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# Children's participation rights in Finland

Summary of the Current State  
and Key Development Needs



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# Introduction

In 2016, the Council of Europe published a Child Participation Assessment Tool that Member States can use to measure their progress in implementing Recommendation CM/Rec(2012)2 of the Committee of Ministers to Member States on the participation of children and young people under the age of 18. The Assessment Tool aims to bring the practices of the Member States into line with the level required by the Recommendation and, consequently, to ensure children's right to participate in decision-making on matters affecting them as guaranteed under Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

The Assessment Tool consists of ten indicators with which Member States can assess their actions to protect and promote children's participation and their measures to create spaces for children to participate.

In early 2019, the Ministry of Justice launched a project to pilot the Assessment Tool in Finland and appointed a steering group to support and monitor the implementation of the pilot project. In addition to the Ministry of Justice, the steering group included representatives of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, the Ministry of Education and Culture, the Ministry of the Interior, the Office of the Ombudsman for Children, the Advisory Board for Ethnic Relations, the Association of Finnish Municipalities, the Central Union for Child Welfare and the Mannerheim League for Child Welfare.

In spring 2020, an assessment report entitled *"Consulted but not Heard." Children's Participation Rights in Finland.* was published in the publication series of the Ministry of Justice as an output of the pilot project. The publication at hand provides a

summary of the key observations of the assessment report.

The Assessment Tool developed by the Council of Europe aims to support Member States when measuring their progress in implementing their obligations relating to children's participation rights. The Assessment Tool is therefore not a mechanism for comparing or judging Member States. Instead, it is solely a tool for self-assessment. This is why efforts were made to examine children's participation rights and participation structures in a highly self-critical manner in the assessment report, and the aim was to call out any development needs relating to children's participation rights as openly as possible. This approach is reflected in the numerical assessment ratings provided in the report to measure the situation concerning children's participation rights in Finland.

At the time of writing in early 2020, there are several broad-based Government-level strategies, programmes and projects underway or about to be launched in Finland that have direct touchpoints with children's participation rights. In particular the national strategy for children, the national communications strategy on the rights of the child, the programme to address reform in child and family services, but also the National Youth Work and Policy Programme and the National Democracy Programme, are examples of measures contributing to action to promote children's participation rights. It is hoped that the assessment report will provide inputs and content to these processes and serve their preparation. The aim is to incorporate the findings of the report into preparatory work as part of a broader set of measures.

## Indicator 1

# Legal protection of children and young people's right to participate in decision-making is reflected in the national Constitution and legislation

## Summary of the current state

Children's right to participate in decision-making concerning them as well as the authorities' obligation to discern children's views on matters of concern to them have, overall, been taken into account well in Finnish legislation. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is in force in Finland at the level of an act of Parliament. The Constitution lays down provisions on the right of individuals to participate in and influence the development of society and their living conditions and contains an explicit provision on the right of children to influence matters pertaining to themselves to a degree corresponding to their level of development.

In addition, provisions on children's right to participate are laid down in general acts such as the Administrative Procedure Act (434/2003) and the Local Government Act (410/2015) as well as in special acts such as those pertaining to early childhood education and care, pre-primary and other education, health care and social welfare, child welfare, child custody, adoption, law concerning persons, family law, immigration, asylum-seeking and citizenship, criminal and procedural law as well as the sanctions system.

## Numerical assessment

0	No known legal provision for children to express views and for those views to be given due weight
1	Legal expression of children's right to be heard in at least two of the settings specified <sup>1</sup>
2	Legal expression of children's right to be heard in at least four of the settings specified
3	A clear legal obligation to hear and give due weight to children's views is enshrined in the Constitution and in at least six of the settings specified

## Development needs

- Legislation on children's rights to participate is regarded as being fragmented and, in some respects, inconsistent (for example, with regard to age limits concerning the obligation to hear a child), which makes it more difficult to perceive the overall picture.
- Development needs have also been identified in the assessment and ex-post monitoring of impacts on children, both in terms of legislative drafting and in terms of administrative decision-making.
- Shortcomings have been identified in the implementation of legislation, for example with regard to hearing children using sign language and children with disabilities.

<sup>1</sup>The settings specified in the Assessment Tool: school and education, child protection, care and adoption procedures, custody and access in family proceedings, health care, immigration and asylum proceedings, and criminal justice proceedings.

## Indicator 2

# Explicit inclusion of children and young people's right to participate in decision-making in a cross-sectorial national strategy to implement children's rights

## Summary of the current state

Finland does not currently have a national strategy for children as recommended by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, and the coordination of policy on children is not currently clearly within the remit of any ministry. However, as outlined in the Programme of Prime Minister Sanna Marin's Government, preparations for a national strategy for children based on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child were launched in Finland in autumn 2019. According to the Government Programme, the strategy will be based on information and research evidence and promote the implementation of the Convention of the Rights of the Child. In addition, the Government pledges to assess the child impacts of its decisions, improve child budgeting, strengthen knowledge about child wellbeing and foster the inclusion of children and young people. In the preparatory work, inclusion has been identified as a key element in child wellbeing.

## Numerical assessment

0	There is no strategy in place on children's rights
1	There is limited reference to children's rights within a broader national human rights strategy
2	There is some reference to child participation as part of a cross-sectorial national children's rights strategy
3	A distinct and coherent focus on children and young people's right to participate in decision-making exists in a cross-sectorial strategy on children's rights and includes a dedicated set of goals, an established lead responsibility (such as a child or youth ministry) and specific resources allocated to achieve its implementation.

## Development needs

- In the preparation and implementation of the strategy, particular attention should be paid to the inclusion, hearing and equality of vulnerable children. It is essential to develop cross-sectorial cooperation and to improve information provision and communications that promote the realisation of children's rights.
- The strategy should promote the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in Finland, in which case it would also be able to take into account the most vulnerable children, such as asylum-seeking children and undocumented children.
- The strategy should also take into account the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and a separate group of experts with disabilities should be included in the preparation of the strategy.

## Indicator 3

# An independent children's rights institution is in place and protected by law

## Summary of the current state

Finland's Ombudsman for Children is an independent and impartial central government authority. In terms of administration, the Ombudsman operates in conjunction with the Ministry of Justice. The Ombudsman for Children is tasked with promoting the realisation of the interests and rights of children at the general societal level. The Ombudsman has no competence in matters concerning individual children or families. The general oversight of legality concerning the rights of the child falls within the remit of the Parliamentary Ombudsman.

The duties of the Ombudsman for Children and the Parliamentary Ombudsman complement each other and together form the national oversight body required by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. The Finnish National Human Rights Institution (NHRI) consists of the Parliamentary Ombudsman, the Human Rights Centre and its Human Rights Delegation. The NHRI entity fully complies with the requirements of the Paris Principles. The Ombudsman for Children is a member of the Human Rights Delegation.

The Ombudsman for Children maintains contacts with children and young people and collects information from them in various ways, for example through the Young Advisers operating model, expert school groups, research and other studies.

## Numerical assessment

0	No ombudsperson or Commissioner for children
1	Ombudsperson/Commissioner established but not protected by law
2	Ombudsperson/Commissioner established and protected in law
3	Ombudsperson/Commissioner established and is fully compliant with the Paris Principles <sup>2</sup>

## Development needs

- There is room for improvement in awareness of the Ombudsman for Children and awareness among children of access to justice available for them. Vulnerable children in particular are not sufficiently aware of the roles of the various authorities or the access to justice available through them.
- More effective communication targeted at children is needed in cooperation with various actors.

<sup>2</sup>The Principles relating to the Status of National Institutions (Paris Principles) are available on the UN website: <https://www.un.org/ruleoflaw/files/PRINCI~5.PDF>

## Indicator 4

# Existence of mechanisms to enable children to exercise their right to participate safely in judicial and administrative proceedings

## Summary of the current state

Depending on the sector, the methods and practices employed in judicial and administrative proceedings differ slightly from each other as regards hearing and assisting children and ensuring that children are provided with information about their rights and that they understand decisions concerning themselves.

## Numerical assessment

0	No direct access to the courts for children
1	Rules and procedures to ensure access to information on rights, to free access to a lawyer, and to be heard in judicial proceedings and to have decisions explained to them in a way they can understand are being applied in one of the judicial or administrative settings listed
2	Rules and procedures to ensure access to information on rights, to free access to a lawyer, and to be heard in judicial proceedings are being applied in at least two of the judicial or administrative settings listed <sup>3</sup>
3	Full implementation of the Council of Europe Child Friendly Justice guidelines has been achieved in all of the specified judicial and administrative settings.

<sup>3</sup>The judicial and administrative settings listed in the Assessment Tool: criminal justice, family law, care and protection and immigration proceedings.

## Development needs

- The key areas in need of development relate to the child-friendliness of hearing methods and the consideration of the principle of the best interests of the child. There is a particular need for more practices that are suitable especially for young children, children with different communication needs and children belonging to different language groups.
- Children do not receive sufficient information about their rights or procedures relating to access to justice. In addition to children, also the persons who have custody of them should be aware of children's rights and the access to justice available. Unaccompanied children who have entered the country need information about the processes concerning them as well as legal aid and legal advice. Children placed outside the home are also often unaware of their rights and the obligations of the authorities.
- As regards criminal proceedings, it should be ensured, among other things, that police departments have sufficient child-friendly interrogation facilities suitable for the hearing of children and that child victims get legal assistance at the earliest possible stage of any criminal proceedings. Special attention should be paid to protective measures for children who are invited to appear in court in person. Victims' access to support and referral to support services should also be strengthened as an established part of pre-trial investigations, and the use of support persons in criminal proceedings should be promoted. In addition, the procedure by which a child could acquire a counsel/attorney in criminal and civil matters should be developed.
- The child welfare guardianship system should be utilised more efficiently than at present and developed at the nationwide level. There is also room for improvement in communicating decisions to children in formats and language understood by them.
- Significant shortcomings in procedures relating to the health of intersex children have been identified in relation to children's right to participate in decision-making concerning their treatment and care.

## Indicator 5

# Child friendly individual complaints procedures are in place

## Summary of the current state

The general oversight of legality concerning the rights of the child falls within the duties of the Parliamentary Ombudsman. The Parliamentary Ombudsman and the Ombudsman for Children together form the national oversight body under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The complaint procedures and appeal methods and periods very depending on the sector, authority and administrative or judicial process. It is difficult to obtain an overall view of the procedures, and children or those who have custody of them are not sufficiently familiar with the available complaint procedures. As a rule, the procedures are custodian-centric and take place in writing. There is very little information or assistance targeted specifically at children on how to lodge and pursue complaints.

Of the areas specified in the Assessment Tool of the Council of Europe, the child protection and school and education settings are those in Finland where efforts have been made to address the child-friendliness of complaints procedures. In addition, child-friendliness has been developed regarding the general oversight of legality (Parliamentary Ombudsman). In their current state, however, Finland's complaint procedures cannot be regarded as particularly child-friendly. Especially for vulnerable children and their parents/custodians, initiating judicial or administrative proceedings is challenging also because of fear of stigmatisation or discrimination.

## Numerical assessment

0	No complaints or feedback mechanisms in place in any of the areas specified
1	Child-friendly complaints procedures are in place in two of the areas specified <sup>4</sup>
2	Child-friendly complaints procedures are in place in four of the areas specified
3	Child-friendly complaints procedures are mandated by law and easily accessible to all children across all of the areas specified. Children are provided with information about their right to complain and receive help and support to pursue a complaint in accordance with their age and capacity

## Development needs

- Children and young people should be better aware of their rights and complaints procedures. Information should be provided in formats suitable specifically for children and using communication channels and methods used by children.
- The child-friendliness of the current complaints procedures should be assessed and developed systematically. In addition to practical procedures, attention should be paid in assessments to children's own experiences of how they feel they can influence public services if they feel that they have been mistreated.
- Especially vulnerable children, such as children with disabilities, asylum-seeking children and children belonging to sexual and gender minorities, and those who have custody of them, should be informed of complaints procedures and offered help and support in complaints processes.
- In addition, alongside retrospective legal safeguards, practices should be developed that promote the realisation of children's participation rights primarily by means other than through complaints or appeals. Children should be heard and listened to in matters concerning them, and opportunities for complaints should be available in their everyday lives and be easily accessible so that there would be no need to resort to retrospective measures.

<sup>4</sup>The settings specified in the Assessment Tool: schools and education settings, care and protection, health, criminal proceedings, family law proceedings, immigration proceedings. liittyvät toimintaympäristöt, rikosoikeudelliset menettelyt, perheoikeudelliset menettelyt, maahanmuuttoon liittyvät menettelyt.

## Indicator 6

# Children's right to participate in decision-making is embedded in pre-service training programmes for professionals working with and for children

## Summary of the current state

Children's rights and, in particular, children's rights to participate are not particularly prominent in the pre-service training of the professional groups examined in this report, with the exception of the training of community educators working as children and youth leaders/workers, where the rights of children and young people and their opportunities for participation are covered well.

Among teachers, for example, competency levels concerning democracy and human rights education vary at present and there is no uniform teacher education or training on the topic. Individual mentions of study units on children's rights can be found not only in teacher education and training but also in fields such as law, social work and social services, health care and criminal sanctions.

The content descriptions of the pre-service training of police officers do not mention children's rights. Instead, children's rights and their safeguarding in police operations are covered in in-service training for police officers. In the education and training of medical doctors, the approach is medical, with children's rights not mentioned in study programmes.

## Numerical assessment

0	Very limited or no training available on children's right to participation
1	Competency-based training on children's right to participation is included in the pre-service training curricula of at least one group of professionals specified <sup>5</sup>
2	Competency-based training on children's right to participation is included in the pre-service training curricula of at least three groups of professionals specified
3	Competency-based training on children's right to participation is included in the pre-service training curricula of at least six groups of professionals specified

## Development needs

- This report does not enable a comprehensive understanding of the inclusion of teaching in children's rights to participation in the pre-service training curricula of the various professionals. To obtain a more reliable assessment, the contents of the pre-service and in-service training curricula of professionals should be thoroughly examined looking ahead.
- In this context, however, it can be noted that general awareness of children's rights should be reinforced among all professional groups working with and for children, and that training related to children's rights should be made more effective in both pre-service and in-service training.
- Even within the same subject, there may be major differences between educational institutions and universities in teaching relating to children's participation rights. Depending on the educational institution and subject, courses related to the rights and inclusion of children may also be either compulsory or elective. Core curricula should be reviewed to ensure that the pre-service training of all professionals working with and for children provides sufficient knowledge and skills for the realisation of children's rights to participate.
- Professionals working with and for vulnerable children, such as children with disabilities or children using sign language, should be trained in using alternative forms of communication to discern a child's opinion. Teaching should be sufficiently concrete to provide students with practical tools for the inclusion of children and for discerning their opinions.

<sup>5</sup>The groups of professionals specified in the Assessment Tool: teachers, lawyers, judiciary, police, social workers, health care professionals, immigration officials, carer-givers and residential workers, prison officers, children and youth leaders/workers, civil servants and public officials.

## Indicator 7

# Children are provided with information about their right to participate in decision-making

## Summary of the current state

Policies on national communications on the rights of the child were outlined in the national communications strategy on the rights of the child completed in 2010. For the purpose of practical implementation and cooperation relating to communications on the rights of the child, a national cooperation network for communications on the rights of the child, comprising national organisations and authorities, operates in conjunction with the Central Union for Child Welfare. The Ombudsman for Children and the Central Union for Child Welfare have discussed the reform of the national communications strategy in 2020. The aim is to take into account other existing and initiated strategies and policies related to children in the formulation of the new strategy.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child provides a legal basis for early childhood education and care as well as pre-primary, primary, lower secondary and general upper secondary education, and inclusion is one of the key basic principles in early childhood education and care as well as pre-primary, primary, lower secondary and general upper secondary education. The national qualification requirements for vocational qualifications contain mentions of inclusion, of safeguarding opportunities for participation and of the development of young people's living conditions, but children's rights do not stand out in particular.

Municipalities' practices regarding providing children and young people with information vary between and within municipalities. In general, municipal information provision on participation and

decision-making effectively reaches those young people who are involved in advocacy or interest representation or youth work activities but fails to reach other young people, and younger children in particular, equally well. Municipalities and organisations provide information and advisory services for young people at both physical service points and centres and online services on a regional or local basis. In addition, there are both national and local online services targeted at young people on participation and influence.

## Numerical assessment

0	No child-friendly information is available about children's right to participate
1	Ad hoc public education/information programmes are in place to raise awareness of children's right to participate and to association
2	Child-friendly information is sometimes made available for children of different ages and in different formats, including Braille, on, for example, children's associations, services, policies, rights, consultations and government guidance
3	Comprehensive and accessible information programmes on children's rights to participation, and a compulsory component in the primary and secondary school curriculum on children's rights is introduced

## Development needs

- Public awareness of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the right of children to participate should be strengthened by, among other things, enhancing the training of professionals working with and for children. Municipal elected officials and employees should be provided with training and information on the participation and hearing of children and young people.
- In addition, municipalities should more extensively provide children with information about their rights and, in particular, using formats suitable for children and communication channels used by children. Peer-to-peer information provision among children and young people should also be strengthened, and related good practices should be disseminated more widely.
- The implementation of human rights education in early childhood education and care and in pre-primary, primary and lower secondary education and the promotion of awareness of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child should be evaluated. Measures taken by schools and educational institutions for the inclusion of children and young people should also be evaluated on a regular basis.
- Schools and educational institutions should more actively inform pupils/students and their parents or guardians about how pupils/students can participate and influence matters concerning them. In particular, the right of young children to participate in decision-making should be communicated more extensively in their daily lives. When providing information, particular attention must be paid to the special needs of vulnerable children and to ensuring the accessibility of information.

## Indicator 8

# Children are represented in forums, including through their own organisations, at school, local, regional and national governance levels

### Summary of the current state

The inclusion of children and young people in Finland is still realised mainly within structures that are formal and provided by adults. Participation structures are perceived to be largely in place, but there are shortcomings in issues including authorities' attitudes (children's opinions are not taken seriously) and in the realisation of equal participation. Existing representative structures are mainly aimed at young people, and there are hardly any structures suitable for young children available.

There are very few children and young people's forums at the national level. A regional youth council operates in around half of Finland's regions. There are differences between municipalities regarding young people's opportunities for participation and influence, with the most diverse opportunities being available in larger municipalities. Altogether 98% of Finnish municipalities have set up a youth council or equivalent youth influencer group specified in the Local Government Act, and the representative influencing opportunities of youth councils have improved in recent years. However, the participation and influencing opportunities of youth councils vary from one municipality to another. In recent years, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland has also strengthened especially young people's opportunities to participate and hearing young people in parishes.

In early childhood education and care, children's opportunities to participate and influence matters concerning themselves are supported through unit-specific children's meetings, for

example. Pupil and student association activities of schools and other educational institutions are currently quite well-established. In 2017, almost all municipalities had pupil association activities in lower secondary schools, more than 80% of the municipalities had pupil association activities in primary schools, and 70% of the municipalities had student association activities in upper secondary education. Around one in two municipalities had pupil or student association activities at all levels from primary to upper secondary education, and there were only three municipalities in Finland without any pupil or student associations.

### Numerical assessment<sup>6</sup>

0	No forums exist through which children can engage with school, local, regional and national government
1	A child/youth council or parliament exists through which children can address government at the national level
2	Child/youth councils exist through which children can address governments at the regional level
3	Legally mandated child/youth councils or parliaments exist through which children can address governments at the school, local, regional and national level

### Development needs

- The participation of vulnerable children and young people, such as children and young people with disabilities, in representative structures must be increased. Alongside representative structures, other methods of participation and influence should be strengthened so that all children and young people have equal opportunities to participate and influence.
- At all levels of government, hearing methods that meet the needs and wishes of children and young people must be introduced. Municipal, regional and central government alike must, in a comprehensive manner, consider the mechanisms used to implement the hearing of the views of young people required under, for example, the Local Government Act (410/2015) and the Youth Act (72/2006).
- A youth council or youth influencer group appointed by the local executive must be established in every municipality, and young people must be provided with access to influence in the municipality concerning all matters that can be regarded as significant for children and young people. Ensuring children and young people's diverse participation and hearing their voices requires sufficient resources (time, budget, human resources) and often also calls for changes to customary ways of doing things.
- Wishes expressed by children themselves include discussing topical political decisions more actively and organising election fairs and shadow elections at schools, lowering the voting age to 16, and encouraging children to have influence locally as well as nationally.
- The participation in and influence of children and young people in law drafting processes should be systematised, especially when it comes to legislative projects directly affecting them.
- The role and activity level of pupil and student associations should be strengthened in every way in the everyday work of schools, such as in management groups, at teachers' meetings and in parents' committees, and by sharing good practices at the national level.

<sup>6</sup>Please note: The assessment criteria provided by the Assessment Tool for this indicator in particular are too categorical, with none of the alternatives presented directly applicable to the situation in Finland. For example, at the municipality or educational institution level, the structures are mostly in place, and the same applies to the regional level, at least in part. The situation is poorest at the national level as regards structures for participation.



## Indicator 9

# Child-targeted feedback mechanisms on local authority services are in place

## Summary of the current state

There are no systematic information collection mechanisms covering all sectors in Finland for experiences of (particularly young) children concerning local authority services. Generally speaking, it also appears that only few existing feedback systems are particularly child-friendly. In this assessment, the largest volume of information on child-targeted feedback mechanisms was found concerning education, teaching and child welfare services.

National surveys and studies such as the School Health Survey, the FinLapset health and wellbeing survey, the Child Barometer and Youth Barometer are conducted at regular intervals, and monitoring data generated by them is utilised not just by central government but also by educational institutions, municipalities and regional administration in contexts such as promoting children's wellbeing, monitoring and evaluating the implementation of legislation and developing services.

Schools and educational institutions regularly ask pupils, students and their parents for feedback on issues such as safety, comfort, food and teaching. There are specific provisions concerning student feedback in vocational education and training, and the feedback is published on the education administration's Education Statistics Finland portal.

Methods for collecting feedback from children and young people in child welfare and alternative care have been developed in cooperation with organisations, for example. Municipalities use various methods to collect feedback from children and young people. There are significant area differences in practices relating to local feedback mechanisms. Organisations working with and for children and young people have developed feedback mechanisms targeted at children and young people and collected children's experiences of their everyday lives and services, of the need for them and of service development.

## Numerical assessment

0	Children do not have opportunities to offer feedback on local public services and such services are not required to offer such opportunities
1	At least two of the local public services specified <sup>7</sup> have systems in place for children to provide feedback on the services provided
2	At least four of the local public services specified have systems in place for children to provide feedback on the services provided
3	All of the local public services listed are required to have feedback arrangements in place and have established effective systems to obtain and respond to feedback from children

<sup>7</sup>The public services specified in the Assessment Tool: education and schools, alternative care (e.g. fostering, children's homes), play, recreation and sports, cultural services (e.g. museums, arts), child protection services, support for immigration and asylum seekers, family support and pre-school services.

## Development needs

- The collection of feedback on local public services should be more regular and systematic than at present.
- The child-friendliness of feedback mechanisms should be improved and their suitability for different age groups and children with different capacities should be ensured (accessibility).
- The effectiveness of feedback mechanisms should be examined, and children providing feedback should be informed of the outcomes of their feedback.
- The various sectors and actors (e.g. municipalities, organisations, researchers) should cooperate more extensively to develop feedback mechanisms.
- When collecting feedback from children, attention should be paid to employing multiple channels and to the importance of dialogue. Young people emphasise that trust and feedback requests are required for them to dare to tell and ask about matters relating to their rights and their non-realisation. Children and young people may find it difficult to provide feedback face to face and therefore hope to have opportunities for anonymous feedback.

## Indicator 10

# Children are supported to participate in the monitoring of the UNCRC (including in CRC shadow reporting) and relevant Council of Europe instruments and conventions

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## Summary of the current state

Finland's periodic reporting on the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) has repeatedly been delayed in recent years, which has also made it more difficult to compile alternative reports. Children's participation in the monitoring of instruments is currently arbitrary, and it is also unclear which authority is or should be responsible for supporting children's participation in reporting.

## Numerical assessment

0	No arrangements are in place to support children's participation in monitoring the implementation of children's rights instruments
1	Selected children are invited and supported to participate in the monitoring of the UNCRC
2	The views of a wide range of children from different backgrounds and circumstances are gathered on the implementation of the UNCRC
3	Children's own organisations receive support to systematically monitor the implementation of the UNCRC and any other children's rights instruments that the member State has ratified

## Development needs

- Periodic reporting must be enhanced so that reports will be submitted on time.
- Information on the realisation of children's rights must be collected from children regularly and more systematically, and this information must be utilised in periodic reporting. Children's more active and systematic inclusion in the monitoring of instruments requires that the authorities and others working with and for children are familiar with the key contents of the UNCRC.
- Municipalities must be included more systematically in the preparation of periodic reporting. Municipalities' knowledge and competencies could be utilised more extensively in supporting children's participation in monitoring. Municipalities should be informed of how and at which stage children and young people are included in monitoring. Municipal employees must be provided with training on the rights of the child and on the UNCRC evaluation and monitoring mechanisms.
- Existing information collection channels should, as appropriate, be used for children's participation in reporting. For example, the views of vulnerable children and young people can be obtained from peer groups and organisations.

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