



# Progress or Progression:

*Reviewing Children's Participation in the UN Study  
on Violence against Children, 2003–2006*

Progress and lessons learned since the 2002 Special Session on Children based on Save the Children's support to the involvement of children



**Save the Children**

*Save the Children fights for children's rights.  
We influence public opinion and support children at risk,  
in Sweden and in the world.*

*Our vision is of a world in which the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child  
has been translated into practical reality, and all children's rights are fulfilled.*

*Such a world is one which:*

- respects and values each and every child;*
- listens to, and is prepared to learn from, children;*
- gives every child hope and opportunity.*

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# *The Timeline of the UN Secretary General's Study on Violence against Children*

Below is a timeline of some of the most important dates relating to the UN Study.

## **Timeline of the UN Study**

- 2001 November – the United Nations (UN) General Assembly requests the Secretary General to conduct a study on violence against children. The Study is led for the United Nations by UNICEF, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)
- 2001 Save the Children Sweden is mandated by Save the Children to be the lead agency for Save the Children's involvement in and contributions to the UN Study
- 2002 Save the Children creates a global Task Group on Violence against Children to mobilise this work. A network of Save the Children national and regional focal points is also established to feed into and from the work of the Task Group
- 2002 May – UN General Assembly Special Session on Children is held in New York
- 2003 Professor Paulo Pinheiro is appointed as the Independent Expert for the Study by the UN Secretary-General
- 2003 Save the Children holds an internal global workshop on violence against children and decides on its 3 priority themes: physical and humiliating punishment, sexual abuse and children in conflict with the law; and, its overarching contributions to the UN Study: children's participation and gender-based violence with a rights based approach
- 2004 The UN Study Secretariat is established in Geneva and Amaya Gillespie is appointed to lead it. Save the Children seconds a child participation practitioner – Ravi Karkara – to the Secretariat
- 2005 Nine regional consultations take place organised by UNICEF and inter-agency steering committees. Children's participation is a key feature of the regional consultations
- 2006 The UN Study is launched in October at the United Nations in New York. This includes the launch of child friendly materials on the Study. National and regional launches also take place
- 2006 Save the Children holds its first worldwide Day of Action against violence against children
- 2007 National and regional launches continue to take place; Save the Children holds its second worldwide Day of Action against violence against children; In December 2007 the UN General Assembly agrees to appoint a Special Representative on violence against children – the successful culmination of a worldwide campaign

# Definitions Fact Sheet

**NGO Advisory Panel:** The NGO Advisory Panel was formed to advise on all aspects of the Study, to provide the Independent Expert and the Study Secretariat with input on the Study's content, process and outcomes, to encourage and facilitate broad and effective non-governmental organisation involvement in the Study and to help mobilise effective follow up to the Study. The Advisory Panel had 24 individual members from around the world.

**National/Regional Steering Committees/Working Groups:** National, and especially regional, steering committees were established to guide and coordinate the process and planning of the regional consultations. They were comprised of representatives from the government hosting the regional consultation, key UN agencies, non-governmental organisations and national or regional organisations and networks. Some steering committees also included children and young people's representatives.

**Save the Children:** The world's leading independent children's rights organisation with members in 27 countries and operational programmes in more than 100. Save the Children fights for children's rights and works to deliver immediate and lasting improvements to children's lives worldwide.

**Save the Children's Task Group on Violence against Children:** The Task Group was established to coordinate Save the Children's work in relation to the UN Study at the global level bringing together Save the Children's thematic groups (participation, exploitation and abuse, physical and humiliating punishment), its network of regional Focal Points on Violence against Children and other key Save the Children actors. During the Study the Task Group was composed of representatives of Save the Children member organisations from Sweden (lead agency), Norway, Canada and UK. The Task Group also collaborated with other key external actors such as the UN Study Secretariat, the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the World Health Organization (WHO), the NGO Sub-Group on Violence against Children and the diplomatic missions of national governments at the United Nations.

**Save the Children's Focal Points on Violence against Children:** The Save the Children Task Group (above) initiated a network of focal points (both regional and national) to cover all regions and to promote and coordinate work at the regional and national levels. Most Focal Points were members/chairs/co-chairs of regional (and national) steering committees and working groups (above). This network proved to be very valuable in promoting Save the Children's prioritised themes, advocating for Save the Children's positions and supporting children's

participation during the Study process. The focal points also collaborated closely with their counter parts on Children's Participation.

**SEAP:** South East Asia and the Pacific region.

**United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Children:** The Special Session on Children took place in New York at the United Nations General Assembly in May 2002. The aim of the Special Session was to review the progress made for children since 1990 (when the Convention on the Rights of the Child was born), and in particular the goals of the World Summit for Children. Organisers also wanted to make a renewed commitment to children by developing a new global agenda for the coming decade. The Special Session resulted in a plan of action 'World Fit for Children' which is a commitment by world leaders from more than 180 countries to protect and promote children's rights.

**UN Study Editorial Board:** The UN Study 'World Report' was produced by the Independent Expert (Professor Pinheiro) with the support of an Editorial Board that included (apart from Professor Pinheiro and Amaya Gillespie – Director of the Study Secretariat) representatives of several UN agencies, research institutes and non-governmental organisations. The actual writing was done by chapter leaders who prepared drafts and submitted them to the Editorial Board for review. Panels of peer reviewers also supported the chapter leaders with inputs and feedbacks on the draft. Save the Children provided the Editorial Board and chapter writers with input and support regarding children's participation. This included copies of its key children's participation publications related to the UN Study – *'Act Now! Children's Actions to end violence against girls and boys'*, a paper comparing the draft Study recommendations with recommendations made by children and Save the Children's submissions to the UN Study which all had a child participation component. In addition Save the Children provided ongoing feedback on the various draft chapters of the Study's final world report which included comments on child participation issues. Finally, Save the Children provided members of the Board with an orientation in children's participation.

**UNICEF:** The United Nations Children's Fund originally set up in 1946 as the UN International Children's Emergency Fund. UNICEF is the main organisation in the UN which works for the protection, survival and development of children. It works closely with governments around the world to provide services for children such as medicines, vaccines, water, food and clothing.

# Preface

***“Children are not mini-human beings with mini human rights. As long as adults continue to regard children as mini-human beings, violence against children will persist”.***

Professor Paulo Pinheiro,  
Independent Expert leading the UN Study on Violence against Children.

Violence against children is a serious breach of children’s rights. Children and young people, however, are seldom consulted or involved in developing policies and programs to prevent and respond to violence against them.

Save the Children decided at an early stage to get involved in the process of the UN Study on Violence against Children, and to make it a high priority since girls and boys all over the world had identified violence as a key priority to be addressed. Save the Children believes that it is not only important to listen to children, but also to act on what they say.

Through a well-structured network of Regional, National and International Focal Points on Violence against Children, and through the Global Task Group on Violence against Children Save the Children was able to mobilize its members to take action against violence and to promote children’s meaningful and ethical participation.

Save the Children supported children and young people’s involvement in the entire UN Study process through their participation in national, regional and international consultations and other processes. At the same time, Save the Children seconded an advisor on child participation to the UN Study Secretariat.

Key issues identified and recommendations made by children and young people became an important base for developing advocacy messages. They also contributed to and influenced the content and the recommendations of the UN Study. Children’s own actions to stop violence were also documented and captured through publications and films to support the UN Study.

The UN Study process was and is – a unique opportunity for challenging social norms and attitudes which condone violence against children. It continues to be a critical impetus to the engagement of governments and other duty-bearers, and to their making and honouring commitments to develop and implement laws, policies and programs to stop violence.

The UN Study emphasizes the importance of states developing multifaceted and systemic approaches as part of their national planning processes. States are urged to prohibit all forms of violence, in all settings, prioritize prevention and enhance the capacity of all professionals who work with children. It is further recommended that states actively engage with children and support child-led initiatives to address violence.

The UN Study has created a momentum for advocacy and it has illustrated that children are not only victims of violence – they are also social actors and partners in the fight against violence. Save the Children will therefore continue, through its involvement in follow-up to the UN Study, to promote the implementation of the recommendations through the active participation of children and young people.

This publication will serve as an inspiring tool, with key learning from the successes as well as the constraints of children's participation in the UN Study process. Accordingly, it is hoped that children's participation can be further strengthened in current follow-up processes, and those that will continue in the future.

Special thanks go to all the children and young people who organized and mobilized and participated in the UN Study process, to the staff of Save the Children and partner organizations who dedicated so much effort to promoting and supporting empowering, child friendly and meaningful processes for involving children and young people and, finally to Clare Feinstein who has done an excellent job in capturing the process and the many lessons learned, in this publication.

*Lena Karlsson*

Chair of Save the Children's Task Group on Violence against Children 2005-2007

# Executive Summary

The United Nations (UN) Secretary General's Study on Violence against Children [hereafter referred to as the UN Study or the Study], with its recognition of and support for children as social actors, 'reflects a new era that builds from the 2002 UN Special Session on Children [hereafter referred to as the Special Session], where formal protocol was broken and the participation of children was seriously considered'.<sup>1</sup>

Save the Children drew heavily on the experience accumulated through supporting children's participation in the Special Session during its engagement with the UN Study. This document therefore refers back to children's participation in the Special Session process and reflects on the progress made and lessons learned.

This report has been written for Save the Children as a means to help integrate the learning from this process into other current and future Save the Children processes, especially its worldwide programming to address violence against boys and girls and its efforts to promote the systematic involvement of children and young people in the development of national plans and systems to follow up the Study's key recommendations. It is also intended to serve as a reflection for the organisation given the significant commitment in both time and resources that Save the Children invested in this specific contribution to the UN Study.

It is also however written for Save the Children's partners in this process – key UN agencies, international non-governmental organisations and national and local partners – as an aid to help the intensification of efforts at all the different levels – national, regional and international – to build capacity and share and present good practice on the involvement of children in addressing violence against them and in advocating with governments, UN agencies and society at large for clear implementation of the final recommendations from the UN Study.

Finally, it is important to note that this report reflects on Save the Children's support to the promotion and facilitation of children's participation from the perspectives of its worldwide network of staff who were involved in this sustained and substantial effort. An additional document outlining the process and outcome of Save the Children's overall contribution to the UN Study is planned for 2008 while an overall evaluation of the impact of Save the Children's involvement is planned for 2009.

## **Background to the UN Study**

On 11th October 2006 the report of the United Nations Secretary-General's Study on Violence against Children was launched during the 61st session of the General Assembly.

On 22nd November 2006 the General Assembly adopted its annual resolution on the rights of the child in which it commended 'the Independent Expert for the

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1. Agency, Children and Violence: In and beyond the UN Study on Violence against Children. ICPRC. Draft Working Paper November 2007.

participatory process through which the report was prepared ... and, in particular for the unprecedented level and quality of participation by children.<sup>2</sup>

### ***Children's participation in the UN Study***

Children's participation in the UN Study provided another global opportunity to show that children have valuable views that they can contribute on issues of relevance and importance to them as well as being another step in the journey of attitude change among key decision makers and other adults towards the participation of children.

Children and young people took on many roles during the Study process. For example, they were advisors, documentalists, advocates, respondents, researchers, facilitators as well as active participants during national, regional and global consultations. During the Study, at each of the different levels (from local to global), they were able to make very clear recommendations of how they think violence can be stopped. They were also given the space to demonstrate the actions they have developed and taken to stop violence against children.

While children did not initiate the dialogue about the UN Study either nationally, regionally or internationally, they had however raised violence as a priority concern for children in many countries around the world which was, in itself, probably a contributing factor to the Study being undertaken. Children were not consulted in developing the framework of the Study or in deciding the process to be followed. However, within the given framework and process Save the Children and organisations with whom it worked in partnership during this process, as well as children and young people, advocated for changes to ensure that children's voices were heard in child friendly and enabling environments as documented on the following pages. The process, in general, can therefore be said to reflect children's actions and calls to action.

### ***Focus on children's agency and quality children's participation***

When Save the Children began its active engagement with the UN Study in 2002-2003, it decided to focus on the meaningful and ethical participation of girls and boys as its overall and specific contribution to the process. This decision was based on Save the Children's child rights based approach to programming which focuses on children's participation as one of the key principles. It also recognised and reflected the priorities of addressing violence against children as articulated over the years by many of the children with whom Save the Children works.

From the outset of Save the Children's engagement with the UN Study, the purpose of its support to children's participation was to recognise and support children as social actors and partners. Part of this process meant promoting understanding and acceptance of the importance and benefit of children's participation among key actors in the Study. This served to overcome any initial resistance to the involvement of children in the process. It also reflected Save the Children's approach to children's participation – that, work with adults to build their capacity and to commit the nec-

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2. UN General Assembly, 61st session, Third Committee, Promotion and protection of the rights of the child, 17 November 2006, paragraph 14.

essary resources to ensure the meaningful participation of girls and boys is as important as the direct work with children to support their right to be heard. It further recognised the limitations of the Study process with its set framework and tight time schedule and the time needed to convince others of the relevance of children's participation to such an initiative.

Save the Children's approach to children's participation in the UN Study drew its inspiration and guiding principles from the organisation's practice standards in children's participation. This was especially evident in the focus on quality as reflected in the promotion and application of ethical and meaningful children's participation. The practice standards provide a baseline against which the quality of children's participation in the UN Study can be measured.

This focus therefore meant that much effort during the UN Study was invested in continually trying to raise the quality of children's participation. As above, this was based on recognised and agreed standards and principles with information, training and a certain amount of resources available to support it on the part of Save the Children and other partners.

### ***Working in partnership***

Save the Children worked in partnership to support children's participation in the UN Study at all levels – national, regional and international. Save the Children chaired, co-chaired or participated in official regional working groups and committees (or equivalent structures) on children's participation in seven out of the nine regional consultations held in 2005. The two international children's meetings held in 2006 in connection with the international launch were organised and facilitated in a partnership between the UN Study Secretariat, Save the Children and UNICEF.

Save the Children also initiated, facilitated or contributed to children's participation in a wide range of national consultations and other national or local processes.

At the beginning of the Study process Save the Children drew up generic guidelines on its role and responsibilities in supporting children's participation for use internationally as well as by countries and regions.<sup>3</sup> For example, Save the Children agreed to take a lead in promoting ways to ensure the meaningful and ethical participation of children in the UN Study. This meant that Save the Children would play an advisory or technical role in relation to children's participation. It did not assume Save the Children responsibility for organising and facilitating children's participation although this seemed to be an expectation at different levels.

### ***National and regional consultation processes***

At national levels children met, collaborated, shared experiences and learned about the UN Study and the opportunities it provided to support and further their work and advocacy efforts on violence against children at local and national levels. They were supported to do this through the development, dissemination and translation of child friendly materials including the child friendly version of Professor Pinheiro's initial concept note for the Study and the Questions & Answers document produced

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3. Save the Children's role and responsibility in relation to children's meaningful and ethical participation in the UN Study on Violence Against Children. Save the Children. 2003.

for children and young people. Wherever national processes were organised children were able to send their representatives to the regional consultations held during 2005 where they could continue to advance their collective efforts and speak directly to key decision makers about their ideas, activities and recommendations.

In some countries – as outlined in this document – national children’s participation processes, including children’s own initiatives, were probably strengthened as a result of their engagement with the UN Study. Some regions also felt that they were able to work together with children to influence and shape the process of national and regional work, consultations, advocacy and follow up.

### ***Strengths and weaknesses of national and regional processes***

The general weakness of national child participatory processes is acknowledged in this report however, although this does – and did - vary from country to country and across regions. As noted above, some national child participation processes were sufficiently strong and developed to fairly easily integrate the UN Study into ongoing work with children and existing children’s groups and initiatives. This included taking a stand whenever national processes were not considered meaningful. Children and young people can also be at the forefront of lobbying for genuine participation as is illustrated in this review.

In other countries national children’s participation processes were probably strengthened as a result of their engagement with the UN Study. Children were also able to strengthen their work and initiatives.

In some regions, however, the right conditions were not perceived to be in place to ensure and secure children’s ethical participation. This was particularly the case in Latin America and Southern Africa. Due to this, in Latin America Save the Children did not play a role in supporting children’s participation at regional level whereas in Southern Africa Save the Children Sweden had to withdraw as coordinator of the children’s participation processes when it felt it could no longer guarantee that ethical standards could be upheld.

Several regions felt that other and creative ways needed to be explored and implemented to involve children in sustainable ways at the different levels so that each level could feed into the others. As in previous global participatory processes involving children in regional and international processes during the UN Study proved to be an expensive exercise. The involvement of younger children also remained a challenge throughout the process as is acknowledged elsewhere in this assessment.

### ***Learning the lessons***

All the lessons learned in the Special Session were taken into account and acted upon during the organisation, coordination and facilitation of children’s participation in the various UN Study processes. However, time, advance planning and sufficient resources continue to remain huge challenges at every level of involving children in consultative processes in genuine and meaningful ways. Some examples from the UN Study highlight this:

- the need for child friendly materials to arrive early enough to be really useful in the mobilisation of and work with children

- the need for time to genuinely consult with children on draft final recommendations that emerge from such studies or consultations in less stressful and overburdened processes and time frames
- the expense of involving children in regional and international processes

*Other challenges to relate to:*

- the need to strengthen and sustain children's participation at national and regional levels so that good and strong national and regional experiences and platforms can be used as a basis for feeding into global processes
- the need to explore and promote ways of involving children and young people which do not always depend on their physical presence in events and meetings
- the need to reach out to and include the diversity of children's experience, especially those who suffer discrimination and are excluded from consultation and decision making processes, including younger children
- the need to continue work with adults, especially key decision makers, to ensure their commitment to meaningfully involve and consult with children in planned follow up that responds to the Study's findings and the priority issues identified by children within countries. This also includes continued support to and work with NGOs and others to follow up with the children and young people involved in the Study process

Based on the challenges as well as the successes in supporting children's ethical and meaningful participation in the UN Study the lessons from the Special Session can be adjusted or added to in the following ways:

1. A common and agreed commitment to meaningful and ethical participation needs to be established from the beginning as an essential key feature of the process
2. Care needs to be taken when assuming responsibility for organising children's participation or 'taking a lead'
3. Better preparation leads to better results, including the importance of work in preparing adults to work together with children, to respect their right to be heard and to meet and fulfil their commitments to children
4. Good and sustainable community and national processes are crucial to the meaningful involvement of children at other levels
5. Other ways of involving children, especially younger children, need to be explored and implemented
6. Child protection needs to be better understood among partners at all levels and especially the synergies between children's participation and child protection
7. Each 'participation' initiative needs to have – and be part – of a long term vision on children's participation with realistic and achievable goals. A vision or strategy which focuses on the systematic involvement of children on issues of relevance to them in child friendly decision making structures and processes which provide children with a significant presence and voice and which are accountable to them as a key stakeholder

The process of supporting children's participation in the UN Study was not always an easy one and this review acknowledges this fact. The reflection on lessons learned attempts to capture the considerable challenges faced and how these were addressed or overcome. These experiences are very important lessons in themselves and are included for future reference. The review however also presents the considerable achievements made in terms of children's participation at different levels and in different countries and regions.

### ***Ensuring quality follow up***

One weakness that has also been acknowledged as a challenge at all levels – national, regional and global – is the issue of quality follow up. Everyone (national governments, UN agencies, local, national and international NGOs and so on) involved in the UN Study must renew and redouble efforts to build on the participation of children in the Study, to continue the work begun to involve and empower children as full and active partners in addressing violence against children and, to include them in meaningful ways in the development, planning, implementation and assessment of policies and programmes to eliminate it.

# Chapter One

This chapter sets the scene for assessing the lessons learnt from children's participation in the UN Study process.

## ***The unprecedented level and quality of participation by children commended by the United Nations***

On 11th October 2006 the report of the United Nations Secretary-General's Study on Violence against Children was launched during the 61st session of the General Assembly.

On 22nd November 2006 the General Assembly adopted its annual resolution on the rights of the child in which it commended 'the Independent Expert for the participatory process through which the report was prepared ... and, in particular for the unprecedented level and quality of participation by children.'<sup>4</sup>

Save the Children's role in 'advising and facilitating the involvement of children' was acknowledged by Professor Pinheiro in his 1st and 2nd progress reports to the UN General Assembly in 2004 and 2005 respectively as well as in his final report to the United Nations in October 2006.<sup>5</sup>

## ***The purpose and structure of this report***

This report covers the period from the beginning of 2003 to October 2006 and the launching of the UN Study report at the UN General Assembly in New York and reviews the lessons learned from children's participation in consultation processes linked to the UN Study as supported by Save the Children.<sup>6</sup> However, as much of Save the Children's engagement with the UN Study in relation to the involvement of children was carried out in partnership with key UN agencies, international NGOs and national and local partners, this review naturally includes processes supported by and undertaken with the other key actors involved.

The report begins by reflecting briefly on and presenting the lessons learned from the 2002 Special Session on Children as a commentary on how learning in children's participation has increased and improved – or not – and on progress made in the intervening years. It is followed by a review of the lessons learned during the UN Study by identifying Save the Children's purpose and objectives in supporting the ethical and meaningful participation of children in the Study. It outlines the key

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4. UN General Assembly, 61st session, Third Committee, Promotion and protection of the rights of the child, 17 November 2006, paragraph 14

5. Report of the independent expert for the United Nations study on violence against children, United Nations General Assembly, 61st session, Item 62 of the provisional agenda, Promotion and protection of the rights of children. 23rd August 2006. Available at [www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/docs/study/SGSVAC.pdf](http://www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/docs/study/SGSVAC.pdf)

6. This review focuses on consultative processes linked to the UN Study and does not look at the progress made in terms of involving children in, for example, programmatic work within Save the Children as a result of the Study.

principles that Save the Children promoted in this process with regard to children's participation. These provide a baseline from which to document and assess the lessons learned.

The report goes on to provide a brief introduction to the UN Study, including a timeline of key moments in the process outlining the process outcomes, achievements and challenges from Save the Children's perspective relating to its support for and promotion of the direct involvement of children.

The report then highlights specific learnings from national and regional processes, outlining some of the commonalities and differences and the particular and specific challenges and concerns.

To conclude, the lessons learned from the Special Session on Children are presented. These are then adjusted or added to, based on the experience of supporting children's participation in the UN Study and recommendations are made for integrating these learnings into future processes and similar initiatives. These recommendations are also intended to shape and inform the involvement of children in Save the Children's programmes as a means of strengthening its work on violence against children as well as the organisation's continuing efforts to promote the systematic involvement of children and young people in the development of national plans and systems to follow up the Study's key recommendations.

The review concludes with a listing of Save the Children's resources that were produced, used and drawn upon during the Study.

### ***From the UN Special Session on Children to the UN Study on Violence against Children: progress or progression?***

The Special Session on Children was a key moment in establishing a precedent for the involvement of children in global processes with its various national and regional components. As such, the experience of supporting children's participation in the Special Session provided a baseline for Save the Children and its partners to apply or adjust the lessons learned in order to support children's ethical and meaningful participation in the UN Study. As mentioned earlier, the Special Session is therefore the starting point of this review of children's participation in the UN Study.

The lessons learned from the UN Study can therefore be considered complementary to those learned through the Special Session. Further, and continual application and adjustment of these lessons learned, will ensure that standards – and therefore the quality – of children's participation can continue to be raised.

The experience of supporting children's participation in the Special Session as a lead agency led Save the Children to bring this, and its wider field experience, together and to consolidate it in the form of Practice Standards in Children's Participation. These are referred to extensively elsewhere in the document. What is important to stress is that Save the Children used these Practice Standards as the basis, or starting point, for its approach to supporting children's participation in the UN Study. Similarly, the experience of the South East Asia and the Pacific (SEAP), of developing and implementing minimum standards drew inspiration and guidance from the practice standards. The SEAP minimum standards represented a policy document complemented by a set of procedures or protocols to aid their application. Practice or minimum standards are now more and more widely considered

as a prerequisite to ensure meaningful participation and a framework against which good practice in consultations, programmes and so on can be measured.<sup>7</sup>

As in the Special Session, the UN Study was another step in the journey of attitude change towards the participation of children. Professor Pinheiro, in his preface to the *Children's actions to end violence against girls and boys*, a document produced by Save the Children, acknowledges that he is, in his own words, 'a fairly recent convert'.<sup>8</sup> He was further convinced by meeting all the children and young people who participated in each regional consultation: 'Advocating for their own recommendations alongside government representatives, planners and policy makers proved to be much more than just a meeting of minds. ... at each interaction I am further convinced of the importance of their active presence in these important processes.'<sup>9</sup>

Furthermore, the UN Study process can be considered to have complemented the Special Session in that it resulted in 'higher acceptance of the need for providing space for children to participate, knowledge about the fact that children have important contributions to make and recognition of principles for children's participation'.<sup>10</sup>

### **Providing a global platform for children's views**

Children's participation in the UN Study therefore provided another global opportunity to show that children have valuable views that they can contribute on issues of relevance and importance to them. In survey after survey and consultation after consultation children have identified the violence that they experience and witness as the number one issue of concern to them. In national, regional and global consultations, events and activities in which they participated during the Study children, from Lesotho to Bangladesh, Yemen to Serbia, Fiji to Nicaragua and all the countries and regions in between, urged governments and the international community to take action now to stop violence against children.

At each of the different levels (from local to global) children have made very clear recommendations of how they think violence can be stopped. They have also clearly demonstrated the actions they have developed and taken to stop violence against children.

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7. These standards have subsequently also been adapted for other global initiatives on children's participation – such as the Committee on the Rights of the Child Day of General Discussion in 2006 and children's involvement in the Junior G8 2006.

8. *Children's Actions to End Violence against Girls and Boys*. Save the Children. 2006. Available at [www.rb.se](http://www.rb.se).

9. *Act Now! Some highlights from children's participation in the Regional Consultations for the United Nations Secretary-General's study on Violence against Children*. Save the Children. 2005. Available at [www.rb.se](http://www.rb.se).

10. *Influencing the United Nations on Violence against Children*. Documentation on Save the Children's involvement in the UN Study on Violence against Children, 2002-2005. Save the Children. 2006. This report documents Save the Children's general involvement in the Study, including its child participation work, up to 2005.

*'We strongly believe that a community with peace, love and unity can be built if we work together for the future.'*

Children at the East Asia and Pacific regional consultation

*'Please tell him that we need a follow up of our recommendations.'*

Message from the children at West and Central Africa regional consultation to the UN Secretary-General

*'We urge you to activate these recommendations and others made by children in previous consultations and to involve us when designing actions on violence against girls and boys in each country and region.'*

Children at the South Asia regional consultation

*'The protection of children involves major financial resources but the life and well being of millions of children depend on the willingness of governments to put in place the necessary measures. In our view, violence committed against a single child is one instance of violence too many.'*

Children at the West and Central Africa regional consultation

*'Through dialogue and cooperation we must act together and act now!'*

Children at the Europe and Central Asia regional consultation

*'We ... have agreed ... to close ranks under one slogan, namely "rejection of violence against children".'*

Children at the Middle East and North Africa regional consultation

*'We want to believe that if we can unite and be one we can end violence against young people. But we must know that success is not something to wait for, we must go and seek for it.'*

Children at the East and Southern Africa regional consultation

*'We feel our juvenile justice systems have the responsibility to rehabilitate youth and integrate them back into society rather than subject them to more violence.'*

Children at the North America regional consultation

This direct and effective participation of children also served to overcome any initial resistance to children's participation in the process. For example, as mentioned above, Professor Pinheiro underwent a significant change of opinion during the Study process and became convinced of the importance and benefits of children's participation through his direct engagement with children and young people and their direct engagement with policy makers at all different levels. At the beginning of its engagement in the process Save the Children committed time and resources to build capacity and undertake advocacy with key actors around children's participation recognising that this was as important as the support to direct work with the children themselves.

## **How the UN Study drew on lessons learned from previous processes**

The process of children's participation that was supported and facilitated during the UN Study was generally felt to demonstrate an improvement on previous initiatives. In its publication '*12 Lessons Learned from children's participation in the UN General Assembly Special Session on Children*'<sup>11</sup> Save the Children hoped that, through documenting the lessons learned, similar future initiatives would be able to build on the Special Session experience 'to achieve even better results in supporting meaningful, quality children's participation.'<sup>12</sup>

## **The 12 Lessons Learned from children's participation in the UN General Assembly Special Session on Children**<sup>13</sup>

- Lesson 1 work with adults on how they can encourage children's participation is as important as the work with children themselves
- Lesson 2 children's participation requires sufficient time, funding and planning if it is to be meaningful and good quality
- Lesson 3 'child friendly' information is essential in order to give children the same access to information as adults
- Lesson 4 the selection of child delegates needs to be sensitive to issues of representation and inclusion, in order to both maximise the experience brought into events and to promote the sustainability of outcomes
- Lesson 5 language is a major barrier to children's participation in international meetings. Proper attention needs to be given to the translation of materials and the ready availability of interpreters
- Lesson 6 follow up to meetings needs to be an essential part of the process of children's participation – not an afterthought
- Lesson 7 young adults are an important resource in supporting the participation of children
- Lesson 8 participation processes are vulnerable to adult manipulation. Measures need to be taken to guard against this and to integrate tolerance and respect for the opinion of others into the process
- Lesson 9 child protection must be built into every aspect of the planning for an event or process involving children
- Lesson 10 systematic evaluation is essential to improve practice and to learn for the future
- Lesson 11 children want to work with the media. They should be supported to do so and – at times – protected from it too
- Lesson 12 adults accompanying children to meetings need to be clear about their responsibilities, but also given opportunities to use their skills and experience when the children are busy elsewhere

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11. Save the Children. 2004. Available at [www.savethechildren.net](http://www.savethechildren.net).

12. 12 Lessons Learned, as above.

13. 12 Lessons Learned, as above.

As mentioned earlier, Save the Children did draw heavily on the experience of the Special Session to enhance its support to children's participation during the UN Study. This was especially evident in the focus on quality as reflected in the promotion and application of ethical and meaningful children's participation.

The process of supporting children's participation in the UN Study was not always an easy one. This review acknowledges this fact and attempts to capture the considerable challenges faced and how these were addressed or overcome. These experiences are very important lessons in themselves and are included for future reference. The review also presents the considerable achievements made in terms of children's participation at different levels and in different countries and regions.

## ***Setting the stage for lessons learned***

Below is a brief summary of key phases of children's involvement in the UN Study. A more detailed time line outlining key achievements and challenges is contained in Chapter Two of this report. Some key footprints to the Study are presented immediately after Chapter One.

2003–2004 were crucial years for good preparation work; 2005 was a key year for children's participation in national and regional consultations; 2006 was a key year for supporting children's advocacy, especially around the international launch of the Secretary-General's report. From 2007 onwards the key challenge is on keeping the momentum and follow up with children who have been involved, especially at the national level, based on their priorities and recommendations.

When Save the Children began its active engagement with the UN Study in 2002–2003, it decided to focus on the meaningful and ethical participation of girls and boys as an overall and specific contribution. This was based on Save the Children's child rights approach to programming which focuses on children's participation as one of the key principles. This decision to have an overall focus on children's participation was then reinforced during Save the Children's global workshop in Bangkok in December 2003.<sup>14</sup>

The three specific priority themes for Save the Children during the Study and upon which its submissions would be based, also decided at the Bangkok global meeting in 2003 were: child sexual abuse and exploitation, children in conflict with the law and corporal/physical and other forms of degrading punishment. Gender-based violence was also recognised as relevant to all the above themes and as a subject which required special consideration.

The choice of these themes and overarching issues was based on the priorities articulated by children with whom Save the Children had been working over the years and on Save the Children's experience of working on the issue of violence against children. In addition, very few other agencies and organisations were prioritising these issues.

Submissions were made by Save the Children on each of these topics to the UN Study Secretariat as official contributions to the Study. Each of the submissions also reflected the voices of children and young people and their key recommendations.

Save the Children's expertise on children's participation was specifically request-

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14. The 2nd Save the Children Global Workshop for the UN Study held in Bangkok in November 2003.

ed by the various United Nations agencies at all the different levels – international, regional and national. In Professor Pinheiro’s preface to Save the Children’s documentation of children’s recommendations from the regional consultations<sup>15</sup>, the Independent Expert acknowledged that the process of supporting children’s participation in the UN Study was ‘guided by practice standards on meaningful participation’ as developed by Save the Children.

### **Save the Children’s Practice Standards on Children’s Participation**

Practice standards/minimum quality standards/key elements state what children and others can expect of Save the Children’s practice in child participation. As such they provide a basis for accountability. They help to provide a framework for ensuring consistent, high quality child participation practice. They help to reinforce and demonstrate the importance of quality of work with children. They assist staff, partners and children to measure the quality of this work. They help to build the capacity of adults to work better with children. Practice standards cut across all work with children.

Save the Children published its set of practice standards in child participation in 2005. They were developed through years of experience of supporting children’s participation from the local through to the global levels. The standards are based on feedback and consultation with Save the Children staff, partner organisations and children in various countries and community settings.

#### **There are 7 practice standards:**

- 1) An ethical approach: transparency, honesty and accountability - being clear to children about the possibilities and limitations for expressing their opinions, being involved in decision making, taking action and achieving change and in what sort of time frame
- 2) Children’s participation is appropriate and relevant – building on the personal knowledge, skills and abilities of children, supporting children’s involvement in issues that are of real relevance and importance to them and their choice whether they wish to participate or not, in what way and for how long
- 3) A child friendly, enabling and safe environment – helping children to become knowledgeable by providing them with information in languages and formats that they can understand according to their age and ability and allowing them the opportunity to work and express themselves using the medium they feel most comfortable with
- 4) Equality of opportunity - reaching out to different groups of children, especially those whose voices are not heard and supporting them to influence decision making
- 5) Staff are effective and confident - building capacity to understand children’s participation and work better with children. It also involves management support and commitment to the process of involving children

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15. *Act Now!* as before.

- 6) Participation promotes the safety and protection of children - creating safe environments in which children can get involved and take action, learning from children how best to support them in safe and meaningful ways and working with children to identify and minimise any risks involved in participating
- 7) Ensuring follow up and evaluation – providing feedback to the children involved, supporting children’s involvement in follow up work, supporting their actions and agendas and measuring over time the impact of children’s participation both in terms of concrete changes (laws and policies) and attitudinal change (greater acceptance of children’s participation)

### ***The purpose and objectives of children’s participation in the UN Study***

From the outset of Save the Children’s engagement with the UN Study, the purpose of children’s participation was to recognise and support children as social actors and partners. Part of this process meant promoting understanding and acceptance of the importance and benefit of children’s participation among key actors in the Study. It also meant providing children with the space and support to express their views, be involved in decision making and to take action aimed at changing the position and condition of girls and boys in society.

This, however, did not mean transferring responsibility for addressing the problem of violence against children on to children. As above, Save the Children’s approach to children’s participation is based on the principles of child rights and clearly emphasizes that ultimate responsibility for addressing violence against children lies with governments and the adult community in general. The approach however also recognized that, in work to provide better protection to children in their daily lives, opportunities must be actively found, promoted and supported to include their voices, views, perspectives and actions.

### ***Using practice standards in children’s participation***

As mentioned above, Save the Children’s approach to children’s participation in the UN Study drew its inspiration and guiding principles from the organisation’s practice standards on children’s participation.

At Save the Children’s global workshop in Bangkok in 2003 it was agreed that for Save the Children the meaningful and ethical participation of children would be guided by the following principles:

- an ethical approach and commitment to transparency, honesty and accountability
- a safe approach in which children’s protection rights are properly safeguarded
- a non-discriminatory approach that ensures that all girls and boys – regardless of their gender, ability, language, ethnicity etc. – have an equal opportunity to be involved
- a child friendly approach which enables children to contribute to the best of their abilities

These principles were then subsequently reflected in the approaches to children's participation for some of the regional consultations which were held in 2005. They therefore provide a baseline against which the quality of children's participation in the UN Study can be measured.

### ***The role of children and young people***

Children and young people took on many roles during the Study process. For example, they were advisors, documentalists, advocates, respondents, researchers, facilitators as well as active participants during national, regional and global consultations.

The Europe-Central Asia region was one of the regions involved in consultation processes linked to the UN Study to include children and young people on its regional Working Group on Child Participation.<sup>16</sup> The adults involved in the Working Group had a strong feeling that this changed the atmosphere of their preparatory meetings and the preparatory process resulting in the whole process being more child-led. Ellena from the UK, one of the young members of the Working Group also participating in the children's consultation concluded that 'it's very important that this is not just an adult-based group. Being there we really had a say on the agenda, and in some ways, I think, we will keep it much more focused.' Ioana, her counterpart from Romania, agreed 'I think some issues that came up in the working group with the adults were solved just because we were there to present a genuine "child perspective". And thinking about it, I believe that this actually made the work much easier for the adults.' (source: [www.violencestudy.org/europe-ca](http://www.violencestudy.org/europe-ca)).

Through consultation processes with children it was also possible to consult with them on how they wished to be involved in the Study. The example of West and Central Africa is illustrative here – see pages 49 forward.

### ***National and regional consultation processes***

At national levels children met, collaborated, shared experiences and learned about the UN Study and the opportunities it provided to support and further their work and advocacy efforts on violence against children at local and national levels. They were supported to do this through the development, dissemination and translation of child friendly materials including the child friendly version of Professor Pinheiro's initial concept note for the Study and the Questions & Answers document produced for children and young people. Wherever national processes were organised children were then able to send their representatives to the regional consultations held during 2005 where they were able to continue to advance their collective efforts and speak directly to key decision makers about their ideas, activities and recommendations.

### ***International consultation processes***

During 2006 some of the children and young people from each region who were involved in the Study at national and/or regional levels were able to participate in global consultations and activities including the International Launch of the Study

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16. Ratio of adults-children was 6-8 (the number of adults varied):2 children/young people.

report. This helped children and young people to use these opportunities and arenas to further their collective agendas and objectives as well as present the experiences and views from their specific national and regional contexts.

Two children's meetings took place at the global level in New York in May and October 2006. The May meeting was organised as an opportunity for children to be consulted on the key issues and recommendations emerging in the Study's final report which was being drafted at the time. It also provided a space for consultation with children on the design and development of the Study's child friendly materials – the adaptation of the World Report for children and young people, *'Our Right to be Protected from Violence'* and *'Safe You and Safe Me'* – and for children and young people's inputs into the planning of the International Launch. The October meeting served as a children's preparatory forum for this launch.<sup>17</sup> By the October meeting the organising team was able to respond to and support the wish of children and young people, expressed throughout the Study and especially at the earlier May meeting, to lead and facilitate their own processes. At the pre-launch preparatory forum for children and young people in October a team of young facilitators who had been involved in the Study at national, regional and international levels co-facilitated the event supported by a team of adults. 'The young facilitators brought a certain kind of freshness to the forum which created an atmosphere of energy and enthusiasm.'<sup>18</sup>

### **Providing the spaces**

In all the consultation processes at the different levels children were able to meet beforehand in preparatory forums and their own spaces to prepare themselves and discuss and prioritise their own issues.

### **As a result**

Some children and young people gained enormous experience from participating in a process over a period of several years. For example, some who participated in initial national, regional and international activities in 2004 also participated in the International Launch in 2006. Some young people who originally participated as under 18s 'graduated' through the process of the Study to take on the role of young (over 18) facilitators.

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17. Children and Young People's Preparatory Forum for the International Launch of the UN Secretary-General's Study on Violence against Children, 8-12 October 2006, New York. Report by Neha Bhandari with Clare Feinstein. Available at [www.crin.org](http://www.crin.org)

18. Children and Young People's Preparatory Forum for the International Launch of the UN Secretary-General's Study on Violence against Children, as above

# Footprints of the UN Study in relation to children's participation

Here is a map of some of the key footprints of the UN Study in relation to children's participation for those who may be unfamiliar with the process and its outcomes.

## Footprint 1:

There were many different national and regional initiatives, activities and events – consultations, participatory case studies and research as well as advocacy work – involving children and young people during the course of the Study. Here are a few examples.<sup>19</sup>

- In West and Central Africa, Save the Children chaired the regional Working Group on Children's Participation in preparation for the regional consultations in 2005. Children from three child led organisations in West and Central Africa<sup>20</sup> identified their own priority issues - physical and humiliating punishment, sexual abuse and violence at work – and carried out their own studies through their own organisations and networks.
- In Uganda, Save the Children consulted with 1,400 children to better understand their views on violence.
- In Latin America, Save the Children supported, through a regional secretariat, a series of national consultations with over 2,000 children from 17 different countries.
- In South Asia, Save the Children supported the production of a film on violence against children by a children's film making group
- In Southeast Asia and the Pacific, Save the Children Sweden released '*What children say*': the results of research with over 3,000 children in eight countries across the region on their perspective on corporal punishment. The report was an official contribution to the UN study
- In Yemen, '*enabling children's voices to be heard led to action*'<sup>21</sup>. For example, the testimonies of children in conflict with the law led to programs to work with the police on changing their attitudes towards children. The voices of children against physical and humiliating punishment led to a joint program with UNICEF on

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19. '*Influencing the United Nations on Violence against Children*'. Documentation on Save the Children's involvement in the UN Study on Violence against Children, as before. Some other country and regional initiatives have been documented and are presented, together with the lessons learned, in Chapter 3.

20. The African Movement of Working Children & Youth (AMWCY), child clubs in schools and members of the Voice of the Young.

21. Taken from session on Key learnings from countries and regions – child participation – during the Save the Children global workshop on the UNVAC in Agra, February 2007.

training teachers on alternative discipline. The Children's Parliament was able to use the focus on issues of violence against children in the concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child to undertake media work and raise awareness of the issues.

## **Footprint 2:**

In 2005, nine regional consultations were held as an important part of preparing the Study. They were organised by UNICEF with support from partner organisations organised in regional steering committees and hosted by the governments of the countries in which they were held.

The purpose of these consultations was to provide opportunities for governments and members of civil society, including non-governmental organisations and children, to put forward key issues and recommendations to be covered in the Study.

Save the Children played a key role in most regions together with partners in promoting and supporting children's participation during the consultations. A total of 260 girls and boys from various backgrounds took part in the consultations – 29 from the Caribbean, 25 from South Asia, 25 from West and Central Africa, 22 from North America, 30 from Latin America, 26 from East Asia and the Pacific, 27 from the Middle East and North Africa, 24 from Europe and Central Asia and 55 from East and Southern Africa.

The consultations provided children with a space to advocate for their own recommendations along with key adult decision makers from governments, UN agencies and civil society. Children adopted their own declarations or statements in their preparatory meetings before each regional consultation. This enabled them to identify their own priorities and contributions for the regional consultations which were then reflected in the outcome documents and final recommendations from most of these meetings.<sup>22</sup>

## **Footprint 3:**

As part of its commitment to ensure the meaningful participation of children in the Study process, Save the Children played a key role in developing several child friendly publications for the Study.<sup>23</sup>

These included producing, at the beginning of the Study process, a child friendly version of a key background document – Professor Pinheiro's concept note. In addition, Save the Children, with the collaboration of children through an email list server specifically set up for this purpose, produced a Questions & Answers paper for children to help inform them about the Study in its early phases and as an aid to support their participation in national and regional initiatives linked to the Study.

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22. The recommendations put forward by children in the course of the regional consultations can be found in *Act Now!*, as before. Available at: [www.rb.se](http://www.rb.se) or [www.crin.org](http://www.crin.org).

23. The child friendly materials can be found on the Save the Children Sweden website: [www.rb.se](http://www.rb.se) and on [www.crin.org](http://www.crin.org).

Both the child friendly concept note and the Questions & Answers document were translated into French and Spanish and widely distributed among UN and NGO networks participating in the Study – for example, they were posted on the website of the Child Rights Information Network (CRIN).

In addition, several countries and regions produced their own child friendly documents, reports and information over the course of the Study.

During 2006, the final year of the Study, other key child friendly materials were produced to help children become informed about and understand the findings of the Study contained in the final report submitted to the UN General Assembly in October 2006. These publications were also intended to highlight what children are doing and can do to be part of the movement to prevent and stop violence against children. They included an adaptation for children and young people of the Study's World Report and an activity book – *'Our Right to be Protected from Violence'*. Children and young people who participated in a global workshop in New York in May 2006 were able to contribute to the design and development of these publications. They were also field-tested with other groups of children in selected countries which had the resources and capacity to support such a consultation in a very short time frame.

In addition, Save the Children recognised the need to produce more age specific and diversity sensitive material and information in a wider range of languages to support the participation of a wider group of children – especially those of younger ages, from different backgrounds and with different abilities. In 2006 it therefore produced a global publication for younger children – *'Safe You and Safe Me'* – which has subsequently been translated into at least 17 languages.<sup>25</sup> Children participating in the May 2006 global workshop were also able to give input into the design and development of this publication which was also field tested with children in selected countries prior to publication. The adaptation of the World Report, *'Our Right to be Protected from Violence'* and *'Safe You and Safe Me'* were all launched by children and young people in an event hosted by Save the Children at the United Nations in New York in October 2006 during the international launch of the Study – see Footprint 5 below.

#### **Footprint 4:**

Save the Children recognised that it was important to document children's voices and recommendations as part of an advocacy process as well as to highlight the practical actions taken by children to address the violence confronting them in their daily lives. In general, all Save the Children's advocacy work in relation to the Study had a strong component on children's participation, including all the advocacy materials produced. In particular, the following materials were produced as a means of amplifying the voices of children.

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24. The May 2006 global workshop for children is referred to in more detail in Chapter One.

25. Amharic, Arabic, Bangla, Bosnian, Dari, French, Hindi, Kiswahili, Korean, Mongolian, Nepali, Russian, Serbian, Spanish, Thai, Urdu, Vietnamese.

*Act Now!*, a publication bringing together children's recommendations from the nine regional consultations, was produced by Save the Children in order to document and highlight children's contributions to advocacy during the UN Study process.<sup>26</sup> This document was primarily written for the UN Study Editorial Board to ensure that children's voices were included in a genuine and meaningful way in the final report of the Study. However, Save the Children also recognised that children's recommendations from the various processes (national, regional and international) related to the Special Session on Children had not been adequately captured and pulled together into a single document<sup>27</sup>. Drawing on this lesson learned *Act Now!* was also intended to be used for advocacy, including children's advocacy, with local, national, regional and international authorities and organisations. It stands as a testament to children's recommendations and provides a basis upon which decision makers and policy and program planners can follow up and respond to children's recommendations, take concrete action to implement them wherever possible and involve children in this work. The document has annexes with children's recommendations from each of the regional consultations including a global analysis for use in global advocacy and regional specific recommendations for use in regional and national level advocacy.

In addition, Save the Children produced an action document in 2005 which brought together some examples of children's actions to end violence against them from each region involved in the UN Study.<sup>28</sup> The aim of this document was to: show how children's actions, when given the right support, have helped to combat violence against them; strengthen the ability of children, governments and organisations to identify, document, promote, exchange and adapt successful practices ('promising models') for use in eradicating violence against children; provide a resource to be used for advocacy purposes at national, regional and international levels and as a foundation for ensuring that children are involved in planning actions to address violence; and, to provide an additional contribution from Save the Children to the UN Study.

*'Children's Actions to end violence against girls and boys'* shows how children understand and know what they want and what they want to achieve in terms of advocacy, how they want to achieve it, by when they want to achieve it and with whom they need to engage in order to bring about the positive change desired.

In 2006, to coincide with the drafting of the Study's final report, Save the Children also produced a document comparing the Study's draft recommendations with children's recommendations from the regional consultations (as documented in *Act Now!* above).<sup>29</sup> This comparative document was used by Save the Children for advo-

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26. *Act Now!*, as before.

27. Children's participation in the Special Session process, and the lessons learned, are reflected on in Chapter One above and in Chapter Four of this report.

28. *'Children's Actions to End Violence against Girls and Boys: A contribution to the United Nations Study on Violence against Children'*. Save the Children. 2005. Available at [www.rb.se](http://www.rb.se).

29. Save the Children Summary Analysis Report Highlighting Key Comparisons between SGSVAC Recommendations (19.06.06) to Address Violence in each setting and Recommendations from Children and Young People. By Claire O'Kane for Save the Children, July 2006.

cacy with the UN Study Secretariat to make sure that children's voices were reflected in the report drafting process. The document was also shared with the children and young people who participated in the global consultation in New York in May 2006. Subsequently, another document was produced by Save the Children to compare children's recommendations with the final UN Study recommendations.<sup>30</sup> Again, this document was used for advocacy.

Finally, in 2006 Save the Children put together a film of existing footage on children's action which had originally been produced by children and adults. This film brought together the experiences of children who are taking action to overcome violence in their own lives, in their schools and in their communities and calls upon the adult community to involve children, listen to them and take their views seriously. The film was premiered at the international launch of the UN Study report in New York in October 2006 – see next page.<sup>31</sup>

### **Footprint 5:**

On October 11, 2006, the Secretary-General's independent expert, Professor Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro, presented the findings of a comprehensive and ground-breaking global study of violence against children, revealing the widespread and intolerable use of violence against girls and boys worldwide to the Third Committee of the 61<sup>st</sup> Session of the United Nations General Assembly. Children's recommendations from the regional consultation statements and declarations are reflected in this Study report as well as clear recommendations for involving children in follow up mechanisms and action plans.<sup>32</sup>

One young girl, selected by her peers at the preparatory meeting for the international launch, made a speech on behalf of the children and young people who participated directly in the International Launch of the Study.<sup>33</sup> 21 children and young people were involved in the launch and pre-launch Preparatory Forum.<sup>34</sup> These children had been active participants in national activities and the regional consultations held as part of the Study. They were selected through diverse participatory processes in their countries and regions. Some participants were under 18 years of age and some had already turned 18 by the time of the international launch.

The pre-launch Preparatory Forum, held in New York from 8th to 12th October 2006, aimed to help children and young people participating in the launch to: fur-

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30. Save the Children Summary Analysis Report Highlighting Key Comparisons between SGSVAC Recommendations (23.08.06) and View and Recommendations from Children and Young People. By Claire O'Kane for Save the Children, August 2006

31. Copies of the film can be obtained from the Save the Children Sweden regional office for South and Central Asia by sending an email to: [info@savethechildren.org.np](mailto:info@savethechildren.org.np)

32. See footnote 29 above

33. Children and young people's statement from the Preparatory Forum, presented at the 61st Session of the UN General Assembly: Third Committee, Wednesday 11th October 2006. Available at: [www.crin.org](http://www.crin.org)

34. 21 children and young people from 18 countries – Canada, China, East Timor, Ethiopia, India, Jamaica, Lesotho, Maldives, Mali, Nepal, Nicaragua, the Philippines, Romania, Senegal, Slovenia, Venezuela, Yemen and Zambia – were involved in the launch and pre-launch Preparatory Forum.

ther explore the issues covered in the UN study and become familiar with the study's recommendations; prioritise the issues the group wished to raise and highlight at the International Launch; support a process in which children could shape the opportunities for their participation that were available during the International Launch but which also recognised the constraints imposed by a formal UN process; identify and assign roles and responsibilities for each participant during the International Launch; provide support for children's involvement in media activities and features.

The international launch in the Third Committee meeting of the UN General Assembly was followed by other events including a roundtable discussion during which the children and young people were able to ask questions to an 'audience' which included heads of key UN agencies, eminent people, goodwill ambassadors, government and other high-level representatives. Children and young people also had the opportunity to present and launch the child friendly materials produced for the Study in the presence of Kofi Annan, the Secretary General of the United Nations at the time of the launch. The premiere of the film *'Children's Actions to End Violence against Girls and Boys: A Global Initiative'* was also screened at this event.<sup>35</sup>

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35. The child friendly materials can be found on the Save the Children Sweden website: [www.rb.se](http://www.rb.se) and on [www.crin.org](http://www.crin.org).

# Chapter Two

This chapter presents a time line of some key process outcomes, achievements and challenges in supporting and promoting children’s participation from a global Save the Children perspective. National and regional perspectives are highlighted in the next chapter.

<p>2003-2004 <b>Preparation Phase</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tool Kits</li> <li>• Child Friendly Material</li> <li>• Orientation to others on child participation</li> <li>• Advocacy on children’s participation</li> </ul>	<p>2005 <b>Active Engagement with Children in Regional and National processes, including follow up</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advocacy</li> <li>• Facilitation</li> <li>• Process documentation</li> </ul>	<p>2006 <b>Active Engagement with Children in Global, Regional and National processes, and follow up</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advocacy with children</li> <li>• Documentation</li> </ul>	<p>2007 <b>Follow up and keeping momentum</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documentation</li> <li>• Evaluation</li> <li>• National level follow ups</li> </ul>
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## **Preparation phase, 2003-2004**

This phase saw the start of the UN Study, the appointment of the Independent Expert – Professor Paulo Pinheiro – and a commitment to support children’s participation in the Study process.<sup>36</sup>

## **Some process outcomes and achievements**

- Save the Children (SC) preparations for the Study begin; SC decides to promote and support children’s meaningful and ethical participation as an over-arching theme and contribution to the Study and as part of its rights based approach; SC agrees on a common framework and approach to children’s participation based on its practice standards – that is, children are recognised as actors, resourceful participants and partners in the process.
- Key resources on child participation are developed for example, toolkits on conducting consultations and research with children; child friendly materials including a child friendly version of the concept note developed by the Independent Expert and a Questions and Answers paper on the Study. By doing this Save the Children explicitly recognises that the need to build the capacity of adults was crucial to promoting children’s participation and quality practice.
- Save the Children, together with other partner organisations, undertakes strong advocacy work around the meaningful and ethical participation of children in

<p>2003-2004 <b>Preparation Phase</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tool Kits</li> <li>• Child Friendly Material</li> <li>• Orientation to adults on child participation</li> <li>• Advocacy on children’s participation</li> </ul>
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36. Reference concept paper ‘A child friendly version of the Concept paper’ was produced by Save the Children in 2004.

the Study process, including through the meetings of the Geneva-based NGO sub-group on children and violence.

- Save the Children organises trainings on child participation in Geneva for key external actors and as part of the NGO Advisory Panel's first meeting.<sup>37</sup>
- A child participation practitioner from Save the Children – Ravi Karkara – is seconded to the UN Study Secretariat.
- Save the Children begins to develop ideas for gathering children's voices and allowing their opinions and experiences to be heard in different ways – rather than through their physical presence in meetings. This approach also recognised that children had been consulted many times in the past – and had offered their views and opinions – on the prevalence and effect of violence against them. National and regional publications on 'children's voices against violence' are therefore produced.
- Save the Children's network of regional, and in some cases national, child participation focal points is strengthened and mobilised to support children's participation in the Study. In some regions, inter-agency groups or committees supporting children's participation are formed.

### **Some challenges**

- All partners involved in the Study find it a challenge to involve younger children in the process in meaningful ways. This was an ongoing challenge through the Study process.
- Save the Children country and regional programmes take a while to get involved in supporting children's participation in the Study process.
- Save the Children finds it difficult to develop a clear, organisational position towards supporting children's involvement in the NGO Advisory Panel.<sup>38</sup> From the outset, Save the Children had concerns about the Advisory Panel's plans to involve children in its work and had communicated these – and possible solutions – to the Panel in a letter of October 2003.<sup>39</sup> At the request of the Save the Children Task Group on Violence against Children, the Save the Children Child Participation Working Group produced a short guide on children's participation for the Advisory Panel and others in September 2003.<sup>40</sup> As mentioned above, Save the Children carried out a

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37. *A Workshop Report on Child Participation in the UN Study on Violence against Children* by Clare Feinstein, Ravi Karkara, Sophie Laws. Save the Children. 2004. Available at [www.rb.se](http://www.rb.se).

38. The Non-governmental organisations Advisory Panel was formed to advise on all aspects of the Study, to provide the Independent Expert and the Study Secretariat with input on the Study's content, process and outcomes, to encourage and facilitate broad and effective NGO involvement in the Study and to help mobilise effective follow up to the Study. The Advisory Panel had 24 individual members from around the world.

39. Thoughts and Reflections from Save the Children on the NGO Advisory Panel's Concept Paper – *'Child and Youth Participation in the NGO Advisory Panel for the UN Study on Violence Against Children'*, October 2003.

40. *'Promoting Children's Meaningful and Ethical Participation in the UN Study on Violence against Children: A Short Guide for Members of the NGO Advisory Panel and Others'*. Save the Children. 2003.

training workshop on children's participation for the Advisory Panel at the beginning of April 2004. Some of Save the Children's key initial concerns included: the purpose of children's involvement in the Panel's work, the need to ground Study processes at the national and regional levels rather than moving directly to the international level, the selection and representation of the young members of the Panel, the lack of guaranteed resources available to support young people's meaningful engagement in the Panel, the need for good preparatory processes and the level of support to individual young members in between meetings of the group.

- As has been mentioned earlier, the set process and framework for the Study and its tight schedule present challenges both in terms of the advocacy work necessary to convince others of the importance and relevance of children's participation and to make sure that short time frames do not compromise the quality of children's involvement.
- The organisations involved in the process of supporting children's participation sometimes have different perceptions of and approaches to children's participation. The need for working to agreed and clearly defined standards becomes more apparent and essential.

### **Children's Active Engagement, 2005**

This phase saw children's active engagement in most regional consultations and also in some national activities and processes.

#### **Some process outcomes and achievements**

'The under 18 delegate that I am accompanying is more satisfied than any other participant I have ever seen or accompanied. It is hard to pinpoint the improvements but it's more tidy and easier to understand what we are trying to accomplish. The focus on one issue (violence) helps as it makes the process easier to follow and we are trying to do fewer things well.'<sup>41</sup>

*Accompanying adult, Norway –  
from regional consultation in Europe and Central Asia, July 2005*

- Child participation guidelines and standards are developed to support children's involvement in national and regional processes. This work is particularly developed in the South East Asia and the Pacific region where minimum standards in children's participation are developed, tested and implemented for national and regional consultations involving children. These standards are also adapt-

**2005  
Active Engagement  
with Children in  
Regional and National  
processes, including  
follow up**

- Advocacy
- Facilitation
- Process

41. Assessing Children's Participation '*Children and Young People Act Now*': A report of the Europe and Central Asia Children and Young People's Consultation for the UN Study on Violence against Children. 2005.

ed and used to support the involvement of children in global meetings linked to the Study which took place in 2006. They have subsequently also been adapted for other global initiatives on children's participation – such as the Committee on the Rights of the Child Day of General Discussion in 2006 and children's involvement in the Junior G8 2006.

- Save the Children plays a pivotal role in many national and regional steering and child participation committees<sup>42</sup>, ensuring in particular that good child protection strategies and procedures are developed and implemented. For example, in the West and Central Africa region the fact that Save the Children was asked to facilitate children's involvement provided 'an opportunity to shape the process'.<sup>43</sup>
- Some steering and planning committees established to support the regional consultations, and especially children's involvement, have both over 18 and under 18 members – for example, Europe and Central Asia and North America; young facilitators are also involved in some of the preparatory meetings for children which precede the regional consultations, as well as in the global children's meetings which took place in 2006.
- Children's recommendations from their preparatory meetings are clearly reflected in many regional consultations and regional declarations.
- Save the Children and the UN Study Secretariat collaborate to bring together children's recommendations from these preparatory processes and regional consultations into a single document – *'Act Now!'*
- Save the Children supports national and regional publications which highlight children's voices against violence – Uganda and South Asia are examples of this.
- Save the Children gives prominence to children's advocacy by beginning to develop a film and a publication outlining children's actions to stop violence against them.
- In some countries Save the Children's work with children is sufficiently strong and developed to fairly easily integrate the UN Study; in other countries, Save the Children's work with children is strengthened as a result of engagement with the Study – see example of Romania below.
- Save the Children begins to develop strong follow up work in some regions – for example, West and Central Africa (see box below).
- Save the Children develops a good collaboration and partnership with other organisations at the different levels – national, regional and international. This is also a challenge however. The development of clear and realistic Terms of Reference and definitions of roles and responsibilities are important in establishing successful inter-agency collaboration.

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42. National, and especially regional, steering committees were established to guide and coordinate the process and planning of the regional consultations. They were comprised of representatives from the government hosting the regional consultation, key UN agencies, non-governmental organisations and national or regional organisations and networks. Some steering committees also included children and young people's representatives.

43. Taken from session on Key learnings from countries and regions – child participation – during the Save the Children global workshop on the UN Study in Agra, February 2007.

- Through their involvement in the process, children are recognised as actors, resourceful participants and partners for future planning. There is support for their advocacy efforts.
- Children's own initiatives and processes are strengthened through their involvement with the process. For example, in Afghanistan children are supported to develop child media initiatives (printing and audio).

The children [involved in the regional consultation in West and Central Africa] decided that it was not enough to just feed information into the UN Study. They wanted to get involved in the fight to end violence themselves.

After the regional consultation the under-18 delegates went back to their respective countries to develop action plans. The children then met together again in the Gambia to discuss what they had done so far. For example, they had initiated activities such as: sensitising children about violence; starting a radio and television sensitization campaign; networking with other children's groups to fight violence against children; collaborating with the police and other authorities on violence against children; sensitising teachers on corporal and humiliating punishment; developing concrete action plans to guide the children to be organised in fighting to stop violence against children.

'Children are motivated to continue their campaigns to end violence. A few years ago, violence was an accepted part of every child's experience. They took the violence for granted. Now, they are beginning to see that it does not have to be this way and that, in fact, we all need to do our part to try to end violence perpetuated against children. Children of West Africa have taken up the challenge and they are doing their part. Now it is up to adults-parents, teachers, governments and so on to do their part as well.'<sup>44</sup>

In Romania children were involved from the beginning and were therefore given the space to define the problem, what was wrong and what needs to be done to achieve the desired change. Children and adults collectively defined the desired outcomes and developed plans together. This process built on the strengths of the different groups involved through a process of defining who is better at doing what. Through the process they have been able to establish a core reference group of children and young people to maintain momentum and the sustainability of the work.<sup>45</sup>

### **Some challenges**

- In some regions there are challenges and constraints on inter-agency cooperation in the area of child participation. For example, in Southern Africa, Save the Children Sweden chooses to withdraw from the regional consultation process due to

44. 'Children's Actions to End Violence against Girls and Boys', as before.

45. Taken from session on Key learnings from countries and regions – child participation – during the Save the Children global workshop on the UNVAC in Agra, February 2007.

ethical concerns which arise in the process of supporting children's participation in the regional consultation. They continue to support good national processes.

- There are limited national processes and preparations with children in some regions.
- There are constraints on the time and funds necessary for good preparation.
- The process is essentially adult-led and children and young people are invited to participate. The parameters of the Study and the possibilities for and constraints on children's involvement were clear from the beginning. On the one hand the Study provided children with a space which they then occupied to speak directly with key decision makers about their experiences, ideas, actions and recommendations about preventing and stopping violence against children. On the other hand, regional and international processes involving children – for example, the regional consultations - tended to be geared towards outcomes determined by adults which children were less able to shape and influence in their own ways as illustrated by these conclusions from a report documenting the Europe and Central Asia regional consultation process.

Consultations like this occur under time pressure and the need for them to result in a set of 'outcomes' – preparing children for their participation in an adult conference. These outcomes are therefore usually adult generated, adult led and adult dominated. More acknowledgement needs to be given to the fact that many children and young people become involved in processes because they want to be involved in decision making. They are often used to being facilitators and many would relish the opportunity of facilitating or co-facilitating such children's consultations. The planning and coordination of future consultations should give more consideration to giving children and young people more space, time and genuine opportunity to bring their thoughts, proposals and way of doing things into the process.

- There is a need for more age-specific and diversity-sensitive material and information available in a wider range of languages to support the participation of a wider group of children – for example, younger children, children from different backgrounds, children with different abilities and so on. Through the process of the UN Study, work on analysing and differentiating the experiences and responses of different groups of children according to their age, gender and so on was not undertaken. This represents perhaps a missed opportunity for disaggregating information and using it to better inform policies and programs according to the specific needs of, for example, girls, boys, younger children, older children and so on.
- It continues to be difficult to involve more difficult-to-reach children, including younger children, the further that processes move away from the local and/or national.

2006  
**Active Engagement  
with Children in  
Global, Regional and  
National processes,  
and follow up**  
• Advocacy with children  
• Documentation

- It is a challenge to keep up the momentum after the resources (time and money) invested in the regional consultations and to ensure good follow up and accountability with the children involved and in relation to children's recommendations.

### **Children's Active Engagement, 2006**

This phase saw children's engagement at the global level in international meetings and the international launch of the UN Study report as well as in advocacy work and activities at national and regional levels.

### **Some process outcomes and achievements**

- There are financial resources to support the involvement of children in global processes in 2006.
- There is good cooperation between Save the Children regional focal points (violence against children) and child participation regional focal points for the Study.<sup>47</sup>
- Save the Children continues its collaboration and partnership with other organisations at the different levels – national, regional and international. This also, however, remains a challenge.
- In 2005–2006 the advocacy carried out by the young people involved in the Advisory Panel is instrumental in persuading key actors, such as the Independent Expert, to change their minds in favour of proposing the appointment of a Special Representative. The young people also influence many of the Advisory Panel's key advocacy messages.
- The children's meeting that took place in May 2006 in New York serves as a good preparation for children's involvement in the international launch in October and ensures that lessons learned can be incorporated into the planning for the launch.
- Child friendly materials for the Study are produced, disseminated widely and translated into many languages.
- Save the Children produces material specifically for younger children – *'Safe You and Safe Me'* – which is widely distributed and translated into at least 14 languages.

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47. At the beginning of Save the Children's engagement with the Study a network of regional focal points was established which was responsible for promoting, coordinating and supporting Save the Children's contributions to the Study – thematic, advocacy, child participation etc. They were linked to a network of national focal points who were responsible for doing the same at country level. Both regional and national focal points then linked up with Save the Children regional focal points on children's participation – a network first established during the UN General Assembly Special Session on Children and subsequently expanded and strengthened during the Study – who were primarily responsible for working with partners to ensure children's meaningful and ethical participation especially in the regional processes linked to the Study.

- The organising team for children's involvement in the international launch follow up the children's recommendation from the earlier global children's meeting in May that they should be involved in the planning and facilitation of the international launch. A team of 3 young facilitators is then brought together for the preparatory children's meeting for the international launch.
- Children's recommendations are reflected in the Study's final report.
- Recommendations for involving children in follow up mechanisms and action plans are contained in the Study's final report.
- The role of Save the Children in advising and facilitating the involvement of children is acknowledged in the Study's final report and at the international launch.
- Children and young people are highly visible actors during the international launch.
- Children and young people are generally very satisfied with their participation in the international launch.

'There is not much improvement that can be made because it honestly was an excellent forum that I am honoured to have participated in and am sure that other children would be more than happy to be part of in the future.'

*from children and young people's evaluation of  
the Preparatory Forum for the launch<sup>48</sup>*

- There is follow up with children and young people through national and regional focal points after the international launch and also in relation to the Save the Children Worldwide Day of Action against Violence against Children, 2006.<sup>49</sup>
- Save the Children plays a very active advocacy role through the diplomatic missions to the United Nations in New York to influence the 2006 UN General Assembly omnibus resolution in favour of children's participation.
- Children continue to be recognised as actors, resourceful participants and partners for future planning and support to their advocacy efforts by key adult actors at the various levels.
- Children's initiatives and processes continue to be strengthened through their involvement with the process.

## **Some challenges**

- The proposal for the children's global meeting in May 2006 is not well received in some regions, mainly due to the time and advance planning which are requirements for meaningful participation. However, all regions participate in supporting children's participation in the international launch in New York in October 2006 and Save the Children supports this in most regions.

48. Children and Young People's Preparatory Forum for the International Launch of the UN Secretary-General's Study on Violence against Children, as before.

49. Save the Children Day of Action newsletter. Save the Children. 2006.

- Collaboration and partnership with other organisations remains a challenge. Some key issues that need continuous work and efforts in order to strengthen and improve practice include: the mainstreaming and institutionalisation of good child participation practice and the 'space' available, especially at the global level, for children to shape their own processes as opposed to events being designed and choreographed by adults.
- There are some issues around representation in the global meetings in 2006 especially in relation to the different processes children have been involved in – local, national, regional and international. For example, some children had been involved in local/national and regional processes while other children had been primarily involved in an international advisory group – the NGO Advisory Panel. These different experiences were not always easy to reconcile in a global meeting. In preparations for the international launch a process of selection of children was agreed with all the regions in advance. No division was made between children involved in international processes – for example, as young members of the Advisory Panel - and children coming from national and regional processes.
- It is not always clear what level of support Save the Children should give to the young representatives from the Advisory Panel at global as well as at regional levels. For example, whether Save the Children should financially support the participation of young members of the Advisory Panel in the regional and international consultations; how to involve them in preparatory processes taking place at country or regional levels for the 2006 international meetings and events when they had not been a part of such country/regional processes and so on. The leading role that Save the Children played at the global level relating to children's participation at times seemed to exert pressure and/or expectations both internally and externally that the organisation would support all aspects of the participation process no matter what.
- The children's global meeting in May is largely determined by adult needs and outcomes relating to inputs into the Study report and the child friendly materials. Children had limited possibility to influence the agenda of the meeting although they did manage to create a certain amount of space to influence the content and process of the meeting as it progressed.
- The role of accompanying adults in the children's meeting in May presents a challenge. Additional steps are taken in the planning, preparation and implementation of the preparatory meeting for the international launch in October to ensure that issues relating to the role and responsibilities of accompanying adults are resolved as far as possible. For example, clear terms of agreement for all accompanying adults are drawn up which all accompanying adults have to sign up to.
- Logistical arrangements for the two global children's meetings in 2006 are a challenge but clear efforts are made to resolve outstanding issues between the May and October meetings.
- The time frame for producing the child friendly material, including the field testing with groups of children and young people, represent a challenge. There is a need to produce quality and effective material in a tight time frame which has

to be balanced against the time needed to test it adequately with groups of children and to take their ideas and concerns on board.

- Similarly, the process for producing the final report was closely monitored to ensure that children's recommendations are adequately and meaningfully reflected.
- Keeping the momentum after the international consultations and ensuring good follow up and accountability is a challenge to all involved.

# Chapter Three

This chapter outlines specific learnings from national and regional consultative processes involving children and linked to the UN Study.

## **National, regional and international collaboration**

Save the Children worked in partnership to support children's participation in the UN Study at all levels – national, regional and international. To some extent this followed models or committees established during the Special Session although, where these partnerships worked well, the UN Study process provided opportunities for their strengthening and expansion. Save the Children chaired, co-chaired or participated in official regional working groups and committees (or equivalent structures) on children's participation in seven out of the nine regional consultations. The two international children's meetings held in 2006 in connection with the international launch were organised and facilitated in a partnership between the UN Study Secretariat, Save the Children and UNICEF.

Save the Children also initiated, facilitated or contributed to children's participation in a wide range of national consultations and other national or local processes, some of which have been highlighted briefly in earlier in this report and others which are highlighted further below.

In the 2005 report documenting Save the Children's involvement in the Study several regions raised the issue of the extent to which 'Save the Children should assume responsibility for organising children's participation in the UN Study processes. Doing so has both advantages and disadvantages.'<sup>50</sup> Some felt that Save the Children should be more careful about assuming this role and concentrate on facilitating the participation of children.

Based on the experience of involving children in the UN Study process it is clear that there is still a need for guidelines on the roles and responsibilities of all partners involved in collaborative agreements at national, regional or international levels. At the beginning of the Study process Save the Children drew up generic guidelines on its role and responsibilities in supporting children's participation for use internationally as well as by countries and regions.<sup>51</sup> For example, Save the Children agreed to take a lead in promoting ways to ensure the meaningful and ethical participation of children in the UN Study. This meant that Save the Children would play an advisory or technical role in relation to children's participation. It did not assume Save the Children responsibility for organising and facilitating children's participation although this seemed to be an expectation at different levels as noted earlier in this

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50. *'Influencing the United Nations on Violence against Children'*. Documentation on Save the Children's involvement in the UN Study on Violence against Children, *as before*.

51. *'Save the Children's role and responsibility in relation to children's meaningful and ethical participation in the UN Study on Violence Against Children'*. Save the Children. 2003

report. This underpins the need for complete clarity and understanding about the roles and responsibilities of different partners in any given collaborative children's participation process.

Guidelines were also drawn up in various countries and regions for collaborative work in these contexts. For example, in South East Asia and the Pacific a network of national focal agencies was created and played a key role in ensuring that the Minimum Standards for children's participation and accompanying protocol were used. For the two global children's meetings in 2006 documents were drawn up outlining the roles and responsibilities of the different partners – the UN Study Secretariat, Save the Children and UNICEF.

#### ***A lesson learned:***

Taking a lead role on child participation means we need to understand roles and responsibilities at all levels - internationally, regionally and nationally. This means establishing and detailing a clear division of roles and responsibilities of each organisation which maximise each organisation's strengths, mandate and capacities across countries and regions and internationally. Southern Africa region suggested developing a protocol on how the region should deal with the participation of children in future consultations of this nature.<sup>52</sup>

Because Save the Children played a leading role at global level in supporting children's participation it was assumed by regional and national actors that Save the Children would take the same lead at these levels and there was a certain pressure and expectation on Save the Children to do so.

### ***National, regional and international action involving children***

While it is true that children did not initiate the dialogue about the UN Study either nationally, regionally or internationally the process in general did reflect children's actions and calls to action.

One key concern was the general weaknesses of national child participatory processes although this did vary from country to country and across regions. Some national child participation processes were sufficiently strong and developed to fairly easily integrate the UN Study into ongoing work with children and existing children's groups and initiatives. This included taking a stand whenever national processes were not considered meaningful. Children and young people can also be at the forefront of lobbying for genuine participation.

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52. Progress Report from the Eastern and Southern African regional preparatory consultation for the UN Secretary General's Study on Violence against Children. Kopanong Conference Centre, Johannesburg, Gauteng, Republic of South Africa, 18th–20th July 2005

*An example of a challenge to meaningful and ethical participation from West Africa:*

This example relates to children's involvement in the regional consultation in May 2005. The consultation took place 2 weeks before the summer exams and child members of the regional Steering Committee lobbied for a change of dates to enable children and young people to participate. When it was explained that the dates could not be changed the children and young people initially recommended that they and their representatives would not be able to participate. After a long discussion a consensus was reached between child and adult members of the Committee. Only children not involved in summer exams would be selected to participate. For those children selected it was a meaningful process – they selected their own representatives and they participated at all levels of the consultation including being involved in the final recommendations drafting committee.

In other countries national children's participation processes – and children's initiatives – were probably strengthened as a result of their engagement with the UN Study: see the example of Yemen outlined in the Footprints on page 29 above which illustrates, from their perspective, how enabling children's voices to be heard leads to action. West Africa felt that being given the 'child participation brief (lead)' in the region enabled them to influence and shape the process together with children – see the example of West Africa below for how children were able to influence the regional consultation. Afghanistan felt that Save the Children Sweden and Norway are now seen as a key resource in the country on children's participation based on their engagement with the UN Study process. Children were also able to strengthen their work and initiatives, as noted earlier in the Timeline of achievements and challenges (see Chapter Two).

*The achievements in Canada:*

As a result of all the efforts, Save the Children succeeded in changing the attitudes of the government and NGO representatives in relation to children's participation in policy dialogue. ... Fewer and fewer policy initiatives that affect children take place without the direct participation of children. The policy being written was directly influenced. The young people, while reviewing the text of the draft document, made numerous recommendations and suggested revised language. In some sections of the policy young people's efforts can be seen word for word.

Long term impacts are also being realised... Our past experiences and recommendations are being factored into a new dialogue on Canada's accountability to its commitments to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. In the coming years there may be more institutionalised support for children's participation in policy dialogue with the Canadian government.<sup>53</sup>

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53. 'Global Capacity Building Workshop on Community and Child Centred Advocacy for Ending Violence against Children'. Save the Children Sweden, 2006. Available at [www.rb.se](http://www.rb.se).

### *The process in Zambia:*

Children from community based Child Rights Clubs and from elementary and high schools were involved throughout the process. These children were already part of different programmes. The materials on How to Involve Children (in consultation and research) were made available to participating organisations and children to help their active participation. The children organised and facilitated activities to select their representatives in the UN Study, including participation at the Regional Consultation. Children took the initiative of organising two school debates in the two main regions of Zambia – Lusaka and Copperbelt provinces. The theme of the debates was: how tradition and culture enhance children's rights. Children were involved in the entire process, including the selection of participants, debate moderation, time-keeping and judging. The children chosen through this process participated in the Regional Consultation. The participation of both boys and girls in the entire process was encouraged. A third child representative was chosen from the Children's Press Bureau representing a group of children training to be young journalists.

A key follow up activity will be to continue to involve children in legislating for their rights.<sup>54</sup>

### *Life is a precious diamond:<sup>55</sup> the Lesotho National Consultation:*

Despite the difficulties Save the Children experienced in the child participation process linked to the regional consultation and outlined further below, a success at national level was the Lesotho child participatory process which was supported by Save the Children Sweden and carried out by the NGO Coalition on the Rights of the Child (NGOC).

A national consultation was held in Lesotho in May 2005 to enable children to share experiences of violence against children in Lesotho, to allow children to discuss the themes that would be discussed in the subsequent regional consultation for Eastern and Southern Africa (South Africa, July 2005) and to nominate 2 children who would represent their peers in this regional consultation. Five thematic areas of violence against children were focused on during the national consultation mirroring those to be discussed at regional level: sexual abuse and rape, physical punishment and other forms of degrading punishment, harmful traditional practices, violence against children and HIV/AIDS and children in conflict with the law. For each of the themes, the children's discussions focused on what (understanding the concept), where (capturing the settings), by whom (the perpetrators), why (capturing the causes) and what can be done by both adults and children (recommendations).<sup>56</sup>

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54. 'Global Capacity Building Workshop on Community and Child Centred Advocacy', as before.

55. Title of a song by Doc from the Lesotho National Consultation. Source: The Lesotho National Consultation on Violence against Children, 13th-15th May 2005. Maseru.

56. The Lesotho National Consultation on Violence against Children, 13th-15th May 2005. Maseru.

### *The experience of Vietnam:*

With the approval of Save the Children, Plan in Vietnam translated *So You Want to Consult with Children* into Vietnamese and disseminated it. Save the Children Sweden worked with the government to facilitate a children's consultation on the Study in June 2005. Follow up participation of children from the children's consultation was supported and monitored. A national consultation of stakeholders was preceded by workshops designed to ensure children's participation at the provincial level. The children chose their own representatives, many of whom belonged to minority groups. This was the first time Vietnamese children had chosen their own representatives for a national consultation. In previous processes they had always been chosen by the government.

Some lessons learned: NGOs should play an active role in advocating with the government and UN bodies to promote children's participation in all activities related to children's lives. Government and UN bodies do not do this voluntarily due to a lack of capacity, expertise and willingness; Save the Children should play a leading role since there is willingness, experience and capability within the organisation.<sup>57</sup>

### *Child led media advocacy: Hatemalo in Nepal:*

Hatemalo is a child rights organisation in Nepal which works with radio, theatre, comics and magazines to spread awareness about child rights in general and violence against children in particular. A child-to-child approach is followed to promote and advocate on key issues of relevance to children (child health and development, children's education rights, sexual abuse and exploitation, corporal punishment, street children, hygiene and sanitation, environmental protection) through the use of multi-media, print, broadcast, street theatre and child club activities, including research work and media monitoring programmes. In 2002 Hatemalo began an intensive programme on violence against children. It undertook a two-week discussion in children's clubs on forms of violence against children. Trainings against the use of corporal punishment were organised for teachers, parents and children. Teachers were trained on non-violent teaching methods. Some child clubs are in the process of developing child friendly schools. In 2004 Hatemalo undertook research on corporal punishment in schools. In 2005 Hatemalo organised a comic training on corporal punishment.

According to the children they face a lot of difficulty convincing teachers about the harm of corporal punishment. They hold regular discussions with them and try to convince them. The children also feel that convincing parents of the benefits of allowing their children to become involved in child club activities is challenging.<sup>58</sup>

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57. 'Global Capacity Building Workshop on Community and Child Centred Advocacy', as before.

58. 'Global Capacity Building Workshop on Community and Child Centred Advocacy', as before.

*Child led organisations in West Africa influence the regional consultation:*<sup>59</sup>

Three child led organisations – the African Movement of Working Children and Youth, child clubs in schools and members of the ‘VOICE of the young’ participation in the regional consultation held in West Africa held in Bamako in Mali in May 2005. At least 300 children from 10 countries across the region were involved at national and regional levels. The process of children’s participation was supported technically and financially by Save the Children Sweden together with its partners in the region – ENDA (working children), WAO (sexual abuse and exploitation), EDEN (children’s parliaments and child clubs) and CPA (corporal punishment). UNICEF and Save the Children financially contributed to the process.<sup>60</sup>

From December 2004 onwards children took action by conducting country surveys – in Gambia on corporal punishment in schools and families; in Senegal on sexual abuse; and, in Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d’Ivoire, Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Guinea Conakry, Mali, Niger, Senegal and Togo on violence against children in the workplace.

Children decided on how they were going to collect and analyse information on the type of violence identified. This included: samples of who to interview; development of questionnaires for interviews; how to handle data collection – children through focus groups and adults through interviews; how to analyse the data collected – compare and contrast the responses from children and adults. Where the views diverge those of children would be considered; collection of data from national studies to be brought together and harmonised during children’s preparations for the regional consultation. From this review of the regional situation of violence against children, the children were able to issue a statement and make clear recommendations for the regional consultation.

6 children from nine out of the ten countries involved in the national studies were involved in the regional consultation. In their preparatory forum they identified recommendations linked to their 3 areas of interest and decided on their advocacy strategy for the regional consultation. This was: for their recommendations to be included in the adult recommendations (and not separated out as a children’s statement), to be a member of the group in charge of drafting the final recommendations, to have a follow up children’s consultation after the regional consultation to plan for follow up of the UN Study. The children’s advocacy succeeded – their recommendations were included in the final document of the regional consultation, one child delegate was a member of the drafting committee, a follow up children’s consultation was organised in Gambia in October 2005 to plan follow up.

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59. Reference West and Central Africa document.

60. Save the Children Sweden in West and Central Africa decided to prioritise support to meaningful children’s participation at national and regional levels as its main contribution to the UNVAC process.

### *The impact on our lives and follow up:*

With this process all the key actors in West Africa recognised us as social actors for the implementation of our rights: ‘Last year we found it difficult to have funds for our activities around the celebration of the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. This year it was UNICEF and Plan who asked us to present the budget for this event.’

We have been involved in participatory action research on the situation of children in Koranic schools in Senegal because the partner who is carrying out this research was in Bamako to view our contribution to the regional consultation.

The presence of the First Lady of the Gambia at the children’s (follow up) consultation and her acceptance to chair this consultation is another mark of esteem and recognition.

We have no doubt that other partners will join Save the Children to finance our plan of actions.<sup>61</sup> The West African NGO coalition on the rights of the children has accepted us as members of its national branches and many countries will include our action plans in their plans in cooperation with UNICEF.

Southern Africa, however, felt that the continued weakness of national child participatory processes resulted in top down and, to some extent, tokenistic approaches. The weakness of national processes meant that children who participated in the international processes (the international launch in October 2006) were not able to feedback to their peers, communities and governments. The Europe and Central Asia region agree that it is essential to focus on the strengthening of community and national level actions and processes which can then in turn form the basis for and give meaning to regional and international processes. Several regions felt that other and creative ways need to be explored and implemented to involve children in sustainable ways at the different levels so that each level can feed into the others. As in previous global participatory processes, involving children in regional and international processes during the UN Study proved to be an expensive exercise. In Latin America while national work was undertaken in 17 countries it was a challenge to involve more children and not just those already involved and organised in existing groups and organisations. The involvement of younger children also remained a challenge throughout the process as has been acknowledged elsewhere in this assessment.

### *A lesson reinforced:*

Future efforts need to continue to focus on building sustainable national capacities that then feed into regional and then international processes.

At the regional level the organisation and facilitation of children’s participation was a complex – and, as noted above, an expensive – process. In South East Asia and the

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61. Children have followed up the regional plan of action by adopting their own national plans of Action.

Pacific, the region made a heavy investment in good preparation in order to obtain good results from a good process. The Inter-Agency Group which coordinated this work was felt to be very successful. Terms of Reference and clear definition of roles and responsibilities were very important to this, as noted in the previous section.

In other regions however the right conditions were not perceived to be in place to ensure and secure children's ethical participation. This was particularly the case in Latin America and Southern Africa. Due to this, in Latin America Save the Children did not play a role in supporting children's participation at regional level whereas in Southern Africa Save the Children Sweden had to withdraw as coordinator of the children's participation processes when it felt it could no longer guarantee that ethical standards could be upheld. The main reasons for this were a lack of understanding among members of the regional steering committee on what ethical and meaningful children's participation entails, lack of funding to secure good quality processes and the fact that the process of organising the regional consultation and children's involvement in it began very late – time, resources and advance planning being requirements for meaningful participation. For example, the Steering Committee for the regional consultation differed in opinion on what form children's participation should take. The two mainstream positions were that children be part of the conference with adult participants throughout the consultation; the other position was that children needed their own space to discuss the issues and present their perspectives in plenary to the full conference. The latter format eventually prevailed.<sup>62</sup>

*Important lessons were however learnt from these challenges:*

It is important to get a common and agreed commitment to the process of children's involvement from all the stakeholders and partners involved before Save the Children commits to taking a lead for children's participation.

It is also important to take a stand when things are going in a direction Save the Children does not like and where Save the Children practice or minimum standards are being compromised in the process – We need to be confident about saying 'no' if the conditions are not right or not in place.

Southern Africa region also found that the difficulties with children's participation in the regional consultations had consequences for children's ethical and meaningful participation in the global processes and events that took place in 2006 – the May meeting and the international launch. The regional processes could not be used, as planned, for children from their region to formulate messages for the global level and to elect representatives to take part in the global events. Instead Save the Children in Southern Africa chose to support children from a child led organisation in Lesotho to participate in the international launch in New York in October 2006

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62. Progress Report from the Eastern and Southern African regional preparatory consultation for the UN Secretary General's Study on Violence against Children, *as before*.

based on a national process around the UN Study – see boxed example from Lesotho above. Unfortunately, the children involved had very limited involvement with the UN Study before going to New York which meant in effect that in supporting their participation Save the Children had to compromise some of the organisation's standards in ethical and meaningful children's participation in order to have representation from Southern Africa at the international launch. 'This has also shown us the difficulties to sustain regional child participation processes in Southern Africa, especially without strong national structures to build on. Something that we are trying to address in different ways.'<sup>63</sup>

Despite these challenges the Southern Africa region has highlighted the following concrete examples of how it is following up children's participation in the UN Study, as per April 2007:

- Save the Children Sweden organises a workshop with its partner organisations in Southern Africa in May (2007) in order to build the capacity of partners around the UN Study and its recommendations and to explore how work around the UN Study can be taken forward on regional as well as national levels. Children's participation will be discussed in this workshop and some children may also be invited to participate.
- Save the Children Sweden is continuing to work with its two partner organisations (NGOC and Youth Media) and their children's structures that have been part of the UN Study process. These organisations will continue to work around the UN Study with the children also in 2007.
- Children's recommendations from the regional consultation and the international launch of the Study in New York are being used in ongoing advocacy work related to the abolishment of violence against children in different settings in the region.

## ***Assessing children's participation – regionally***

### ***An evaluation of East Asia and the Pacific***

#### ***New height of participation in East Asia and the Pacific (EAP)***

In 2003, UNICEF and Save the Children initiated the creation of a regional steering committee for the purpose of organizing the regional consultation, and ensuring the meaningful and ethical participation of children. As a result all 26 children involved in the EAP consultation attended as full delegates, as well as resource persons in group discussions. All were Under 18 and none was required to communicate in English. All had an equal status with the adult delegates and could make decisions alongside them.

New measures were introduced to support effective facilitation, translation, and protection. These included the establishment of a Child Protection Committee that developed various child protection procedures such as risk assessments and briefing

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63. Internal document from Save the Children Sweden in Southern Africa.

materials. These were aimed at protecting children from harm (physical, sexual and emotional abuse) in the participation process, making sure that Guardians were adequately selected, that complaints procedures were in place and so on.

A Child Participation Coordinator was appointed (who organized all the logistics arrangements for the under 18 delegates), together with 16 translators (who were trained on participatory translation methods) and a team of 14 adult facilitators who were identified and briefed to ensure the meaningful and ethical participation of under 18 delegates in the working group sessions.

All this gave participation its true meaning, and was realized through respect, empowerment, child friendliness, as well as quality of process.

East Asia and the Pacific region undertook an evaluation of children's participation in the regional consultation.<sup>64</sup> The region also produced a summary report of children's participation in the global and regional launches that took place in October 2006.<sup>65</sup>

The evaluation of children's participation in the regional consultation in 2005 was made through analysis of data from questionnaires completed by under 18 delegates, their accompanying adults (Guardians) and national focal agencies in each of the participating countries as well as from various protocol documents prepared for the consultation (under 18 consent forms etc), minutes from workshops and meetings and from evaluation reports.

The evaluation essentially focuses on the piloting of the Minimum Standards on children's participation, and accompanying protocols, before, during and after the regional consultation. These Minimum Standards, as noted earlier, were developed by the region for the regional consultation process. The evaluation report analyses some key issues for effective implementation of these Minimum Standards, the strengths and weaknesses and some recommendations which draw on the lessons learned from this experience of children's participation.

As the evaluation report acknowledges each region had its own interpretation and approach towards ensuring the ethical and meaningful participation of children in the UN Study while guided by the generic material produced and principles espoused by Save the Children and outlined in the beginning of this report. As in other regions, East Asia and the Pacific established a regional steering committee to coordinate input at this level into the Study and to organise the regional consultation. Similar to other regions a sub-group of the steering committee was set up to deal specifically with the participation of children.

This sub-group decided to develop and implement standards for consulting with

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64. Evaluation report on children's participation at the East Asia Pacific regional consultation for the UN Study on Violence against Children, October 2005. By Helen Veitch, Consultant on Children's Participation.

65. Global and regional launch of the UN Secretary-General's Study on Violence against Children: Summary report of children's participation. Submitted by Guy Thompstone, Child Participation Coordinator, November 2006.

children rather than guidelines. The standards were then therefore seen as a statement of the lowest level of practice acceptable to ensure meaningful children's participation. The Minimum Standards developed were approved by the regional steering committee in December 2005 for use at the regional consultation. They consisted of 27 statements describing the minimum level at which adults and children should behave and operate in consultations with children. They were accompanied by a set of protocols, consisting of 17 documents, which were the working tools or procedures for using the standards.

Some key conclusions from the EAP evaluation which reinforce some of the learnings from other national and regional processes are:

- The crucial role of national partners and national partners. In the case of East Asia and the Pacific, national focal agencies were critical to the successful implementation of the Minimum Standards. National consultations took place in 10 countries and acted as an important step in the preparation of young delegates for the regional consultation – a point emphasised throughout the UN Study process and throughout this global assessment report.
- A common and agreed commitment to children's participation and the form it should take contributes to successful inter-agency collaboration and in securing the resources necessary for children's participation.
- If a key principle of Minimum Standards is equality of opportunity then ensuring that language is no barrier to participation has a huge impact on participatory processes. A requirement to speak English places an enormous restriction on potential candidates. By not insisting on this the EAP approach opened up selection and representative processes and widened the potential for participation to groups of children who typically suffer discrimination and are often excluded from such consultative processes.
- Time is key to proper planning and for enabling minimum standards to be met. When time runs short and activities are hurried then standards tend to be compromised.
- Child protection procedures must be strong and comprehensive. They must be clearly explained to ensure that everyone has a common understanding of what they mean, why they are necessary and how they apply to good standards in children's participation.

Strengths and weaknesses were drawn from the above analysis. One weakness that has also been acknowledged as a challenge at all levels – national, regional and global – is the issue of quality follow up. The recommendations made from this experience of children's participation are relevant for the wider UN Study process as well as similar future initiative. The generalities of these recommendations – rather than the specifics relating to the regional context – are taken up in this global assessment report (see Chapter Four).

## ***An assessment of Europe and Central Asia***

The Europe and Central Asia Working Group on Child Participation for the Study set out to support ‘meaningful, good quality children’s participation [in the regional consultation that took place in Ljubljana in Slovenia in July 2005] that gives children a genuine opportunity to express their views, be involved in decisions or take action’.

In a very short six month period (January-June 2005) the Working Group worked very effectively and efficiently to organise an open nomination and selection process across Europe and Central Asia, to design a children’s consultation and to input into the other Working Groups linked to the Regional consultation (especially the Core Group). The fact that the Working Group could draw on information, material and ideas from other regions engaged in similar processes was a major advantage given the short time frame for preparation.

As a group they agreed the following approaches were necessary to ensure meaningful children’s participation:

- An ethical approach and a commitment to transparency, honesty and accountability.
- A safe approach in which children’s protection rights are safeguarded.
- A non-discriminatory approach that ensures that all children have an equal opportunity to be involved.
- A ‘child friendly’ approach which enables children to contribute to the best of their abilities.

Below is a summary of the assessment of whether and how these standards were met.<sup>66</sup>

### ***Ethical approach***

From the beginning, the Working Group worked with the core organising group for the Regional Consultation to ensure that the children and young people participated in the Consultation itself as full delegates on an equal footing with adult participants, participating in the working groups and plenary sessions and not involved in separate or parallel child-only sessions.

The Working Group also made a commitment to ensuring an open nomination and selection process, despite the short time available, across Europe and Central Asia. At its first meeting in January 2005 the Working Group was clear about the actual funds available for supporting child participation in this particular regional process. They therefore set a limit on the number of young delegates and accompanying adults that would be able to participate in the Regional Consultation that matched exactly the available funding. This avoided a situation whereby nomination and selection processes with children and young people were undertaken without having a guarantee of sufficient funds to carry them through. One of the key

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66. For a full report, see *‘Assessing Children’s Participation’, ‘Children and Young People Act Now!’*, as

criteria for nomination and selection was that children should be involved because of their experience in addressing violence against children. While some of the young delegates may also have directly experienced violence it was very clear that they were involved in this process to discuss children's actions and solutions and not their own personal experiences of abuse.

The criteria that the delegates must be able to communicate in English or Russian (the working languages of the Regional Consultation) may have prevented children from being nominated or selected to participate.

As mentioned previously in this report, the Europe-Central Asia region was one of the regions to include children and young people on its Working Group on Child Participation.

### ***Safe approach***

Child protection forms an essential part of participatory work with children. There are, however, different approaches to the issue of creating a safe environment in which children feel comfortable in participating. Some organisations have well defined child protection policies which they invoke in any setting involving consultations with children. Other organisations take the issue very seriously but have perhaps a less prescriptive approach to its implementation. These different approaches were reflected in the adult organisations comprising the Working Group on Child Participation. Despite these differences everyone involved took child protection very seriously and a child protection strategy specific to the process was developed and included various mechanisms to promote safe participation.

It is important to also note that for each of the consultation processes with children – not only for Europe and Central Asia – child protection focal points were appointed and comprehensive child protection guidelines were drawn up and good procedures applied. Children were invited to participate in the various consultations as experts on an equal footing with adult participants and were not invited to testify about any personal experiences of violence, exploitation or abuse.

### ***Non-discriminatory approach***

The Working Group was committed to a bilingual approach to the children's consultation. While much information was inevitably first produced in English key documents were translated into Russian as part of the preparatory process. During the consultation itself most, but not all, information was produced in both languages, including bilingual flipcharts for most plenary sessions and work in small groups.

As mentioned elsewhere in this report, the Europe and Central Asia region – as other regions – struggled with the challenge of reaching the most difficult to reach to ensure that their voices were also heard and their opinions equally valued and taken into consideration. The Working Group acknowledged this challenge and paid special attention to supporting the participation of more marginalised groups of children: for example, children from minority groups and post-conflict areas.

## ***Child friendly approach***

The written evaluations show that most participants were pleased with their level of participation and that the preparatory workshop helped them know more about violence against children, develop personal skills such as teamwork, building confidence, developing and expressing ideas, sharing thoughts and listening to others and prepare for their participation in the Regional Consultation.

While the regional consultation was essentially an adult conference to which children had been invited, measures were taken to increase the space for children's participation – for example, the Act Now session on 6th July – as part of a process of creating an environment conducive to children making their voices heard. As a result, children had a visible and noticeable role and presence at the Regional Consultation.

The adult organisers felt that the session on child participation led by young people contributed greatly to the integrity of the preparatory meeting. It helped adults see the skills of children and young people. The mentoring of the youth and adult team as they prepared also meant that experiences were shared and everyone supported each other. The children and young people also really appreciated the child developed and led session but there was a strong feeling and request that, in the future, more sessions should be led and facilitated by them and other young people. This suggests that it is not enough to 'allow' or 'invite' children and young people to lead a session on child participation while the adults continue to facilitate the more complicated 'issues/decision-making' sessions. Children and young people could also have played a bigger role in reporting on the working group sessions and in drawing up the final set of recommendations. While the recommendations tried to capture the words and phrases of the young delegates they perhaps did not recognise them as such because they had not been involved in writing them.

One key outstanding issue remains that of quality follow up with the children involved. Issues relating to this, which were highlighted in the Europe and Central Asia assessment report, are outlined in Chapter Four of this report in the exploration of lessons learned.

## ***An assessment of Eastern Africa***

In late 2006 and early 2007 an assessment questionnaire on the involvement of children in the UN Study was circulated to all Save the Children regional focal points involved in the Study as part of preparations for and follow up to an internal global workshop on follow up to the Study which was held in Agra, India, in late January 2007. The questionnaire aimed to assess children's participation based on the approach to children's participation adopted by Save the Children at the beginning of their engagement with supporting children's involvement in the Study – namely an ethical, safe, non-discriminatory and child friendly approach. A copy of this questionnaire can be found in Appendix One of this report.

Eastern Africa replied to this questionnaire as did individual countries in the region including Lesotho, Mozambique, Swaziland and Zambia – see below for a summary of the assessment from these 4 countries.

The sub-regional assessment from Eastern Africa found that children participated on an equal footing with adults but more so at the national level than at the regional. This probably compares with other regional assessments. For example, the Europe and Central Asia region recognised the struggle to ensure that children's voices are heard and their opinions equally valued and taken into consideration and, how this dilemma is often only magnified the further away you get from children's immediate contexts (the more local level).<sup>67</sup>

As in other regions, Save the Children developed a concept paper on children's participation, organised trainings on child participation for steering committee members and drafted guidelines and agreements for national processes to select children. These measures were considered important in ensuring an ethical, safe and child friendly approach to children's participation.

National focal agencies were also established to coordinate children's participation at that level and to prepare children for their participation in the regional consultation. These processes allowed children to set their own criteria for the selection of their own representatives to the regional consultation and to elect these representatives. Children particularly appreciated that they were tasked with the responsibility of nominating among themselves who to represent them which suggests that the nomination and selection of young delegates is not always a peer-initiated and implemented process.

The region felt that the cooperation between Save the Children and other agencies facilitating children's participation showed a great commitment to promote children's participation and concluded that efforts need to continue together with partners to map out ways of strengthening this at all levels. Save the Children's role in promoting and supporting children's participation has also improved the profile of the organisation in the region. Constraints at the regional level however included: less involvement of other Save the Children member organisations, less cooperation from UN agencies, the fact that children seemed to be ignored in discussions by adults and the limited participation of African governments.

Children however found it useful to interact with other children from other countries and areas and share issues of violence. They felt that their views and opinions had been heard.

***Follow up:***

Children's recommendations were forwarded to key actors during the Save the Children global Day of Action on violence against children in 2006.

Dialogue has been initiated at country level by children to take forward their recommendations. Discussions with partners have been initiated on children being involved in follow up plans and actions.

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67. *'Assessing Children's Participation', 'Children and Young People Act Now!'*, as before.

## ***Assessing children's participation: Lesotho, Mozambique, Swaziland and Zambia***

In general, from the assessment of the 4 countries, in terms of applying an ethical approach to children's participation it was felt that:

- Children's voices were heard but that generally those of adults were more dominant.
- In all countries there were local (national) processes which were crucial in helping prepare children for their participation in the regional consultation. In Zambia, children were involved in the national planning process.
- Guidelines on children's participation were received from the regional steering committee for Southern Africa and were used by all of the 4 countries.
- The time frame, resources and too little communication and information (about the regional process) were considered to be the main constraints. Mozambique highlighted the need for ensuring that children selected to represent others are enabled to take on this sort of representative role.
- The quality of cooperation between Save the Children and other agencies in facilitating children's participation in this process was judged to be generally good, although with some room for improvement. In Mozambique, partners recognise Save the Children's expertise on children's participation.

### ***In terms of applying a safe approach***

- Although a specific child protection strategy was not always developed for the process, children's protection was ensured through the use and adaptation of existing guidelines and Save the Children's child protection policy.
- Work was done to ensure that accompanying adults adequately fulfilled their roles and responsibilities. For example, office staff accompanied the chaperones in Lesotho while focal agencies with experience of this work were selected in Mozambique. However, it was generally felt that during the consultative processes involving children accompanying adults were 'under-used' with no specific activities organised for them.
- In Lesotho, Zambia and Swaziland, 'just graduated' youth played a role in facilitating processes and providing guidance to younger children.
- Insufficient funds and unsuitable venues for consultation processes were some of the constraints mentioned in applying a safe approach.

### ***In terms of applying a non-discriminatory approach***

- Special efforts were made to ensure the participation of children from different backgrounds through the involvement of children at the community level, of different ages and gender, from different provinces in a country, with different experiences of participation, speaking different languages, creating the space for dif-

ferent forms of expression and ways of working. Both Zambia and Swaziland however mentioned the challenge of involving children with disabilities in the process.

- Limited funds and the time frame were cited as the main reasons for the processes not being more inclusive. There was a delay in starting the processes at national level which left little time to prepare adequately for the regional consultation.

### ***In terms of applying a child friendly approach***

- Two of the countries produced child friendly versions of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and made use of child friendly material supplied by the regional steering committee.
- Through their participation in the process children learned more about the issues of violence that affect them and developed the ability to talk about these issues in more confident and articulate ways. They were able to interact with and learn from the experience of other children, were able to identify similar situations of violence, learned communication and facilitation skills and how to take opportunities to champion their own activities. They developed the capacity to recognise when children's rights are at risk.
- Meetings were held with parents and representatives of local and central government to sensitise them about the Study and children's participation in the process. Press conferences were held and radio and television were also used to further sensitisation efforts.
- Several measures were taken to increase the spaces for children's participation such as: national children's conferences including pre-training for young facilitators; support to children's clubs and organisations; supporting children's media work and initiatives to raise and amplify their voices.
- For Zambia, the national activities such as the national consultation, national conference and Save the Children Global Day of Action offered more opportunities to be shaped by children and young people than the regional consultation or the national launch of the Study; for Lesotho, preparation for the regional consultation, the follow up work with the media and the preparation and sharing of reports of the consultations offered more space for children to shape the process than the national consultation and planning and the regional consultation
- Constraints on implementing a child friendly approach included: budget and time frame limitations, lack of experience among the children of participating, limit on the number of children able to participate in the different processes.

Here is a snapshot of how children are being involved in quality follow up to the Study:

#### ***Lesotho:***

- Action is being taken by civil society partners to respond to children's recommendations.

- Children are supported to meet regularly to make their plans on their issues, including violence against children. They have budgets for these meetings.
- There are plans to support the activities and action plan of the Children Coordinating Committee who are requesting logistical and financial support from adults.
- Efforts are being made to help link children in Lesotho with children's organisations in South Africa to implement follow up actions, although it is acknowledged that these links need to be strengthened.

*Mozambique:*

- Information on the Study is being disseminated to children and their sharing of experiences is being supported – for example, members of the Children's Parliaments and youth leagues.
- Children's initiatives and actions are being supported and strengthened through: training on child rights issues, training on protection issues, supporting their participation in consultation processes relating to the Children's Act and the national Social Forum, training on reporting and complaints mechanisms, helping children to organise local debate forums through the district level parliaments, supporting the children and youth leagues and networks, supporting child-child support groups especially in schools and local communities where resources are scarce, promoting self-help measures.

In Swaziland a mind set or attitude change towards children and children's participation is being reported and acknowledged although funding is lacking to give impetus to further progress. However, an effort is being made to carry forward the work in terms of awareness raising and engaging partners and government at the policy level.

*Zambia:*

- Key children's issues are being raised, discussed and advocated for by children members of the Child Rights Clubs and the Children's Press Bureau.
- Sensitisation meetings are being held with parents, guardians and teachers.
- Members of the Children's Press Bureau are doing interviews with policy makers and implementers.
- Children are participating in radio and television discussion programmes.
- Children are being support and materials.
- Children are being supported to attend and participate in workshops, meetings and trainings.

# Chapter Four

This chapter brings together the lessons learned from supporting children's participation in consultations on the UN Study and makes recommendations for children's involvement in similar future processes.

## **Learning the lessons – from the Special Session to the UN Study and beyond**

As mentioned in Chapter One, Save the Children developed a publication outlining the 12 lessons it felt the organisation had learned from the process of supporting children's participation during the Special Session on Children as follows:<sup>68</sup>

- Lesson 1 work with adults on how they can encourage children's participation is as important as the work with children themselves
- Lesson 2 children's participation requires sufficient time, funding and planning if it is to be meaningful and good quality
- Lesson 3 'child friendly' information is essential in order to give children the same access to information as adults
- Lesson 4 the selection of child delegates needs to be sensitive to issues of representation and inclusion, in order to both maximise the experience brought into events and to promote the sustainability of outcomes
- Lesson 5 language is a major barrier to children's participation in international meetings. Proper attention needs to be given to the translation of materials and the ready availability of interpreters
- Lesson 6 follow up to meetings needs to be an essential part of the process of children's participation – not an afterthought
- Lesson 7 young adults are an important resource in supporting the participation of children
- Lesson 8 participation processes are vulnerable to adult manipulation. Measures need to be taken to guard against this and to integrate tolerance and respect for the opinion of others into the process
- Lesson 9 child protection must be built into every aspect of the planning for an event or process involving children
- Lesson 10 systematic evaluation is essential to improve practice and to learn for the future
- Lesson 11 children want to work with the media. They should be supported to do so and – at times – protected from it too
- Lesson 12 adults accompanying children to meetings need to be clear about their responsibilities, but also given opportunities to use their skills and experience when the children are busy elsewhere

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68. '12 Lessons Learned from Children's Participation in the UN General Assembly Special Session on Children', as before.

The aim of this publication was to ensure that, in similar and future initiatives lessons could be learned – and applied – from both the successes and the challenges experienced in efforts to make children’s participation a living reality during the Special Session.

### *So, were the lessons learned during the UN Study?*

This final chapter looks in more detail at how the lessons learned from the Special Session have been added to or adjusted through the experience of the UN Study.

## **The UN Study**

The focus on the ethical and meaningful involvement of children meant that much effort during the UN Study, as noted previously in this report, was invested in continually trying to raise the quality of children’s participation. As above, this was based on recognised and agreed standards and principles with information, training and a certain amount of resources available to support it on the part of Save the Children and other partners.

All the lessons learned in the Special Session were taken into account and acted upon during the organisation, coordination and facilitation of children’s participation in the various UN Study processes. However, time, advance planning and sufficient resources continue to remain huge challenges at every level of involving children in consultative processes in genuine and meaningful ways. Some examples from the UN Study highlight this:

- the need for child friendly materials to arrive early enough to be really able to work with and mobilise children in countries
- the need for time to genuinely consult with children on draft final recommendations that emerge from such studies or consultations in less stressful and overburdened processes and time frames
- the expense of involving children in regional and international processes

Other challenges already outlined in the previous chapters relate to:

- the need to strengthen and sustain children’s participation at national and regional levels so that good and strong national and regional experiences and platforms can then be used as a basis for feeding into global processes
- the need to explore and promote other ways of involving children and young people which do not always depend on their physical presence in events and meetings
- the need to reach out to and include the diversity of children’s experience, especially those who suffer discrimination and are excluded from consultation and decision making processes, including younger children
- the need to continue work with adults, especially key decision makers, to ensure their commitment to meaningfully involve and consult with children in planned follow up that responds to the Study’s findings and the priority issues identified by children within countries. This also includes continued support to and work

with NGOs and others to follow up with the children and young people involved in the Study process

Based on the challenges as well as the successes in supporting children's ethical and meaningful participation in the UN Study the lessons from the Special Session can be adjusted or added to in the following ways:

**1. A common and agreed commitment to meaningful and ethical participation needs to be established from the beginning as a key and essential feature of the process**

This entails getting a commitment to a genuine process – including sufficient resources and commitment to good follow up – from all involved stakeholders. It is especially important to have such a common and agreed commitment to and understanding of children's participation and the form it should take if Save the Children commits to taking the lead in future processes. It is also important to take a stand and – if necessary – disengage from processes if practice standards are compromised and a process is not considered meaningful or beneficial to those involved.

**2. Care needs to be taken when assuming responsibility for organising children's participation or 'taking a lead'**

'Taking the lead' can have both advantages and disadvantages. For example, in West Africa it meant that Save the Children and its partners were able to 'shape' the child participation process. However, roles and responsibilities at the different levels – national, regional, international - need to be clearly understood and need to maximise the strengths, mandate and capacities of different partners at the different levels. For example, should national and regional players and partners assume that if Save the Children takes a lead for a process at the global level then it will automatically take the lead at these levels? It may mean the adoption of a protocol on how child participation will be dealt with and by whom at each level of a process.

**3. Better preparation leads to better results**

This reinforces the need for adequate time and resources to be invested to ensure the quality of children's participation and good child protection practice. It entails, among other things, the development of comprehensive budgets and a commitment to secure the costs from all involved stakeholders. It also includes the importance of work in preparing and sensitising adults – parents, teachers, community leaders, UN agency and NGO staff, government officials and so on – on children's participation, its relevance, benefits and importance and what is needed to make sure that it is genuine and that children really do have a significant presence and voice in child friendly decision making structures and processes.

#### **4. Good and sustainable community and national processes are crucial to the meaningful involvement of children at other levels**

As this report has outlined the challenge is to sustain children's participation at the local and national levels and then feed this into regional and global processes. More creative ways need to be found to do this so that the children involved can benefit from and follow up on their participation at the levels most distant from their lives. The UN Study showed how existing children's initiatives can benefit from their engagement in such processes and collaboration with child led organisations is a key to the success of future processes. Children and their organisations could, in the future, be more involved in shaping the process.

#### **5. Other ways of involving children need to be explored and implemented**

Involving children in regional and international processes is a very expensive exercise. More also needs to be done to reach out to and involve children from diverse backgrounds, including younger children. Children should be supported to initiate the dialogue in their own spaces. For example, inviting key decision makers, such as a relevant United Nations Special Representative/Special Rapporteur, to consultations with children about their rights – rather than always inviting children to join and be part of adult-led and adult-initiated consultation processes.

#### **6. Child protection needs to be better understood**

There is a need to ensure a common understanding of what child protection means among all partners at all levels, and how it applies to good practice in children's participation. This means exploring and understanding the synergies between the two concepts in order to better illustrate how participation can help to promote protection. This can be done by taking the key components or elements of meaningful children's participation and the concepts or principles behind it (such as Practice Standards) and then making the various linkages between children's participation and child protection work in practice in all its different forms and at all different levels (child protection policies, child protection programmes, child protection systems and so on).

#### **7. A long term vision with realistic goals is needed**

If children are to be central to follow up, each project or process needs a long term vision of what it is trying to achieve through their participation with realistic and achievable goals. This needs to be conveyed to all the stakeholders involved. Such a vision or strategy needs to focus on ways to ensure the systematic involvement of children on issues of relevance to them in child friendly structures and mechanisms at different levels (in the community, in governments) which are accessible to children and through which they can influence decision making. It is part of the process of ensuring quality follow up with the children involved and adult accountability to

children for the commitments that are made during these processes. How has the process helped children to influence policy makers and how are their voices and actions being translated into better programming and policy making? How are the recommendations from children influencing current and future planning cycles of key organisations? And, what are the creative ways in which children are being involved in follow up plans and actions? These are all key questions which need to be answered in this follow up period.

### ***Taking the recommendations forward***

Meaningful children's participation means letting children's genuine statements emerge, respecting the fact that they have their own views, ways of expressing themselves and ideas about the world in which they live. It means children being genuinely involved in decision-making processes and being recognised as partners in the work to bring about positive changes in their lives. It means giving children the space to lead and develop their own processes with the support and guidance of and in partnership with adults.

This .. means allocating more time – and money – to allow similar processes to develop and unfold in more genuinely child led ways. At present most processes are still mainly designed by adults with specific outcomes that are often also adult generated (for example, children's participation in a high level meeting). The result is that children do participate in the process, they do have the space to tell what they know, what they feel and what they think the solutions are or should be. But, in the process children's genuine involvement in leading the process and in making decisions will often get compromised. This means that children will continue to be consulted for their competence – what they know about a given issue or situation – but will still not be recognised as a key stakeholder involved in designing, developing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating processes from their beginning to their conclusion.<sup>69</sup>

Save the Children should continue to build on its work in promoting the ethical and meaningful involvement of children in both the UNGASS and the UN Study by ensuring that:

- key learnings from the process of supporting children's participation in the UN Study are used to improve Save the Children's programme work on violence against children, as well as its work on children's participation in general
- the meaningful engagement of children in Save the Children's programme work continues to be strengthened in order to improve its work on violence against children
- children's participation is an integral element of government, UN agency and Save the Children's own work on child protection as a key feature of implementing the UN Study recommendations and monitoring their implementation

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69. *Assessing Children's Participation, 'Children and Young People Act Now!'*, as before.

- capacity continues to be built so that children and young people and the adults who are engaged with them have increased capacity to promote implementation of the UN Study recommendations
- priority is given to local and national work with children and that any investments in global processes should clearly build on national (and also regional) processes
- future processes clearly demonstrate meaningful and ethical children's participation, particularly through adherence to minimum practice standards
- the lessons learned from both the UNGASS and the UN Study are used to inform children's participation in other key Save the Children initiatives such as Rewrite the Future

As Professor Pinheiro has acknowledged in his progress report to the United Nations General Assembly in October 2007: 'The study has raised the expectations of millions of children in all regions'.<sup>70</sup> Children's participation in the UN Study has further been cited as a good example from which other agencies and processes are willing to learn – for example, Save the Children's Rewrite the Future global challenge. It has also influenced the drafting of the General Comment on Article 12 that will probably be adopted by the Committee on the Rights of the Child in their session in May 2008.

The challenge before everyone involved in this process therefore remains to build on the participation of children in the Study and to continue the work begun to involve and empower children as full and active partners in addressing violence against children and to include them in meaningful ways in the development, planning, implementation and assessment of policies and programmes to eliminate it.

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70. UN General Assembly, 62nd session, Third Committee, Promotion and protection of the rights of the child, 2007.

# A Poem

To some of you this is just another poem,  
But to the children here it is a declaration of a life learnt lesson

You will walk away from this and may not even remember  
But the voices in our heads will scream forever  
Voices that to you may seem so faceless

But actually represent children from so many places  
Children who have placed their lives in your hands  
Children who see hope through your very eyes  
Children who breath, feel and laugh  
Children who cry when there is no one to help them when things get so rough

For children who felt they were all alone,  
They felt they found angels when you all came along  
It is for these children that we are all here today

And our jobs are far more important than simple words can ever say  
We must fulfill our promise in each and every way  
To make a world for children that will only get better and better each  
And everyday

Let it be that one day there will be no violence against children  
Let it be one of us who will say we helped achieved it  
Never look at the many reasons why something may seem impossible  
Look at all the children here and you will believe like we do

That everything is possible.

*Kapaya Kaoma, Zambia*<sup>71</sup>

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71. Taken from Children and Young People's Preparatory Forum for the International Launch of the UN Secretary-General's Study on Violence against Children, *as before*. Poem reproduced with permission.

## A Postscript: 2007 and beyond

As this review has noted, 2006 was a crucial year for ensuring that:

- the recommendations of children from the 2005 regional consultations and official submissions to the UN Study were included in the final Study report
- a child- or reader-friendly report of the UN Study was published, translated and made widely available to children all over the world and other child friendly materials for different age groups and for promoting children's actions were produced
- the recommendations of children to end violence against children were supported by member states of the UN General Assembly
- national governments acknowledged the importance of the UN Study and committed themselves to initiating meaningful follow up processes that involve children and that respond to the study findings and the priority issues identified by children in each country
- children were recognised as partners in the decision-making and follow up process

In 2007, with the Study report launched, the challenge lay in keeping the momentum and follow up with the children and young people involved in the Study.

From information collected by Save the Children as a contribution to Professor Pinheiro's progress report on the 1st year of follow up to the Study to the UN General Assembly, and as outlined elsewhere in this review, children and young people continued to be actively involved in follow up to the Study. They were involved in the national and regional launches of the Study that took place in 2007, for example in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. The various child friendly materials produced in 2006, including '*Safe You and Safe Me*' and '*Our Right to be Protected from Violence continued*' to be widely translated and disseminated. In West Africa, children's own plans for follow up continued to be supported. These include children's awareness raising campaigns, for example peer-peer sensitization on all forms of violence against children. In Serbia, children and young people have been involved in preparations for a national campaign to ban corporal punishment, in the development of a child friendly version of Save the Children's Child Protection Policy and, in the process for introducing a Child Rights Ombudsman. In Southern Sudan children have been involved in the drafting of Save the Children Sweden's child protection strategy and in the development of a child friendly version of the Children's Bill. Through their child rights clubs children have also been involved in discussing issues of violence and child abuse and are being trained to protect themselves from assaults and sexual abuse. In Cambodia Children's Councils have been created at school level through the Cambodia National Council for Children Basic Education Program. These Councils discuss issues related to violence against children in schools. Children are also participating in village child protection networks through Save the Children Norway's Village Safety Net Programme. In Venezuela children and young people played a very active role in an ultimately successful campaign to introduce a law banning corporal punishment.

On or around 19th October, thousands of children in Africa, the Middle East, Latin America, Asia and Europe participated in Save the Children's 2nd worldwide Day of Action against violence against children, calling on governments across the globe to put an end to the daily violence against them.<sup>72</sup>

And finally, on 27th November 176 of the 177 UN member states represented at the UN General Assembly voted to establish a global champion for the protection of children – a Special Representative of the UN Secretary General on Violence against Children. Some of the children and young people who were part of the Study process had campaigned actively for a Special Representative. Their support for the proposal was based on their agreement that an important role for the Special Representative would be to help ensure continued children's participation in efforts to stop violence against children. As highlighted in the concluding chapter above the challenge lies in meeting these expectations.

### ***The Save the Children Task Group continues its work***

During 2007, and into 2008, Save the Children's Task Group on Violence against Children has continued to actively work to ensure that children are engaged in follow up actions and mechanisms and that support is given to child-led initiatives and their own plans to address violence. This has included discussions to support children's involvement in the work of the NGO Advisory Council that has replaced the previous NGO Advisory Panel as well as, and especially, in the work of the Special Representative once appointed.

It has continued to advocate for children's involvement to be an integral element of government, UN agency and Save the Children's own work on child protection as a key feature of implementing the UN Study recommendations and monitoring their implementation. Within this work the need is recognised to further develop and enhance technical expertise on children's participation across regions as a priority issue. This is important in terms of the ability of all actors to promote and support meaningful, sustainable and inclusive children's participation within permanent structures and processes.

The production of additional child friendly materials has been supported, including a follow up publication to *'Safe You and Safe Me'* focusing on inclusion and non-discrimination and an Advocacy Handbook for children and young people to support their involvement in planning and implementing their own action plans especially in relation to follow up to the UN Study.<sup>73</sup> In addition, there are plans to evaluate the child friendly materials produced for the Study and to support the more systematic involvement of children in key reporting procedures, including meetings and consultations with children in country.

This work continues into 2008.

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72. For more information see Save the Children's Worldwide Day of Action against violence against children, 2007 (newsletter). Available from Save the Children Sweden [www.rb.se](http://www.rb.se).

73. Both publications forthcoming, 2008

# Listing the resources

## USEFUL REFERENCE DOCUMENTS ON CHILD PARTICIPATION SAVE THE CHILDREN

(Produced for UN Study on Violence against Children)

Name of Publication	Produced by	Year	Language				Format			
			English	French	Spanish	Other	Hard copy	PDF/Word	CD Rom	Online <sup>74</sup>
1. So You Want to Consult with Children? A Toolkit of Good Practice	Save the Children	2003	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓
2. So You Want to Involve Children in Research? A toolkit supporting children's meaningful and ethical participation in research relating to violence against children	Save the Children	2003	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
3. Key recommendations for involving children in national and regional consultations for the UN Study on Violence against Children	Save the Children	2004	✓				✓			
4. Promoting Children's Meaningful and Ethical Participation in the UN Study on Violence Against Children: A Short Guide for Members of the NGO Advisory Panel and Others	Save the Children	2003	✓				✓	✓		
5. Creating a Process Fit for Children. Children and Young People's Participation in the Preparations for the UN Special Session Children	Save the Children	2004	✓				✓	✓		
6. 12 Lessons Learned from Children's Participation in the UN Special Session on Children	Save the Children	2004	✓				✓	✓		✓
7. Children's Participation in International-Level Meetings: A report based on feedback from under-18 participants at the United Nations Special Session on Children	Save the Children	2003	✓				✓	✓		
8. Practice Standards in Child Participation	Save the Children	2003	✓	✓	✓			✓		
9. A Workshop Report on Child Participation in the UN Study on Violence Against Children	Save the Children	2004	✓				✓	✓	✓	
10. Save the Children's role and responsibility in relation to children's meaningful and ethical participation in the UN Study on Violence against Children	Save the Children	2004	✓				✓			

74. Materials listed are available online at [www.savethechildren.net](http://www.savethechildren.net) or [www.rb.se/eng](http://www.rb.se/eng)

Name of Publication	Produced by	Year	Language				Format			
			English	French	Spanish	Other	Hard copy	PDF/Word	CD Rom	Online
11. Seen and Heard: Participation of Children and Young People in East Asia Pacific in Events and Forums Leading up to and Following up on the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Children	Save the Children South east, East Asia and Pacific Region	2004	✓				✓	✓	✓	
12. What is the United Nations Study on Violence against Children?	Save the Children	2005	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		
13. Questions & Answers for Children and Young People on the UN Study on Violence against Children	Save the Children	2005	✓				✓	✓		
14. Violence against Children. The voices of Ugandan Children and Adults. By Dipak Nader	Raising Voices/ Save the Children in Uganda	2005	✓				✓	✓		
15. Voices of Girls and Boys to end Violence against Children in South and Central Asia. By Neha Bhandari with Fahmida Jabeen and Manoj Karki	Save the Children Sweden Regional Office for South and Central Asia	2005	✓				✓	✓	✓	
16. Children's voices Against Violence against Girls and Boys. A film made for the UN Study on Violence Against Children in South and Central Asia.	Save the Children Sweden Regional Office for South and Central Asia	2005	✓						✓	
17. What Save the Children thinks about physical and humiliating punishment. Information for children and young people	Save the Children	2005	✓				✓	✓		
18. Act Now – Some Highlights from Children's Participation in the Regional Consultations for the UN Study on Violence	Save the Children	2005	✓				✓	✓		
19. Children's Actions to End Violence against Girls and Boys	Save the Children	2006	✓				✓	✓		✓
20. Safe Me and Safe You – Violence is Not OK (for 5-12 Years Old)	Save the Children	2006	✓				✓	✓		✓
21. United Nations Secretary-General's Study on Violence Against Children: Adapted for Children and Young People	UN Study on Violence Against Children	2006	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
22. Film: Children's Actions to End Violence Against Girls and Boys: A Global Initiative: A 26-minute DVD on children's actions	Save the Children	2006	✓						✓	✓

*Note: Many regions have prepared child friendly report from their consultation.*

# A questionnaire for assessing children's participation in the UN Study

## 1. Some questions for assessing the application of an Ethical Approach:

From children's participation in national, regional and international processes related to the UNVAC you have been involved in supporting:

- Were children's voices heard on an equal footing with adults?

If yes, then how? – in planning groups, in consultations, in outcome documents/declarations/statements in launch preparations and activities, others. For example, to what extent were children's recommendations reflected in the Regional Declarations? *Please describe.*

If no, please describe why not and your assessment of the way in which children's voices were heard

- Were guidelines for children's participation developed?

If yes, by whom, what did these guidelines include, how were they implemented and assessed? *Please describe.*

- In your region were there national preparatory activities with children and young people which led / fed into regional processes?

If yes, *please describe.*

If no, why not and what is your viewpoint on this?

What difference do you think local/national processes made to children's participation in regional or international processes? *Please describe.*

- In situations where children's representatives were chosen, was there an open nomination and selection process?

If yes, then how did this work? What criteria were established and by whom? Were there any limitations on participation (for example, numbers of representatives, language considerations, others)? If yes, who decided on these and how were they communicated to children and young people? *Please describe.*

- What is your assessment of the quality of cooperation between SC and other agencies in facilitating children's participation in your countries / region?
- For regions in which SC did not engage in regional processes, can you describe and assess any other positive outcomes from your support to children's involvement in the UN Study process?
- What were the constraints on implementing an ethical approach? *Please describe.*

## 2. Some questions for assessing the application of a Safe Approach:

From children's participation in national, regional and international processes **related to the UNVAC** you have been involved in supporting:

- Did you always develop a child protection strategy for each consultation, activity involving children and young people?

If yes, what did this contain and by whom was it developed? *Please describe.*

- What mechanisms were used to promote safe participation? *Please describe.*
- What was done to try and make sure that accompanying adults adequately fulfilled their roles and responsibilities? What mechanisms are needed to ensure that accompanying adults feel 'useful' and have something to do during child only consultations, events, activities? *Please describe.*
- Did 'just graduated youth' (over 18s) play a role in processes in your country or region?

If yes, *Please describe.*

- What were the constraints on implementing a safe approach? *Please describe.*

## 3. Some questions for assessing the application of a Non-discriminatory Approach:

From children's participation in national, regional and international processes **related to the UNVAC** you have been involved in supporting:

- What did you do to ensure respect for diversity and equality of opportunity? Please describe
- What did facilitators do to ensure this? Please describe
- How did you overcome language as a barrier to equal participation? What measures did you put in place, how well did they work and, in your opinion, what else needs to be done? *Please describe.*
- Were you able to ensure that the voices of the most difficult to reach children were also heard, their opinions equally valued and taken into consideration?

If yes, how did you achieve this? *Please describe.*

- What were the constraints on implementing a non-discriminatory approach? *Please describe.*

#### 4. Some questions for assessing the application of a Child friendly Approach:

From children's participation in national, regional and international processes related to the UNVAC you have been involved in supporting:

- Did you produce, translate and distribute your own child friendly materials and information? This may include such materials produced globally.

If yes, *please describe*.

- What did children and young people find particularly helpful and why? What did their participation help them learn or develop further? This may relate to their 'at-home' preparations for participation, preparatory meetings, activities, consultations and so on. *Please describe*.
- What was done to sensitize key adults (in the community, in consultations and so on) to children's participation in these processes? *Please describe*.
- What measures were taken to open or increase spaces for children's participation, particularly in national, regional consultations? *Please describe*.
- What elements of logistic support (venue, accommodation, food and so on) helped strengthen the child friendly approach? Please describe. What more needs to be done in this respect?
- Listing the various activities, consultations and so on with, for and by children and young people, can you rank – on a scale of 1-10 - the extent to which these were shaped and driven by children and young people? For example, 10 would be 100% shaped by children and 1 would be not at all shaped by children. Can you explain the ranking you give to each activity, what you feel would have been an ideal ranking and how the 'ideal' could have been achieved?

Examples could be – national consultations with children in preparation for regional processes, regional consultations, follow up meetings/activities at the national level, local-level initiatives and so on

- What were the constraints on implementing a child-friendly approach? *Please describe*.

#### 5. Ensuring Quality Follow Up to the UNVAC:

- Are key actors in your country and/or region responding to and taking forward the recommendations made by children and young people? *Please describe*.
- Are children's voices and actions influencing policy makers and being translated into better programming and policy making?

If yes, in what way and how is this being achieved? *Please describe*.

- Are the recommendations made by children and young people influencing cur-

rent and future planning cycles of Save the Children, SC partners and other organizations?

If yes, in what way and how is this being achieved? *Please describe.*

- How has children's participation in the UNVAC influenced Save the Children as an organization and its program and advocacy work and so on (both positive and negative)? *Please describe.*
- Are children are being involved in follow up plans and actions? If yes, how? *Please describe.*
- How are children and young people who took part in the 2 global meetings in New York in 2006 being supported to link up with other children and young people involved in the national and regional processes? For example, sharing experiences and outcomes, planning follow up actions to the UNVAC and so on
- What is being done to support and strengthen children's own initiatives and actions? What are the support needs they have identified from adults? *Please describe.*

*Save the Children fights for children's rights.  
We deliver immediate and lasting  
improvements to children's lives worldwide.*

## **WHAT IS THIS PUBLICATION ABOUT?**

'Progress or Progression' reviews children's participation in the UN Study on Violence against Children in the period from 2003 to the international launch of the Study in October 2006.

It looks specifically at the progress made and lessons learned since the 2002 Special Session on Children based on Save the Children's support to the involvement of children in the UN Study.

## **IS THIS FOR ME?**

If you are a member of Save the Children or a partner in the process of supporting children's participation in the UN Study process, this publication is intended as a reflection on this specific contribution to the Study.

## **WHAT CAN I LEARN FROM THIS PUBLICATION?**

It presents and shares the achievements, challenges and good practice related to the involvement of children in addressing violence against them. This provides a base from which to intensify efforts among all the actors involved at all the different levels – national, regional and international – in continuing support for children's meaningful involvement in the follow up to the UN Study. And, especially in advocating for and monitoring the clear implementation of the Study's final recommendations.



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