



Empower and Build Resilience at Children



Informational Brochure "Participation of Children and Young People"



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INTRODUCTION

In a society that aims to evolve and create an inclusive future, the **participation of children and young people** is no longer optional — it is a necessity.

When they are heard, involved, and consulted, children and young people become active, responsible, and creative citizens.

This brochure gives you a clear overview of your right to participate and how you can influence the decisions that affect your life.

What does the participation of children and young people mean?

Participation is the process through which children and young people express their ideas, engage in decision-making, and actively shape the life of the community, school, and society.

Participation is:

- a **legal and moral right**, recognized internationally (UN Convention on the Rights of the Child),
- an **act of democracy** in practice,
- an essential step toward **autonomy, confidence, and social engagement**,
- a path to personal and civic development.

According to UNICEF, “Children have the right to be heard in all matters affecting them, in addition to rights and freedoms to appropriate information, thought, expression, association and peaceful assembly. Children may exercise the right to participation in various ways, individually or in groups, including participation in decisions taken at home, at school or in the community, and this applies to all children capable of forming a view. This obligation is also reflected at the local level, and requires schools, communities, and cities to foster and enable child participation practices and structures and ensure that children can be heard safely and effectively. It is not only an autonomous right, but also a general principle of the CRC. This means that the exercise of the right to participation is an essential lever for the realisation of all children's rights.”

Participation is built:

- **in the family** – when you are listened to and involved in household decisions,
- **at school** – through councils, clubs, and student-led projects,
- **in the community** – through civic engagement, volunteering, or local initiatives.

What does consulting children and young people mean?

Consultation is an important form of participation.

It means:

- being asked what you think about a topic that affects you,
- having your opinion taken seriously,
- having the opportunity to contribute to change through ideas and suggestions.

It is important that adults – teachers, parents, authorities – create safe spaces where the voices of children and young people are **heard and respected**, not ignored.

Have you ever thought about why participation is important?

- It gives you the **power to influence** decisions that affect you.
- It helps **develop critical thinking** and freedom of expression.
- It creates opportunities to **get involved in real projects**.
- It contributes to **improving policies** for young people.
- It helps **build more inclusive and fair communities**.

