

Participation of Children with Disabilities

A Collection of Resources

IDDC Child Rights Task Group
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Please contact IDDCChildRights@iddcconsortium.net if you have relevant resources to add to this collection.

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Introduction

This repository document includes a selection of documents, tools, guidelines and resources on the topic of participation of children with disabilities. The document was initiated and developed by the International Disability and Development Consortium (IDDC) Child Rights Task Group. It is not an exhaustive list, and will continue to evolve as new and relevant resources are being developed. It covers a broad spectrum of topics, all with the common denominator that it relates to the participation of children with disabilities. The document is intended to be used by the IDDC, its task groups and its members.

Why do children with disabilities need to be included and participate?

Upholding children's rights:

- According to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), all children have the right to express themselves and be involved in decisions that affect them in accordance with their evolving capacities (CRC article 12). Article 2 in the CRC clearly states that all children have the same rights and prohibits any form of discrimination on the basis of race, color, gender, language, religion, ethnicity, disability or any other status.
- The right of children with disabilities to participate is also specified in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD) under article 7 on children with disabilities, where it is mentioned; "States Parties shall ensure that children with disabilities have the right to express their views freely on all matters affecting them, their views being given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity, on an equal basis with other children, and to be provided with disability and age-appropriate assistance to realize that right."
- The CRPD committee issued in 2018 a [General comment No. 7](#) on the participation of persons with disabilities, including children with disabilities, through their representative organizations, in the implementation and monitoring of the Convention.

Consulting and listening to the experts:

- Children with disabilities are the de facto experts on the experience of living with disabilities and should therefore always be consulted in questions that are directed towards them or may affect them directly or indirectly. This will result in higher quality programmes.

Advancing inclusion:

- Including and ensuring the participation of children with disabilities in various child or community consultations will contribute to reducing stigma, discrimination and attitudinal barriers in communities, as well as promoting in general a more diverse and inclusive approach in community consultations.
- Contributing to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (Agenda 2030) in accordance with the Leave no one behind agenda.

General Resources

- **TAKE US SERIOUSLY! Engaging Children with Disabilities in Decisions Affecting their Lives** (UNICEF 2013)
 - ▷ Link: <https://www.unicef.org/documents/take-us-seriously>.
 - ▷ This guideline is divided in two parts, where the first part captures the legal framework, why children with disabilities's participation is important, considerations on the physical requirements, how to ensure an accessible and inclusive process, how to ensure ethical considerations and facilitating a meaningful participation. The second part covers central questions related to how children with disabilities can be reached, what steps to take to achieve inclusive participation and how to measure and know if the participation is effective and its impact.
- **Guidelines for Consulting with Children & Young People with Disabilities** (Plan International 2016)
 - ▷ Link: <https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/library/guidelines-consulting-children-young-people-disabilities>
 - ▷ This guideline takes a practical approach to consultation of children with disabilities. Provides general considerations to take and which impairment specific considerations to take towards children with hearing, physical, visual and communication impairments.
- **Inclusion and participation** (Future Learn/London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine)
 - ▷ Link: <https://www.futurelearn.com/info/courses/children-with-developmental-disabilities/0/steps/60079>
 - ▷ This is a web page and an article, that includes a small video, that talks about inclusion and participation of children with developmental disabilities and its benefits.
- **Participation of Organisations of Persons with Disabilities in Development Programmes and Policies** IDA Global Survey Initial report 2019 (IDA 2019)
 - ▷ Link: <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/IntOrder/GlobalGovernanceSpaces/InternationalDisabilityAlliance.pdf>
 - ▷ This document, is based on the global survey in 2019 of the International Disability Alliance (IDA) and based on their Global Survey and focuses on the obligation under the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), article 4.3, to closely consult and actively involve persons with disabilities through their representative organisations. The report analyses the extent, quality, and impact of participation of Disabled Persons' Organisations (DPOs) with governments, UN bodies, and funding agencies. It highlights progress in recognition of disability rights, but also shows that participation is often uneven, insufficient, or not meaningful, especially for people with intellectual, psychosocial, and multiple disabilities. The document calls for stronger accountability, inclusive practices, and systematic involvement of DPOs to ensure that global governance decisions reflect the lived experiences and rights of persons with disabilities.

- **Increasingly Consulted, but Not Yet Participating: IDA Global Survey Report on Participation of Organisations of Persons with Disabilities** (IDA 2020)
 - Link: <https://internationaldisabilityalliance.org/blog/increasingly-consulted-not-yet-participating-ida-global-survey-report-participation>
 - The report Increasingly Consulted, but Not Yet Participating presents findings from the first global survey led by Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) on their involvement in decision-making with governments, the UN, and funding agencies. It shows that while OPDs are being consulted more often, their involvement is still largely limited, late-stage, and not meaningful. It concludes with clear recommendations for governments, UN bodies, and donors to move from consultation toward full, systematic, and rights-based participation of OPDs at all stages of policy and programme cycles.
- **What is Participation and What Barriers Do Children with Disabilities Face When Trying to Participate?** (Childhub 2017)
 - Link: <https://childhub.org/en/child-protection-online-library/what-participation-and-what-barriers-do-children-disabilities-face>
 - This is a two-page summary on the barriers that many children with disabilities experience when trying to participate.
- **UNICEF's 10 Ingredients of High Quality Participation - As Identified by Children with Disabilities** (UNICEF 2017)
 - Link: <https://childhub.org/sites/default/files/attachments/10-ingredients.pdf>
 - Super simplistic list of what it takes to ensure high quality participation based on what children with disabilities' own opinions.
- **What Should Be Known About Participation of Children with Disabilities** (Child Protection Hub for South East Europe 2016)
 - Link: https://childhub.org/sites/default/files/library/attachments/what_should_be_known_about_participation_of_children_with_disabilities.pdf
 - This one-page document is a summary that outlines where children with disabilities can participate and how.
- **Tips for Accommodating Children with Different Disabilities in Participation Settings** (Child Protection Hub for South East Europe 2016.)
 - Link: https://childhub.org/sites/default/files/library/attachments/tips_for_accommodating_children_with_different_disabilities_in_participation_settings.pdf
 - This is a three-page summary that in a simple way outlines tips for accommodating and what to consider when ensuring the participation of children with various types of impairments (visual, hearing, speech/communication impairments, physical/mobility Impairments, hyperkinetic disorder, psycho-social disabilities and autism). Link to the same content but presented as a infographic.

- **Listen include Respect - international Guidelines for Inclusive Participation** (Inclusion International and Down Syndrome International)
 - ▷ Link: https://www.google.com/url?q=https://www.listenincluderespect.com/&sa=D&source=docs&ust=1770044518754191&usg=AOvVaw3MGq4_mm1Xqclk9v6Y50i4
 - ▷ The Listen Include Respect guidelines explain how organisations can include people with intellectual disabilities, and were developed by Inclusion International and Down Syndrome International with input from over 1,500 people and families across nearly 100 countries. The guidelines include a “how-to guides” that contains nine categories or context sections that explains the different things that an organisation should do to make parts of your work more inclusive and inclusive to people with intellectual disabilities.
- **We Want to Participate - Guidelines for the Inclusion and Participation of Children with Disabilities** (Save the Children June 2026)
 - ▷ Link: <https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/document/we-want-to-participate-guidelines-for-the-inclusion-and-participation-of-children-with-disabilities>
 - ▷ This guide gives practical ideas to remove barriers and create spaces where every child feels safe, respected, and included, no matter who we are or the disabilities we may have. The guidance was informed and led by children, including children with disabilities. It was developed using a participatory and inclusive approach, for a Malawi context, but includes suggested actions for all stakeholders irrespective of culture and country. It is written from the perspective of the children and uses a child-friendly language and design.

Research / Methodology

- **Modelling Inclusive Education - Child Led Research. A Learning Paper** (ADD 2023)
 - ▷ Link: <https://add.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Inclusive-Education-Report.pdf>
 - ▷ This is an easy and accessible presentation of a child led research, using child researchers as part of the methodology that was carried out in Tanzania. It is a 12 page user friendly document with good illustrations and recommendations at the end.
- **Young Voices in Inclusive Education A guide to help young researchers conduct action research with peers and younger children** (EENET 2018)
 - ▷ Link: https://www.eenet.org.uk/resources/docs/Young_voices_in_action_research_Final2.pdf
 - ▷ This guide focuses on how to prepare and support older children to work with their peers and with younger children on ‘child voice’ activities. It provides adult facilitators with background information, training content, and exercises to prepare young people in action research.

- **Participatory Action Research with Disabled Adolescents in Nepal (PARDAN) to develop methods and materials to understand their experience of COVID-19 (UCL)**
 - ▷ Link: <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/global-health/research/z-research/pardan>
 - ▷ This webpage hosts a range of resources on participatory action research from the PARDAN project. It includes videos, project information, and research briefs.
- **Strengthening the voices of adolescents with disabilities in Nepal - Conducted by International Centre for Evidence in Disability and London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine**
 - ▷ Link: <https://www.lshtm.ac.uk/media/23451>
 - ▷ This is a summary of a research project designed to understand the most important issues for adolescents with disabilities in Nepal.
- **Amplifying the Voices of Children with Disabilities (Able Child Africa Network 2025)**
 - ▷ Link: <https://ablechildnetwork.org/resources/amplifying-the-voices-of-children-with-disabilities/>
 - ▷ This report presents the findings of a survey conducted to understand the priorities and experiences of children with disabilities in East and Southern Africa regarding their human rights. This survey aimed to provide valuable insights into the challenges and barriers these children face and their needs and aspirations for a better world. By highlighting their voices, the report seeks to inform policy and programme development to better support the realisation of the rights of children with disabilities across the continent.

Safeguarding

- **Disability-Inclusive Child Safeguarding Guidelines and Toolkit** (Able Child and Save the Children International 2021)
 - ▷ Link: <https://www.ablechild.org.uk/resources/safeguarding-guidelines/>
 - ▷ These guidelines have been developed to respond to an existing gap in child safeguarding practices, which often fail to recognize the specific requirements and adaptations needed to ensure the safety of children with disabilities. The guidelines build on consultations with children and youth with disabilities as well as experience from over 20 organisations. Through the guidelines, you will find information about best practices, as well as practical tools and helpful recommendations. The different chapters are useful for both organising for disability-inclusive child safeguarding and for making each step of the child safeguarding cycle disability-inclusive. The toolkit provides helpful solutions for organisations and practitioners working across development and humanitarian sectors on how to plan for disability-inclusive child safeguarding programmes. Each tool provided shows how to include children with disabilities within programmes, this is important as it is essential we identify, monitor, and build into our programme design risks that children with disabilities may experience as a result of engaging in activities or programmes.

Education

- **Participation of children with disabilities in school: A realist systematic review of psychosocial and environmental factors** (Maciver et al. 2019)
 - ▷ Link: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/30695082/>
 - ▷ This article is examining what helps or hinders the participation of children aged 4–12 with disabilities in school. It finds that participation is shaped not only by impairment or diagnosis, but by psychosocial factors (such as identity, competence, and children's experiences) and environmental factors (including school structures, peer relationships, adult support, physical spaces, and learning materials), highlighting the need for interventions that address the whole school context rather than clinical factors alone.

Child Rights Governance

- **Participation** (Council for Disabled children)
 - ▷ Link: <https://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/what-we-do-0/networks/making-ourselves-heard/participation>
 - ▷ This page offers a simple description of why and how the Council for Disabled Children prioritize children's participation in decision making.

Humanitarian

- **Guidelines for Children's Participation in Humanitarian Programming** (Save the Children International (2013))
 - ▷ Link: <https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/document/guidelines-childrens-participation-humanitarian-programming>
 - ▷ These guidelines have been developed to support humanitarian managers and field staff in applying meaningful and safe children's participation in different stages of the humanitarian programme response. The guidelines support emergency preparedness efforts to strengthen staff and partners' capacity to support meaningful children's participation. It includes guidance and tools to enhance meaningful children's participation in the emergency response, and in transitions to relief, reconstruction and peace-building processes.
- **Guidance on Children's Consultations in Humanitarian Contexts** (Save the Children International 2023)
 - ▷ Link: <https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/document/guidance-childrens-consultations-in-humanitarian-contexts>
 - ▷ This guidance provides practical advice for conducting meaningful and ethical children's consultations in humanitarian settings. It emphasizes using children's input to inform actions and ensuring feedback loops with communities. The methodology is designed to be realistic for complex contexts and encourages collaboration with local and

international actors. It is encouraged to conduct children's consultations in collaboration with local and national actors and other (international) humanitarian agencies. Lastly, this 'how to' guide is equally relevant when conducting children's consultations as part of other, inter-agency data collection exercises like inter-agency sector-specific needs assessments.

- **Good Examples Hearing from Girls with Intellectual Disabilities** (Inclusion International)

- ▷ Link: <https://s38312.pcdn.co/wp-content/uploads/IRC-Case-Study-compressed.pdf>
- ▷ This is a case study about how Listen Include Respect can be used in projects. It explains how we used Listen Include Respect to run inclusive focus groups with adolescent girls with intellectual disabilities in humanitarian settings in Ethiopia and Burkina Faso. This document is a "Listen Include Respect Good Example" – it is a case study that explains a way that Listen Include Respect has been used in a project. This good example talks about how Inclusion International and the International Rescue Committee (IRC) used Listen Include Respect on the "Inclusive and Accountable" project. The project is about listening to adolescent girls with intellectual disabilities to understand how to make humanitarian work more inclusive. This Listen Include Respect Good Example includes:
 - * Ways self-advocates were included in the project from the start.
 - * How we all worked together as organisations of people with disabilities, self-advocates and humanitarian workers in an inclusive way.
 - * Practical examples of inclusive tools like role-plays, storytelling, and accessible materials.
 - * Key recommendations for making humanitarian programs more inclusive.

Monitoring and Evaluation

- **A Toolkit for Monitoring and Evaluating CHILDREN'S Participation** (Save the Children International 2014)

- ▷ Link: <https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/library/toolkit-monitoring-and-evaluating-childrens-participation-introduction-booklet-1>
- ▷ This is the first booklet in a toolkit that provides a conceptual framework for measuring children's participation. Booklet 1 explains the background to the toolkit and provides an overview of children's participation. It includes a brief guide to monitoring and evaluation, with definitions of key terms and some useful resources.

- **Meaningful Youth Engagement Training Guide** (Make Way)

- ▷ Link: <https://www.make-way.org/toolkit/meaningful-youth-engagement-training-guide/>
- ▷ The Meaningful Youth Engagement (MYE) tool is a guide to effectively involving young people in youth-focused programmes. It identifies gaps in planned youth participation, and offers practical solutions for making youth participation an essential part of any youth programme.

Climate Change

- **Amplifying the Voices of Children with Disabilities on Climate Resilience and Adaptability** (Able Child Africa Network 2026)
 - ▷ Link: <https://ablechildnetwork.org/resources/climate-adaptability/>
 - ▷ Building on the Able Child Africa Network's 2024 study Amplifying the Voices of Children with Disabilities, this new research takes a deeper look into one of the areas children themselves identified as a growing concern: climate resilience and adaptability. In 2025, the Network conducted a survey with 1,112 children with disabilities across seven countries in the region. The study explores how extreme weather, access to early warning systems, community preparedness, and individual coping strategies intersect with disability to influence children's safety, inclusion, and wellbeing.

About the International Disability and Development Consortium

The International Disability and Development Consortium (IDDC) is a grouping of civil society organisations coming together around a common objective: promoting inclusive international development and humanitarian action with a special focus on the full and effective enjoyment of human rights by all persons with disabilities. A broad consortium, our membership includes organisations of persons with disabilities, non-governmental development organisations, national networks and international member-based networks.

For more information, contact: IDDCChildRights@iddcconsortium.net

IDDC member organisations



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