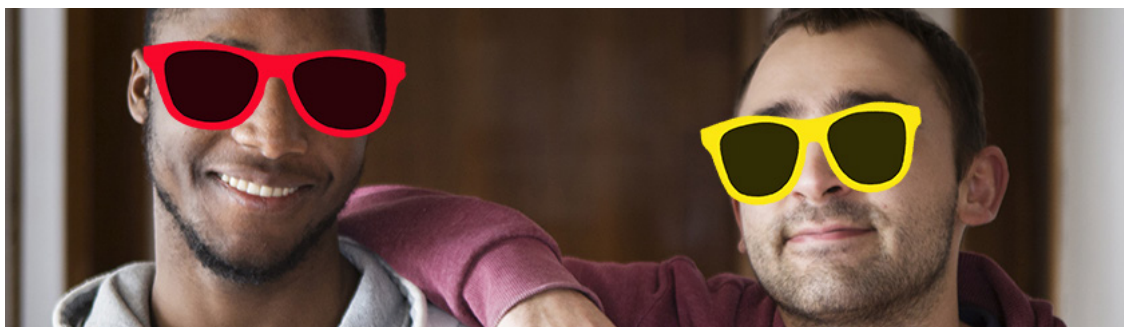


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FAMILY BASED CARE FOR CHILDREN IN MIGRATION

EVERYONE DESERVES AFFECTION AND SUPPORT IN GROWING INTO ADULTHOOD



D2.10

GUIDELINES ON INSTRUMENTS AND TECHNIQUES FOR CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION



CIDIS



HFC
"Help
For
Children"



FONDAZIONE
ISMU
INIZIATIVE E STUDI
NELLA MIGRANZA



por Causa
Investigación, periodismo y migraciones



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INTRODUCTION

As part of the “FA.BI Family Based care for children in migration”, financed by the AMIF - Asylum, Migration and Integration fund and aimed at strengthening the family reception system for unaccompanied foreign minors, a set of guidelines and recommendations has been drawn up regarding the various aspects of the family fostering process, in order to: provide adequate assistance to the needs of lonely minors; equip guardians, curators, social workers and professionals with specific knowledge and skills to understand in depth the vulnerabilities of minors and achieve successful foster care; improve the quality of national and local reception systems for unaccompanied foreign minors.

The recommendations are the result of a multidisciplinary work of maximization and capitalization of skills carried out by the partners of the project - Center for Information Documentation Initiative for Development (CIDIS); Hope For Children Crc Policy Center (HFC); Kentro Merimnas Oikogeneias Kai Paidiou (KMOP); Foundation for Initiatives and the Study of Multi-ethnicity (ISMU); Porcausa De Investigacion Y Periodismo (porCausa); Jesuit Refugee Service Malta Foundation (JRS MALTA) - which operate in the field of reception, assistance and integration of unaccompanied foreign minors in five European countries of the Mediterranean area (Italy, Spain, Cyprus, Malta, Greece).

The guidelines formulated are as follows:

- Guidelines training programs for professionals, foster families and unaccompanied foreign minors;
- Common child communication policy;
- Guidelines on instruments and technique for children’s participation;
- Recommendation on Assessing multi-stakeholders engagement effectiveness;
- Recommendation on methodologies and tailored services for vulnerable groups.

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INTRODUCTION

Working with children is proven to be very challenging since one person has to deal simultaneously with the different personalities of young individuals. Nonetheless, the endeavour of making children participate in a variety of diverse activities and/or services also lies amongst the challenges that professionals, parents and youth workers come across multiple times. Child participation is a fundamental right of every child and lies at the heart of building a child-friendly city or community. It means that children can discuss and co-decide on all matters that affect them, like family, school, community matters, government policies, legal policies. It means that their concerns, ideas and priorities are being heard. This is crucial for the realization of children’s rights and also one of the core principals of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Child participation is also positive for the development of children and youth; it increases self-esteem and self-believe.

Below, you can find some useful guidelines regarding the instruments and techniques that can be used for children’s participation. In a nutshell, becoming aware of the different areas where a child can participate in as well as in a variety of activities that are important for their well-being and how those have an impact on the relationship they have with their family and their peers.

WHY IS CHILDREN PARTICIPATION IMPORTANT

As already mentioned above, children have unique perspectives when it comes to topics that involve them. Therefore, allowing them to express their opinion and share their thoughts significantly contributes to their mental development, enhances their relationship with adults since they show them that they matter and they are valued. In addition, it improves safeguarding while at the same time makes a positive impact on community engagement and use of the children’s right to active citizenship.

The involvement of children, can happen through both formal and informal methods. Informal methods, include:

- Social media
- Surveys
- Petitions
- Focus groups
- Demonstrations

Whereas formal methods refer to:

- School
- Youth Councils
- Youth Parliaments
- Community meetings

The correct and efficient participation of children in the above mentioned sectors, are also opportunities for them to interact with other individuals of their age, sometimes these can belong to a different cultural background as well, and that is a fact that contributes to their growth and well-being.

WHY CHILDREN DO NOT PARTICIPATE

Even though many important steps have been made for the inclusion of children in decision making there are still circumstances where children refuse to participate. This can happen due to:

- Decision makers' adultism - lack of a child equality perspective
- Children's opinion not seriously considered, underestimated / no understanding about the benefits of their participation
- A risk to good project outcomes
- Undermine children's respect for adults
- Lack of adult capacity to properly encourage, support and facilitate child participation.

The biggest challenge is to ensure meaningful collaboration between adults and youth (youth adult partnerships), where youth is not only viewed as source of energy, but as professional colleagues who bring along specific knowledge, experience and skills. Consequently, the need for the development of different tools and guidelines that will allow the opportunity to young individuals to actively participate and make decisions in topics that are important to them.

GUIDELINES ON PARTICIPATION

Nevertheless, a child is still considered someone who is not always capable of making a decision, or is not interested in the topic where a decision needs to be made from him. There are a few techniques that can be used in order to increase child participation. Those are:

- Setting up the activity in a child friendly way and according to the child's interests, abilities and needs
- Educating children about ways to participate and its benefit
- Preparing the child for successful participation ahead of time
- Start listening not only with the ears, but also with the eyes and heart
- Make participation fun!

The adults working with children can also use different educational methods to draw them closer and make them understand the importance of decision-making. One of the most well-known examples that can be used, is Roger Hart's "ladder of child participation". Hart's model is very useful for identifying good practices and eliminating forms of non-participation. In further detail the ladder, consequently this method used has 8 steps:

Manipulation Is the lowest rung of the ladder, referring to situations where children have no understanding of the situation they are in and do not understand (the consequences of) their actions. A good example is preschoolers carrying placards protesting about certain political issues.

Decoration A situation can amount to decoration if children are used to support a cause indirectly, without sufficient information. Children singing or dancing at events as entertainment, without knowing anything of the purpose of the event, are decoration.

Tokenism Refers to the situation where children seem to have been given a voice, but are given little or no opportunity to formulate their opinions, or have any influence over the subject or style and mode of communication. Many examples of tokenism can be pointed to, such as the way children are sometimes used on conference panels to say something on a topic, without sufficient preparation on the subject and without having consulted with peers. With no explanation of how such children are selected and whose views they represent, it is hard to call such involvement participation.

Assigned but informed Unlike the non-participatory rungs above, the children understand the intentions of the project; they know who made the decisions concerning their involvement and why, and they should have a meaningful (not just decorative) role. If children volunteer for the project after these requirements have been met, they can be said to be assigned but informed.

Consulted and informed If children are asked for their views, they understand the process and their views are taken into account, children can be said to be consulted and informed. They are fully informed of the procedures, as well as the purpose and implications of their participation.

Adult initiated - shared decisions with children The sixth rung is third from the top of the participation ladder: adults initiate a project, but share the decision-making process with children. Children are asked to design a classroom for example, but adults also play a role in the outcome. In terms of the children's influence, Hart describes the adult initiated, shared decisions with children rung as 'true participation'.

Child initiated Directed: Where children initiate a project, and adults give them the freedom to direct it without interference. A group of children wants to produce its own school newspaper, for example; they seek permission from the school and receive support, but produce the newspaper themselves.

Child initiated - shared decisions with adults Describes situations where children — usually adolescents — take the initiative, incorporating adults into projects which they design and manage themselves.

Children might identify a problem in their school, for example, and initiate a project to solve it, convincing adults to run it.

Another important method that can be used is the Lundy model of child participation. This model provides a way of conceptualising Article 12 of the UNCRC which is intended to focus educational decision-makers on the distinct albeit interrelated, elements of the provision. The four elements have rational chronological order:

- **SPACE:** Children must be given safe, inclusive opportunities to form and express their view
- **VOICE:** Children must be facilitated to express their view
- **AUDIENCE:** The view must be listened to
- **INFLUENCE:** The view must be acted upon, as appropriate

REFLECTIONS

Participation is influenced by the nature of the spaces in which it happens. Therefore, is not so much that values are reproduced in space, rather that the construction of spaces for participation the construction of spaces for the participation of young people (socially, culturally and aesthetically as well as physically) directly influences whether and how they will participate. In being critically reflective about young people’s participation we therefore need to rethink the ‘spaces’ for participation, both in terms of where participation is

meaningful for young people, but also in terms of how the spaces, and by implication power relationships, in different contexts are constructed.

One of the major problems with participation has been its widespread preoccupation with involvement in decision-making rather than a wider spectrum of activities which characterise how young people engage with and make sense of their worlds and through which one could argue their well-being, identity and citizenship status is realised. It is essential therefore that children and young people have the opportunity to benefit from spaces unfettered from the control and agenda of adults where new futures and ideas can be imagined and expressed through young people's exploration, experimentation and creative expression.

Autonomy and self-determination does not just involve young people doing things on their own but having the space to take a lead, take on responsibility and take the initiative exercising their own power in relation to others. For young people this means public spaces, schools, neighbourhoods, associations and organisations where they can all engage, explore, learn, express themselves, interact with others, develop ideas, take the initiative, take on responsibility and develop confidence and abilities so that they can increasingly acquire the capacities to shape and influence their immediate environments, lives and futures.

LEARN MORE ABOUT FAMILY BASED CARE FOR YOUNG UNACCOMPANIED MIGRANTS AND FA.B! ACTIONS



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