**UNICEF input on the right to development of children and future generations**

29 March 2024

UNICEF welcomes the opportunity to provide input to the Special Rapporteur on the right to development’s upcoming report on the right to development for children and future generations. This submission will focus primarily on the right to development for children.

# 2. How are the human rights of children and future generations impacted by development-related decisions (e.g., related to economic development or new technologies) made by the present adult generation? Please provide examples from your country or area of work.

The human rights of children are uniquely impacted by development-related decisions. UNICEF examined the available data on the 48 child-related SDG indicators, around five domains of child well-being: Survive and Thrive, Learning, Protection from Harm, Safe and Clean Environment, and Life Free of Poverty. (For the list of indicators for each domain, see: [Dashboard on SDG Effort and Recent Progress](https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/unicefdata/viz/dataviz-sdg-benchmark-draft9v3/qa-heatmap5?publish=yes)[[1]](#footnote-2)). The data show that only 11% of countries have met their targets for 2030.[[2]](#footnote-3) Particularly the indicator group Protection from Harm requires significantly more effort to reach the target. Moreover, one in three children worldwide lack access to basic services such as health care, nutrition, education and social protection.[[3]](#footnote-4)

Comparative benchmarking of current status and 2030 targets on a global level:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Indicator group** | **Average current position**  | **Average target for 2030** |
| Survive and thrive | 50.28% | 67.85% |
| Learning | 49.67% | 72.39% |
| Protection from harm | 50.47% | 104.34% |
| Safe and clean environment | 50.29% | 93.81% |
| Life free of poverty | 50.36% | 84.14% |

Source: UNICEF data warehouse 2023[[4]](#footnote-5)

Specific ways in which development-related decisions impact children include:

**Economic development**

* It is estimated that globally, 333 million children are living in extreme poverty, and nearly 1 billion children living in multidimensional poverty. At the current rate of progress, achieving the Sustainable Development Goals’ poverty targets are out of reach. [[5]](#footnote-6) Economic hardship is a significant driver for child labour, child marriage, migration, and sexual exploitation (and business activity may be contributing to them). Moreover, poverty remains one of the most obstinate barriers to access to education.
* Business is intrinsic to the social and economic fabric of our world, and virtually all children are impacted one way or another by business activity – as consumers of products and services, through exposure to marketing and advertising, as young workers or child labourers, as users of digital platforms, or through the environments where they live and play. And business activities and relationships that adversely impact parents and caregivers can have indirect but significant impact on children. Family-friendly workplace practices and policies relating to working adults have big consequences for children. For workers who are parents or have caregiving responsibility for children, business (and government) policies such as paid parental leave and paid sick leave, living wages, access to affordable, quality childcare and health care, breastfeeding and nutrition support, child benefits, flexible working arrangements, and the regulation of overtime and working hours can have very real implications for the physical, emotional and intellectual development of their children. Family-friendly workplace policies practices are integral to decent work by allowing parents and caregivers to balance work and family life, and to provide the care, attention, and resources their children need to thrive.
* Research has shown that longer periods of paid parental leave (for both mothers and fathers) improve child health and lower poverty. In low- and-middle income countries a one-month increase in paid maternity leave has been found to reduce infant mortality rates by 13%. But, according to a 2022 ILO report, 30% of women globally lack access to sufficient paid maternity leave.[[6]](#footnote-7) In addition, almost two-thirds of the world’s children under age 1 live in countries where fathers are not entitled to a single day of paid paternity leave[[7]](#footnote-8)
* Studies have also shown that increases in the minimum wage are associated with significant decreases in children’s malnutrition indicators such as stunting and low birthweight, and decreased risk of child maltreatment.

**New technologies**

Technology is continuously and rapidly evolving. The task of finding the best balance between realising opportunities, reducing risks, and preventing harm to children in the digital environment remains a challenge for both policymakers and industry.

* The digital environment can enable and enhance children’s access to high-quality inclusive education, including reliable resources for formal, non-formal, informal, peer-to-peer and self-directed learning. However, not all children can benefit from technological advancements due to the digital divide, which can negatively impact children's right to non-discrimination, education and information access.[[8]](#footnote-9)
* Vulnerabilities to threats to online safety (i.e. exposure to violent and sexual content, cyberaggression and harassment, gambling, exploitation and abuse, and the promotion of life-threatening activities) can violate children’s right to life, survival and development.[[9]](#footnote-10)
* Business activities in the digital environment can also pose direct risks to children’s rights. For example, companies (and governments) collect and process more data on children than ever before. Because of children’s greater cognitive, emotional, and physical vulnerabilities, the privacy and fairness concerns emerging from the collection of adults’ data are magnified in the case of children’s data. One aspect of this relates to the fact that children are less able to understand the long-term implications of consenting to their data being collected. The implications of surveillance and tracking are also more significant for children due to greater exposure over their lifetime, and due to the importance of childhood as a time for development and experimentation with identity[[10]](#footnote-11).

**Climate change and environmental degradation**

The climate crisis is the defining human and child rights challenge of this generation and is having a devastating impact on children’s well-being. It distinctly illustrates the huge social and environmental costs of growth models that fail to be informed by long-term thinking to incorporate the adverse impacts and future costs to society and the planet as part of establishing the real costs of growth. The consequences are being borne by children, both now and in the future and examples include:

* Killer childhood diseases are spreading more because of environmental degradation and climate change.
* Children are more likely to suffer from air pollution than adults.
* Infants and young children are less able to regulate their body temperature and more prone to dehydration, making them more vulnerable during extreme heatwaves.
* Child malnutrition is worsened by crop failures and rising food prices, which is exacerbated by higher temperatures and increased rainfall linked to climate change.
* 40 million children are having their education disrupted every year because of disasters exacerbated by climate change, and this number continues to increase.
* Extreme heat is associated with an increase in mental health problems including post-traumatic stress disorder and depression in children and adolescents.[[11]](#footnote-12)

**Conflict and displacement**

* Children are dramatically over-represented among the world’s refugees. Children made up less than one third of the global population, but more than 41% among the world’s refugees in 2022.[[12]](#footnote-13)
* Displacement often breaks families apart and forces children to move on their own or live with limited support from families and communities.
* Displacement multiplies protection and safety risks. Internally displaced children are particularly vulnerable to abuse, violence and exploitation as social norms break down and protective services are no longer available.
* Displacement often disrupts education by delaying or entirely interrupting children’s learning, depriving them of the opportunity to reach their full potential.
* Displacement poses challenges to accessing essential services such as safe housing, water and sanitation, and health care or psychological support. [[13]](#footnote-14)

# 3. How to ensure a meaningful participation of children and future generations in development-related decisions at all levels (e.g., in policy formulation or impact assessment)? Are there any existing good practices or models?

UNICEF report ‘[ENGAGED AND HEARD! Guidelines on Adolescent Participation and Civic Engagement](https://www.unicef.org/documents/engaged-and-heard-guidelines-adolescent-participation-and-civic-engagement)’ lists five main strategies and 19 sub-strategies and case studies for adolescent participation in decision-making: [[14]](#footnote-15)

1. **Advocate for laws, policies practices and budgets.**

The right of adolescents to participate in all spheres of life must be underpinned by legislative and policy frameworks that strengthen and guarantee participation rights. Recognizing participation rights, incorporating them into laws, policies and practices, and providing the necessary budgetary support will ensure institutionalised participation rather than short-term, one-off participation activities.[[15]](#footnote-16)

1. **Enhance positive social norms and attitudes.**

Social norms and prevailing cultural values often impede adolescents’ participation rights in both private and public settings.[[16]](#footnote-17) Adolescents are often motivated to challenge discriminatory social norms, including in humanitarian settings, but they must be allowed to do this safely and without the risk of retribution.

1. **Build the awareness, skills capacities of adults.**

Adults must be equipped with knowledge and skills to interact with adolescents in a respectful, participatory and inclusive way and to partner with adolescents as change agents. Technical support and mentoring on participatory processes should be provided to decision-makers in families and alternative care settings, schools, other institutions, communities, and the larger society.

1. **Build the awareness, skills capacities of adolescents.**

Adolescents need information, knowledge, skills, and confidence to claim and exercise their participation rights, especially in contexts where girls and/or boys are not encouraged to express views and make decisions. Experiential learning and participatory methodologies can effectively build adolescents’ abilities to identify and address issues that affect their lives. General areas of capacity-building for adolescents include: transferable skills, child rights, gender equality and non-discrimination, participatory action research, critical analysis and project planning (including financial literacy), advocacy, media and digital literacy, and organisational development skills.

1. **Create and sustain platforms for adolescent participation and civic engagement.**

Adolescents have rights to the freedom of association and peaceful assembly (Article 15 CRC). Opportunities to meet regularly and to implement action plans through their own associations and other collaborative platforms are crucial to adolescents’ systematic participation. Platforms for such participation in both formal governance structures and informal spaces (in person and online) should be supported and strengthened, as some adolescents, especially the most marginalized, may initially be less willing and able to engage in formal spaces.[[17]](#footnote-18)

For the sub-strategies, see the [full report](https://www.unicef.org/media/73296/file/ADAP-Guidelines-for-Participation.pdf). The Annex to this submission contains examples and good practises.

# 4. How to integrate an intersectional approach to the participation of children to ensure that differentiated impacts on children due to various discriminations, exclusions or vulnerabilities are considered? Kindly share any good practices.

The aforementioned UNICEF report ‘[ENGAGED AND HEARD! Guidelines on Adolescent Participation and Civic Engagement](https://www.unicef.org/documents/engaged-and-heard-guidelines-adolescent-participation-and-civic-engagement)’ lays out seven key actions to promote equity and inclusion in adolescent participation and civic engagement:[[18]](#footnote-19)

1. **Adopt a twin-track approach for equitable participation:**
	1. **Identify, analyse and address barriers to inclusion, including stigma and discrimination**. Encourage duty-bearers, stakeholders, staff and adolescents to reflect upon and discuss power relations within and between groups, analyse patterns of inclusion and exclusion and implement strategies for overcoming discrimination.
	2. **Actively support the participation and capacities of adolescents who are excluded.** Target and Build solidarity among adolescents who are: out of school and working; living with disabilities; girls; ethnic minorities; affected by HIV/AIDS; married; caregivers or parents; stateless, refugees, internally displaced (IDPs) and/or on the move; living in alternative care; or lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning or intersex (LGBTQI). Consult adolescents about how they would like to be engaged, what barriers limit their participation and how to overcome them.
2. **Ensure risk assessments, child safeguarding and do no harm.** Systematically implement UNICEF’s Policy on Conduct Promoting the Protection and Safeguarding of Children, including risk assessments and mitigation*.* Prioritise conflict sensitivityand do no harm, especiallyin contexts of conflict or political insecurity. Support a safe environment for participation by increasing the awareness of communities of the benefits of adolescent participation, especially for girls, adolescents with disabilities and other marginalised groups.
3. **Support inclusive spaces *and* separate spaces for specific groups of adolescents.** Inclusive spaces enable adolescents from different backgrounds to collaborate on activities and to overcome stigma and discrimination. However, it may also useful for adolescents with similar backgrounds to meet together, build solidarity and a positive identity, and act to improve their particular situation. For example, adolescent girls are more able to discuss sensitive issues in female-only spaces.[[19]](#footnote-20)
4. **Ensure accessible, diversity-friendly information for adolescents of different ages and abilities.** Provide offline versions of online resources, as some adolescents cannot access the internet. Budget for interpreters.
5. **Disaggregate data.** Promote greater disaggregation of data to ensure critical contextual inequalities are addressed by policymakers and implementers.
6. **Strengthen partnerships with the most marginalized adolescents and their allies.** Support the training and mentoring of adults, youth and adolescents on gender equity, disability inclusion and conflict sensitivity.
7. **Advocate for equitable facilities, services, communications and policies.** Address attitudinal barriers among service providers and institutionalize accountability mechanisms to track whether marginalized adolescents are being reached. Recognize and mitigate policy tensions that may arise when marginalized adolescents begin participating in governance.

# 5. What measures should be taken to protect and empower child human rights defenders?

UNICEF's recent contribution to the issue of child human rights defenders focuses on children’s right to freedom of peaceful assembly.

Children who exercise their right to freedom of expression or engage in protests, including children environmental human rights defenders, often face threats, intimidation, harassment, and other serious reprisals. Children are affected by distinct forms of harm from adults and they operate in distinct contexts, for example schools, which provide an arena for status-related harm such as punishment by teachers. The recently published UNICEF report [Free & Safe to Protest: Policing assemblies involving children](https://www.unicef.org/media/144876/file/%20Free%20and%20safe%20to%20protest%20%3A%20Policing%20assemblies%20involving%20children%20.pdf) articulates child rights in the context of policing assemblies, the particular challenges children face in exercising this right, and the need for States to provide an overall enabling environment for law enforcement officers to police assemblies in a rights-respecting way, with specific recommendations to take into account before, during, and after assemblies take place. Recommendations for States include:

* Protect children from threats and abuse by state and non-state actors, including reprisals by families, teachers, peers or members of the community or the general public, both online[[20]](#footnote-21) and offline. During the global consultation with 447 children ahead of the Committee on the Rights of the Child Day of General Discussion on Child Human Rights Defenders in 2018, 313 children (70%) reported experiencing violence or abuse when acting as human rights defenders.[[21]](#footnote-22)
* States, State actors, and other stakeholders should receive training on children’s civil and political rights, including measures to ensure that children can enjoy them safely.
* Take all appropriate measures to ensure that no restrictions other than those that are provided by law and that are necessary are imposed on forming and joining associations or taking part in environmental protests. Laws, including those relating to defamation and libel, should not be abused to suppress children’s rights.
* Bring domestic laws in conformity with article 15 CRC and articulate the States’ obligations to both facilitate and protect, including stating the rights of children to freedom of peaceful assembly, their entitlement to be protected as they do and the removal of potential legal obstacles.
* Ensure that protection extends to online activities and take measures to ensure that children’s online participation in peaceful assembly is safe, private and free from surveillance by public and private entities.
* Provide effective remedies for violations of children’s rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association.[[22]](#footnote-23)
* All mechanisms established for human rights defenders should be known and accessible to children, which is currently not the case. Existing protection mechanisms should raise awareness and ensure that children who advocate for human rights can use these mechanisms on an equal basis as adults.[[23]](#footnote-24)
* Complaints mechanisms should be well resourced and able to independently, promptly, and thoroughly investigate allegations of child rights violations in order to hold those responsible accountable.[[24]](#footnote-25)

For the full list of recommendations, see the [aforementioned report](https://www.unicef.org/media/144876/file/%20Free%20and%20safe%20to%20protest%20%3A%20Policing%20assemblies%20involving%20children%20.pdf).

# 6. How to create child-friendly judicial and non-judicial remedial mechanisms to address violations of children’s rights in the context of development policies, projects or programmes?

Ensuring children’s access to justice/the realization of their right to remedy requires both that (1) formal and informal accountability avenues (such as the justice system, or national human rights institutions) are in place and adapted to children (‘supply dimension’)and (2) that children and their families know about child rights and receive legal, paralegal and social support in seeking redress (‘demand dimension’).

Lack of access to justice is often considered a defining attribute of poverty and exclusion. Children from poor family background and other disadvantaged groups are simultaneously more likely to have their rights violated and less likely to seek and obtain a remedy. In that sense, justice systems and other accountability mechanisms are not available to those who need it most. Yet, if accessible to all, justice systems could be a tool to overcome deprivation and restored rights that were denied. Justice systems – as well as other avenues for accountability such as national human rights institutions (NHRIs) or administrative mechanisms – have an important role to play in combating inequalities, challenging discriminatory practices and restoring entitlements that have been denied (‘levelling the playing field’).[[25]](#footnote-26)

In line with the above, UNICEF has developed a series of resources and tools to promote greater and equitable access to justice for all children, including the following selection:

* [Study on children’s equitable access to justice](https://euc-word-edit.officeapps.live.com/we/%E2%80%A2%09https%3A/www.unicef.org/media/50996/file/Equitable_access_to_justice_for_children_in_Central_and_Eastern_Europe_and_Central_Asia_-_v2_1.pdf), describing the obstacles that children face in seeking redress and what can be done to address these. It focuses on 4 countries of Europe and Central Asia but we observe the same patterns across all regions.
* [Child Rights Education Toolkit](https://www.unicef.org/media/77146/file/UNICEF-CRE-Toolkit-with-appendices.pdfChild-friendly).
* [Child-friendly complaint mechanisms (NHRI)](https://euc-word-edit.officeapps.live.com/we/%E2%80%A2%09https%3A/www.unicef.org/eca/sites/unicef.org.eca/files/2019-02/NHRI_ComplaintMechanisms.pdf%20--).
* [Guidelines on child-friendly legal aid](https://www.unicef.org/eca/media/5171/file).
* [Justice system responses to child victims and witnesses in Europe and Central Asia: Summary of key achievements, challenges and recommendations](https://www.unicef.org/eca/media/14536/file).
* [Legal empowerment to advance climate and environmental justice in EAPR](https://www.unicef.org/eap/reports/legal-empowerment-advance-climate-and-environmental-justice).

The UN has also developed the following guidance for child-friendly procedures in criminal matters:

* Guidelines on Justice in Matters Involving Child Victims and Witnesses of Crime [English](https://www.unodc.org/pdf/criminal_justice/Guidelines_on_Justice_in_Matters_involving_Child_Victims_and_Witnesses_of_Crime.pdf)
* United Nations Guidelines on Justice in Matters involving child victims and witnesses of crime Online Training [English](http://www.unodc.org/justice-child-victims/login/login-form.jsp?lng=en), [French](http://www.unodc.org/justice-child-victims/login/login-form.jsp?lng=fr)
* Child-friendly version of the UN Guidelines on Justice in Matters Involving Child Victims and Witnesses of Crime [Arabic](https://www.unodc.org/pdf/criminal_justice/Guidelines_A.pdf), [Chinese](https://www.unodc.org/pdf/criminal_justice/Guidelines_C.pdf), [English](https://www.unodc.org/pdf/criminal_justice/Guidelines_E.pdf), [French](https://www.unodc.org/pdf/criminal_justice/Guidelines_F.pdf), [Russian](https://www.unodc.org/pdf/criminal_justice/Guidelines_R.pdf), [Spanish](https://www.unodc.org/pdf/criminal_justice/Guidelines_S.pdf)
* Justice in Matters Involving Child Victims and Witnesses of Crime: Model Law and Related Commentary [English](https://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/Justice_in_matters...pdf), [Spanish](https://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/Justice_in_matters_ES.pdf), [French,](https://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/ModellawFR.pdf)
* Handbook for Professionals and Policymakers on Justice in Matters involving Child Victims and Witnesses of Crime [Arabic](https://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/handbook_on_child_victims_and_witnesses._Arabic.pdf), [Chinese](https://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/handbook_on_child_victims_and_witnesses._chinese.pdf), [English,](https://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/hb_justice_in_matters_professionals.pdf) [French](https://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/09-8664_F_ebook_no_sales.pdf), [Russian](https://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/handbook_on_child_victims_and_witnesse.RUS.pdf), [Spanish](https://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/crimeprevention/Handbook_for_Proffesionals_and_Policymakers_Spanish.pdf), [Croatian](https://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/Justice_in_Matters_HR_web._Croatian.pdf)
* Training Programme on the Treatment of Child Victims and Child Witnesses of Crime - for Prosecutors and Judges [English](https://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/Training_Programme_on_the_Treatment_of_Child_Victims_and_Child_Witnesses_of_Crime_-_Prosecutors_anf_Judges.pdf)
* Training Programme on the Treatment of Child Victims and Child Witnesses of Crime - for Law Enforcement Officials [English](https://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/Training_Programme_on_the_Treatment_of_Child_Victims_and_Child_Witnesses_of_Crime_-_Law_Enforcement.pdf)

# ANNEX

**Examples of enhancing adolescent participation in Argentina, Moldova, Nepal, and Nigeria (question 2)**

**1. Advocate for laws, policies practices and budgets**

In Argentina, UNICEF provides technical assistance to the government to facilitate the involvement of adolescents in participatory budget processes, including budget monitoring and analysis. Collaboration with the Chief of Cabinet of Ministers and the Argentinian Network of Participatory Budgets has enhanced adolescents’ visibility in participatory budgeting processes. A training manual and methodologies have been developed for central government and municipal officials. As a result, over 30,000 adolescents from more than 38 municipalities have been involved in participatory budgeting through fora, dialogue and innovative communication tools. Ongoing monitoring of subnational budgets confirms that the shares of overall public investments in children have increased.[[26]](#footnote-27)

**2. Enhance positive social norms and attitudes.**

DFID Nigeria’s flagship gender equality programme, Voices for Change, uses a norms approach to inspire attitudinal and behaviour change in young people towards women’s roles in household decision-making, women’s leadership and prevention of violence against women and girls. It was designed and implemented over five years (2012–2017) across four states – Enugu, Lagos, Kaduna and Kano. It specifically targeted a population of 3 million young men and women aged 16–25 with a range of interventions. Young people were invited to join intensive ‘safe space’ dialogues in person, in their colleges or online. Transformative gender awareness training was provided for influencers in young people’s lives, such as media personalities and religious and traditional leaders, to enable them to promote positive gender behaviours. To promote societal change and to make gender equality the new cool, a branded mass media campaign, ‘Purple’, was broadcast over radio, TV and social media. Finally, to strengthen institutional commitments to gender equality, the programme supported Nigerian gender advocates to push for legislation to enshrine equal opportunities in law, to prohibit the use of violence, to give greater focus to budgeting resources for promoting gender equality and to assist women to get more involved in politics. As a result of the programme, there was a large-scale change in young people’s gender attitudes in the four states. Almost 48% of young people in the four states (1.14 million people) recognized Purple, and over 70% of them correctly identified the brand as being associated with gender equality. These ‘Purple people’ experienced greater levels of change in their gender attitudes and practices than young people who did not recognize Purple.[[27]](#footnote-28)

**4. Build the awareness, skills capacities of adolescents**

In 2017, UNICEF Moldova participated in a regional study on parenting adolescents and parenting support programmes. The study in Moldova revealed common challenges and needs identified by both parents and adolescents, including the need for non-violent communication, opportunities for adolescents to participate in family decision-making, guidance on career opportunities and increased access to information and services on reproductive health. Building upon these findings, UNICEF Moldova, in collaboration with the National Centre for Prevention of Child Abuse, developed and piloted a national curriculum on parenting adolescents that focussed on stimulating adolescents’ participation in decision-making processes, career orientation, non-violent communication and healthy lifestyles. To enhance scale-up and sustainability, advocacy is also under way to influence a National Action Plan for Parenting, and communication materials on parenting have been developed.

**5. Create and sustain platforms for adolescent participation and civic engagement.**

Strategic advocacy and collaboration by CSOs with the Government of Nepal has resulted in positive trends in support of community- and school-based child clubs and adolescent involvement in various local governance structures and processes, including health and school management committees and citizens’ forums at the district, municipal and village development committee levels. The Child-friendly Local Governance strategy in Nepal has institutionalized adolescent participation in planning committees and processes through consultations known as ‘bal bhela’. The bal bhela uses a systematic creative methodology (such as risk-mapping and visioning) to consult with adolescents (generally 12–18 years old) about their needs and demands for their community and to ensure that their priority concerns are reflected in local municipal planning and budgeting processes. For instance, based on adolescents’ demands, Sunwal municipality integrated plans and budgets for various child-focused activities including training on child rights, enhanced girl-friendly toilets in schools, and awareness campaigns on child marriage and labour exploitation.[[28]](#footnote-29)

**Examples of model on child and youth participation in local governance in India**

In India, the efforts so far have pointed towards the need for empowering the local government namely, the Panchayats and the local communities to localize and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially those related to children and women. The Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR), therefore, launched an initiative called “Localization of SDGs (LSDGs)” in late 2021, to accelerate the last mile delivery of SDG outcomes through the Gram Panchayats (GPs), the lowest level of local governance unit in India.

India is one of the early adopters of the CRC in 1992 and has been committed to realise rights of children as progress for children is a way to prioritize SDG based outcomes. Therefore, a child rights-based approach to SDG agenda is highly relevant. The GPDP guideline, Central Finance Commission grant and MoPR’s award for Child Friendly Panchayats provide enabling environment for promoting child friendly villages.

The GPDP guideline by MoPR proposes inclusion of the following child friendly inputs in GPDP:

1. **Child Protection**: GPs should focus on protection of children from violence and exploitation, such as child marriage, child labour, child abuse;
2. **Education**: GPs should recognize the importance of quality Early Childhood Education (ECE) and learning outcomes of children; transition to higher classes;
3. **Nutrition and Health**: GPs should assess nutritional status of children (0-18 years), including pregnant women;
4. Ensure 100% immunization, conduct social audit of neonatal and maternal deaths;
5. **Child Budgets**: Mandatory budgetary allocation for child centred priorities; child protection for all including early childhood (0-6 years), childhood (6-10), and adolescence (10-18)
6. **Water and Sanitation**: Ensure safe hygiene and good practices for clean drinking water and sanitation in communities and households.

To ensure complete institutionalisation of child and adolescents’ participation in village level planning, development and budgeting, since 2022, UNICEF supported MoPR to develop the guidelines and advisories to do help villages organise the Bal/Balika Sabhas (children assemblies). The children's assemblies are expected to meet before the Gram Sabhas (village assemblies) and adopt resolution on children and adolescents’ priorities in the preparation of the village plans known as the Gram Panchayat Development Plans (GPDPs).

In addition, UNICEF collaborated with the MoPR to collate and compile good practices on child friendly and child responsive local governance across Indian states. The link below provides all the documents that were developed in collaboration with MoPR and launched at a National Workshop organised by MoPR and UNICEF.

Furthermore, in 2019, the Centre for Gender Studies and Development (CGSD) at National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR), Hyderabad, has established a Child Rights Resource Unit (CRRU-UNICEF) in collaboration with UNICEF India. The unit is undertaking training and capacity building activities as well as supporting research on child rights with the aim of advocacy at various levels.

* MoPR Letter on Child Friendly Villages: <https://cdnbbsr.s3waas.gov.in/s316026d60ff9b54410b3435b403afd226/uploads/2023/02/2023021779.pdf>
* YouTube video on Child Friendly Villages /child participation (Bal Sabhas): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AZKQISdV-tw>
* Materials on good practice compendium and Advisories on Bal Sabhas: <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1NXAOJhSmHFB9lWH4Wo4WsW--GrOqQ6xG>
* Child Rights Resource Centre:<http://nirdpr.org.in/crru/index.html#:~:text=About%20Child%20Rights%20Resource%20Unit(CRRU)&text=The%20unit%20is%20undertaking%20training,of%20advocacy%20at%20various%20levels>
1. UNICEF, <https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/unicefdata/viz/dataviz-sdg-benchmark-draft9v3/qa-heatmap5?publish=yes>. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. UNICEF, <https://data.unicef.org/resources/sdg-report-2023/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. UNICEF Division of Data, Analytics, Planning and Monitoring – Data and Analytics Section, Progress on Children’s Well-Being: Centring child rights in the 2030 agenda – For every child, a sustainable future, United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), New York, September 2023, p. 12. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. UNICEF data warehouse 2023 <https://data.unicef.org/dv_index/>. See also <https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/unicefdata/viz/dataviz-sdg-benchmark-draft9v3/qa-heatmap5?publish=yes>. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. UNICEF, <https://www.unicef.org/education>. See also <https://data.unicef.org/topic/child-poverty/overview/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. International Labour Organization, ‘Care at Work: Investing in care leave and services for a more gender equal world of work’, March 2022. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. United Nations Children’s Fund, ‘Family-Friendly Policies: Redesigning the workplace of the future – A policy brief’, UNICEF, July 2019, [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
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