Child participation in decision making: Implications for education and beyond

Francesca Gottschalk,

Hannah Borhan

OECD

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

EDU/WKP(2023)16

Unclassified

English text only

30 October 2023

DIRECTORATE FOR EDUCATION AND SKILLS

OECD Education Working Paper No 301: Child participation in decision making

Implications for education and beyond

Francesca Gottschalk and Hannah Borhan, OECD

This working paper has been authorised by Andreas Schleicher, Director of the Directorate for Education and Skills, OECD

Francesca Gottschalk, francesca.gottschalk@oecd.org

JT03530390

OECD EDUCATION WORKING PAPERS SERIES

----

www.oecd.org/edu/workingpapers

Acknowledgements

Abstract

Child empowerment is on the policy agenda of education systems around the world, in particular since the increasing emphasis in policy and research discourse on supporting children's participation rights. A large body of literature suggests that child participation in making decisions on matters that affect them is not only essential from a child rights perspective, but also that it is associated with several positive outcomes from the individual to societal level. In OECD countries there are many domains in which children can and do actively participate in making decisions, including regarding their education. This paper explores how and where children can participate in decision making, with a focus on policies and practices in OECD education systems. It outlines key considerations for child participation, including barriers that many systems are struggling to overcome.

Table of contents

FIGURES

TABLES

BOXES

1. Introduction

Child empowerment is on the policy agenda of countries around the world (Gottschalk, 2020[1]). Policy makers are exploring ways in which children[1] can be involved in decision making processes, and governments are increasingly recognising the importance of supporting children to participate across a wide range of policy domains. This has been an important point in particular in education systems in OECD countries and has been recognised in different ways. For example, the Declaration on Building Equitable Societies Through Education, adopted on 8 December 2022 on the occasion of the Ministerial meeting of the Education Policy Committee, called on the OECD to support countries to "give learners a voice in what they learn, how they learn, where they learn and when they learn" (OECD, 2022[2]). Including children in decision making and policy-making processes has also emerged as a transversal and system-wide challenge in the OECD's Centre for Educational Research and Innovation work, namely its 21st Century Children project (Burns and Gottschalk, 2019[3]; Burns and Gottschalk, 2020[4]).

In scholarly, political and societal discourse, there is growing recognition that encouraging the meaningful participation of children in decision making can contribute to better social cohesion, communities that are more egalitarian, and can help young people make healthier and more empowered transitions to adulthood (Patton et al., 2016[5]). The United Nations (UN) has defined youth participation as "the active and meaningful involvement of young people in all aspects of their own, and their communities' development, including their empowerment to contribute to decisions about their personal, family, social, economic, and political development" (United Nations (DESA), 2007[6]). Similarly, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has described youth participation as a process whereby "adolescent girls and boys (individually and/or collectively) form and express their views and influence matters that concern them directly and indirectly" (Lansdown, 2018, p. 3[7]).

Involving children and young people in decision making processes is crucial, as they constitute a significant demographic across OECD countries. As of 2021, 17.6% of the population on average in OECD countries was below the age of 15, varying from 11.8% in Japan to 28% in Israel (see Figure 1). The OECD's Youth Advisory Board (Youthwise) aptly acknowledges that at the global level "young people are a third of the population but 100% of the future" (OECD, 2022[8]). Extensive data suggests that by engaging with young people and empowering them, societies can benefit from being more cohesive and resilient, and it can strengthen democracies (OECD, 2018[9]).

Despite the significance of this demographic in OECD countries, evidence suggests that young people tend to have less trust in government than their parents' generation and are more disengaged with traditional forms of participation (OECD, 2018[9]). This underscores that they may be frustrated with the available channels for them to participate meaningfully in decision making (ibid.). Global trends in democracies such as declining civic participation, deteriorating trust and increasing polarisation (OECD, 2021[10]) highlight the importance of investing efforts to include children and young people in decision making, to empower them today and for their futures.

---

[1] The 21st Century Children project defines childhood as 0-18 years old, and also acknowledges the diversity within this age group.

Figure 1. Young population (under age 15) in OECD countries

Total, % of population, 2021 or latest available
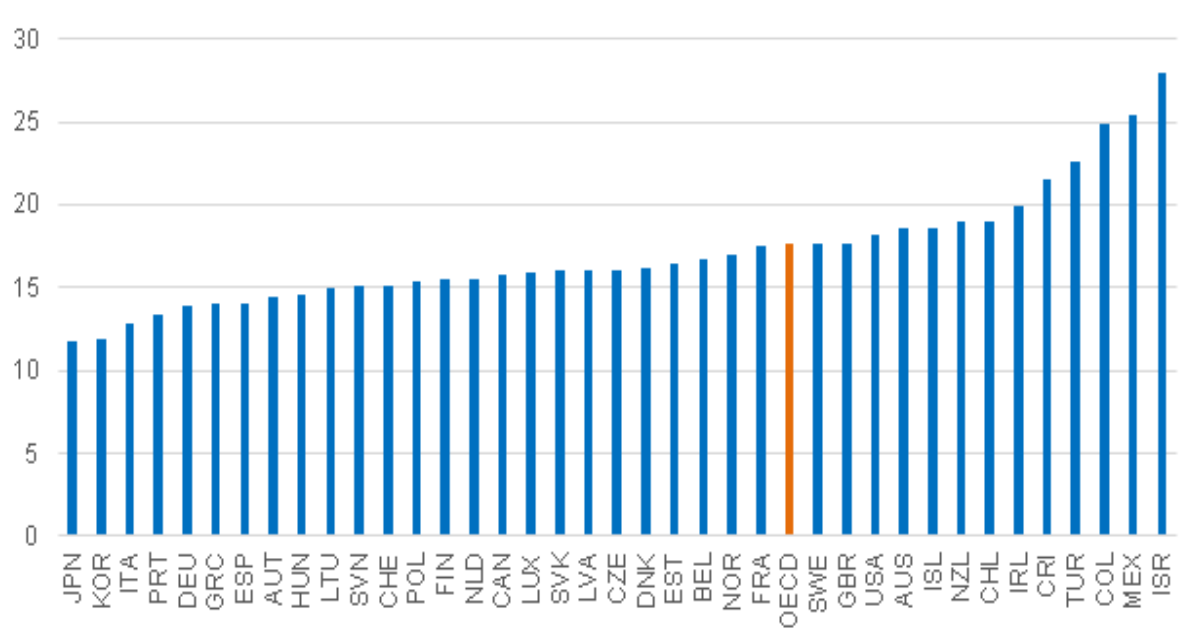
Note: The young population is defined as people under the age of 15. Source: (OECD, 2023[11]) "Young population" (indicator). https://doi.org/10.1787/3d774f19-en (Accessed on 30 March 2023).
Source:

Education systems play a key role in empowering students in becoming responsible, informed and engaged members of society. This can support them in actively participating in societal conversations and taking a role in making decisions for the good of themselves and their communities (Gottschalk, 2020[1]). Preparing students effectively for the future supports them in becoming agents of change who can positively impact their surroundings, and can understand and anticipate how their actions affect themselves and those around them both today and in the longer term (OECD, 2018[12]). In responding to changing notions of childhood and the understanding that children can and should participate in decision making, education itself must evolve to continue helping individuals develop as people and also as members of society in a complex and quickly changing world (OECD, 2019[13]).

This paper will explore the literature on child empowerment and participation in decision making. Section 2 will provide an overview on children's participation rights, and how child participation in decision making can feed into positive outcomes for society, education systems and children themselves. It will outline some of the major models of child participation.

Section 3 will explore some practical ways of how children can and do participate in different domains from public life to research, and importantly in the digital environment. Section 4 of this paper will provide examples from OECD countries of initiatives that foster decision making and give children a say, including participatory budgeting schemes in schools and volunteering practices in their communities, followed by Section 5, a country case study of child participation in practice in Ireland. Finally, Section 6 concludes with a future-focused agenda by explaining some key challenges, barriers and considerations for child participation in decision making.

2. Overview of child participation research

Children's views must be present and listened to when shaping policies at all levels of the system, as recommended by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)[2] (United Nations, 1989[14]). Factors such as the UNCRC's recognition of children as rights holders, the acknowledgement of children as competent social actors, and the development of participatory research and policy-making methods have facilitated the emerging view that children can (and should) participate in decision making and that they are actors in their own right (e.g. (Lundy, McEvoy and Byrne, 2011[15]; Cornwall and Fujita, 2012[16]; Cuevas-Parra, 2020[17])).

Participation in decision making has gradually come to be considered a practice that can enable children to positively engage in society (Archard, 2004[18]; McMellon and Tisdall, 2020[19]), and it is increasingly argued that children can influence decisions even when they are invited in to do so at so called 'low entry points' (Cousens, 2017, p. 529[20]). Engagement of children in decision making processes can help shift the narrative from focusing on the vulnerabilities of children, or looking at them as individuals in need of protection, to one that recognises them as rights holders who have the necessary abilities, skills and expertise to participate fully (Tisdall, 2016[21]).

Many national and international entities have recognised, and are recognising, the value and importance of children's participation in decision making. The UNCRC has been one of the most influential factors, in particular as it has been ratified more than any other human rights treaty. UN bodies such as UNICEF have also published about the importance of child participation in different domains, underscoring participation as a fundamental right of children and, and developing a conceptual framework to measure the outcomes of adolescent participation (Landsdown, 2018[22]).

The OECD across its portfolios including Education and Skills, Public Governance, and Science, Technology and Innovation, has also set the scene on this issue. The 2022 Ministerial Meeting of the Education Policy Committee at the OECD highlighted the importance of student voice in shaping their learning experiences (OECD, 2022[2]). The 2022 Ministerial Meeting of the OECD Public Governance Committee also stressed the importance of promoting youth participation in civic and democratic processes and in decision making to reinforce democratic systems, in line with the policy principles outlined in the OECD Recommendation on Creating Better Opportunities for Young People (OECD, 2022[23]; OECD, 2022[24]). The OECD Recommendation of the Council on Open Government recognises that stakeholder participation in policy cycles "increases government accountability, broadens citizens' empowerment and influence on decisions, builds civic capacity, improves the evidence base for policy making, reduces implementation costs, and taps wider networks for innovation in policy making and service delivery" (Nishiyama, 2017[25]). The OECD Recommendation on Children in the Digital Environment also gives primacy to children's participation. As outlined in the Companion Document to the Recommendation, children are the most important stakeholders in this space and it is important to consider the role that they can play in ensuring the digital environment is safe and beneficial for them (OECD, 2022[26]).

There are a number of other international actors that have furthered the agenda on including children in decision making processes. For example, the Council of Europe (CoE) released its Recommendation on the participation of children and young people under the age of 18, which calls for its member states to "ensure that providers of services to families and children support children and young people to participate in service development, delivery

---

[2] The UNCRC was adopted in 1989 by the UN General Assembly.

and evaluation' (Council of Europe, 2012, p. 5[27]). The CoE also highlights the different spheres of decision making that concern children, from the individual, to the family and the policy level. The Council of the European Union adopted the Recommendation establishing a European Child Guarantee in 2021, which calls on its members to recognise children as stakeholders in preparing, implementing, and monitoring and evaluating national action plans to implement the Recommendation (Council of the European Union, 2021[28]). The EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child also aims to help strengthen children's participation in society.

2.1. Recognising child and student agency

While there is no international consensus on the definition of "student agency" (OECD, 2019[29]), the term agency implies a sense of responsibility for students to participate in the world, thereby influencing others, events or circumstances (OECD, 2018[30]). Agency is something that is malleable, and developing a sense of agency is both a learning goal and a learning process in education (OECD, 2019[29]). When students are able to play an active role in deciding how and what they will learn, this can positively affect their motivation to learn.

The OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) in 2018 explored students' agency regarding global issues. This was defined as "a worldview in which one sees oneself as connected to the world community and feels a sense of responsibility for its members" (OECD, 2020, p. 63[31]). The dimension focuses on the role students can take as active and responsible members of society, referring to their readiness to respond to challenges or situations from the local to global levels. Students' sense of agency for global issues varied across OECD countries. It was highest in Costa Rica, Korea, Portugal, Spain and Türkiye, while the lowest levels were observed in Austria, Germany, Hungary, Latvia and the Slovak Republic. In most countries and economies participating in this part of the assessment, girls reported greater agency regarding global issues than boys, and in all participating countries and economies socio-economically advantaged students reported greater agency than their disadvantaged peers (OECD, 2020[31]).

Interestingly, students were more likely to agree with statements that did not involve an active role than those that implied they needed to take action. This could imply a degree of pessimism about the power of students to make a difference or that active participation requires more time and effort, or adolescents might be less familiar with more active forms of citizenship (OECD, 2020[31]). This further underscores the need for students to feel that they can meaningfully participate in decision making and that their contributions can bring about change. In order to have capacity to take action, students need knowledge, skills and attitudes that they can translate into actions that can benefit their local and global communities (Milfont and Sibley, 2012[32]).

It is important to note that children engage in decision making processes and autonomous actions in their everyday lives as well. They are active participants in settings such as their local communities, and their participation in everyday contexts might be more meaningful and impactful for their daily lives (Percy-Smith and Taylor, 2008[33]). Therefore, it is important to recognise that children do in fact have agency and are already actors in their own right. If this agency is appropriately acknowledged, it could help shift the classical vulnerability narrative to one that is more empowered.

Box 1. Giving students choice about the subjects they study

In many OECD countries, students can exercise some choice over the subjects they study at the upper secondary level. The degree of choice students have varies across countries, with some countries offering significant choice in subject areas while in others the core may compose almost 100% of the curriculum, or there can be limited choice with a large core curriculum.

Countries that allow students to choose the subjects they study see this as important as it gives students the space to exercise their independence and make decisions, which can support their sense of agency. When students are afforded the opportunity to make coherent choices in upper secondary this can also create a strong foundation for future learning opportunities and employment, which is important for their adult and working life. Limited student choice can ensure coherence in the path of study, yet runs the risk of being less motivating or engaging for students as there is less opportunity to shape their course of study. However, large amount of subject choice, while potentially motivating for students, can be associated with high stakes due to the influence this has on their pathways into future education and work.

Source: (Stronati, 2023[34]), *The design of upper secondary education across OECD countries: Managing choice, coherence and specialisation,* https://doi.org/10.1787/158101f0-en

---

2.2. What do children think?

There is an abundance of research that suggests that children like participating and want to participate in decision making. One main message that emerged from a consultation of children in EU countries was that children from all regions reported that they wanted a greater say on the decisions that affect them (ChildFund Alliance, Eurochild, Save the Children, UNICEF and World Vision, 2021[35]). Respondents were also asked "When adults take decisions that affect you, do they ask for your opinion". Over half of respondents reported that their parents asked for their opinion always, and 43% responded that it happens sometimes. However, when it comes to their teachers, around 20% reported that their teachers asked for their opinions always, and just under 50% reported sometimes. In the Europe Kids Want survey, 2 out of 3 children (of almost 20 000 respondents) reported being unhappy with the way their local decision makers in cities and towns engage with them (UNICEF and Eurochild, 2019[36]). The same survey highlighted that relatively few children felt that when they were consulted it made a difference.

In a study of children's rights in Northern Ireland (United Kingdom), the issue children reported as most important was not having a say in decisions affecting them (Kilkelly, Kilpatrick and Lundy, 2005[37]). In this study, it was concluded that children's perspectives were rarely sought or listened to, and when they were this was tokenistic and limited.

In a survey of children in Denmark, when asked what the most important factors are for their well-being at school, over half of respondents reported being "in a good class where no one is excluded" and "that I see my friends", while 11% of those surveyed responded "that I have a say"[3] (The Lego Foundation and Tænketanken Mandag Morgen, 2021[38]). Boys were more likely than girls to report that having a say was important to them, and almost a third of children surveyed reported that they would like to have more of a say in school than they already have. The desire for co-determination varied across age groups.

---

[3] Respondents could choose a maximum of three options.

For example, in the youngest groups that participated, there was a desire to be allowed to take their toys to school more often. However in the older groups, they reported a desire to be able to choose more elective courses in school, or to be more involved in choosing the course content (The Lego Foundation and Tænketanken Mandag Morgen, 2021[38]).

Another key message that emerges from work with children suggests that they like participating, they want to participate in decision making and that it is important to them to have the opportunities to do so (Lundy, 2018[39]). Children have reported that participatory experiences can be fun and can help them meet new friends or learn different skills (Lundy, Marshall and Orr, 2015[40]; Orr et al., 2016[41]). How and how much children participate varies across national contexts, and across different age groups and sometimes also by gender. Therefore, providing the opportunities to participate and ensuring that children can participate in processes and in ways that are meaningful to them is crucial.

2.3. Children's participation rights

Children's rights as outlined in the UNCRC tend to be split into three groups, which are often referred to as the "3 Ps": the rights to protection (i.e. the protection of their rights), to provision (e.g. to services such as education, health etc.) and to participation (i.e. children being active in decision making within societies, communities, programmes and/or services) (Habashi et al., 2010[42]). Historically, the emphasis has been on children's provision and protection rights (Habashi, Wright and Hathcoat, 2011[43]), however in recent decades the debate has shifted as children are increasingly recognised as full human beings who have integrity and the right to participate meaningfully in their communities and society at large (Lundy and McEvoy, 2009[44]). Since the adoption of the UNCRC, there has been burgeoning interest in research looking at how children can and do participate in decision making, and their experiences of participation, including in local governance, at school and in areas such as policy consultations (Gal and Duramy, 2015[45]).

There are several articles that encompass so called "participation rights" (See **Table 1**), of which Article 12 is the most cited in the child participation literature. It is important to note that the word participation itself does not appear in the UNCRC, despite its use within the 3P categorisation.

Table 1. Participation rights in the UNCRC

Article	Right	Overview
12	To be heard on matters affecting them	A child who is capable of forming their own views has the right to express their views freely in all matters affecting them, and their views will be given due weight in accordance with both the age and maturity of the child.
13	Freedom of expression	The child has freedom of expression, including to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds in different ways (orally, written/print, art, media). This right is limited insofar as to respect the rights/reputations of others and for issues such as public order or national security.
14	Freedom of thought, conscience and religion	The child has freedom of thought, conscience and religion that may be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary to protect public safety, order, health or morals, or the fundamental rights and freedoms of others.
15	Freedom of association and peaceful assembly	These rights can only be restricted in the interests of national security, public safety, public order or the protection of public health/morals or to protect the rights and freedom of others.
16	To privacy	No child shall be subjected to interference with their privacy, arbitrarily or unlawfully, nor to their correspondence or to unlawful attacks on their honour/reputation.
17	To information	States shall ensure the child has access to information from a diverse range of national and international sources, in particular those that are helpful in promoting social, spiritual and moral well-being, and physical and mental health. Measures under Article 17 include encouraging the production and dissemination of children's books, and encouraging the mass media to disseminate information of social and cultural benefit to the child among others.

Source: (United Nations, 1989[14]), *Convention on the Rights of the Child,* https://treaties.un.org/doc/Treaties/1990/09/19900902%2003-14%20AM/Ch_IV_11p.pdf

Article 12 is one of the guiding principles of the UNCRC and ascribes to children "the right to be heard in all matters affecting them, to participate in all decision making processes having a bearing on their lives and to exert influence over such decisions in accordance with their age and maturity" (United Nations, 1989[14]). In general, young children tend to need more protection and guidance from adults than adolescents, therefore the weight given to views in decision making will vary based on the age, and importantly the maturity, of the children in question (Shier, 2019[46]). In 2009, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child issued a General Comment on Article 12 in which participation is explicitly mentioned, describing it as a term that has "evolved and is now widely used to describe ongoing processes, which include information-sharing and dialogue between children and adults based on mutual respect, and in which children can learn how their views and those of adults are taken into account and shape the outcome of such processes." (UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2009[47]).

Article 12 importantly does not mean that children should have the final word on all decisions affecting them, or that every decision should be made in accordance with their wishes (Shier, 2001[48]), but rather outlines the right for children to have their perspectives taken into account when these decisions are made (Hart, 2008[49]). It also does not require children to participate in decision making; participation should always be relevant and voluntary, and children can withdraw their consent to participate in processes at any point. Rather, children must be given the opportunity to choose the level of participation they want to engage in, and these opportunities should match their capacities (Hart, 1992[50]).

The implementation of Article 12 has been limited and faces problems. In part, this is because it challenges traditional power dynamics between children and adults, moving children from passive societal actors to active participants in decision making (Percy-Smith, 2011[51]; Thomas, 2015[52]). As mentioned previously, traditional views of children as incompetent or vulnerable can impede this further. 'Participation rights' confront these traditional notions, positioning children as autonomous beings who are competent social actors (Jones, 2017[53]; Hester and Moore, 2018[54]). This group of rights tends to be the most controversial as set out by the UNCRC and the most difficult to measure in terms of performance (Habashi et al., 2010[42]). A further limitation to effective implementation is that children themselves are often unaware of their rights under the UNCRC (McMellon and Tisdall, 2020[19]). For example, in a sample of children in England (United Kingdom) only about one-quarter were aware of the UNCRC (Kosher and Ben-Arieh, 2017[55]). Perhaps also ironically, children themselves were not involved in any significant way in the drafting of the UNCRC (Lundy et al., 2015[56]).

There is also a debate in policy and public discourse about the concept of making decisions that are in the best interests of the child. In 2013, The Committee issued General Comment 14 Article 3(1), outlining that "the concept of the child's best interests is aimed at ensuring both the full and effective enjoyment of all the rights recognised in the Convention and the holistic development of the child" (UN Comittee on the Rights of the Child, 2013[57]). Therefore, in making decisions that are in the child's best interests, children should be included to recognise their rights under Article 12. Denying children's rights to participate fails to recognise Article 12, and further denies them the ability to exercise their other rights (Landsdown, 2001[58]). Actively involving children in decision making should not be seen as an option, or something that adults gift to children, but rather as a legal imperative as it recognises their rights (Lundy, 2007[59]).

> **Box 2. Ombudsperson offices for children in OECD countries**
>
> In a number of OECD countries, there exists a public authority charged with the protection and promotion of children's rights such as a children's Ombudsperson. This office can work to coordinate and mainstream youth concerns and rights into policy making and service delivery across different levels and institutions of government (OECD, 2018[9]). They tend to be independent bodies that report to parliaments or governments, and their independence means they can more effectively promote the rights of children and youth.
>
> The first children's Ombudsman was established in Norway in 1981, and since then many OECD countries have followed suit. In Europe, the European Network of Ombudspersons for Children (ENOC) was established in 1997 with the mandate of facilitating the promotion and protection of the rights of children. As of now, almost all OECD countries have in place a person or an office that serves as a children or youth ombudsperson whether this is a specific ombudsperson office dedicated to children/youth or a general ombudsperson office that addresses these concerns (OECD, 2018[9]).

2.4. Who benefits from child participation?

Child participation in decision making is linked to beneficial outcomes in different domains. Literature suggests it can strengthen democracies and social cohesion, it can be helpful for policy makers in designing policies that are better targeted to the needs of children, it has benefits for education systems and there are numerous benefits for children themselves.

2.4.1. Societal and policy-level benefits

At the societal level, direct participation can help children create peaceful and democratic societies that uphold human rights. Active citizenship can reinforce positive civic behaviours such as participation in civil society and politics, keeping oneself informed about political ongoings and democratic behaviours like voting and running for official positions (OECD, 2018[60]). Working with children and young people can also contribute to social cohesion, and make sure that policy measures are responsive, well informed (OECD, 2017[61]), and it can help children claim their rights and hold governments accountable for their commitments (Feinstein and O'Kane, 2009[62]).

Engaging in decision making in contexts such as the home and at school will help children learn to resolve interpersonal conflicts and can serve to empower them for their futures. It can help create a culture of respect, where decisions are made through negotiating with others rather than through conflict (UNICEF, 2013[63]). When children are engaged in decision making processes from a young age, and are members of youth groups and voluntary organisations, this correlates with future political engagement and can also build trust and transparency between children and their governments now and in the future (OECD, 2018[60]). Child participation also plays an important role in protecting them from things like violence and exploitation. It can help build children's resilience, and children can be effective advocates in realising their own protection rights (Feinstein and O'Kane, 2009[62]). Their participation can also help ensure that policies and measures are child-friendly and are adequate and appropriate for children (Feinstein and O'Kane, 2009[62]). Evidence from the OECD report *Fit for All Generations?* suggests that when young people

are engaged in the policy-making cycle they also tend to express higher satisfaction with policy outcomes (OECD, 2020[64]).

In the education governance context, there are many benefits to involving stakeholders more directly in decision and policy making. It can lead to better policy outcomes by ensuring that policies are tailored to the needs and interests of different stakeholder groups, while capitalising on their expertise and knowledge to make policies more fit-for-purpose. It can also support the implementation process by enhancing the understanding of a policy, thereby enhancing legitimacy and inducing a sense of ownership. Finally, as mentioned previously, it can stimulate greater trust among policy makers and stakeholders (Burns, Köster and Fuster, 2016[65]).

Box 3. The value of youth perspectives on digital technologies

Digital technologies have become nearly ubiquitous in modern children's' lives (Burns and Gottschalk, 2019[3]). Understanding how children use these devices and what their opinions are can help education systems grapple with tough questions around digital technologies and their use inside the classroom. Some important points for policy makers to consider are:

- Engaging with child and youth perspectives may help focus more attention on the positive elements of digital technologies and the opportunities they afford. The overemphasis in policy and media discourse on protection and risks can obscure potential positive outcomes (Burns and Gottschalk, 2019[3]). Many children also do understand various risks in the digital environment, including risks to their privacy for example, however they report that digital tools can support them in a multitude of ways (Third and Moody, 2021[66]). In a consultation of 709 children and young people in 27 countries, child respondents reported that digital technologies are essential tools to realise their rights and that many considered digital access and use as basic needs (Third and Moody, 2021[66]). Children highlighted that the digital environment allows for access to information, can play a role in their identity development and digital tools can be important resources to reduce inequalities.

- Given the speed of technological change, parents, teachers and especially policy makers are having a hard time keeping up with these developments and ensuring policies are based on strong evidence. Engaging with children and young people on how they use digital technologies and where they see the potential benefits (and risks), while also engaging them in processes such as curriculum design can help ensure what they learn is relevant and appropriate (Burns and Gottschalk, 2019[3]).

2.4.2. Benefits for children and schools

Student participation in decision making has the potential to yield many benefits for different actors including the school, the student and the wider community. The Council of Europe outlines various benefits of student participation in decision making (Council of Europe, n.d.[67]). These include:

- Student participation in school decision making can help to foster a sense of citizenship amongst young learners, as well as develop important civic

competencies such as co-operation and communication, self-efficacy and awareness of societal issues.

- Being invited to give serious contributions to the school and wider community can give young learners a sense of belonging, as well as developing their self-esteem and helping them to foster respectful relationships. In turn, this may benefit the school by reducing the incidences of problems such as drop-outs, radicalisation and bullying.

- Using participatory practices in the classroom has been shown to improve the classroom atmosphere as well as the educational achievements of students.

A large body of literature supports these points. For example, PISA 2018 results also show favourable outcomes in schools where students are given a platform to voice their opinions (OECD, 2020[68]). On average across OECD countries, 68% of students were in schools where the principal reported that the school seeks feedback from students on topics such as their teachers, lessons and resources, although this practice was more common in socio-economically advantaged rather than disadvantaged schools. Students in schools where they had a platform to voice their opinions tended to perform better on the reading assessment than those from schools that did not seek student feedback (OECD, 2020[68]).

Student participation in decision making may also contribute to more positive school climates (Voight and Nation, 2016[69]), it can be supportive of respectful relationships between students and school staff (Lloyd and Emerson, 2016[70]), and having a shared sense of responsibility for their educational pathways is associated with higher levels of student motivation and achievement (Helker and Wosnitza, 2016[71]). Participation is also associated with positive well-being outcomes (Lloyd and Emerson, 2016[70]; John-Akinola and Nic-Gabhainn, 2014[72]). In particular, authentic forms of participation at school have been positively associated with student well-being, whereas when students are simply given a 'voice' this may not alone be predictive of well-being (Anderson et al., 2022[73]). Authentic participation at school can take different forms, including having a say with those who have influence, being able to make choices, having influence and working together with others, whereas when students express themselves and feel their perspectives are not taken into account would not constitute authentic participation despite giving them "voice". In general, there is a consensus in the literature that student participation is an important feature of successful programmes that can improve students' experiences at school (Berti, Grazia and Molinari, 2023[74]).

An important point to consider is that children largely report that they enjoy participatory experiences, and that it can help them develop skills and confidence while also increasing their understanding of their rights (Lundy, 2018[39]; Lundy, Marshall and Orr, 2015[40]; Orr et al., 2016[41]). It is also positively associated with things like life satisfaction and happiness (de Róiste et al., 2012[75]). Making space for children to contribute to decision making can be a fun and exciting experience for those involved.

2.5. Models of child participation

Participatory frameworks rely on the conceptualisation of children as competent social actors, and that they can interact with others to participate in making decisions that affect them (Theobald, Danby and Ailwood, 2011[76]). Children can participate in decision making processes in various ways, through engaging in consultations with adults to assess their views, to more active models of participation where children obtain a certain degree of responsibility, power and influence in making decisions (Theobald, Danby and Ailwood, 2011[76]; Botchwey et al., 2019[77]; Partridge, 2005[78]).

Different models and theories of child participation exist, some of which are outlined in Table 2 and will be discussed in more detail in the subsequent sections. This is not an exhaustive overview of all models of child participation but will highlight models that are frequently cited in the literature. Despite the plethora of models available in the child participation literature, Corney and colleagues (2021, p. 682[79]) argue that "none of the large number of models available to us can claim to fully represent the complexity and diversity of the realities that they may be applied in".

Table 2. Models of child participation

Model	Key features
Ladder models	Rungs depict increasing levels of child participation, from "non-participation" to "genuine participation".
Lattice models	A dynamic model that shows the different influence children can have over the course of a participatory process in terms of processes (e.g. setting aims, analysing information) and outputs (e.g. policy change).
Pathways	This model depicts the ways in which children can be involved in projects or participatory processes, outlining openings, opportunities and obligations for project partners to support child participation. An implied hierarchy is similar as what is seen in ladder models, although this model does not identify forms of "non-participation" per se.
Broad forms	This model simplifies child participation into three categories: consultation, collaboration and child-led activities.
The Lundy model	This model outlines four interrelated concepts that must be in place to facilitate child participation. Children need space in which they can express themselves, they need to have a voice that can be expressed freely, they need an audience who will listen to them, and their views should have influence and be acted upon as necessary and appropriate.

Irrespective of the conceptual model guiding or informing the development of a participatory processs, children's participation should follow some basic requirements to ensure their participation is safe, ethical and meaningful. According to these principles, child participation should be (ChildFund Alliance, Eurochild, Save the Children, UNICEF and World Vision, 2021[35]):

- Transparent
- Voluntary
- Respectful
- Relevant
- Child-friendly (i.e. there should be adequate time and resources and approaches should be adapted to the capacities of those participating)
- Supported by adults who are appropriately trained
- Inclusive
- Safe and risk-sensitive
- Accountable.

2.5.1. Ladders, lattices and pathways to participation

Certain models of child participation, including ladders, lattices, pathways and levels of engagement, look at the ways in which power is conferred to children in relation to adults in decision making processes. Many such models exist in the literature, and they can be very useful in understanding different forms of participation, as well as non-participation.

Ladders of participation

The "ladder" of child participation is a well-known model first depicted by Hart (1992[50])[4]. The steps on this ladder, as explained in Box 4, show increasing levels of student power in decision making and different forms of co-operation between children and adults. Forms of "non-participation" are found on the lowest rungs of the ladder, depicting manipulation, decoration and tokenism. The higher rungs depict "genuine participation" and are: assigned but informed; consulted and informed; adult initiated, shared decisions with children; child initiated and directed; and finally, child initiated, shared decisions with adults. Hart argues that the higher rungs on the ladder are not necessarily superior to the ones underneath but rather depict the degrees to which children can initiate projects and make decisions (Hart, 2008[49]).

Box 4. From non-participation to genuine participation

Defining the rungs in Hart's ladder

- Manipulation: when children have no understanding of the issue, and therefore of their actions in relation to the issue. This can stem from adults being unaware of children's abilities. Manipulation can also occur when children are consulted but given no feedback, or when meanings and purposes of "consultative" activities are not appropriately conveyed for a child audience. Children are used to support adults' projects on this rung.

- Decoration: when children are used to bolster a cause in a relatively indirect way, when they have little to no idea of the cause and have no say in the organisation.

- Tokenism: when it seems like children are given a voice, but they have little opportunity to formulate their own opinions and little choice about the subject or style of communication.

- Assigned but informed: when children understand the intentions of a project, they know who was involved in making decisions regarding their own involvement and why, they have a meaningful role, and they volunteer for the project after the goals were made clear to them.

- Consulted and informed: when children work with adults as consultants in a process designed and run by adults, but children understand the process and their opinions are taken seriously into account.

- Adult initiated, shared decisions with children: when projects are initiated by adults but the decision making is shared with children.

- Child initiated and directed: when children conceive of and carry out complex projects. With supportive conditions, children can work cooperatively with others (even those who are very young).

- Child initiated, shared decisions with adults: when children initiate projects themselves, then incorpora, te adults. This type of participation is quite rare.

[4] The ladder metaphor was borrowed from an essay by Arnstein (1969[326])on adult participation.

Similar models aim to simplify Hart's ladder (e.g. Jensen and Simovska (2005[80])) or suggest a non-hierarchy of the different forms of child participation (e.g. Simovska and Jensen (2009[81])) Simovska and Jensen (2009[81]) argue that a non-hierarchical model can help to avoid normative use of the "levels" description of the different types of participation, while also presenting different forms of participation that are valid and allow for flexibility given the decision-making process being engaged in. Reddy and Ratna (2002[82]) suggested the addition of extra rungs to the bottom of the ladder, namely active resistance and hindrance. Active resistance is when adults work against children's participation, whereas hindrance is when adults block or discourage child participation, intentionally or unintentionally undermining them and making them feel reluctant to participate. They also elaborate rungs similar to Hart's rung on tokenism, such as tolerance and indulgence.

Criticisms of "ladder" models of participation include that children and adults are separated into different groups, which does not adequately recognise diversity of potential power relationships between and within groups of adults and children (McMellon and Tisdall, 2020[19]). They also does not account for contextual factors, like socio-economic status, that can affect children's participation (ibid). In 2008, Hart stated that his intention in publishing this model was to "stimulate a dialogue on a theme that needed to be addressed critically" and that the model does not mean that children always need to participate at the highest possible level (Hart, 2008[49]). However, with the attention garnered by the ladder, it was increasingly used as a tool to measure people's work with children rather than as a reflection tool. He describes that the ladder portrays a narrow scope of how children can participate in their communities, does not look at informal participation, and only looks at participation of children in relation to adults.

The Sun Model of Co-Agency

In 2018, the OECD Student Focus Group – students from 10 countries who had volunteered to help steer the development of the OECD Learning Compass 2030 and were selected by their respective countries to do so – created the "Sun Model of Co-agency" based on Hart's ladder (OECD, 2019[29]). Students changed the visualisation from a ladder to a sun-shaped image (see Figure 2), as they determined that agency could be represented by a circular, spiral image rather than a linear one. They wanted to show that in almost every degree of co-agency, students work with adults. The exception is the newly added degree of "silence" where the belief of young people and adults is that young people cannot contribute and therefore remain silent, leaving all decisions and activities to be initiated by adults. In the first three degrees of co-agency ("manipulation", "decoration" and "tokenism"), the students in the focus group believed that these levels signify instances where they could contribute, however they would not have the opportunities to do so. Co-agency has been positively associated with well-being (OECD, 2019[29]).

Figure 2. Sun model of Co-Agency
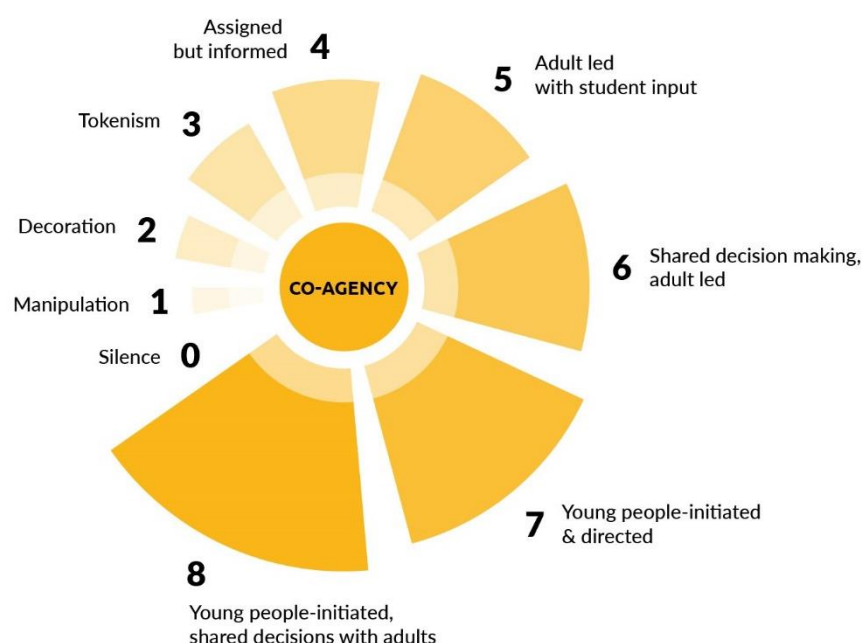
Note: This model modifies Hart's (1992[50]) ladder of child participation, done by the OECD Student Sphere (Linda Lam, Peter Suante, Derek Wong, Gede Witsen, Rio Miyazaki, Celina Færch, Jonathan Lee and Ruby Bourke).
Source: (OECD, 2019[29]), *Conceptual learning framework: Student agency for 2030,* www.oecd.org/education/2030-project/teaching-and-learning/learning/student-agency/Student_Agency_for_2030_concept_note.pdf

Lattices of participation

A model conceptualised as a lattice, published by Larkins, Kiili and Palsanen (2014[83]), shows how different actors including children, adults and institutions can exert influence over a decision making process or project at different times, directing resources including time and finances. The lattice model outlines how influence of different actors in a participatory process can fluctuate in different stages of the project as individuals exert influence in different ways through the lifespan of the work in the various processes (e.g. setting aims, identifying methods, analysing information) and in the different products (e.g. sharing findings, changing policies or practices).

In this model, actors were identified as having the ability to decide what to do with their own resources (e.g. time, money), suggest actions by other resource holders, engage in dialogues to come to collective decisions on the use of project resources, apply social pressure about the use of resources etc. (Larkins, Kiili and Palsanen, 2014[83]). The lattice model depicts the dynamic ways in which different actors can exert influence over the project or process in question. In practical terms, it can help promote thinking about the potential opportunities for children to engage in making decisions about the use of resources in a project, at which stages and in which ways.

Pathways to participation

Shier (2001[48]) depicts a "pathways to participation" model, which culminates in adults and children sharing power and responsibility for decision making. Unlike Hart's ladder,

this model does not include forms of non-participation like manipulation or decoration. The five levels of participation that are proposed in this model are:

- Children are listened to;

- Children are supported to express their points of view;

- Children's views are taken into account;

- Children are involved in decision making;

- Children share both power and responsibility for making decisions.

The model underscores that children should not just be listened to when organisations engage in decision making, but that their views are given due weight in order to comply with, and avoid violating, the UNCRC. This model also outlines issues that can impede participation, including organisational structures and practices. It does this by stipulating "openings", "opportunities" and "obligations" at each level of participation. An opening refers to the point at which a stakeholder has made a commitment or intends to work in a certain way. For example, for level 1, a question that could be asked is "Am I ready to listen to children" (Shier, 2001[48]). The opportunity refers to the point at which the needs are met to facilitate an individual or organisation to operate at the level. For example, this could signify that there are adequate resources, or skills and knowledge that enables the individual or organisation to engage with one or more of the five levels. The obligation refers to the point at which it has been agreed that an organisation or individual will operate on a certain level, whether this is listening to children (at level 1) or involving them in decision making (at level 4). True compliance with Article 12 of the UNCRC starts at the third level or higher.

As with ladder models, Shier's model has also been criticised in that it may imply a "hierarchy" of participation. Readers might interpret the higher levels as better than those on the lower ends. Despite potential drawbacks of the model, the questions around openings, opportunities and obligations can provide an interesting and comprehensive roadmap for individuals or organisations looking to encourage child participation more systematically in their processes.

Broad forms of participation

Lansdown (2011[84]) categorises types of participation under three broad forms. The first is consultation, where children are asked about their views but are not involved in the decision making process beyond this. Consultations are adult-driven, and recognise that children can be important sources of information. Consultative processes can involve children of different backgrounds and ages, and can take the form of surveys, focus groups or conferences to name some examples.

The second is collaboration, which involves children and adults working together and sharing responsibility. While this stage is also adult-led, children can be engaged in the process as partners which can empower them to have influence over decision making, and even challenge outcomes. This form of participation can involve children designing and/or undertaking research, developing policy or sitting on boards and/or committees. Consultative processes can be adapted to be more collaborative for example by encouraging children to determine the goals of the process or giving them the opportunity to take on roles such as those of researchers.

Finally, the third level in this model is child-led activities, where children initiate, run or organise activities themselves. This may or may not involve adult support as facilitators. Children can initiate activities as individuals, or within a group.

2.5.2. The Lundy model of child participation

The Lundy model is one of the most cited and influential models of child participation. Lundy argues that the successful implementation of Article 12 of the UNCRC requires considering the implications of four separate factors, which are interrelated concepts that must be put in place to facilitate child participation. The elements are presented in chronological order, and are:

- Space: Children must be given safe, inclusive spaces in which they can form and express their points of view, and they should be encouraged to express their views should they wish to engage in decision making;

- Voice: Children need to be facilitated to express their views freely;

- Audience: Their views should be listened to by others, in particular by those whose duty it is to listen;

- Influence: As appropriate, their views should be acted upon (Lundy, 2007[59]).

Lundy argues that there is a significant overlap between space and voice, which is where children's right to express a view falls, and between audience and influence, where their right to have their views given due weight falls (Lundy, 2007[59]). The model also represents that Article 12 should be considered in light of other relevant provisions in the UNCRC, such as the rights to non-discrimination, to information and protection from abuse for example.

How can the Lundy model be considered in very practical terms? Regarding space, children need to have a safe space in which to express their views. This means they need to be protected from abuse, and they should be able to express themselves without fear of rebuke (Lundy, 2007[59]). This refers not only to fear of rebuke or reprisal from teachers, but also from their peers. Students might be concerned to speak out if they are worried about being teased or bullied by their classmates. Digital tools can facilitate children expressing themselves anonymously, which can allow them to speak more freely in certain instances (Lundy, 2007[59]). Not only do spaces need to be safe, but they should also be inclusive and non-discriminatory so that all children, including the most disadvantaged and marginalised, can choose to participate.

The voice component of the Lundy model suggests that children need to be facilitated to express their views freely. The right to express a view does not depend on whether a child can express a mature view, but rather on their ability to form a view (Lundy, 2007[59]). In this regard, children can be supported in forming a view for example through different capacity building activities, provision of child-friendly information and providing sufficient time so they can understand the issues at hand. Ways of facilitating younger children in forming views could be through the use of videos, drawing projects or things like plays and puppet shows. Practical assistance might also be necessary for some children to be able to express a view, such as the use of assistive technology (Lundy, 2007[59]).

The audience component suggests that children's views should be listened to and not just heard by those who are involved in making decisions. Depending on the age and developmental stages of children, effectively listening to children might also involve observing what they do and picking up on non-verbal cues that children might use to express their points of view (Lundy, 2007[59]). Children's views should also be listened to by the right people and conveyed to those who can influence the decisions being made. Finally, influence suggests that children's views should be taken seriously and acted upon as appropriate.

Box 5. Is tokenism a dirty word?

Literature on tokenism with respect to child participation suggests that the term is used to describe when adults fail to take children's views seriously, although there is not one agreed definition (Lundy, 2018[39]). For example, Tisdall describes it as when 'Children and young people may be consulted but their views have no discernible impact on decisions' (2015, p. 382[85]). Instances that typify this include consulting children after a decision has already been made, allowing them to speak about a limited number of insignificant or less significant issues or if they are patronised/dismissed (Perry-Hazan, 2016[86]; Tisdall, 2015[85]). Simply put, tokenism refers to instances in which child participation may be done as a "tick the box" exercise, so adults can say that they involved children in the process at hand despite them having little to no influence on the decisions being made.

In her 2018 article *In defence of Tokenism?,* Lundy puts it bluntly: "Tokenism is a dirty word in children's participation" (2018[39]). The view that tokenism is a form of non-participation (e.g. see Hart's ladder) can and has been used to justify the idea that doing nothing is better than involving children in ways that could be deemed tokenistic. While encouraging tokenistic participation is wrong, and undermines children's rights to fully participate, Lundy argues it can be a start and is less wrong than not including children at all.

Lundy (2018[39]) suggests using feedback to introduce more transparency and accountability in decision making processes, and to encourage more meaningful participation of children thereby in part de-tokenising participation. Feedback should be full, in that it provides details to children (i.e. what the adults agreed with, what they were surprised by, what is going to happen next), it should be child-friendly (i.e. accessible to all the children who participated in the process), it should be fast, and it should be followed-up on as part of an ongoing dialogue during the decision making process. Lundy argues that the process of giving feedback using these 4 Fs (fast, full, friendly and followed-up) can help move processes from being tokenistic, towards fostering respectful dialogue and making interactions more meaningful (Lundy, 2018[39]).

2.6. In sum

Modern childhood has changed in a number of ways, and children today are notably more often regarded as competent social actors who can participate in society and their communities in different ways. With the adoption of the UNCRC, and other international efforts to recognise the participation rights of children, there have been movements across the board in many OECD countries to recognise these rights and include children in decision making processes. The potential positive outcomes of child participation in decision making processes have been extensively studied, and more attention can be paid moving forward in overcoming the barriers and ensuring children have adequate and inclusive opportunities to effectively and meaningfully participate in making decisions that affect their lives now and in the future.

3. How and where can children participate in public life?

As outlined in previous sections of this paper, there is increasing acknowledgement that children should be afforded opportunities to participate in different domains of public life. This section will give examples of how and where children can participate in different areas of public life, in particular in governance, in the digital environment and in research.

3.1. Participation in governance and public life

There are different ways in which children can be involved in governance and public life. Much of the available evidence to date concerns young people rather than children per se. A consistent finding is that engaging young people in decision making can lead to different positive outcomes by increasing the understanding and interest of young people in civic and political processes, while also fostering active citizenship (OECD, 2020[64]). When children and young people feel they are more involved in decision making and that governments take their concerns seriously, this can contribute to outcomes such as social well-being, self-esteem and a sense of empowerment (OECD, 2018[60]). In general, engaging with civil society in delivering services can reduce cost of production, can increase satisfaction with services and can help governments by enhancing their abilities to overcome complex issues in societies (OECD, 2016[87]).

Young people are sometimes consulted or engaged in the policy cycle at different stages including identifying policy priorities, drafting policy documents, implementing policies, monitoring implementation and policy evaluation (OECD, 2018[9]). However, children and young people tend to be a social group that is less systematically involved than for example academic experts or NGOs. Youth stakeholders also tend to be more involved in the design or drafting phase, rather than throughout the full policy cycle (OECD, 2020[64]). Despite these potential shortcomings, there are examples in many OECD countries of how young people and children can be involved in decision making processes.

In some systems children have the potential for engagement in formal democratic processes like voting. While the voting age in most OECD countries is 18, in some OECD countries, younger citizens have the right to vote in some elections. For example, over-16s in Austria can vote in national and local elections, as can over-17s in Greece (OECD, 2020[64]). In Greece and Israel, the voting age is 17 in subnational elections, whereas it is 16 in Austria and Estonia (OECD, 2020[64]). There are other ways in which children and young people can be involved in decision making such as through the allocation of public resources and participation in the policy cycle. For example, participatory budgeting is a process in which citizens can voice their views and these can be taken into account in the allocation of public resources (OECD, 2018[9]). When adapted to children, it can help promote ownership, transparency and accountability for decisions. Some schemes are designed specifically for students or children, however others might be open to people over the age of 18 as well (OECD, 2018[9]). Examples of participatory budgeting schemes are elaborated upon in Section 4.

Certain forms of deliberative democracy can also include opinions and inputs from children. Deliberative processes that are well-designed can promote inclusion of groups, such as children, who tend to be disempowered or historically marginalised in political processes (Curato et al., 2017[88]). While inviting children into the democratic arena still tends to be quite unexplored (Pearse, 2021[89]), there are some potential mechanisms that could be used to facilitate this. For example, schools can serve as spaces for student deliberation, and if appropriately connected, can contribute to wider systems of deliberation

such as within civic spheres (Hayward, 2012[90]; Nishiyama, 2021[91]). This can contribute to a more inclusive deliberative system.

Citizens' assemblies are a form of deliberative democracy that allow members of society, including children if they were invited, to express thoughts and opinions. This might be particularly relevant regarding topics such as climate change, which is an issue where children and young people have the most to gain or to lose (Harris, 2021[92]). Citizens' assemblies are common in Ireland, as well as some other OECD countries. While children were not eligible to participate in the Irish Citizens' Assembly (2016-2018) deliberations on climate action, they were eligible to contribute submissions. However, few of the public submissions received were from children and young people (3% of the total) (Harris, 2021[92]).

Children and young people can also be involved in political processes through bodies such as dedicated child or youth parliaments or councils. These types of bodies are widespread across the OECD, in particular in EU countries (Shephard and Patrikios, 2012[93]). The OECD Youth Stocktaking report outlines that using intermediaries such as national youth councils, youth associations and activists can help governments more effectively reach out to young people (OECD, 2018[9]). This type of "enclave" deliberation, if it provides supportive and safe spaces for children to participate, can be inclusive for groups that might otherwise be excluded, and can help members of the group identify common aims and strengthen arguments and recommendations (Wojciechowska, 2019[94]). However, many young people are not organised into specific groups and governments should therefore ensure that they give equal opportunities for participation to strive for a more inclusive approach, despite the fact that this could be more challenging (OECD, 2020[64]). Furthermore, the impact of youth councils and parliaments might be limited, and some scholars have argued they play more of a socialisation and/or civic educational role (Shephard and Patrikios, 2012[93]).

Despite the different ways children and young people can and do participate in governance and public life, improvements can be made and more concrete steps can be taken to incorporate the views of young people in decision making. For example, less than a third of OECD countries with response and recovery plans for the COVID-19 pandemic explained how young people could engage in delivering recovery measures (OECD, 2022[95]). Some scholars have argued that governments should have sought children's views, not just to realise their participation rights, but because engagement with children could have provided decision makers with early warning systems to mitigate some of the potentially adverse effects of their responses on children (Lundy et al., 2021[96]). Furthermore, children's participation in international fora remains rare, and there is a dearth of understanding about the perceived value and how it is organised in practice (Templeton, Cuevas-Parra and Lundy, 2022[97]).

3.1.1. Local, national and international Youth councils

Children and young people are being increasingly involved in government decision making practices at both national and international level in the form of youth councils. Youth councils are representative bodies which typically contribute to the discussion and definition of youth policies in their system. Youth councils should have the right to formulate opinions and create recommendations on youth related issues across all levels of government. They also function as nationwide representation, advocacy and lobby work for issues related to young people, as well as often identifying new topics and areas of work affecting young people. This can help governmental institutions to be more responsive to changes affecting youth (OECD, 2018[9]).

In around half of European countries surveyed by the European Commission (2019[98]), the establishment and composition of a youth council are required and defined by law. In many of them, the youth council is under the direct authority of the ministry in charge of youth policy, which provides logistical support and budgetary resources. Youth councils at national level are often umbrella organisations, representing local and regional youth councils, youth unions, associations as well as individual young people. National Youth Councils are present in most, but not all OECD countries (OECD, 2018[9]; OECD, 2020[64]). According to the 2019 OECD Youth Governance Surveys, 78% of OECD countries surveyed had a national youth council (OECD, 2020[64]).

The framework and structure of youth councils varies greatly. In the majority of OECD countries, national youth councils operate independently from the government, and primarily function as a channel of youth voice and advocacy. The Swedish Youth Council for example, is involved in the policy formation process as an independent consultation provider, rather than part of a formal structure. Similarly, the Netherlands' Dutch Youth Council is the main national partner on youth in the country, but does not represent an official governmental body. In some OECD countries, national youth councils are part of the formal government structure. In Israel for example, the Israeli National Student and Youth Council works under the Ministry of Education and is mandated to participate in decision making across a range of ministries and government bodies dealing with matters pertinent to youth. The Council of Europe's *Recommendation on the role of national youth councils in policy development* (2006[99]) advocates for its member states to consider national youth councils as partners of public authorities and legitimize their role in this context.

Local youth councils also play an important role in enabling young people to participate in the decisions that affect them and help to create a community atmosphere that encourages youth to be involved in political processes (OECD, 2018[9]). Youth councils are more common at the subnational or regional/local level; they are present in 88% of OECD countries surveyed in the Youth Governance Surveys (OECD, 2020[64]). In New Zealand, for example, there are over 50 formal youth councils, each consisting of at least 10 participants. They have the authority to make a submission to government on issues affecting youth in their community, and issue petitions to the local council or government. Similar structures can be observed in Mexico, and in Ireland. In Ireland, there is particular focus on involving children under the age of 18 in their 31 local youth councils, in order to ensure the participation of those who are not yet able to cast a vote.

Young people also have opportunities to engage in initiatives at an international or global level through youth representation in different fora (OECD, 2018[9]). For example, several multilateral institutions have established youth delegate programmes which engage young people in discussions at global level. These include initiatives such as the Y7 and Y20 Summits, as well as the UN Youth Delegate Programmes. These aim to enable the young generation to participate in shaping the global agenda.

Most research on youth councils primarily study singular cases, countries and systems, and generally finds that youth participation in government decision making practices can yield many benefits for young people individually and for the community more widely. For example, young people may gain a sense of control in decision-making processes (Checkoway, 2011[100]), and this may lead to enhanced self-esteem, empowerment and self-efficacy ((Blanchet-Cohen, Manolson and Shaw, 2012[101]), (Matthews, 2001[102]) in (Augsberger et al., 2017[103])).

> **Box 6. Ensuring participation in Youth Councils is inclusive**
>
> Although most authors agree that youth engagement in government decision making has the potential to benefit both youth and the community, some researchers have found that youth councils may reinforce certain social inequalities, relating to areas such as member representation and social networking (Augsberger et al., 2017[103]). For example, researchers have criticised the recruitment and selection of youth in national youth councils which can create a misrepresentation of the voices of youth within a community (Augsberger et al., 2017[103]), and miss the voices of marginalised youth groups (Wyness, 2009[104]). High-achieving young people tend to receive the most opportunities to participate in youth councils, which can lead to a misrepresentation of the voices of youth and reinforce social inequalities.
>
> Augsberger et al. (2017[103]) suggest in their research that an important area for improving youth councils is to focus on recruiting diverse youth, including those who attend non-traditional school settings. They also suggest that more emphasis should be placed in engaging socially disadvantaged groups, particularly in enhancing their social networks.

3.2. Participation and empowerment in the digital environment

3.2.1. Realising children's rights in the digital environment

The digital environment can be a context in which children's rights are elaborated, while also offering opportunities to realise their rights to participate (Lievens et al., 2018[105]; Livingstone and O'Neill, 2014[106]). There are various tensions and contradictions in the digital environment regarding children's rights, with the potential to both uphold and undermine them (Coppock and Gillett-Swan, 2016[107]). For example, the digital environment can be supportive of children's provision rights (e.g. by providing access to various social services such as health and education), it can serve to empower children and support their participation rights (e.g. by giving them space to advocate for themselves and become informed on different issues), while it can also have implications for children's protection rights (e.g. violations of children's safety or privacy) (Fayoyin, 2011[108]). Digital media can facilitate children's realisation of their rights to play, to access information, to express themselves freely, and it allows them to communicate with others.

The OECD has been an important proponent in upholding children's rights and empowerment in the digital environment. The 2021 Recommendation of the Council on Children in the Digital Environment states that measures should be taken to support children in making the most of the benefits of the digital environment including by "upholding and respecting children's rights to freely express their views and their ability, as appropriate considering their age and maturity, to participate in matters that affect them in the digital environment" (OECD, 2021[109]). Similar positions have been taken by other international actors. For example, the European Network of Ombudspersons for Children (ENOC) in 2019 adopted a position statement that called upon "governments, the European Commission and the Council of Europe to undertake all appropriate actions to respect,

protect and fulfil children's rights so that children and young people might be able to enjoy the benefits and opportunities which the digital environment offers"[5].

Children are still often seen as needing protection from harm in the digital environment, rather than as actors in their own right (Nawaila, Kanbul and Ozdamli, 2018[110]). Taking children's privacy as an example of one digital risk, while emerging evidence suggests that young children in particular may struggle to fully understand risks to their digital privacy, they do care about and are sensitive to who might be able to access their personal information and take some measures to protect themselves in this regard (e.g. not using real names as usernames, verifying identities with face-to-face interactions etc.) (Zhao et al., 2019[111]). In order to promote empowerment in digital environments, children should be given learning opportunities on risks and privacy concerns, and including children in the design of interventions such as workshops can ensure that these opportunities build upon children's existing conceptions and understandings of digital risk and privacy (Zhao et al., 2019[111]). Rather than children being seen as a group solely in need of protection, learning opportunities can empower them in promoting their own safety and privacy, alongside appropriate policy and legal supports.

3.2.2. *The digital environment can enable child participation in public life*

Children are increasingly using digital means to engage with others, and to participate in collective decision making, and advocate for change. A study by Ofcom (2022[112]) found that "social justice" is an increasing trend in children's consumption of information and posting content online. Over 60% of youth (age 18-29) interviewed by the *Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement* (CIRCLE, 2020[113]) said that creating political social media content helped them feel more informed, represented and heard. However, 37% of youth also said they do not feel "qualified" to voice their political opinions online, particularly white females (45%) and males of colour (43%) (CIRCLE, 2020[113]).

EU Member States have acknowledged the potential of new technologies to break down the distance between young people and policy makers and to allow people to share their opinions, and have committed to foster a range of e-participation policies tailored towards young people (Council of Europe, 2012[114]). In around one-third of countries participating in the Council of Europe, national e-participation platforms facilitating youth participation have been established. In France, for example, the Ministry of Education has supported the launch of a project called *L'Isoloir* [The Voting Booth] in collaboration with local authorities, digital associations and scientific institutions. The aim of the interactive and participative digital tool is to allow children between the age of 14 and 18 to voice their opinion on topical societal issues, and to bring their opinions to wider public attention. The website also includes interactive games which educate children on their civic rights, such as freedom of expression on the Internet. It allows children to propose new debate topics, debate on topics of their interest online, and to vote on societal debates. The slogan of the website is *« Donne le droit de vote aux – de 18 ans »* (Give the right to vote to those under 18) (L'Isoloir, n.d.[115]).

Information-seeking is also positively associated with civic participation and engagement (Middaugh, Clark and Ballard, 2017[116]). Social media platforms represent a significant portion of online media consumption today, however, they are vulnerable to the spread of mis and dis -information (Pennycook et al., 2021[117]). Data from UNESCO (2022[118])

---

[5] European Network of Ombudspersons for Children (ENOC) Position Statement on "Children's Rights in the Digital Environment" Adopted by the 23rd ENOC General Assembly, 27th September 2019, Belfast

show that young people rely more on social media and other online platforms for news than traditional news sources. However, across the OECD, only 32% of children firmly believe that the Internet is a reliable source of information (OECD, 2021[119]).

The participatory nature of online media easily facilitates the translation of information into action (Clark and Marchi, 2017[120]). An online social media post, for example, can provide a direct link to a donation site or to sign a petition (Middaugh, Clark and Ballard, 2017[116]). Social media and digital networks are increasingly being used for social movements, activism, and participatory politics as a result (Cammaerts, 2015[121]). For example, the Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) Ice Bucket Challenge went viral across social media in 2014, raising awareness of the disease as well as $115 million for ALS research (ALS Association, 2017[122]). Focusing on youth's heightened engagement with social media and political matters, an OECD report on the empowerment of youth in governance (OECD, 2018[9]) recommends governments to set up a Digital Government Strategy, through which governments should provide relevant online content and opportunities for young people to engage with their government.

Media literacy is gaining increasing political attention internationally as a tool to equip children with the knowledge and skills they need to be able to participate in online life safely and effectively. Incorporating digital media literacy into teaching and learning can help children learn how to distinguish fact from opinion online, assess the credibility of information sources, and detect biased or false information (Hill, 2022[123]). Government-supported media literacy initiatives often take the form of additions to secondary school media studies, such as the United Kingdom's General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) Media course, or the addition of media literacy components to Ontario's English curriculum (Dezuanni, 2016[124]).

Box 7. Ladders of participation in the digital environment

Some scholars suggest a ladder model for children's participation in the digital environment. For example, research done with samples of children in Bulgaria, Chile and South Africa suggests that children in these samples take their first steps onto the ladder by participating in gaming or socialising with others. A potential benefit of these activities is that they might help build skills of children so they can climb further up the ladder, towards activities such as gaming, learning activities (e.g. using the Internet for school work or researching health-related information), and finally civic and creative activities. Fewer children participate in the activities found higher up in the ladder, and those who do tend to be older. This research brings up a number of questions, including how children can be supported to seize opportunities in the digital environment and transform them into benefits.

Source: (Livingstone et al., 2019[125]), *Is there a ladder of children's online participation? Findings from three Global Kids Online countries.*

When given the opportunity to share their views, children have interesting and sometimes different perspectives about the digital environment to the adults in their lives. In a Danish survey, when children were asked what the best thing about having digital tools like computers and mobile phones were, no respondents reported "there's nothing good about it", while the majority responded that they liked talking to and spending time with friends, and having fun by watching videos and looking at memes (The Lego Foundation and Tænketanken Mandag Morgen, 2021[38]). Around 1 in 3 children surveyed reported that there is nothing bad about having a digital device, whereas some reported concern about things like being left out, being bullied or being logged in all the time. Recently emerging

evidence suggests that parents are likely to have conversations with their children on matters related to their engagement in the digital environment (Livingstone and Blum-Ross, 2020, p. 32[126]).

3.2.3. Designing digital spaces with and for children

Scholars in the field underscore the need for digital tools to be designed in the best interests of children, and also with children, to facilitate their engagement in the digital environment. Participatory design refers to stakeholders including end users being involved in design processes, in some cases these stakeholders are children. Historically, bringing children into the design process has been difficult and their roles in the designs of digital tools has been limited (Druin, 2002[127]), however this has become an emerging area of research in particular around child-computer interaction.

In the late 20th century, Druin published a Cooperative Inquiry approach that outlines how children can be involved in design processes in active ways (Druin, 1999[128]; Druin, 1999[129]). Druin's (2002[127]) subsequent "onion model" exhibits the four roles that children can play in digital technology design processes and how they are interrelated. At the centre of the onion, children are positioned as users, and in the subsequent layers they are testers, informants and finally design partners. Each role can shape design processes, and children can play multiple roles in a single design process (e.g. in one process children could be testers of prototypes, and also users of the software). van Doorn (2016[130]) adds to this model with the category of children as co-researchers, taking on the role of gathering, sharing and enriching the data, while Iversen and colleagues (2017[131]) add a 6th domain, child as protagonist, where the child is the main agent driving the design process. Despite the various roles children can play in participatory design processes, a recurring critique is that the children who are most likely to be involved are those who are privileged (i.e. from high socio-economic status backgrounds, neurotypical, and from the dominant cultural group(s)) (Korte et al., 2023[132]).

Cortesi and colleagues (2021[133]) provide four examples of models, youth labs, learning and co-designing space, youth boards and participatory research, and outline how children can meaningfully participate in an increasingly digital world. They underscore that these approaches require significant investment of time and resources, and face challenges such as equity and inclusion, accessibility, shifting mindsets and power structures, and considerations for oversight. Their spotlight on Youth Participation in a Digital world outlines the purpose, challenges, first steps, and ways in which youth and adults can participate in each of the four models.

Participatory approaches to design can benefit children, empowering them to think critically about the digital environment that is increasingly prominent in their daily lives (Iversen, Smith and Dindler, 2017[131]). Involving children in design processes can help make better decisions on issues related to children and allows for possibilities for learning and development among participants (Iivari, Kinnula and Kuure, 2015[134]), and for children with special education needs this can help them convey what features would be useful for them in different tools and platforms (Lundy et al., 2019[135]). There are also positive implications for processes such as the generation and refining of ideas (Fails, 2012[136]), and the sometimes prolific imaginations of children can add value by reminding adults of ideas that might be obvious, while also encouraging them to consider things that might at first seem impossible (Guha, Druin and Fails, 2013[137]).

3.3. Child participation in research

A core tenet of childhood studies is that children are regarded as social actors in their own right, which infers that they are individuals, with their own knowledge who can participate actively in processes like creating knowledge (James and James, 2012[138]). There has been increasing engagement over time of children in research in the 21st century despite the fact that the majority of studies on matters concerning children relies on adult involvement (Bradbury-Jones and Taylor, 2013[139]; Fleming, 2010[140]). The active involvement of children in research recognises children as having an important role to play in processes like measuring and monitoring their well-being for example, rather than "subjects for societal concern" (Ben-Arieh, 2005, p. 574[141]). This challenges traditional assumptions of children as passive or incompetent research subjects, and shifts the focus on children's abilities, experiences and knowledge which enables them to participate in and contribute to research processes without the need for adults interpreting their lives for them (Tisdall, 2018[142]). There has been a key interest in exploring ways in which children can actively participate in research, while ensuring that their participation is voluntary, that their safety is preserved, that they can express themselves in appropriate ways, that their views are taken into account and acted upon, and that they receive feedback (in (Lundy and McEvoy, 2011[143])). There are a number of examples of child participation in research, ranging from consultation on their views and opinions, to more active engagement in research design and delivery. Children can play a role as participants and research subjects, or in some instances as co-researchers.

3.3.1. Children as research subjects

Consulting with children to understand their opinions and experiences, for example through surveys, is a common way of involving children in research. In relation to the models of participation outlined in Section 2, consultation and surveys generally are quite low entry points for child participation. Unless children are involved in the development of surveys and in setting some of the research parameters or aims, they are not truly participating in decision making.

There are many examples where children around the world have responded to subjective questions on topics such as their perceptions of their well-being, their perceptions of their school environments, and how they feel about different social issues. Large-scale surveys at the OECD including PISA and the Survey on Social and Emotional Skills (SSES) (15-year-olds, and 10 and 15-year-olds respectively) pose various questions to students regarding some of the aforementioned topics. For example, PISA 2018 assessed whether students were environmentally enthusiastic or indifferent by asking whether students displayed pro-environmental attitudes (OECD, 2022[144]). Respondents were also asked questions about their subjective emotional and physical well-being, relationships with family and friends, and questions such as how often they worried about how much money their families had (OECD, 2017[145]). In Norway, the annual pupil survey asks students about their opinions on learning and well-being at school. Students in the final year of primary and lower secondary (grades 7 and 10), and in the first year of upper secondary (VG 1) are required to complete the survey, although it is voluntary in other years and students decide whether to participate. Students have the opportunity to provide insights into their well-being at school, as well as on topics such as bullying and if there is noise and disorder in their classrooms (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2019[146]).

Some international surveys are more specifically developed to understand children's views. For example, the Children's Worlds Survey looks to understand children's views and

experiences of both their lives and their well-being. It does so by asking questions such as how satisfied children are with their life, how often they felt happy or sad, and whether they have an understanding of their rights (Rees et al., 2020[147]). Giving children the opportunity to share their views and experiences in different research initiatives has given interesting insights into their lives, opinions and perspectives. For example, in research about risks and opportunities for children in the digital environment, the notion of "risky opportunities" arose when children were consulted. It became apparent that the traditional dichotomy of risks versus opportunities was too narrow to accurately categorise children's digital activities, as certain risks might be seen by children as opportunities (Stoilova, Livingstone and Kardefelt-Winther, 2016[148]). Other ways in which children are involved as participants in research could be using methods such as interviews and focus groups.

3.3.2. Children as co-researchers

Involving children in the research process in roles other than participants can also be beneficial for children and researchers alike and can support better quality research. There has been a growing trend to include children in research processes, or for research to be performed by children as co-researchers or as primary researchers, and in this sense there is a shift from research on children, to research with or for children. (Bradbury-Jones and Taylor, 2013[139]). Using methods that elicit children's perspectives can add a richness to the knowledge base that is not obtainable by examining adult perspectives, and it can help children develop skills and learn how to express themselves in other situations (Honkanen, Poikolainen and Karlsson, 2017[149]). In particular for children with special education needs, their involvement in research has been positively associated with things like confidence, independence and self-esteem (Bailey et al., 2014[150]).

Children can participate in research by reflecting on experiences as children in general, rather than their personal experiences (Lundy and McEvoy, 2011[143]). For example, considering children's perspectives when defining different phenomena can complement adult perspectives without replacing them. This can be an important step in different domains of research ranging from child maltreatment (Kosher and Ben-Arieh, 2020[151]) to cyberbullying (see Box 8). Taking into account children's perspectives on these and other issues can help understand the issues, and could be valuable in prevention efforts as well (Kosher and Ben-Arieh, 2020[151]). Children, even those who are very young, can also effectively be engaged in different steps of the research process, including in the development of research questions, in discussions and decisions about methodology, in analysing and interpreting data and in dissemination of findings (Lundy, McEvoy and Byrne, 2011[15]). When children are seen as rights holders by those who they are working with, whereby their competence, agency and right to influence decisions affecting them are recognised, it is likely that their views will be taken seriously and acted upon even if they challenge those of the adult researchers (ibid.).

When working with children as co-researchers, it is important to consider how best to work with children on the research issue at hand and opportunities should be safe, inclusive and engaging. The methods used should support children in expressing their views and experiences, and they must be protected from potential harm that could result in their taking part in the research (Beazley et al., 2009[152]). Researchers can also use capacity building activities to help children understand the issues related to the research questions, and can help boost their confidence to be able to engage more fully in research processes (Lundy and McEvoy, 2011[143]). These activities can focus on teaching children about research methods (i.e. so children are aware of data collection or analysis techniques that they can conduct themselves), and/or can have a focus on children reflecting about the topic at hand so they understand the issues under discussion (importantly, without being led or primed

with a pre-determined perspective) (Lundy and McEvoy, 2011[143]). Researchers should also be mindful of what children, especially younger children, can and want to do when participating in adult-led research activities (Lundy, McEvoy and Byrne, 2011[15]).

Box 8. What's in a definition? The case of cyberbullying

When defining concepts pertaining to children, consulting them is important to ensure researchers and policy makers are measuring the right things. One example to highlight here is cyberbullying, where even among adults, definitions vary and there is a lack of consensus (Gottschalk, 2022[153]).

Understanding how young people perceive cyberbullying, versus other phenomena in the digital environment such as drama or cybergossip, is crucial so adults measure the rights things in meaningful ways. If researchers simply label interpersonal conflicts in the digital environment such as a one-time fight or reciprocal relational aggression as cyberbullying could hinder how teens handle social challenges and navigate complex interpersonal dynamics (Marwick and boyd, 2014[154]). Research suggests that using terms such as drama can be empowering to some extent, for example if youth choose to perceive a mean comment as a joke and refer to it simply as drama (Marwick and boyd, 2014[154]). Classifying interpersonal experiences in the digital environment as cyberbullying can have social, and sometimes legal consequences, therefore ensuring definitions meet the needs and take children's perspectives into account is essential. Strong definitions that encompass children's views with those of experts in the field can help teachers, parents and other trusted adults act appropriately and effectively.

Despite increasing participation of children in research, there remain a number of barriers. One example is requiring adults' consent to participate (Powell and Smith, 2009[155]). There may also be resistance from more senior participants in research to include children in these processes especially in earlier stages, which may take considerable sensitivity and encouragement to overcome (Beazley et al., 2009[152]). In addition, the notion that children lack capacity to participate in research in a meaningful way can further undermine their involvement (Lundy, McEvoy and Byrne, 2011[15]). This is a particular barrier for children who might be socially or otherwise marginalised who tend to be excluded from participatory approaches more generally, but in particular as co-researchers (Bradbury-Jones, Isham and Taylor, 2018[156]). Inclusive participatory research might require the development of different types of communication techniques and the use of more flexible methods that can be adapted to the needs and preferences of child participants (Bailey et al., 2014[150]). There are of course associated financial and time implications with this.

4. Child participation examples from OECD education systems

Creating enabling environments, inside and outside of school, characterised by a culture of mutual respect, is critical for the effective participation of children (OECD, 2018[9]). A 2015 evaluation of legislation, policy and practice on child participation in EU countries highlighted that within different sectors, such as health, justice etc., the education sector showed the most widespread evidence for legislation pertaining to child participation, and all Member States included a provision for child participation in their Education Codes or Acts (European Commission, 2015[157]).

Effective participation, within education systems and more generally, also depends on factors such as access to information, openness of adults to dialogue with children,

appropriate training and the provision of safe spaces in which children can express themselves without fear (Biggeri and Santi, 2012[158]). Evidence suggests that various education activities that take place beyond the classroom can have a large impact on learners and it is important to ensure access to different opportunities at all levels of education (European Education and Culture Executive Agency, 2017[159]). Some scholars have been advocating for years that learner-centred approaches to education that encourage children to engage in social processes like decision making should be mainstreamed (e.g. (Biggeri and Santi, 2012[158])), however some researchers have noted that schools have generally been slower to engage with Article 12 of the UNCRC and to mainstream participatory practices (Sargeant, 2017[160]).

Box 9. Who has a say at school?

According to PISA 2018 results, 67% of students across OECD countries agreed or strongly agreed that their language-of-instruction teachers listened to their view on how to do things. However there was wide variation across OECD countries from less than one in two students in Japan, to almost 77% of students in Colombia, Korea and Portugal (OECD, 2019[161]).

Some research from a sample in the United States suggests that just over half of students surveyed felt like they did not have a voice in decision making at school, that they believed that teachers were willing to learn from students, while 67% saw themselves as leaders (Quaglia and Corso, 2014[162]). Additionally, the Children's Worlds Survey highlighted wide variation across participating OECD countries in the proportion of 10-year-olds who reported having opportunities to make decisions at school ranging from 19% in Germany to 58% in Spain[6] (Rees et al., 2020[147]).

This section provides an overview of some promising policies and practices across education systems in OECD countries which place children as participants in decision-making processes, and build on their skills to be active citizens, both now and in the future. A number of practices will be explored, including: student councils, student-led projects, whole-school approaches, participatory budgeting, methods of co-constructing the classroom, and child participation in the digital environment.

4.1. Student councils

4.1.1. At the school level

Student councils, also known as school councils or student governments, are typically organisations consisting of students who are elected by their peers to represent their interests and needs within their educational institution. While the popularity, composition and processes of student councils vary depending on region and country, they are a common feature in many OECD education systems. In some countries, such as Belgium, Finland (only upper secondary level), Greece, Hungary, Ireland (Secondary level), the Slovak Republic and Wales (United Kingdom), student bodies are a legal requirement (European Commission, 2015[157]).

Student Councils and/or similar student participation programmes are embedded in the school curriculum in a number of OECD countries. The Department of Education in the

---

[6] The proportion of children who chose the "Totally agree" option on a five-point scale from "Not agree" to "Totally agree".

United Kingdom, for example, has placed increasing emphasis and support for schools to develop structures which allow for the meaningful participation of children in decision making. They highlight School Councils in particular as a practice which can provide a meaningful way in which pupils can voice their opinions and have their views taken into account, as well as providing an important and useful way for schools to provide leadership and development opportunities for their pupils (Department of Education UK, n.d.[163]). Schools in the United Kingdom are required by the national curriculum to provide young people with opportunities to participate in school and society, through the 'Learning for Life and Work' strand, which aims to equip students with the knowledge and skills they need to navigate civic life, both now and in the future.

The structure, responsibilities, and level of involvement of student councils vary between country and educational system, however they normally involve a voting system, debates, elections, and consultations with adult decision makers such as the school director or teachers. Many governments, states and international organisations have established resources which encourage and support schools to develop effective school councils, such as Northern Ireland's Democra-Schools programme (see Box 10) (Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People, n.d.[164]), the European Democratic Education Community (European Democratic Education Community, n.d.[165]) and the Texas Association of Student Councils (Texas Association of Student Councils, n.d.[166]) to name a few examples.

Box 10. School councils in Northern Ireland (United Kingdom)

School councils in Northern Ireland play a key role in pupils' early experience of democratic participation (Committee for Education, 2012[167]). The Committee for Education in Northern Ireland conducted an inquiry to analyse the experience and operation of School Councils across Northern Ireland in 2011, with the aim of identifying ways to support and enhance them (Committee for Education, 2012[167]). The inquiry found that the effectiveness of school councils varied widely in the 77% of schools that had a council. Conditions that may contribute to effective school councils include having a culture of support, mutual respect, co-operation, and a commitment to diversity and equality.

Focus groups of students in twenty different schools were created to gain first-hand insights on students' experiences. The report highlights that pupils described a sense of pride and achievement primarily, followed by increased confidence and a greater sense of responsibility. Students also revealed that they liked learning by doing when it came to participating in the school council, rather than receiving direction from staff. The majority of students interviewed who did not have schools with student councils said they would like to have one (Committee for Education, 2012[167]).

There were some differences between students' views and those of the school staff who responded to the survey. Interviews in student focus groups revealed that students felt they had the most influence over one-off school events, followed by raising money and the school uniform. However, 93% of the survey results reported by staff members said that school councils had the most influence on the "school environment", followed by one-off events. Both the survey and the focus group evidence suggest that most School Councils have a designated member of staff involved in its work, who is the key contact responsible for taking their ideas to the principal however, few pupils reported to their

---

school's board of governors, suggesting that perhaps the importance of school councils is being overlooked in some cases (Committee for Education, 2012[167]).

One example of an initiative in Northern Ireland to strengthen and encourage the meaningful development of school councils was the development of Democra-School by the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY) (Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People, n.d.[164]). It provided a large range of resources, online and in person, in areas such as school election guidelines, an adaptable 'first past the post system', sample nomination forms, a 'proportional representation' system outline, a list of roles and responsibilities, and school council meeting minutes templates.

Student Councils are typically the first experience children and young people have of democratic processes (Mcfarland and Starmanns, 2009[168]), and can prove as an effective way to advance students' rights ((Cross, Hulme and McKinney, 2014[169]; Halfon, 2012[170]; Griebler and Nowak, 2012[171]) in (Halfon and Romi, 2019[172])). When done effectively, they can provide a meaningful way for students to have their opinions heard, considered and acted upon in the decisions which affect them (Department of Education UK, n.d.[163]). Children who participate in councils are likely to develop self-esteem, confidence and often see an improvement in their academic performance and engagement (Lyle, Hendley and Newcomb, 2010[173]) as well as behavioural improvements (Committee for Education, 2012[167]). Students' relationships with peers, and with the adults who work in the school, can also be improved by involvement in these councils, strengthening their relational and communication skills (Griebler and Nowak, 2012[171]). Furthermore, not only is engaging with learner's voices in school councils beneficial for students, but councils can also be very beneficial for a school's overall function, too. Through a council, students normally have the opportunity to express their views on school matters on which they have first-hand experience, giving staff and decision makers direct insights on school life and how current policies and practices are affecting children (Sherman, 2018[174]). Taking students' opinions into account through school councils can make school reforms more successful (Mitra, 2004[175]), and improve the overall climate of the school (Lyle, Hendley and Newcomb, 2010[173]).

Trafford and Griffiths (2005, p. 90[176]) identify in their article, *How do student councils encourage student participation?*, that student councils are one of the "strongest means of pupil participation". Griffiths, co-author of the article and a high-school student in the position of Chairperson in their student council, claims that one of the positive effects of school councils is the sense of responsibility it gives students, allowing them to develop confidence and feel a sense of belonging in the school.

> *When a student is elected as a representative, they realise that expectations have been placed on them, not by their teachers and parents but their friends and classmates (Trafford and Griffiths, 2005, p. 91[176]).*

The potential benefits of school councils to foster child participation and skill building are clear. One example of good practice from England (United Kingdom) can be found in Box 11. Some food for thought regarding success of school councils from the Committee for Education in the United Kingdom (2012[167]) includes:

- Enthusiastic and dedicated members of staff can make a significant difference to the success and engagement of a council. Schools can assign a staff member who will be given adequate time, training and support to help pupils in creating a meaningful council experience.

- Schools should ensure that pupils who are not directly involved in the council, such as those who do not hold official positions (chairperson, notetaker and so on), are given space to contribute to the Council's agenda and outcomes.

- Mechanisms that encourage all students to participate, such as a rotation of positions, should be in place.

- Councils may not always be the best mechanism to encourage pupil participation in decision making, and creating meaningful opportunities for students to participate in daily decisions should be considered.

Box 11. Student council structure

An example of 'good practice' as highlighted by the Education and Training Inspectorate (England, United Kingdom)

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) (2015[177]) carried out a review of pupil participation strategies across England. Exemplifying an unnamed primary school, ETI identified a successful pupil council. In this school, structures for formal pupil participation begin when children are eight years old (year four). A system of individual class councils in every class between year four to seven feed into the overall Pupil (student) Council. The school's Student Council is structured the following way:

- Every six weeks, all children in the class vote for three peers to be chairperson, vice chairperson and secretary. The teacher must help the students in ensuring that representation is balanced in terms of demographic characteristics of the students.

- For the youngest group of students in the council (year four), the teacher models the roles and responsibilities in order to develop the children's understanding of participatory processes.

- The class councils meet every week to discuss no more than four items of business. Agendas and minutes are then taken forward to the Student Council meeting later in the week. The role of the teacher in these meetings is to facilitate the meeting by helping children manage their time effectively and keep interactions pertinent.

- Following the Student Council meetings, the class council representatives report outcomes and decisions to the rest of the class.

- Ideas are also presented to the Parents' Council and the Board of Governors, and have according to ETI, successfully impacted change.

In addition, children in year six are given the responsibility of operating the school's Eco Committee using the same structures and practices which they learn during the Student and Class Councils. Only children who are not post-holders in the Student Council are able to be post-holders in the Eco Committee, extending the opportunity for student participation further. Children are placed in charge of various responsibilities, such as monitoring and reducing the use of electricity, recycling and organising the school's fruit shop. The school has been awarded the Eco-Schools Green Flag accreditation (Eco-Schools, n.d.[178]) on three separate occasions, each time represented and defended to the jury by the children themselves.

> This school's pupil council and committees display regular commitment from staff and students. They display awareness of raising the voice of all students and not just the "popular elite", and ensuring that representation is balanced in terms of student demographics. Their commitment to projects has gained outside recognition, such as the Eco-Schools Green Flag award, as well as being highlighted as an example of good practice by the Education and Training Inspectorate.

Despite some of the positive associations with councils, there is a gap in research on the exact number, essence and effectiveness of student councils across the globe (Halfon and Romi, 2019[172]; Committee for Education, 2012[167]). This may be because many councils happen somewhat spontaneously or at the discretion of the individual school, and most often do not follow a defined curriculum, making them difficult to measure and track (Halfon and Romi, 2019[172]). It must also be noted that to adopt a fully rights-based approach means that children should have the right not to participate in their council should they choose so (Trafford and Griffiths, 2005[176]).

There is also criticism of councils as a sole means of encouraging and enabling child participation (Cross, Hulme and McKinney, 2014[169]). Criticisms in the few research articles available on student councils can be split into the following key themes:

Adult-Centrism: Numerous studies of school councils and child participation have highlighted the limitation of adult-centrism on the effectiveness of councils. In their study of student governance, including student councils, Mitra (2004, pp. 651 - 688[175]) highlights that, too often, adults view school students as passive recipients of education rather than as active contributors to the learning process. This hinders students' ability to be taken seriously, and therefore to participate meaningfully in participation mechanisms such as school councils. On a similar note, in a review of Student Councils in Northern Ireland, the Committee for Education (2012[167]) observed that in many cases, adults were inadequately involved in ensuring the success of the council. Trafford and Griffiths (2005[176]) identify that a school council is only successful with mutual respect between adults and students, as well as among students, and that a school's overall values contributes to the success of a student council. Lyle et al. (2010[173]) highlight that authenticity is a key component for ensuring successful outcomes from student participation mechanisms, and that teacher beliefs about children's capacity to engage sensibly and productively tends to predict the outcome of responses from students. Addressing adult-centrism and power imbalances between pupils and school staff is therefore essential for ensuring that student councils provide meaningful opportunities for student participation.

Tokenism and "ticking-the-box": In the criticisms of student councils, tokenism usually refers to the practice of including children and youth in decision making processes in symbolic ways, without genuinely valuing their perspectives or ideas. The remit of councils is of particular concern. Tisdall (2022[179]) highlights in their paper that most of the topics covered by school councils in the United Kingdom, for example, are topics such as one-off events, lunch menus, anti-bullying initiatives, eco-committees and so on. Similar topics are seen across student councils on a global scale. While these topics are important to some students, Tisdall (2022[179]) argues that councils are rarely given responsibility over matters of high importance, such as decisions over the curriculum or teaching methods. In some instances, councils are also set up as "tick-the-box" exercises, with little real meaning or participation opportunities for students (Committee for Education, 2012[167]). In an ideal situation child participation would not be seen as tokenistic, however tokenism can provide a useful and sometimes necessary step towards meaningful and respectful engagement with students (Lundy, 2018[39]).

Equity and inclusion: Differences in factors such as age, gender, special education needs, ethnic background and socio-economic status can affect a student's ability to participate in, and be represented by, a student council (Committee for Education, 2012[167]; Lyle, Hendley and Newcomb, 2010[173]). Similarly, students who participate actively in their student council (i.e. post-holders) benefit the most in terms of personal effects (confidence, developing democratic skills etc.) and in terms of improvements in peer relationships and student-adult relationships, compared to their peers who do not have active roles (Griebler and Nowak, 2012[171]). Lyle et al. (2010[173]) identify in their study of Welsh schools, that teachers should actively encourage the involvement of all students in consultation, and avoid amplifying the voices of only the "articulate elite" (p. 3[173]), while similarly the Committee for Education in Northern Ireland (2012[167]) stresses that schools must make effort to avoid 'popular pupil only syndrome' when establishing student councils. Another factor that can undermine equity and inclusion is differences in funding, and how that can have an effect on the effectiveness of school councils. McFarland et al. (2009[180]) found, in their US study, that public schools with more financial resources could afford to give school councils more authority and low-faculty oversight than less advantaged schools. They also found that schools in low-income areas tended to not have school councils, or councils that only performed social functions. Furthermore, they identified that private religious schools had the most active school councils involved in a wide range of topics, but that they had the most faculty oversight in contrast (Mcfarland and Starmanns, 2009[168]).

4.1.2. Student unions at the national level

Many countries have national student unions. For example, in OECD member countries in the EU, national student unions for secondary education were present in Austria, Belgium, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, France, Finland, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Sweden as of 2021 (European Commission, n.d.[181]). In some countries there are multiple student advocacy groups at the national or regional level as well that focus on promoting the rights of students and supporting them to act as empowered agents of change in their school environments.

To highlight an example, the School Student Union of Norway is an organisation that represents students in all political cases related to the Norwegian school system. Students can join the Union voluntarily through their school (after conducting a school-wide poll if there is a general consensus that students would like to join), or as an individual. The Union offers training and education to students and school councils to speak up for themselves at school, and there is funding that student councils can apply for to implement different student-led initiatives such as events, theme weeks or inviting interesting speakers to come to the school. It also publishes information and provides assistance to students if they think their rights have been violated in the school environment.

In Ireland, the Irish Second-Level Students' Union (ISSU) represents school students at the national level, and is led by students. Some activities of the Union include providing training and guidance to students to support them in engaging in decision making processes in their own schools, and working closely with other organisations to amplify the voices of students in political processes and decisions. The ISSU also serves as a stakeholder in decision making in the Department of Education and hold membership in the Department's Expert Group on Student Participation.

Membership in the ISSU is free and consists of school student councils. Member councils can attend and vote in the Annual Assembly, which decides on the policies of the Union. There exist a number of working groups within the Union that focus on topics such as equality, period poverty, sustainable development, among others.

Box 12. European co-operation of school student unions: A spotlight on OBESSU

There are national student unions in many OECD countries with the goals of empowering school students to participate in decision making and have their say in matters affecting them. The Organising Bureau of European School Student Unions (OBESSU) provides a platform for co-operation among these national school student unions in European countries. The vision of the organisation is to achieve dynamic and student-centred education systems that are free, inclusive and high quality. It supports the interests and rights of students, and has the goal that by 2030 student unions will be viewed as crucial stakeholders in decisions on matters affecting them both at a national and European level.

OBESSU has a number of objectives, including building capacity of members in policy and advocacy at the EU level and strengthening the participation of students in decision making processes. Projects focus on various themes such as empowering young people to effectively partake in democratic and participatory processes, and investigating ways of improving teaching and learning processes that give students a say in how they learn and supporting teachers to implement activities that support student motivation and engagement.

Source: (OBESSU, 2023[182]), https://www.obessu.org/

4.2. Student-led initiatives

Student-led projects and initiatives are a form of project-based learning (PBL) that can also provide an excellent way for students to participate in decision making processes. Empowering students to take the lead on projects, outside of more formal structures such as councils for example, can be an effective way to motivate students to participate meaningfully in matters they deem important (Bell, 2010[183]).

In practice, these initiatives are led by students and facilitated by teachers, and there are some funding schemes available for student-led projects across OECD member countries through foundations such as the European Youth Foundation (European Youth Foundation, n.d.[184]), which supports projects developed by, with and for young people; and Young Social Innovators in Ireland (Young Social Innovators, n.d.[185]). While this is not yet a common activity across OECD education systems, support from teachers and school leaders are essential for the adoption of these programmes (Vare, 2021[186]).

Student-led initiatives offer various benefits to students including:

- **Autonomy and agency:** Student-led initiatives offer students a greater degree of autonomy and control over projects of central importance to them. Since they choose the project they want to work on, decide on the goals and objectives, and develop their own plans for implementation (Kokotsaki, Menzies and Wiggins, 2016[187]). Action-based projects can also support student agency (Trott, 2019[188]).

- **Creativity:** Student-led projects allow students room to be creative and innovative in developing solutions to problems (Bell, 2010[183]). This may be more engaging than following student-council procedures, such as elections and debates.

- **Leadership development:** Student-led initiatives allow students to hold responsibility and develop their leadership skills (Cain and Cocco, 2013[189]). This makes it a valuable learning experience and a source of personal growth.

- **Impact:** Many student-led projects are focused on making improvements to the community, and students can directly see the results and impact of their effort. This may be for the school community and/or wider community. This can be highly motivating and rewarding for students (Wolk, 1994[190]).

Implementing this type of activity can also serve as a professional learning opportunity for teachers, as they may need to challenge traditional power dynamics between teachers and students, as well as notions of teacher responsibility (Vare, 2021[186]). In a small study looking at student-led projects involving 100 students and 15 teachers in Greece, Romania, Slovenia, Spain and the United Kingdom, students noticed that their teachers respected and listened to their opinions (Vare, 2021[186]).

Student-led initiatives can successfully feature in school programming. Some initiatives are adopted locally, in individual schools or school districts. Some education systems adopt a comprehensive approach, or issue guidance on student-led initiatives at a higher level. The following section will give examples of some of these approaches.

4.2.1. School-level approaches

One example of a student-led project is from a school in Wales (United Kingdom). CHAT, which stands for the initiative's values of Confidentiality, Help, Advice and Trust, was created by a group of high school students in Olchfa Comprehensive school in Wales in 1995 and is still active today. It is a support service comprised of a small group of 14-15 year-old students who are trained as peer mentors to support any student within the school community (Olchfa School, n.d.[191]).

Students can apply to be CHAT members, and when accepted receive basic training in counselling skills and mediation. The students staff a CHAT room based in the school, which serves as a drop-in space for students who wish to receive support. CHAT also plays a significant role in younger students transitioning to high school, where the CHAT students help the new students settle in, navigate the new school space and make new friends (Olchfa School, n.d.[191]). Olchfa school is part of a network of Pioneer Schools which are leading the way in developing changes to the Welsh school curriculum. The Welsh school Inspectorate, Estyn, inspection in February 2018 deemed the school as excellent and remarked that there are high levels of student participation in all aspects of school life (Estyn, 2018[192]). The report also notes that the CHAT service is a strong and valuable feature of the school's work.

Another example comes from Stanford Online High School in the US, which has a range of student-led initiatives which stem from students' interests (Stanford Online High School, n.d.[193]). These include a Mental Health Committee, where students provide peer support and safe spaces to discuss common mental health challenges, working closely with the professional school counselling team. There is the Leadership Programme, through which students have the opportunity to receive monthly presentations from leaders of all kinds, including entrepreneurs, inventors and Nobel Laureates. The Cyber Ethics event, which allows students to discuss solutions to difficult online scenarios (such as exclusion, being asked for exam answers, cyberbullying etc.). The Girls Can Code Club also hosts hackathons focuses on developing solutions to improving the school community.

In some education systems, students collaborate with students from other schools, or with individuals within their wider communities. One example of this comes from Ireland, and the Young Social Innovators (YSI) initiative. YSI is a non-profit organisation which encourages and empowers young people to use their creativity, talent, insights and passion to come up with solutions to social challenges (Young Social Innovators, n.d.[185]). It represents a network of engaged schools and youth centres and has many training resources

to support educators in facilitating social innovation projects with young people. It also has several platforms and events, which provide mechanisms through which young people's ideas and voices can be heard and shared (Young Social Innovators, n.d.[185]). The UN's Sustainable Development Goals are central to the training and projects supported by YSI.

One of the many student-led projects highlighted by YSI is *Commotion in the Ocean,* aimed at tackling the impact of pollution on marine life. The central aim of the project was to raise awareness on how people can reduce their carbon footprint, which affects sea pollution. They arranged regular beach clean-ups, and created resource packs which were shared with the YSI network of primary schools. They also teamed up with their local council to install special bins in the beach area, and organised a successful fundraiser in the school, including an Ocean Quiz which focused on ocean facts, water sports and all round water-related issues. They donated the proceeds to a local charity.

4.2.2. System-level guidance

Some education systems offer guidance, sometimes in partnership with other actors, to support student empowerment and project management. Guidance can include how to implement programmes or ideas of concrete activities to support student-led projects. For example, in the state of Victoria (Australia), the Department of Education and the Centre for Multicultural Youth published guidance on student-led projects, specifically in the context of anti-racism action (CMY, 2019[194]). This guidance outlines ideas and activities that schools can implement including raising awareness on opportunities and challenges in the school or greater community, identifying practices that could be targeted through a student-led project, and give guidance on how school leadership and school communities in general can support students in leading projects that are important to them. The Department through its FUSE platform[7] provides access to a repository of teaching and learning resources, including the Amplify Toolkit, which focuses on student voice, agency and leadership (Department of Education and Training, n.d.[195]). This toolkit provides access to information and resources including research on child participation, professional learning materials for teachers, and case studies from schools that have implemented various practices to support student voice, agency and leadership.

In New Zealand, Tūturu is an approach aiming to improve the well-being of students at school by removing gaps between schools and health services. This programme is overseen by the Ministry of Education among other actors, such as Te Whatu Ora (Health New Zealand) and the New Zealand police, and was initially implemented to target drug and alcohol use before taking a wider focus on well-being issues more generally. Tūturu published guidance on supporting student-led action in schools, with examples of student-led activities that can be implemented and resources for teachers and school leaders (Tūturu, 2022[196]). Ideas for activities include students collecting data from the school community through different methods (e.g. surveys, interviews, focus groups) to understand which well-being issues are priorities in their contexts, and then how to use this information to inform further student-led action.

4.3. Whole-school approaches (WSA)

Whole-school approaches (WSA) involve stakeholders within and around the school community to work together towards a common goal. The aim of this type of approach is to modify policies and systems within the school, rather than to simply deliver lessons on

---

[7] The FUSE platform is being decommissioning will be replaced in early 2024 by a new digital platform for teaching and learning resources, Arc Learning.

in the classroom to address the targeted outcomes (Langford et al., 2014[197]). An example of WSA is the World Health Organization (WHO)'s Health Promoting Schools (HPS) framework. An HPS aims to promote health through the whole school environment, without relying solely on the health education curriculum (Langford et al., 2014[197]). In this model, things such as the values and attitudes promoted in the school, as well as the physical environment are important factors, and schools engage with a range of actors including families and the broader community, as these all influence children's behaviours and attitudes.

In the literature, examples of WSAs to target a wide range of outcomes are evident. There are WSAs implemented to promote student health and well-being (Aston, 2018[198]; Goldberg et al., 2018[199]; Cefai, Simões and Caravita, 2021[200]), to support outcomes such as reductions in early school leaving (European Commission, 2015[201]), to reduce bullying/cyberbullying (Gottschalk, 2022[153]), and they are also used to tackle social issues such as sustainability and environmental concerns (Henderson and Tilbury, 2004[202]; European Commission, 2022[203]). By focusing on the school system rather than targeting specific members of the school community or on niche problems, WSAs have shown some effectiveness improving learning environments and promoting positive behaviours, while mitigating negative outcomes (Bonell et al., 2018[204]). Working together to improve school ethos can be used to complement more targeted or classroom-based interventions (Bonell, Fletcher and McCambridge, 2007[205]), and a WSA can also be a non-stigmatising way to target certain behavioural outcomes (Cross et al., 2011[206]).

An important feature of WSAs is that they work with the whole-school community, including students, and can be an important way of propagating student opinions and involving students in a collaborative way in decision making processes. Students can be involved at different entry points in WSAs, from being more passive collaborators who receive information from adults to taking on roles as decision makers such as programme coordinators (Berti, Grazia and Molinari, 2023[74]). Active participation of students can ensure that interventions are child-centred in nature (Cefai, Simões and Caravita, 2021[200]) and there is evidence that suggests that child participation in designing, implementing and evaluating well-being programmes is associated with more positive student outcomes (Atkinson et al., 2019[207]; García-Carrión, Villarejo-Carballido and Villardón-Gallego, 2019[208]). Student-led interventions can prove to be more young-person friendly, and use innovative or creative ways of communicating, that may also avoid stigma (Atkinson et al., 2019[207]). Student participation in these initiatives can also help them feel more connected to their schools, and ensure that interventions effectively address their needs in meaningful and inclusive ways (Cefai, Downes and Cavioni, 2021[209]). In targeting certain behaviours like bullying, engaging in dialogue with students to know how they experience and interpret bullying situations or anti-bullying interventions can provide insights into how to involve students more effectively in counteracting bullying behaviours (Forsberg et al., 2016[210]). Despite the potential for student involvement in high entry points of WSAs, there are limited examples of these approaches in OECD member countries that are student-led or driven. Students tend to be involved at lower entry points, as recipients of or participants in the programmes.

Some research suggests that WSAs show only modest or marginal levels of improvement on intended targets such as bullying for example (Allen, 2010[211]; Merrell et al., 2008[212]), and although the effects may be small they can also be significant, and WSAs can be both feasible and efficient in addressing different risks and health outcomes in the school context (Bonell et al., 2018[204]). Furthermore, while WSAs can be important ways of improving school climate and promoting beneficial outcomes for all students, effectively implementing this type of intervention does require sufficient resources, planning, teacher support and capacity building. Teacher professional development is a core component in

promoting effectiveness of WSAs (Wyn et al., 2000[213]), in addition to management and organisation support (Cefai, Simões and Caravita, 2021[200]).

4.3.1. Supporting well-being together

There are many examples of successful WSAs to support well-being in different OECD countries. For example, the [Live Life Well @ School](#) programme in New South Wales (Australia) is a joint initiative by the Department of Education and the Ministry of Health. This WSA focuses on increasing student physical activity and improving healthy eating habits. Alongside various practices to encourage health-promoting behaviours, schools can support student-led initiatives aimed at encouraging physical activity during break times such as recess and lunch (Bravo et al., 2020[214]). In Scotland (United Kingdom), guidance on WSAs outlines the benefits of young people's participation in decision making, and advocates for students being involved in shaping the visions and values of their schools in relation to well-being. The guidance outlines that children can make significant contributions via different channels, including acting as peer educators, delivering well-being messaging, through role modelling, and they can also contribute to capacity building within the school to help deliver health and well-being programming in ways that are sustainable, relevant and meaningful (Scottish Government, 2021[215]).

One of the most well-known WSAs for bullying is the KiVa programme (*Kiusaamista Vastaan*, against bullying in English). KiVa was developed in Finland and is a school-wide programme that targets bullying behaviours, focusing on bystander roles and group processes among students (Kärnä et al., 2011[216]). The intervention involves classroom-based lessons, and group exercises where students are involved in brainstorming and practicing ways that they can support bullied peers (Williford et al., 2013[217]; Salmivalli and Poskiparta, 2012[218]). Students are encouraged to support victimised peers in this programme, thereby positioning them as empowered actors who can contribute to a more positive school climate and to help those in need. Early evidence of the programme showed it was effective in reducing bullying perpetration and victimisation (Kärnä et al., 2011[216]), which has been reported in further trials in Finland (Yang and Salmivalli, 2014[219]) and in other countries such as Italy, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom (Nocentini and Menesini, 2016[220]; Huitsing et al., 2020[221]; Hutchings and Clarkson, 2015[222]; Clarkson et al., 2019[223]). However, an evaluation in Chile had mixed results (Valenzuela et al., 2022[224]).

Another example of a WSA that has targeted bullying is the Learning Together intervention. This WSA was implemented in schools in England had a small but significant effect on bullying behaviours. The intervention involves students in different ways, through the development of "action groups" consisting of staff and students who meet periodically to revise school policies and to work on coordinating the intervention, and also through student participation in surveys used to inform decisions in each school based on the unique needs and perceptions (Bonell et al., 2018[204]). A previous trial of this intervention suggested that student participation might have been a key component in improving both relationships and engagement in schools, and that students were motivated to participate in an intervention aimed at changing the school environment to be more respectful and calm (Bonell et al., 2015[225]).

WSAs for social causes: Spotlight on the environment

WSAs have been increasingly developed for various social issues, such as sustainability and climate change. The 2022 Proposal for a Council Recommendation on learning for environmental sustainability by the European Commission outlines education institutions should be supported to effectively integrate sustainability across activities by considering

whole-institution approaches that involve active learner and staff participation. A further measure proposed for consideration at the system level is to involve learners in meaningful ways to propose and design approaches for what, how and where they learn about and for environmental sustainability (European Commission, 2022[226]). UNESCO also recommends taking a WSA for education for sustainable development (UNESCO, 2020[227]).

An example of a WSA in this domain is Eco-Schools (FEE, 2017[228]). This programme was designed by the Foundation for Environmental Education in 1992 to make schools sustainable and to help change behaviours of students, school staff and their families. One aim of the programme is to foster student participation at all stages of the programme. Within the framework students are supported in leading an Eco Committee in their school, of which the membership should constitute at least 50% students. Students on the Eco Committee are then involved in carrying out an environmental review of their school, and in collecting suggestions for action from different school classes. Students on the Committee also play a role in establishing an action plan, monitoring and evaluating its implementation. All students participate in school-wide activities held at least once per term and have a chance to contribute to the development of an Eco Code such as a statement, song, poem or slogan describing the school's commitment to eco conscious actions (FEE, 2017[228]).

The Eco-Schools programme has shown some success in different OECD countries. In a review in Wales (United Kingdom) covering the time period 2018-2022, pupil-led activities emerging from the programme included litter pick-ups in the community, tree planting on school property, designing forest trails and reducing plastic waste. The participation of students in the programme was empowering and supportive of their agency, and students were able to craft initiatives that were relevant in their contexts (Byrne et al., 2023[229]). In a review in Czechia, the research team concluded that students' action competence (i.e. knowledge, skills and attitudes for dealing with sustainability issues in real life) was positively correlated with the level of perceived participation of students in decision making at school. Students' perceived participation was also correlated with student satisfaction with the programme and with their relationship with the school (Cincera and Krajhanzl, 2013[230]), however when students felt their teachers were in control they felt dissatisfied and frustrated (Cincera and Kovacikova, 2014[231]). Further research supports the idea that students' perceived participation and ownership over the project is important for success (Cincera et al., 2018[232]). Despite these positive outcomes associated with the programme, a study from Slovenia found that the slightly higher level of knowledge on environmental issues in Eco-Schools versus control schools was not correlated with higher environmentally responsible behaviour (Krnel and Naglic, 2009[233]).

4.4. Participatory budgeting

Participatory Budgeting is a structured process which allows for community members to have a say in how to spend a particular part of a public budget. The idea of participatory budgeting was first applied in 1989 in Brazil and has since been applied in democracies throughout the world. Participatory budgeting allows for a horizontal discussion between decision makers and citizens, rather than a vertical one with the decision makers at the top and citizens at the bottom. Participatory budgeting can apply to all citizens, or specific sub-groups. When applied to young people and schools, participatory budgeting has the potential to yield positive effects for each the students, the school and the local area (OECD, 2023[234]).

Participatory budgeting schemes involving youth can be employed to make budgets more responsive to their needs, particularly when youth are involved in designing, selecting and

implementing the projects. Furthermore, giving young people a voice in the allocation of resources can encourage greater interest in a process, and increase their sense of ownership, transparency and accountability (OECD, 2018[235]). Depending on the programme, children have the opportunity to provide varying levels of input. Many schemes involve students proposing initiatives including a proposed budget, which their fellow students can then vote on to establish the initiatives that will receive funding. Others can entail a pre-determined list of projects for students to vote on.

Many schools across the world are now using participatory budgeting as a tool to encourage students to develop life skills, citizenship and an understanding of democracy, and literature on the use of participatory budgeting schemes is generally very promising (OECD, 2023[234]). Students who partake in participatory budgeting programmes have the opportunity to develop leadership skills and understand democratic processes, as well as use their voices and feel a sense of belonging within the school and the wider community (Crum et al., 2020[236]). It also provides the opportunity to hone in on several competencies which could be considered 21st Century Skills, such as self-efficacy, critical thinking, communication, collaboration and creativity (Golinkoff and Hirsh-Pasek, 2016[237]). In their study of participatory budgeting in Chicago high schools in 2019, Crum et al. (2020[236]) identified several positive outcomes linked to participatory budgeting schemes, such as:

- Teachers reported that their students gained critical thinking and interdisciplinary skills, and seemed highly engaged in the process.

- The majority of students who responded to their survey stated that collaboration and communication were the two most important skills they learned in the process.

- Students also reported that they felt like their opinions were heard and counted in the process.

The following section provides examples of participatory budgeting programmes at the national level in Portugal, to more local initiatives in schools in France, Czechia and Lithuania, and an example of a local initiative in Scotland (United Kingdom). There are however many examples of these programmes from around the OECD, and while this list is not exhaustive, it gives an overview of how different programmes could look in different contexts and how they can operate on different levels from the local to the national.

4.4.1. Schools Participatory Budgeting Programme, Portugal

Portugal has one of the highest rates of participatory budgeting schemes, including at national and regional levels (Falanga, 2023[238]). The Portuguese Education Ministry introduced the Schools Participatory Budgeting programme (*Orçamento participativo das escolas* in Portuguese) nationally in 2016/17, as part of the Portuguese National Strategy for Citizenship Education in Public Schools.

To facilitate the programme, each public school in Portugal is allocated a supplementary budget by the state, which is calculated according to the number of pupils in the school and may be complimented by the school's own funds or by other community funding. Students are then given the power to decide, through democratic processes, how the budget is allocated. Students are therefore required to develop budget proposals, host debates and campaign for their ideas. The final idea is elected democratically by all students in the school. To promote a feeling of community and purpose amongst the students, the proposals must benefit in some way the school community.

The programme in Portugal has been well implemented by schools and students and has shown success in engaging students' interest and stimulating valuable ideas. Since the

launch of this initiative, 95% of schools implemented the Schools Participatory Budget, 80% of proposals were considered acceptable by schools and 91% of schools democratically elected students' proposals. Budget plans proposed by the students tended to focus on the acquisition of equipment and improvement of leisure and sociability spaces for students within schools (51%). Many proposals also focused on sports equipment (20%), improvement of school services (13%), educational resources (12%) and extra-curricular activities (12%) (Abrantes, Lopes and Baptista, 2019[239]). Importantly, 69% of school principals surveyed in Portugal found that the participatory budgeting programme meant an effective improvement on students 'rights and participation in school life (Abrantes, Lopes and Baptista, 2019[239]).

4.4.2. Participatory budgeting in schools in Paris, France

In 2016, the Department for Local Democracy, Associations and Youth in Paris created a participatory budgeting programme for schools in Paris. The Schools' Participatory Budget (*Le budget participatif des écoles* in French) enables children to choose a project for their school which will be funded by a government allocation. Eight-five per cent of Parisian schools have participated in the process since it was initiated (Mairie de Paris, 2020[240]).

The process of the programme was co-constructed between the Ministry of National Education (*Ministère de l'Éducation nationale*), the Department of School Affairs (*Direction des Affaires Scolaires – DASCO*) and the Academy of Paris (*Académie de Paris*). Each year, DASCO publishes an established catalogue of ideas for the budget, on which the students can vote on. The projects are designed to be relevant to current societal issues, in order to gain the interest of students and encourage them to think about societal issues. For example, in 2022, the four themes were climate action, building community, digital technologies and planning for the Olympic Games 2024 (Académie de Paris, 2022[241]). In the climate action category, for example, students could choose from options for the budget such as buying recording equipment for making a climate-activism podcast or creating a vegetable garden on the school premises (Académie de Paris, 2022[241]).

Between 2019 and 2020, 100 out of 114 middle schools and 325 out of 355 elementary schools took part in the schools participatory budgeting programme. Three-hundred new projects were created within schools, using a total budget of EUR 7.8 million and EUR 13.8 million (Mairie de Paris, 2020[240]).

4.4.3. School councils engaging in participatory budgeting in Kutná Hora, Czechia

In the town of Kutná Hora in Czechia, participatory budgeting schemes were established in 2019 and 2020. The programmes covered different levels, initially at the school level, and subsequently provided students the opportunity to participate in budgetary decisions at the municipal level. Students received a budget in 2019 that they could allocate towards a project to improve the environment within the school (Balážová, 2021[242]; Democracy Technologies, 2022[243]).

Next, starting in 2020 students as part of a city-level student body composed of students from different schools could choose to allocate resources to a particular project within the city. Student representatives sitting on the council from each school could propose a project that would benefit their school as well as its surroundings. Consultations with school representatives were used to decide which projects would move forward. The third level in this approach, also implemented in 2020, was student participation in municipal participatory budgeting. All citizens over the age of 14 were invited to participate in this

process, and students were given coordinator roles in the projects (Balážová, 2021[242]; Democracy Technologies, 2022[243]).

4.4.4. Participatory budgeting in Lithuanian schools

In 2019, two schools in Vilnius, Lithuania participated in a participatory budgeting programme. Students discussed the needs of their schools and fellow students and voted on projects to implement with a budget of EUR1 000 or EUR1 500 in the two schools respectively. The winning proposals were an outdoor gazebo that served as a study space in one school, and sports equipment in the other. An evaluation of the programme saw that it helped students better understand their school's budget, it increased the proportion of students who reported that they knew how to engage in their school's activities, and an overwhelming majority of students reported that this was an enjoyable experience and that it was their first time being involved in this type of activity (Transparency International, 2019[244]).

4.4.5. Youth-led participatory budgeting in Scotland (United Kingdom)

Participatory-budgeting programmes for children and youth has become a well-established practice in the North Ayrshire region of Scotland (Cook, 2021[245]). North Ayrshire Council, covering 6 localities, runs a variety of youth-led participatory budgeting initiatives for children from the age of eight and above. For example, they started the Youth Participatory Budgeting (PB) Process, which gives youth between the ages of 8-25 years the power over a budget dedicated to youth-based community activities. Children and young people are also invited to take part in wider community budget decisions. The process is transparent, involving youth in every step of the process from designing the application forms, to promoting the participatory budget scheme on social media and taking part in council discussions (Cook, 2021[245]).

In addition, each locality in North Ayrshire has a youth forum for young people between 11-20 years old, and there is a North Ayrshire Executive Youth Committee made up of local representatives. They take part in the wider Scottish Youth Parliament, as well as in local activities.

North Ayrshire councils' brand, "Shaping North Ayrshire: You get to decide what happens on your doorstep" engages with youth through a variety of online platforms targeting different age groups, such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat and Discord. Furthermore, they introduced a course in primary school called "What is PB?", in order to ensure that young children learn about and understand participatory budgeting and its benefits. Since the introduction of these techniques, young people in North Ayrshire have become more likely to engage in participatory budgeting schemes (Cook, 2021[245]).

Since the outbreak of COVID-19, the Youth PB schemes in North Ayrshire moved entirely online. This induced an increase in engagement, with a record number of votes (7 000) per PB processes across high schools through a virtual voting system. The head of the North Ayrshire Council Youth work division would like participatory budgeting to be introduced into all schools in Scotland (Cook, 2021[245]).

4.5. Co-constructing the classroom

In addition to school-based child-participation strategies such as school councils and participatory budgeting programmes (which most often focus on extra-curricular projects), child-participation strategies can also successfully expand to collaborating with teachers

on the design of classroom structures and content, such as negotiating the curriculum, assessment practices and discipline procedures.

4.5.1. Curriculum negotiation

Involving student voice in the creation and planning of lessons, units and subjects can boast a wide range of benefits for the children, the teacher, and the school. Allowing students to negotiate and co-construct the curriculum with their peers and teacher can offer schools a unique perspective on curriculum issues and improve the relevance and engagement of learning (Bron et al., 2016[246]). Indeed, Zipin (2013[247]) found that the relevance of the curriculum increases when students are allowed to enter their life experiences. It is also an excellent opportunity for children to give direction to their learning and practice democratic and leadership skills (Bron, Bovill and Veugelers, 2018[248]). However, although many teachers recognise the desirability of involving students in curriculum development, not many are able to do so because of numerous barriers and a lack of clear practical strategies on how to open up the curriculum to student input (Bron et al., 2016[246]).

Furthermore, despite the growing interest and research in student voice even before the turn of the century, curriculum negotiation was seldom exemplified (Boomer et al., 1992[249]). Bron, Bovill and Veugelers (2018[248]) find in their literature review that there are just two clear examples of curriculum negotiation: one by Australian author Garth Boomer (1978[250]) and one by US author James Beane (1997[251]). Boomer's approach is centred around the idea of class negotiation, and allowing students and teachers to decide together what pedagogical questions are best to pursue in future lessons.

> *"Students can become actors when teachers trust them and willingly apply distributed leadership and share power with students" (Bron, Bovill and Veugelers, 2018, p. 79[248])*

In their paper, *Negotiating the curriculum: realizing student voice,* Bron et al. (2016[246]) suggest a method for curriculum negotiation between students, their peers, and teachers as outlined in Table 3. This is for a process of deciding questions which should be addressed in forthcoming lessons, based on the children's individual interests, ideas, intellectual and social development. They also identify the skills students can develop by partaking in these activities.

Table 3. The Four Steps of the Curriculum Negotiating Process

Steps	Activity	Skills/competences
Individual assignment	Make list of all items and questions regarding a certain topic.	Brainstorming, knowledge recall
Group assignment	Develop a word, web or mindmap surrounding the topic using everyone's lists from the individual activity. Decide on a set of questions in a group which are the most relevant and interesting.	Communication, debate, negotiation, decision making
Class assignment	The groups of students meet to discuss their questions and decide on their priorities as a class. They decide on mandatory and optional questions. The teacher ensures that curriculum requirements are met.	Communication, debate, negotiation, decision making
Distributing questions back to groups	The selected questions are distributed amongst groups, and they plan how to answer them.	Decision making, research, communication

Note: Bron et al. (2016[246]) adapted this from a prompt sheet developed by Cook (1992[252]).
Source: (Bron et al., 2016[246]), *Negotiating the curriculum: realizing student voice.*

Bron and colleagues (2016[246]) consider this a model for democratic education as well as for curriculum negotiation, not only because children participate in the decision making

process, but also because it allows each student to relate learning to their own background and express their uniqueness.

4.5.2. The Consistency Management and Cooperative Discipline programme (CMCD)

Consistency Management and Cooperative Discipline (CMCD) is an instructional and classroom management programme. It is a research-based framework which supports a constructivist approach to classroom management that involves the co-development between students and teachers of shared values and norms. In CMCD, a teacher works collaboratively with their students to create a co-operative plan for classroom rules, use of time, and curriculum elements. Students are said to become "citizens" of the classroom, rather than "tourists" simply passing by without commitment or a sense of belonging, as they share responsibility with the teacher over their learning environment (Freiberg, 1996[253]).

There are five themes of CMCD as presented in Table 4.2 which each contribute to the improvement of instructional time and the overall learning environment. They are: Prevention, caring, co-operation, organisation, and community. Each theme involves strategies which ensure the real involvement of children as actors in the learning process (Freiberg, 1996[253]).

Table 4. The five key themes of CMCD, their objectives and strategies

Theme	Key objectives	Strategies	Skills/Value to Students
Prevention	To prevent future discipline problems.	At the start of the school year, teachers and students establish classroom rules together based on mutual values. All members of the classroom, including staff and students, must sign the agreement.	Allows students to test their own values and feel like the discipline process is fair.
Caring	To ensure children feel like they are cared for by the school.	Teachers audiotape a lesson and analyse it with the students, deciding on what could have been done or said better on both the teacher and students' side. Celebrating students' birthdays (although commonplace in early childhood education, this practice is normally lost by high school).	Students see positive models for caring, from both the teachers and their peers.
Cooperation	Creating a co-operative classroom characterised by trust, helping, sharing, participating and working together.	Students take on roles of responsibility where they feel entrusted to carry out certain tasks. These could be roles such as Recycling Manager, or Printing Manager.	A sense of ownership, greater involvement and opportunity for self-discipline.
Organisation	Classroom organisation is a mutual responsibility between the teacher and the student.	Classroom management "job positions" are posted and students write job applications for them. These include roles such as passing out papers, and assisting the substitute teacher. Jobs are rotated every four to six weeks to ensure that all students get the chance to participate.	Sense of responsibility, belonging and trust.
Community	To build a sense of community in the school.	Invite parents or other members of the community to give career talks, invite older students to the class to answer questions.	Additional role models, highlight the value of education.

Note: The strategies serve as examples and do not represent an exhaustive list
Source: (Freiberg, 1996[253]), *From tourists to citizens in the classroom.*

CMCD has been implemented in the US, primarily in inner-city communities with low socio-economic status, and in the United Kingdom, in London or remote rural areas (Freiberg, Huzinec and Templeton, 2009[254]). CMCD has been recognised by researchers as having a positive effect on students and schools in various ways, and has been praised by researchers on its evidence-based practice (Slavin and Lake, 2008[255]). A meta-

analysis of mathematics teaching identified CMCD as one of few programmes that improved mathematics achievement (Slavin and Lake, 2008[255]). Harwood (2008[256]) found that in British secondary schools, behaviour and national examination results improved following implementation of the CMCD programme. In another national study, CMCD was found to improve student discipline and reading skills (Eiseman, 2005[257]). Furthermore, the South Carolina Department of Education in the United States recognises CMCD as a method for early school leaving prevention (Hammond et al., 2014[258]).

It can be said that CMCD embraces "education through democracy" ((Biesta and Lawy, 2006[259]) cited in (Sant, 2019[260])), where "students have the opportunity to learn as part of a community in which they have a voice and can participate in making decisions with one another" ((Allen, 2011[261]) cited in (Sant, 2019[260])). In conclusion, CMCD offers both students and school staff the opportunity to build on joint decision making, mutual respect and understanding.

4.5.3. Student participation in Assessment

The balance of power between teacher and students during assessment practices is traditionally one-sided and does not usually include the participation of children in the design or grading process (Waldrip, Fisher and Dorman, 2008[262]). However, including children's voices in assessment practices at school, such as self-assessment, can be a powerful tool to encourage effective learning and engagement (Baxa, 2015[263]; Ministry of Education New Zealand, n.d.[264]) As highlighted by New Zealand's Education Ministry best-practice guidelines (Ministry of Education New Zealand, n.d.[264]), when children are participants who contribute to their own assessment processes, they may in fact learn more effectively. Such practices also give teachers opportunities to learn further about children's opinions on their learning process, which can help them teach more effectively.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic in Ireland, the Irish Second-Level Students' Union represented the student perspective in the national exams advisory group to both provide advice on education responses to the pandemic and to give input on how student learning would be assessed for the purposes to the Leaving Certificate. Following this initial invitation, a representative from the Union was appointed to the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment's main council (OECD, 2023[265]).

Assessment for learning

The Assessment Reform Group in the United Kingdom released a widely cited ten-step guide to research-based assessment practice, called Assessment for Learning: 10 principles (Assessment Reform Group, 2002[266]). They distinguish that assessment *for* learning serves a different purpose than assessment *of* learning, which is centred around grading and reporting. "Assessment for Learning is the process of seeking and interpreting evidence for use by learners and their teachers to decide where the learners are in their learning, where they need to go and how best to get there." (Assessment Reform Group, 2002, p. 2[266])

In many of the steps, students' participation in assessment procedures is central to the process, such as:

- Effective planning: Teachers' planning of assessments should provide opportunities for both the teacher and the learner to establish goals, plan how they will receive feedback, what information will be used for assessment and how they will take part in the assessment process.

- Motivation: Assessment methods which protect a learner's autonomy, providing the opportunity to make choices and feedback and self-direction, can build a learner's motivation.

- Establishing goals and criteria: Learners should have a part in deciding the goals and criteria for assessments.

- Self-Assessment: Self-assessment practices can help learners to gain new skills such as self-reflection, and autonomy, as well as lead to new knowledge and understandings.

4.5.4. *Student participation in school inspections*

The role of parent and student voice in school inspections is becoming increasingly important in education systems throughout the world (Brown et al., 2019[267]). This is due to an increasing emphasis in policy on the rights of children and parents to be consulted in the evaluation of schools as key stakeholders in the education process (Brown et al., 2019[267]). In Northern Ireland, a study of young people's views on school inspections identified that a large proportion of children felt that school inspectors did not observe a "typical day" at school, and that teachers' behaviour and lessons changed significantly ahead of the inspection (Perry, 2015[268]). When consulted on how school inspections can be improved, students suggested not giving notice to schools ahead of inspections. They also called for more opportunities for children to engage with the school inspectors, and there was a consensus that parents and school staff such as classroom assistants and caretakers should also participate. Furthermore, they highlighted that school inspections should cover topics such as teachers' skills, student happiness and well-being, school policies (such as bullying), and exam results (Perry, 2015[268]). These results show that children are eager to have a voice in their school inspections and can be a valuable resource of information as key stakeholders in the school system.

In England (United Kingdom), the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) include student voice in their evaluations. They have several methods of doing this, such as asking students to complete a confidential questionnaire about their school before the inspection. Students are also invited to share any concerns about their school outside of the questionnaire to a dedicated email address, to talk to the school inspector in person when they are onsite, and they can also text a dedicated number (Independent Schools Inspectorate, n.d.[269]). Pupils may also, at random, be chosen to participate in discussions lead by the inspector about their learning experiences. School students in the Swedish education system are also consulted in a similar process (The Swedish Schools Inspectorate, 2008[270]). Student voice in teacher and school inspections is also increasingly considered in school districts across the US (Burr et al., 2015[271]).

In Ireland, the Department of Education Inspectorate manifests strong commitment to the UNCRC and the Code of Practice for the Inspectorate (2022) includes clear commitment to Article 12. The Inspectorate acknowledges the benefits for children, schools and the Inspectorate when students participate in inspection. In recent years, it has developed a rights-respecting approach in how it works with children and young people during inspections, ensuring that appropriate conditions are in place to enable children to express their views and emphasises voluntary participation and informed participation. The National Framework for Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-making (Government of Ireland, 2021[272]) and the Lundy model (2007[59]) were influential in the development of the approach as was the voice of children, from early years to senior cycle. Advised by children, the Inspectorate provides advance information for students about the purpose of inspection, how it transacts and the role of the inspector. Children have also

advised on the strengths-based approaches inspectors should take during focus groups; thus, as part of the developmental journey, inspectors were upskilled as rights-respecting facilitators.

4.5.5. Participatory design

As outlined in Section 3, participatory design is increasingly used in the conceptualisation and design of digital technologies. While participatory design in education is in more of an infant stage (Cumbo and Selwyn, 2021[273]), there is some literature to suggest that participatory approaches can be successful in supporting student agency and empowerment. For example, students can be involved in design processes to engage with social issues, or on their learning environments. Students can contribute to design processes by identifying problems in the school environment, and by being brought into discussions on how to improve conditions (Flutter, 2006[274]). Student involvement in a participatory design process in upper secondary schools in Finland saw the fostering of a participatory culture where students felt their input was taken into account, and helped understand what students saw as important to their well-being and learning (Mäkelä et al., 2017[275]).

Students have reported that participating in design processes boosts their confidence and gives them a sense of control, which is something they may not feel during the school day (Flutter, 2006[274]; Sorrell and Sorrell, 2005[276]). These processes importantly also provide students with the opportunity to express themselves, and exercise their rights by having a say in things that affect them (den Besten, Horton and Kraftl, 2008[277]). However, students tend to have quite busy schedules and may lack the time and energy to fully contribute or participate in this type of activity. For example, Mäkelä and colleagues (2017[275]) noted in their study in Finland that student participation rates were relatively low. This was theorised to be due potentially to students having busy schedules, and also the fact that they were temporary occupants of the school who might be less committed to change processes than school staff (Mäkelä et al., 2017[275]). Students might also be reluctant to participate if they think their contributions will not make a difference. Resrarch from participatory design in the digital environment suggests that children may be more engaged in processes and open to collaborating when adults are also active team members (Uğraş, Rızvanoğlu and Gülseçen, 2022[278]). This might have implications for how teachers and school staff engage with students in participatory design processes.

4.6. Drivers and barriers of participatory approaches in education

In many systems, students still have limited opportunities to participate in decision making, and participation might be limited to a few "seats at the table". These seats are rarely occupied by students with special education needs, by younger students and by those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Inclusivity is essential to support all students in building civic skills, to mitigate the "civic engagement opportunity gap" (Bartlett and Schugurensky, 2023[279]), and to make sure all opinions and needs are accounted for. It is thus important to find ways to increase opportunities for all students across the board to avoid tokenism, and to make participatory processes as safe and inclusive as possible so a diversity of voices and opinions can be taken into account. For example, findings from a pilot study on including students with special education needs in a participatory budgeting programme showed promising results regarding the learning outcomes of all students involved, while helping foster relationships and leadership roles for those with special education needs (Bartlett and Schugurensky, 2023[279]).

Teachers and school leaders can be key drivers, or in some cases barriers, to implementing participatory approaches in education systems. Teachers' beliefs about children and their

needs and competences, as well as their own values about teaching and learning activities can help or hinder child participation (Nyland, 2009[280]). Various other factors, such as teacher-student ratios, teachers' professional skills, their ability to manage their workload and schedules, and student characteristics (e.g. age, communication skills, special education needs) can affect the practices teachers employ to support child participation (Venninen et al., 2013[281]).

For some approaches, such as WSAs, teachers and school leaders can benefit from professional learning opportunities to help them with effective implementation of the programme, and they can support teachers and school leaders in facilitating child participation at higher entry points than simply consultation. While some participatory approaches might challenge traditional notions of the balance of power between teachers and students, there are successful examples of programmes where students have reported that they were supported by their teachers and that their opinions were listened to and respected (e.g. (Vare, 2021[186])). There are various resources available for teachers and school leaders, as well as other adults who are working with children, to help adults understand children's participation rights and to support their participation. For example, the Council of Europe's "Listen – Act – Change" handbook provides guidance and a range of resources that are relevant for all adults working with children (Crowley, Larkins and Pinto, 2020[282]).

In many systems, there is a lack of harmonisation regarding child participation in decision making within the education system and across different domains. Research disciplines and policy domains are both traditionally quite siloed (Burns and Gottschalk, 2019[3]; Burns and Gottschalk, 2020[4]), so this is not a new revelation. A lack of co-ordination, or a lack of overarching strategy for child participation and empowerment means that approaches to support child voice and child participation can be fragmented and inconsistent with differences between classrooms, between schools, and across decision-making domains (e.g. education, health and welfare etc.). For example, in some systems participatory approaches may still be quite ad hoc and depend on the buy-in of individual teachers or school leaders (Graham et al., 2018[283]).

A common trend across child participation practices, both inside and outside of education, is a lack of clear and consistent evaluation. The impact of different participatory processes on student outcomes can be under-researched, and for many approaches there is little scientific evidence as to the potential benefits and drawbacks.

4.7. In sum

There has been much progress in recent decades in integrating participatory processes into education systems in OECD countries. One of the most common approaches is establishing student councils, while programmes such as participatory budgeting and incorporating student voice in education reforms is becoming more common. Some systems, such as Ireland, take a strong rights-based approach to participatory practices inside and out of the education system. Co-ordination of participation across policy making domains, while challenging, is a strength in the system to ensure children have opportunities to realise their participation rights to the fullest extent possible.

5. A case study of child participation in policy and practice: Ireland

Ireland has a strong, rights-based tradition of including child voice in decision-making at system level, which stemmed from their ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in 1992 (Fleming, 2015[284]). Ireland has since undertaken

many system-level initiatives which encourage and support children and young people's participation in decision making. This includes, but is not limited to, the development of a new Department for Children and Youth affairs (DYCA) in 2011 which is currently the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) as of 2020, the establishment of an Ombudsman for Children, and national and local level youth councils. Government departments and processes involved in young people's lives, such as the Department for Education (DE) and the School Self Evaluation Guidelines (SSE), also place significant importance on the inclusion and participation of children in decision making processes in Ireland (Macken, 2019[285]). The work of the DE Inspectorate was highlighted in Part 4.

This section will briefly outline some of the ways in which child participation has been incorporated into mainstream decision making processes in the Irish context, and the comprehensive way in which this has been approached.

5.1. Embedded in the law

There are many laws in Ireland which aim to ensure the participation of children in decision making practices. Some of these are summarised in Table 5

Table 5. Legal Supports for Child Participation

Act	General function(s)	Function(s) related to children's participation
Child and Family Agency Act 2013	Promote and support the development, welfare and protection of children ; Encourage and support the effective functioning of families.	Section 9(3): When planning and reviewing the provision of services, children's views must be given consideration. Section 9(4): The views of the child shall be ascertained and given due weight in respect of the age and maturity of the child when the Agency performs its functions in respect of an individual child.
Referendum on Children's Rights 2012	New Article 42(a): Affirmation on the rights and protections of children.	Constitutional status of hearing the views of children in stated circumstances is given.
Guardian ad litem	Under the Child Care Act 1991, an adult can be appointed who speaks on behalf of the child (ad litem) in child welfare courts.	The Department of Children and Youth Affairs was committed to bring forward proposals to significantly reform the 1991 Act relating to Guardians ad litem.
The Education Act 1998	An increased emphasis on inclusivity and equality of access, including provision for children with disabilities or special education needs.	Section 27(3) states that school boards of post-primary schools must encourage and give all reasonable assistance to the establishment of student councils. The function of the school student council is to involve student participation in school decisions.
The Children Act 2001	The focus of the Act is on the criminal justice system and criminal behaviour for children. The age of criminal responsibility was raised from 7 to 12.	Children are given the right to be heard and to participate in criminal proceedings, under section 96.
Ombudsman for Children Act 2002	Promotes the rights of children in Ombudsman services.	The Ombudsman for Children office was established under the act, which investigates complaints made by children about the services they receive from public organisations (such as schools and healthcare systems).

Source: Adapted from (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2015[286]), *National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-making, 2015 – 2020,* www.dcya.ie.

A major strength in Ireland is the co-ordination of child participation practices and the implementation of strategies in different areas of government. These approaches are not limited to policy areas such as education. The legal underpinning of student councils in Irish schools is another strength in this system, which provides councils with both recognition and security (European Commission, 2015[287]). There are also specific settings in which Irish children have reported high satisfaction with their participation, for example those who have been involved in youth clubs or projects (Forde et al., 2017[288]).

Although these laws support children's participation, some researchers have criticised their effectiveness. For example, Gilleece and Cosgrove ((2012[289]) in (Forde et al., 2018[290])) argue that the Education Act 1998 is silent on the specifics of student participation in areas such as subject content, curriculum and pedagogical processes, and highlight that the act does not recommend primary schools to develop student councils despite the potential benefits. O'Mahony (2015, p. 142[291]) highlights that the effectiveness of the law, and student councils in particular, relies on the views of the school boards, parents and teachers who may not take the school council seriously. Furthermore, some children have reported being dissatisfied with decision making processes in general within their local communities (Forde et al., 2017[288]).

Box 13. Ombudsman for Children Office

The Ombudsman for Children office in Ireland is an independent office established under the Ombudsman for Children Act 2002. The role of the Ombudsman for Children is to promote and safeguard the rights and welfare of children in Ireland. They are responsible for investigating complaints made by or on behalf of children about public organisations, such as government departments, local authorities, and health and education services. The Ombudsman also has a role in promoting good practice in relation to child rights, and in advising government and public bodies on policies and practices that affect children.

One of the key functions of the Ombudsman for Children is to provide an independent and confidential service to children and young people who have concerns or complaints about the public services they receive. They work to ensure that these concerns are addressed in a fair and transparent way, and that children's rights and welfare are protected.

In 2021, the Ombudsman for Children received a record number of complaints. Out of 2 126 complaints, 908 were directly related to COVID-19. More than half (53%) were related to education, whereas health and family support received 17% and 12% of complaints respectfully. Most complaints came from adults on behalf of children, and not directly from the children themselves.

The Ombudsman also conducts a number of surveys and consultations with children and young people to better understand their experiences and perspectives, and to inform the Ombudsman's work in promoting and safeguarding children's rights. For example, in February 2022 they launched the Children's Survey on Experiences during COVID-19 (Ombudsman for Children's Office, 2022[292]). The survey was distributed via primary and secondary schools and could be answered online. Children were informed about the survey by their teachers, as well as an informative video, and their participation in the survey was anonymous and voluntary.

Source: (Ombudsman for Children's Office, 2022[293]), www.oco.ie.

5.2. Policy supports

There are also a wide range of policy supports available Ireland which advocate for the participation for children and young people. European supports include the Council Resolution on a renewed system for European co-operation in the youth field (2010-2018) by the Council of the European Union (The Council of the European Union, 2009[294]). One of the strategy's main objectives is to encourage young people to actively participate in

society. They aim to meet this objective by promoting discussions between policy makers and youth, ensuring young people's inclusion in EU policy development.

Since the year 2000 in Ireland, there has been a growth in the number of national policies, strategies, plans and frameworks that include children's participation in decision-making as a key objective (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2015[286]). National policies, strategies and plans include, but are not limited to, the National Drugs Strategy (Interim, 2009-2016), the National Strategy for Research and Data on Children's Lives (2011-2016), the Youth Justice Action Plan (2014-2018): Tackling Youth Crime, and the Agenda for Children's Services. National sets of standards include the National Standards for Special Care Units, National Standards for Foster Care and the Quality Standards for Volunteer-led Youth Groups. National frameworks include the National Quality Standards Framework for Youth work, the HSE National Healthcare Charter for Children, and Siolta: The National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education. Different government departments including the Departments of Education, of Health and of Justice have engaged in consultations on a range of topics affecting children whether this is in the development stages of a new strategy(e.g. Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying, explained in Box 14), for reforms (e.g. curriculum reforms), to develop indicators (e.g. on child well-being) or to develop white papers (e.g. about crime) (European Commission, 2015[287]).

In the education field, the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment provides students with opportunities to engage with curriculum development through different channels. For example, the Schools Forum consists of a network of schools that participate in testing new approaches and capturing student voices through consultation processes around new subject or curriculum specifications. A representative of the ISSU is also appointed to the Council to represent the collective views of students.

Box 14. Developing an action plan on bullying with students and for students

Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying, published by the Department of Education in December 2022, is a recent example of how children and young people can influence and shape national policy. Over 170 children and young people from diverse backgrounds were consulted including children with special educational needs, Traveller and Roma children, and refugees.

The Action Plan is centred on a child right's based approach and provides a collective vision and clear roadmap for how the whole education community and society can work together to prevent and address bullying in schools. It contains a number of actions aimed at increasing the participation of children and young people at a national level and at school level. One of the key actions in Cineáltas was a commitment by the Department of Education to establish a dedicated unit to promote the participation of children and young people into the development of Department policy. The Student Participation Unit was established in March 2023, and has an independent expert group to advise the work of the unit.

Cineáltas also contains the following relevant commitments:

- To develop a new inspection model to assess whether a school has appropriate strategies in place to promote well-being, prevent and address bullying, and promote a positive and inclusive school culture. This new inspection model will be rolled out in schools early in 2024.

- To review and update the 2002 *Student Councils: A Voice for Students'* resource to support the establishment of student councils in primary and post-primary schools that are representative of the students in the school.

- To progress the Charter Bill through the Houses of the Oireachtas and to develop Charter Guidelines that will strengthen the voice and participation of children and young people and their parents in the development and implementation of school policies including their antibullying policy.

- To provide guidance to schools on engaging with their students to support student-led anti-bullying initiatives.

- To develop guidance for post-primary school Student Support Teams on how to actively seek the voice and participation of children, young people and their parents.

Source: (Department of Education, 2022[295]), *Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying,* https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/52aaf-cinealtas-action-plan-on-bullying/

5.3. National strategy on child participation

Recent policy developments include the National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participating in Decision Making (2015-2020) (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2015[286]), which is primarily aimed at children under the age of 18. The Department of Children and Youth Affairs released the National Strategy in 2015, marking Ireland as the first country to develop a national strategy for young people's participation in decision-making. Underpinned by the UNCRC and the EU charter of Fundamental Rights, the strategy aims to ensure that children and young people have a voice in the decisions which affect their everyday lives, both individually and collectively. The strategy aims to support child participation across all policy areas that affect their lives, such as in healthcare, education, community, and in legal settings. It provides guidelines on how government departments, agencies and organisations can meet their obligations under the UNCRC.

Acknowledging that a supportive environment is essential for effective child participation, one of the visions of the National Strategy is 'Participation with Purpose', which extends beyond just ensuring that young people are involved in decision-making, to highlighting that children's views should be listened to, taken seriously and given due weight, with the intention of leading to outcome or change. The framework provides checklists which aim to guide decision makers in the use of the Lundy model and good practice principles in planning and implementing the involvement of children and young people in decision-making. These include a Planning Checklist, an Evaluation Checklist, and an Everyday Spaces Checklist, which gives guidance to education and youth professionals on how to listen and act upon young people's voice in everyday settings. The Framework also provides a number of child/youth evaluation forms to be completed by children and young people and the end of meetings, events or activities (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2015[286]).

One of the key actions of the strategy was the establishment of the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) Children and Young People's Participation Hub. The Hub is an online resource aimed at a range of audiences, including policymakers, practitioners, and children and young people themselves. For young people, it includes easy to follow guidelines on how to get involved in decision-making opportunities and processes.

The Irish Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth published a final review of the National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in

Decision-making 2015-2020, in January 2023 (DCEDIY, 2023[296]). The review assessed the progress made towards the goals of the national strategy. It found that significant progress had been made in promoting children and young people's participation, praising the establishment for a range of participation structures and initiatives which were supported by the strategy. However, it also identified a number of challenges that remain, including the need to ensure that children and young people's views are taken into account at policy-making level, and to address the continuing barriers to participation for marginalised and vulnerable groups. The review includes a range of recommendations for further action, including the development of a new national strategy on participation, and the strengthening of mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating progress. Overall, however, the review highlights the importance of ongoing efforts to promote children's participation in decision making and the need for continued collaboration between government, civic society, and children themselves.

6. Paving the way forward for child participation in decision making

6.1. Key considerations for children's participation in decision making

Although there have been many positive developments, there remain many barriers and challenges to fostering children's participation in decision making. Some challenges include tokenism, lack of impact on decision making and a lack of sustainability of activities to foster participation (McMellon and Tisdall, 2020[19]). In some systems, there are also limited opportunities for children to participate in decision making in particular in the school context. This section will go more into detail on some of these challenges, highlighting key considerations for policy makers and researchers. These considerations are relevant within, but not limited to, the education policy context and can be extended to all policy fields that are relevant for children.

6.1.1. Challenging traditional power dynamics and structures

Despite progress in recent years, scholars underscore that childhood is still thought of as a time of vulnerability and children as in need of protection. These conceptualisations of vulnerability also vary widely across cultures and societies, and the ways in which children and adults interact and in which arenas might look different in different OECD countries.

In general and across most countries, a notorious obstacle to children's participation, and to implementing child rights more generally, is that adults fail to take children's rights seriously (Freeman, 2007[297]). Specifically regarding participation, adults and children alike may hold views that children lack the capacity to participate in decision making (Moran-Ellis and Tisdall, 2019[298]) and children suffer a comparative disadvantage to adults because of this often held notion that they "lack competency", which can be seen as a prerequisite to having and exercising rights (Federle, 2017[299]). Views of children as "future citizens", or "becomings" instead of "beings" (James, Jenks and Prout, 1998[300]), can further exclude them from debates and making decisions about their roles in public life and citizenship (Coady, 2009[301]; Nolas, Varvantakis and Aruldoss, 2016[302]).

The notion that adults are superior to children or of greater worth is referred to as "adultism" (Shier, 2012[303]). This term is also used to describe practices and social structures that are built around these beliefs, which perpetuate the notion of the child as an object rather than a rights holder (ibid). This rhetoric can be seen manifested in different ways. For example, this can be seen when children are considered as inherently and universally naïve, gullible and vulnerable in comparison with adults (Corney et al.,

2021[79]). Corney and colleagues (2021, p. 680[79]) argue that "the idealised characteristics of 'adults' provide the yardstick by which young people are judged and a set of dividing practices are derived", and the attributes of children and of adults are both stereotyped and homogenised.

Implementation of Article 12 is dependent on the co-operation of adults, who might be opposed or lack a vested interest in complying with it (Lundy, 2007[59]). For example, adults' concerns could be due to scepticism in children's capacity to provide meaningful input to decision making, or that giving children more control could undermine their authority. Meaningful involvement of children in decision making processes does require challenging some deeply held assumptions about power relationships between children and adults (Partridge, 2005[78]). It also requires adults to challenge concerns they may have about protecting children and making decisions in their best interests without meaningfully including them in the process (Ruiz-Casares et al., 2016[304]). Adults could also be concerned that giving children opportunities to participate and complying with Article 12 of the UNCRC would take effort that could be better used elsewhere (Lundy, 2007[59]). If adults do not hear and respect children's views, it renders their participation meaningless (af Ursin and Haanpää, 2017[305]).

There is also a question of how children can be brought into adult spaces, and whether they should be brought into very formalised decision making processes with adult ground rules. There are concerns about how children can effectively participate within typically hierarchical adult structures, when forms of engagement that might resonate more clearly with young people are not on offer (Percy-Smith and Taylor, 2008[33]). Some practical ways that power relations could be more equal include adults wearing informal clothing, the use of first names in participatory approaches when appropriate and using language that is child-friendly (Druin, 1999[128]). Actions such as sitting at the same level while engaging in activities can also help in addressing these power structures, and children should not be made to feel like they are in the minority among adults (Fails, 2012[136]).

A further concern in this regard is that while there is the notion that child participation can or does challenge adult patterns of decision making, there is also a risk that child participation can reproduce adult or traditional patterns of power (Montà, 2021[306]). Scholars have questioned the value of maintaining systems of power and decision making that young people seem to be disenfranchised by. For example, Skelton (2007[307]) asks whether children's creativity or vitality could be lost or diminished when participating in adult structures.

However, much research suggests that some of these concerns specifically around changing power dynamics are unfounded. Despite arguments that the language of children's rights, in particular the right to be heard, can undermine teacher authority in schools (in (Lundy and Cook-Sather, 2016[308])), this seems to not be the case (Arnot et al., 2004[309]; Rudduck and McIntyre, 2007[310]) and aligning teacher and student rights can serve the interests of both groups without having teachers at a disadvantage (Lundy, 2012[311]).

As outlined above, there are many potential benefits from child participation in decision making, ranging from positive outcomes for democracies, to skill development and instilling a sense of responsibility in children and young people. Evidence also suggests that in particular in the context of decision making at school, student participation can have positive impacts on the teaching and learning process and can contribute to a more democratic school culture (Flutter and Rudduck, 2004[312]). Despite the potential benefits of encouraging and fostering child participation, educational institutions that are structured around traditional hierarchies and power imbalances may not effectively support partnerships with children (Lundy and Cook-Sather, 2016[308]).

6.1.2. Helping all children understand their rights

As mentioned above, in many instances children and young people are not aware of their rights as outlined in the UNCRC (McMellon and Tisdall, 2020[19]). For example, in a report from the United Kingdom, many young people believe that the UNCRC is not understood or recognised widely among other young people, in particular those who are not active in youth organisations (UK Children's Commissioners, 2020[313]). The same report suggests that the ways in which students have learned about children's rights in schools varies widely, with some schools taking a whole-school approach to teaching and learning about this topic, while other students have little to no experience of learning about these topics in their schools. Teaching children about their rights, and how to exercise them, can have a positive effect on outcomes like relationships and behaviours while also prompting children to respect the rights of others (Dunhill, 2016[314]).

In order to support children in understanding and realising their rights, special attention must be paid to how information is conveyed to them. Ensuring communication is accessible, accounting for factors such as age, preferred communication methods and disability is essential to ensure inclusive participation. Information should be presented to children in ways that are age-appropriate and contextually relevant. This is particularly relevant given that the right to information is enshrined in the UNCRC and is often grouped within children's participation rights.

6.1.3. Fostering inclusion

Children represent a group of population exposed to high levels of inequality and exclusion, while being dependent to some extent on adults to advocate for their interests and structure their experiences (Ito et al., 2021[315]). Adults' concerns about protecting children and making decisions in their best interests can also impede children's right to participate in decision making (Ruiz-Casares et al., 2016[304]). In moving towards societies that uphold children's rights to the fullest, including the right to have their views present and listened to in all matters that affect them, they must be seen as competent social actors who have expertise in their own right and on their experiences to contribute to decision making processes.

The right to non-discrimination is a central principle of the UNCRC. In recent years especially, OECD countries have been increasingly concerned with issues of equity and inclusion and most have operational definitions of both equity and inclusion (OECD, 2023[316]). In order to truly embrace diversity and respect for all children's potential to participate in decision making processes, special attention should be paid to particular groups who have traditionally been at higher risk for exclusion in these processes. For example, children with disabilities or special education needs, and very young children are at higher risk of exclusion (Theobald, Danby and Ailwood, 2011[76]). The rights to participate and be included are closely interlinked, and in order to ensure that inclusion is both effective and meaningful children with disabilities must also be part of the discussion (UNICEF, 2013[63]). Consulting children and including them in decisions, for example around the devices or assistive technologies that they have access to in school, can help ensure that children have what they need and what works best for them in order to feel included in the teaching and learning process (Lundy et al., 2019[135]).

Box 15. Mind the gap: Making participation inclusive

> **Examples from the Ombudsman for Children in Ireland**
>
> The Ombudsman for Children in Ireland published guidance in 2018 with very practical considerations for children's participation in decision making. One key consideration is to be inclusive, and in some instances this might require some creativity or "thinking outside of the box" in order to ensure children with diverse backgrounds, ages and abilities can participate.
>
> The guide suggests to consider ways in which children with different abilities or levels of literacy can participate, whether they express themselves verbally or visually (i.e. by drawing). It also highlights the importance of ensuring meeting spaces are physically accessible, that meeting times do not disadvantage certain student groups (e.g. those of different faiths), and to consider using digital technologies such as social media or applications to include children who are not able to physically join the meeting. The guidance also highlights the importance of being clear, and providing information that is age and ability appropriate.
>
> Source: (Ombudsman for Children, 2018[317]), *Children's participation in decision making,* https://www.oco.ie/app/uploads/2018/12/OCO_Participation-Guidelines_English_WEB.pdf

Indeed, Article 12 of the UNCRC requires adults to make the commitment to hear children's views with respect. Ways of implementing this require considering various forms of communication, including non-verbal communication such as drawing as mentioned in Box 15. Other ways in which stakeholders can be more inclusive in communication methods include using play, sign language, touch and other non-verbal cues such as body language (UNICEF, 2013[63]). Article 7 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities outlines an obligation of states to provide assistance and the necessary tools to children with disabilities to allow them both to express themselves, and to have their views taken seriously (United Nations, 2006[318]).

In practice, the majority of national youth strategies in OECD countries do cover social inclusion of vulnerable groups as a thematic area. However, it is not common practice to conduct separate consultations in decision making processes or consultations on youth policy with those who are potentially vulnerable and/or marginalised such as youth with disabilities or those who are not engaged in education, employment or training (OECD, 2020[64]). One notable example highlighted from the OECD Youth Governance Surveys is New Zealand. The Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy consulted with 10 000 members of society, 6 000 of whom were children and young people. Consultations included interviews, focus groups, surveys, workshops and more, and various groups were prioritised in this process such as Māori and Pacific people, refugees, young people with disabilities and children in state care (OECD, 2020[64]).

Finally, in order to truly foster meaningful participation for all children, safety should be a top concern. Children need safe spaces where they are unafraid to voice their views and where dialogue can be fostered in their families, their communities and society in general (Biggeri and Santi, 2012[158]). Not only do they need to be safe, but they need to feel safe to share their views (Fairhall and Woods, 2021[319]). This can involve things like protecting children's identities in decision making processes, or allowing for anonymous participation for example through the use of digital platforms.

6.1.4. *Making participation meaningful and dealing with tokenism*

All too often, children's participation in decision making processes is done through consultation (Percy-Smith and Taylor, 2008[33]). While this is an important part of the decision making process and children should indeed be included at this level, this is quite

a low entry point. Making participation meaningful requires giving children the opportunity to engage in processes at different stages, in an active way, that involves learning and reflection (Percy-Smith and Taylor, 2008[33]). To ensure participation is not only meaningful, but also effective and sustainable, the Council of Europe Recommendation on Participation states that "it needs to be understood as a process and not a one-off event and requires ongoing commitment in terms of time and resources" (Council of Europe, 2012, p. 7[27]).

Issues such as ignorance and trust between groups such as adults and young people can also undermine meaningful participation. Furthermore, providing participation opportunities that do not appeal to children and young people can impede participatory approaches (Corney et al., 2021[79]). Ensuring that children feel comfortable and that they are offered an opportunity that meets their needs and is developmentally appropriate is crucial in ensuring meaningful participation, or even participation to begin with.

Lundy (2018[39]) argues that even if children feel their time might be wasted or that they participated in activities that were not fruitful or they were not taken seriously, this does not justify breaching an obligation to fulfilling their human rights. She further argues that tokenistic forms of child participation can be valuable to children and to adults, despite the fact that it would be preferable to fully respect children's rights and engage with them in ways that were not tokenistic. Adults tend to exclude children if they believe that they cannot achieve meaningful inclusion or if their inclusion could be considered tokenistic (Lundy, 2018[39]).

6.1.5. Using good, consistent terminology

Challenges within the literature on children's rights, child agency and participation more broadly also stem from the variety of terms and words used. For example, in a literature review on child participation, McMellon and Tisdall (2020[19]) highlight the different terms that are used, often interchangeably and without definition or differentiation, across the literature. Terms like views, autonomy, self-determination, wishes and opinions emerge alongside or instead of the word "participation". Some authors also critique the use of certain terms such as agency, due to the assumption in much of the literature that agency is inherently positive. Therefore, it could be problematic in instances when a child's agency seems questionable (Bordonaro and Payne, 2012[320]; Edmonds, 2019[321]). Children always have some kind of agency and this can be exercised even in situations where they are being manipulated, or rendered incapable of acting autonomously (Mühlbacher and Sutterlüty, 2019[322]).

The notion of competence, and what this means for meaningful participation in decision making, is also important to keep in mind. Like agency, competence is used in different ways across the literature and can refer to competence to participate, competence to adequately understand decision making processes, and the assumed competences that are key for actually making decisions or participating in various processes such as research (Moran-Ellis and Tisdall, 2019[298]). The way in which competence is used conceptually can both support or undermine children's participation, and underscores the importance of clearly defining what is meant by competence and why it is being used (ibid). In order for engagement to be meaningful, the level of competency needed for a participatory process should not only be defined, but the methods used should align with the level of competence required and should be age-appropriate (Bradbury-Jones and Taylor, 2013[139]). Children's views should be taken seriously, whatever their age, maturity or perceived "competence".

6.1.6. Investing time, effort and resources in participation

One common challenge to ensuring child participation in decision making is ensuring adequate resources are available. Including children as stakeholders in decision making requires efforts and resources, and children need to be given adequate access to information and time to understand the issues at hand (Marshall, Byrne and Lundy, 2015[323]; Tisdall, 2015[85]). Timing is also of the essence; if children are consulted very late in the process, their views might have limited shaping power or they may lack time to prepare an adequate response.

Building capacity for stakeholders to effectively participate in making decisions is essential. Not only does this involve providing child-friendly information that is developmentally and age appropriate, but also potentially training and guidance (OECD, 2019[324]) which would be both more expensive and more time-consuming. In the education context, capacity building requires allotting time and resources for professional learning opportunities for teachers and school leaders.

It is also important to consider the time that children themselves are expected to invest in these processes (Cortesi, Hasse and & Gasser, 2021[133]). Faced with more competitive academic environments, and pressures outside of the school day, asking children to dedicate considerable time to decision making processes needs to be balanced with existing commitments. Ensuring that participation is not "all or nothing", that children's busy schedules are acknowledges and that children can participate to varying extents at different times of the process will render participatory processes more inclusive and accessible.

6.1.7. Staying accountable

Various accountability and assessment measures exist to ensure that children and young people's rights, including their participation rights, are effectively realised. Some mechanisms include establishing child rights Ombudspeople or commissioners who are responsible for the protection and promotion of children's rights, highlighting when potential or actual violations take place. Other measures include establishing inspectorates, or directions within existing child/education inspectorates to monitor children's rights, and performing Child Rights Impact Assessments[8] takes place when developing policies or laws that affect children. These impact assessments could fall under the jurisdiction of the Ombudsperson for example, or it could be a component of a human rights or social impact assessment (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, n.d.[325]). While less commonly used in OECD countries, youth checks are another tool where governments can assess the anticipated impact of legislation or regulations on young people (OECD, 2018[9]).

6.1.8. Addressing research gaps

Throughout this paper, various research gaps have been identified and outlined. In particular, more efforts need to be made to assess the effectiveness of different participatory approaches, and the level of participation that they afford. In many approaches in education, the level of child participation is either not assessed, or if assessed is minimal. For example, in a number of WSAs that are supposedly participatory, children are granted entry at quite low access points, however the research suggests that children have a sense of ownership and are more likely to agree with changing school policies or rules when they have the opportunity to shape how they are developed.

---

[8] This is a tool to predict the impact of proposed laws, policies or budget allocations that affect children and their rights.

The child participation literature is also heavily rooted in and focused on some countries. In general, much of the literature has emerged from high-income countries with established democracies, and these also tend to be English-speaking countries. Addressing this gap and exploring how children can effectively and inclusively participate in decision making in different contexts, while accounting for cultural differences is crucial.

6.2. In sum

Child participation in decision making across different policy domains can be powerful in promoting policy success, supporting well-being and upholding children's rights. While children are increasingly being seen as actors in their own rights and competent decision makers, all too often policy makers deny children the right to participate in decisions that affect them, or their participation is ineffective and at low entry points. With children's rights taking a progressively central importance in policy and societal discourse, affording children the opportunity to realise their participation rights is crucial. Despite some challenges to child participation, finding ways to meaningfully work with children on matters concerning them can enhance policy effectiveness and accountability, it can provide crucial learning opportunities for children to engage in democratic and civic processes throughout their lives, it can support their inclusion and well-being, and children report that they find participatory experiences fun and exciting.

Changing long-held beliefs and a narrative that portrays children as vulnerable individuals in need of protection will not happen overnight, and will require consistent efforts from policy makers, researchers, the media, society and children themselves to underscore why this is important and how it can be beneficial. Breaking down barriers to participation, and investing time, effort and resources to find ways of ensuring meaningful, inclusive, safe and effective participation of children in decision making is important for policy makers in OECD countries to consider and explore.

References

Abrantes, P., A. Lopes and J. Baptista (2019), *The Schools Participatory Budgeting (SPB) in Portugal*, Participatory Budgeting World Atlas, https://www.pbatlas.net/uploads/7/0/6/1/70619115/portugal_2.pdf (accessed on 1 December 2022). [238]

Académie de Paris (2022), *Budget participatif des écoles et des collèges pour vos projets numériques ! | Académie de Paris*, Académie de Paris, Paris, https://www.ac-paris.fr/budget-participatif-des-ecoles-et-des-colleges-pour-vos-projets-numeriques-125486 (accessed on 1 December 2022). [240]

af Ursin, P. and L. Haanpää (2017), "A Comparative Study on Children's Rights Awareness in 16 Countries", *Child Indicators Research*, Vol. 11/5, pp. 1425-1443, https://doi.org/10.1007/s12187-017-9508-1. [304]

Allen, K. (2011), "Mathematics as Thinking. A Response to "Democracy and School Math"", *Democracy and Education*, Vol. 19/2. [260]

Allen, K. (2010), "A bullying intervention system in high school: A two-year school-wide follow-up", *Studies in Educational Evaluation*, Vol. 36/3, pp. 83-92, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.stueduc.2011.01.002. [210]

ALS Association (2017), *ALS Ice Bucket Challenge Commitments*, https://www.als.org/IBC (accessed on 18 April 2023). [121]

Anderson, D. et al. (2022), "Positive links between student participation, recognition and wellbeing at school", *International Journal of Educational Research*, Vol. 111, p. 101896, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2021.101896. [72]

Archard, D. (2004), *Children: Rights and childhood*. [17]

Arnot, M. et al. (2004), *Consultation in the classroom: Developing dialogue about teaching and learning*, Pearson. [308]

Arnstein, S. (1969), "A ladder of citizen participation", *Journal of American Institute of Planners*, Vol. 35/4, pp. 216-224. [325]

Assessment Reform Group (2002), "Assessment for Learning: 10 Principles", *Research-based principles to guide classroom practice*, http://www.assessment-reform-group.org.uk (accessed on 7 April 2023). [265]

Aston, R. (2018), "Physical health and well-being in children and youth: Review of the literature", *OECD Education Working Papers*, No. 170, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/102456c7-en. [197]

Atkinson, C. et al. (2019), "Developing a student-led school mental health strategy", *Pastoral Care in Education*, Vol. 37/1, pp. 3-25, https://doi.org/10.1080/02643944.2019.1570545. [206]

Augsberger, A. et al. (2017), "Youth Civic Engagement: Do Youth Councils Reduce or Reinforce Social Inequality?", *Journal of Adolescent Research*, Vol. 33/2, pp. 187-208, https://doi.org/10.1177/0743558416684957. [102]

Bailey, S. et al. (2014), "Involving disabled children and young people as partners in research: a systematic review", *Child: Care, Health and Development*, Vol. 41/4, pp. 505-514, https://doi.org/10.1111/cch.12197. [149]

Balážová, M. (2021), "YOUTH ENGAGEMENT IN PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING. CASE STUDY OF KUTNÁ HORA (2019-2020)", *Slovak Journal of Public Policy and Public Administration*, pp. 53-72, https://doi.org/10.34135/sjpppa.210806. [241]

Bartlett, T. and D. Schugurensky (2023), "Inclusive civic education and school democracy through participatory budgeting", *Education, Citizenship and Social Justice*, p. 174619792311607, https://doi.org/10.1177/17461979231160701. [278]

Baxa, S. (2015), "Enhancing Students' Understanding and Revision of Narrative Writing through Self-Assessment and Dialogue: A Qualitative Multi-Case Study", *The Qualitative Report*, Vol. 20/10, https://www.proquest.com/docview/1734381547?pq-origsite=gscholar&fromopenview=true (accessed on 7 April 2023). [262]

Beane, J. (1997), *Curriculum Integration: Designing the Core of Democratic Education*, Teachers College Press. [250]

Beazley, H. et al. (2009), "The right to be properly researched: research with children in a messy, real world", *Children's Geographies*, Vol. 7/4, pp. 365-378, https://doi.org/10.1080/14733280903234428. [151]

Bell, S. (2010), "Project-Based Learning for the 21st Century: Skills for the Future", *The Clearing House: A Journal of Educational Strategies, Issues and Ideas*, Vol. 83/2, pp. 39-43, https://doi.org/10.1080/00098650903505415.
[182]

Ben-Arieh, A. (2005), "Where are the Children? Children's Role in Measuring and Monitoring Their Well-Being", *Social Indicators Research*, Vol. 74/3, pp. 573-596, https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-004-4645-6.
[140]

Berthelsen, D., J. Browlee and E. Johansson (eds.) (2009), *The guiding principles of participation. Infant, Toddler Groups and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*, Routledge.
[279]

Berti, S., V. Grazia and L. Molinari (2023), "Active Student Participation in Whole-School Interventions in Secondary School. A Systematic Literature Review", *Educational Psychology Review*, Vol. 35/2, https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-023-09773-x.
[73]

Biesta, G. and R. Lawy (2006), "From teaching citizenship to learning democracy: overcoming individualism in research, policy and practice", *Cambridge Journal of Education*, Vol. 36/1, pp. 63-79, https://doi.org/10.1080/03057640500490981.
[258]

Biggeri, M. and M. Santi (2012), "The Missing Dimensions of Children's Well-being and Well-becoming in Education Systems: Capabilities and Philosophy for Children", *Journal of Human Development and Capabilities*, Vol. 13/3, pp. 373-395, https://doi.org/10.1080/19452829.2012.694858.
[157]

Blanchet-Cohen, N., S. Manolson and K. Shaw (2012), "Youth-Led Decision Making in Community Development Grants", *Youth & Society*, Vol. 46/6, pp. 819-834, https://doi.org/10.1177/0044118x12455024.
[100]

Bonell, C. et al. (2018), "Effects of the Learning Together intervention on bullying and aggression in English secondary schools (INCLUSIVE): a cluster randomised controlled trial", *The Lancet*, Vol. 392/10163, pp. 2452-2464, https://doi.org/10.1016/s0140-6736(18)31782-3.
[203]

Bonell, C. et al. (2015), "Initiating change locally in bullying and aggression through the school environment (INCLUSIVE): a pilot randomised controlled trial", *Health Technology Assessment*, Vol. 19/53, pp. 1-110, https://doi.org/10.3310/hta19530.
[224]

Bonell, C., A. Fletcher and J. McCambridge (2007), "Improving school ethos may reduce substance misuse and teenage pregnancy", *BMJ*, Vol. 334/7594, pp. 614-616, https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.39139.414005.ad.
[204]

Boomer, G. (1978), "Negotiating the Curriculum", *English in Australia*, Vol. 44, pp. 16-29.
[249]

Boomer, G. et al. (1992), *Negotiating the Curriculum: Educating for the 21st Century*, Routledge, https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203975381.
[248]

Bordonaro, L. and R. Payne (2012), "Ambiguous agency: critical perspectives on social interventions with children and youth in Africa", *Children's Geographies*, Vol. 10/4, pp. 365-372, https://doi.org/10.1080/14733285.2012.726065.
[319]

Botchwey, N. et al. (2019), "Including Youth in the Ladder of Citizen Participation", *Journal of the American Planning Association*, Vol. 85/3, pp. 255-270, https://doi.org/10.1080/01944363.2019.1616319.
[76]

Bradbury-Jones, C., L. Isham and J. Taylor (2018), "The complexities and contradictions in participatory research with vulnerable children and young people: A qualitative systematic review", *Social Science and Medicine*, Vol. 215, pp. 80-91, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2018.08.038.
[155]

Bradbury-Jones, C. and J. Taylor (2013), "Engaging with children as co-researchers: challenges,counter-challenges and solutions", *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, Vol. 18/2, pp. 161-173, https://doi.org/10.1080/13645579.2013.864589. [138]

Bravo, A. et al. (2020), "The equitable reach of a universal, multisector childhood obesity prevention program (Live Life Well @ School) in Australian primary schools", *Public Health Research and Practice*, Vol. 30/1, https://doi.org/10.17061/phrp3012003. [213]

Bron, J., C. Bovill and W. Veugelers (2018), "Distributed curriculum leadership: How negotiation between student and teacher improves the curriculum", *Journal of Ethical Educational Leadership* 1, pp. 76-98. [247]

Bron, J. et al. (2016), "Negotiating the curriculum: realizing student voice", *The Social Educator*, Vol. 34, pp. 39-54. [245]

Brown, M. et al. (2019), "Parent and student voice in evaluation and planning in schools", *Improving Schools*, Vol. 23/1, pp. 85-102, https://doi.org/10.1177/1365480219895167. [266]

Bruun Jensen, B. and V. Simovska (2005), "Involving students in learning and health promotion processes - clarifying why? what? and how?", *Promotion & Education*, Vol. 12/3-4, pp. 150-156, https://doi.org/10.1177/10253823050120030114. [79]

Burns, T. and F. Gottschalk (eds.) (2020), *Education in the Digital Age: Healthy and Happy Children*, Educational Research and Innovation, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/1209166a-en. [4]

Burns, T. and F. Gottschalk (eds.) (2019), *Educating 21st Century Children: Emotional Well-being in the Digital Age*, Educational Research and Innovation, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/b7f33425-en. [3]

Burns, T., F. Köster and M. Fuster (2016), *Education Governance in Action: Lessons from Case Studies*, Educational Research and Innovation, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264262829-en. [64]

Burr, B. et al. (2015), "Student Voices in Teacher Evaluations". [270]

Byrne, M. et al. (2023), *Review of the Eco-Schools Environmental Education Programme in Wales (2018 to 2022)*, Welsh Government, https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/statistics-and-research/2023-05/review-of-the-eco-schools-environmental-education-programme-in-wales-2018-2022-summary.pdf (accessed on 20 July 2023). [228]

Cain, K. and S. Cocco (2013), "Leadership Development through Project Based Learning", *Proceedings of the Canadian Engineering Education Association (CEEA)*, https://doi.org/10.24908/pceea.v0i0.4869. [188]

Cammaerts, B. (2015), "Social Media and Activism", *Mansell, R., Hwa, P., The International Encyclopedia of Digital Communication and Society*, pp. 1027-1034. [120]

Cefai, C., P. Downes and V. Cavioni (2021), *A formative, inclusive, whole school approach to the assessment of Social and Emotional Education in the EU. NESET report*, Publications Office of the European Union. [208]

Cefai, C., C. Simões and S. Caravita (2021), *A systemic, whole-school approach to mental health and wellbeing in schools in the EU' NESET report*, Publications Office of the European Union, https://doi.org/10.2766/50546. [199]

Checkoway, B. (2011), "What is youth participation?", *Children and Youth Services Review*, Vol. 33/2, pp. 340-345, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2010.09.017. [99]

ChildFund Alliance, Eurochild, Save the Children, UNICEF and World Vision (2021), *Our Europe, Our Rights, Our Future*, https://www.unicef.org/eu/documents/summary-report-our-europe-our-rights-our-future. [34]

Cincera, J. et al. (2018), "Emancipatory or instrumental? Students' and teachers' perceptions of the implementation of the EcoSchool program", *Environmental Education Research*, Vol. 25/7, pp. 1083-1104, https://doi.org/10.1080/13504622.2018.1506911. [231]

Cincera, J. and S. Kovacikova (2014), "Being an EcoTeam Member: Movers and Fighters", *Applied Environmental Education & Communication*, Vol. 13/4, pp. 227-233, https://doi.org/10.1080/1533015x.2015.972299. [230]

Cincera, J. and J. Krajhanzl (2013), "Eco-Schools: what factors influence pupils' action competence for pro-environmental behaviour?", *Journal of Cleaner Production*, Vol. 61, pp. 117-121, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2013.06.030. [229]

CIRCLE (2020), *Young People Turn to Online Political Engagement During COVID-19 | CIRCLE*, https://circle.tufts.edu/latest-research/young-people-turn-online-political-engagement-during-covid-19 (accessed on 17 April 2023). [112]

Clark, L. and R. Marchi (2017), *Young People and the Future of News*, Cambridge University Press, https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108116015. [119]

Clarkson, S. et al. (2019), "Introducing KiVa school-based antibullying programme to the UK: A preliminary examination of effectiveness and programme cost", *School Psychology International*, Vol. 40/4, pp. 347-365, https://doi.org/10.1177/0143034319841099. [222]

CMY (2019), *Student Voice*, https://www.cmy.net.au/schools-standing-up-to-racism/student-voice/ (accessed on 3 August 2023). [193]

Coady, M. (2009), "Beings and becomings: historical and philosophical considerations of the child as citizen", in Naughton, G., P. Hughes and K. Smith (eds.), *Young Children as Active Citizens: Principles, Policies and Pedagogies*. [300]

Committee for Education (2012), *Report on the school councils inquiry*, http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/assembly-business/committees/2016-2017/education/reports-2011-2016/report-on-the-school-councils-inquiry/ (accessed on 22 March 2023). [166]

Cook, A. (2021), *Youth-led Participatory Budgeting*, Democratic Society (Demsoc), https://www.demsoc.org/blog/youth-led-participatory-budgeting (accessed on 1 December 2022). [244]

Cook, J. (1992), "Negotiating the curriculum: Programming for learning", *Negotiating the Curriculum: Educating for the 21st Century*, pp. 15-31, https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203975381-9/NEGOTIATING-CURRICULUM-PROGRAMMING-LEARNING-FON-COOK. [251]

Coppock, V. and J. Gillett-Swan (2016), "Children's rights in a 21st-century digital world: Exploring opportunities and tensions", *Global Studies of Childhood*, Vol. 6/4, pp. 369-375, https://doi.org/10.1177/2043610616676025. [106]

Corney, T. et al. (2021), "Youth participation: Adultism, human rights and professional youth work", *Children & Society*, Vol. 36/4, pp. 677-690, https://doi.org/10.1111/chso.12526. [78]

Cornwall, A. and M. Fujita (2012), "Ventriloquising 'the Poor'? Of voices, choices and the politics of 'participatory' knowledge production", *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 33/9, pp. 1751-1765, https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2012.721274.

[15]

Cortesi, S., A. Hasse and U. & Gasser (2021), *Youth participation in a digital world: Designing and implementing spaces, programs, and methodologies*, Youth and Media, Berkman Klein Center for Internet & Society, https://cyber.harvard.edu/publication/2021/youth-participation-in-a-digital-world.

[132]

Council of Europe (2012), *Recommendation on the participation of children and young people under the age of 18*, https://www.coe.int/en/web/youth/-/recommendation-on-the-participation-of-children-and-young-people-under-the-age-of-18 (accessed on 29 March 2023).

[26]

Council of Europe (2012), "Resolution of the Council and of the representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, on the overview of the structured dialogue with young people on youth participation in democratic life in Europe", *Official Journal of the European Union*, Vol. 380/01, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2012:380:0001:0004:EN:PDF (accessed on 27 April 2023).

[113]

Council of Europe (2006), *Recommendation Rec(2006)1 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the role of national youth councils in youth policy development*, https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectId=09000016805d8caa#globalcontainer (accessed on 27 April 2023).

[98]

Council of Europe (n.d.), *Making children's and students' voices heard*, https://www.coe.int/en/web/campaign-free-to-speak-safe-to-learn/making-children-and-students-voices-heard#1 (accessed on 12 April 2023).

[66]

Council of the European Union (2021), *Council Recommendation establishing a European Child Guarantee*, https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-9106-2021-INIT/en/pdf.

[27]

Cross, B., M. Hulme and S. McKinney (2014), "The last place to look: the place of pupil councils within citizen participation in Scottish schools", *Oxford Review of Education*, Vol. 40/5, pp. 628-648, https://doi.org/10.1080/03054985.2014.963039.

[168]

Cross, D. et al. (2011), "Three-year results of the Friendly Schools whole-of-school intervention on children's bullying behaviour", *British Educational Research Journal*, Vol. 37/1, pp. 105-129, https://doi.org/10.1080/01411920903420024.

[205]

Crowley, A., C. Larkins and L. Pinto (2020), *Listen - Act - Change: Council of Europe Handbook on children's participation for professionals working for and with children*, Council of Europe.

[281]

Crum, T. et al. (2020), "Participatory Budgeting in Schools: A Toolkit for Youth Democratic Action", *College of Urban Planning and Public Affairs, University of Illinois at Chicago*, https://greatcities.uic.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/PB-in-Schools-Toolkit.pdf (accessed on 10 November 2022).

[235]

Cuevas-Parra, P. (2020), "Co-Researching With Children in the Time of COVID-19: Shifting the Narrative on Methodologies to Generate Knowledge", *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, Vol. 19, p. 160940692098213, https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406920982135.

[16]

Cumbo, B. and N. Selwyn (2021), "Using participatory design approaches in educational research", *International Journal of Research & Method in Education*, Vol. 45/1, pp. 60-72, https://doi.org/10.1080/1743727x.2021.1902981.

[272]

Curato, N. et al. (2017), "Twelve Key Findings in Deliberative Democracy Research", *Daedalus*, Vol. 146/3, pp. 28-38, https://doi.org/10.1162/daed_a_00444. [87]

DCEDIY (2023), *Final Review of the National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-making 2015-2020*, https://www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/244760/e5dc3ce5-2fc0-4d3b-b6b9-d38a415a3223.pdf#page=null (accessed on 28 April 2023). [295]

Democracy Technologies (2022), *Kutná Hora – Where Students Manage the Participatory Budget*, https://democracy-technologies.org/participation/kutna-hora-where-students-manage-the-participatory-budget/ (accessed on 22 July 2023). [242]

den Besten, O., J. Horton and P. Kraftl (2008), "Pupil involvement in school (re)design: participation in policy and practice", *CoDesign*, Vol. 4/4, pp. 197-210, https://doi.org/10.1080/15710880802524946. [276]

Department of Children and Youth Affairs (2015), *National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-making, 2015 – 2020*, Government Publications , Dublin, http://www.dcya.ie (accessed on 19 April 2023). [285]

Department of Education (2022), *Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying*, https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/52aaf-cinealtas-action-plan-on-bullying/. [294]

Department of Education and Training (n.d.), *Amplify Toolkit*, https://fuse.education.vic.gov.au/pages/amplify (accessed on 3 August 2023). [194]

Department of Education UK (n.d.), *School councils and pupil participation | Department of Education*, https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/school-councils-and-pupil-participation (accessed on 20 March 2023). [162]

Dezuanni, M. (2016), "National educational policy for media literacy education: Media arts in the Australian curriculum", *The Journal of Media Literacy*, https://28ed58ae-6e6e-4aef-abfa-efa01afa7c48.filesusr.com/ugd/24687f_f414fdb816f94590a9e723d6ad99f2b7.pdf (accessed on 21 November 2022). [123]

Druin, A. (2002), "The role of children in the design of new technology", *Behaviour & Information Technology*, Vol. 21/1, pp. 1-25, https://doi.org/10.1080/01449290110108659. [126]

Druin, A. (1999), *Cooperative inquiry: Developing new technologies for children with children*. [127]

Druin, A. (1999), *The Role of Children in the Design of New Technology: HCIL Technical Report No. 99-23.*. [128]

Dunhill, A. (2016), "Does teaching children about human rights, encourage them to practice, protect and promote the rights of others?", *Education 3-13*, Vol. 46/1, pp. 16-26, https://doi.org/10.1080/03004279.2016.1165717. [313]

Eco-Schools (n.d.), *What is Eco-Schools? - Eco Schools*, https://www.eco-schools.org.uk/about/what-is-eco-schools/ (accessed on 20 March 2023). [177]

Edmonds, R. (2019), "Making children's 'agency' visible: Towards the localisation of a concept in theory and practice", *Global Studies of Childhood*, Vol. 9/3, pp. 200-211, https://doi.org/10.1177/2043610619860994. [320]

Education and Training Inspectorate (2015), *Pupil Participation-Case Studies of Good Practice identified by ETI*. [176]

Eiseman, J. (2005), *An evaluation of Consistency Management and Cooperative Discipline (CMCD), Implimention for success (study report)*, Brown University, Research & Evaluation division of the Education Alliance. [256]

Estyn (2018), *A report on Olchfa School Gower Road Sketty Swansea SA2 7AB*, Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales, http://mylocalschool.wales.gov.uk/Schools/SchoolSearch?lang=en (accessed on 17 April 2023). [191]

European Commission (2022), *Input Paper: A Whole School Approach to Learning for Environmental Sustainability*, DG Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, https://education.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2022-02/input-paper-whole-school-approach-sustainability.pdf. [202]

European Commission (2022), *Proposal for a Council Recommendation on Learning for Environmental Sustainability*, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52022DC0011&from=EN. [225]

European Commission (2015), *A whole school approach to tackling early school leaving: Policy messages*, Directorate-General for Education and Culture, https://education.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/document-library-docs/early-school-leaving-group2015-policy-messages_en.pdf. [200]

European Commission (2015), *Evaluation of legislation, policy and practice on child participation in the European Union (EU)*, https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/f425176f-cc2c-46bd-8a3a-65d958fff780/language-en. [156]

European Commission (2015), *Evaluation of legislation, policy and practice on child participation in the European Union (EU): Country Report Ireland*, Publications Office of the European Union. [286]

European Commission (n.d.), *National Student Unions (September 2021)*, https://national-policies.eacea.ec.europa.eu/youthwiki/comparative-overviews/participation/national-student-unions/2021 (accessed on 5 May 2023). [180]

European Democratic Education Community (n.d.), *European Democratic Education Community*, https://eudec.org/ (accessed on 28 March 2023). [164]

European Education and Culture Executive Agency (2017), *Citizenship education at school in Europe*, Publications Office, https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2797/536166. [158]

European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (n.d.), *Child rights impact assessment*, http://fra.europa.eu/en/content/child-rights-impact-assessment#:~:text=Child%20rights%20impact%20assessment%20is,development%20of%20policies%20and%20laws. (accessed on 2 May 2023). [324]

European Youth Foundation (n.d.), *Examples of supported projects*, https://www.coe.int/en/web/european-youth-foundation/projects-supported2 (accessed on 17 April 2023). [183]

Fails, J. (2012), "Methods and Techniques for Involving Children in the Design of New Technology for Children", *Foundations and Trends® in Human–Computer Interaction*, Vol. 6/2, pp. 85-166, https://doi.org/10.1561/1100000018. [135]

Fairhall, N. and K. Woods (2021), "Children's Views on Children's Rights: A Systematic Literature Review", *The International Journal of Children's Rights*, Vol. 29/4, pp. 835-871, https://doi.org/10.1163/15718182-29040003. [318]

Falanga, R. (2023), "Scaling participatory budgets. Pitfalls and potentialities from multiple scales in Portugal", *Local Development & Society*, pp. 1-17, https://doi.org/10.1080/26883597.2023.2181704.

[237]

Fayoyin, A. (2011), "Promoting Children's Rights Through the New Media: The Nigerian Experience", *Journal of Communication*, Vol. 2/2, pp. 57-65, https://doi.org/10.1080/0976691x.2011.11884782.

[107]

Federle, K. (2017), "Do Rights Still Flow Downhill?", *The International Journal of Children's Rights*, Vol. 25/2, pp. 273-284, https://doi.org/10.1163/15718182-02502004.

[298]

FEE (2017), *Eco-Schools Handbook: Engaging the Youth of Today to Protect the Climate of Tomorrow*, https://ecoschools.in/pdf/Eco-Schools-Handbook.pdf.

[227]

Feinstein, C. and C. O'Kane (2009), *Children's and Adolescents' Participation and Protection from Sexual Abuse and Exploitation*, UNICEF Office of Research - Innocenti.

[61]

Fleming, D. (2015), "Student Voice: An Emerging Discourse in Irish Education Policy", *International Electronic Journal of Elementary Education*, Vol. 8/2, pp. 223-242.

[283]

Fleming, J. (2010), "Young People's Involvement in Research", *Qualitative Social Work*, Vol. 10/2, pp. 207-223, https://doi.org/10.1177/1473325010364276.

[139]

Flutter, J. (2006), "'This place could help you learn': student participation in creating better school environments", *Educational Review*, Vol. 58/2, pp. 183-193, https://doi.org/10.1080/00131910600584116.

[273]

Flutter, J. and J. Rudduck (2004), *Consulting pupils: What's in it for schools?*, RoutledgeFalmer.

[311]

Forde, C. et al. (2018), "Learning from children's voice in schools: Experiences from Ireland", *Journal of Educational Change*, Vol. 19/4, pp. 489-509, https://doi.org/10.1007/s10833-018-9331-6.

[289]

Forde, C. et al. (2017), "Children and Young People's Participation in the Community in Ireland: Experiences and Issues", *Irish Journal of Applied Social Studies*, Vol. 17/1, pp. 3-16.

[287]

Forsberg, C. et al. (2016), "Students' views of factors affecting their bystander behaviors in response to school bullying: a cross-collaborative conceptual qualitative analysis", *Research Papers in Education*, Vol. 33/1, pp. 127-142, https://doi.org/10.1080/02671522.2016.1271001.

[209]

Freeman, M. (2007), "Why It Remains Important to Take Children's Rights Seriously", *The International Journal of Children's Rights*, Vol. 15/1, pp. 5-23, https://doi.org/10.1163/092755607x181711.

[296]

Freiberg, H., C. Huzinec and S. Templeton (2009), "Classroom management-a pathway to student achievement: A study of fourteen inner-city elementary schools", *Elementary School Journal*, Vol. 110/1, pp. 63-80, https://doi.org/10.1086/598843/ASSET/IMAGES/LARGE/FG3.JPEG.

[253]

Freiberg, J. (1996), *From tourists to citizens in the classroom*.

[252]

Gal, T. and B. Duramy (eds.) (2015), *Addressing the challenges of children and young people's participation: Considering time and space.*, Oxford University Press.

[84]

Gal, T. and B. Duramy (eds.) (2015), *Face to face: Children and young people's right to participate in public decision making*, Oxford University Press.

[322]

Gal, T. and B. Duramy (2015), *International Perspectives and Empirical Findings on Child Participation: From Social Exclusion to Child-inclusive Policies*, Oxford University Press.

[44]

Gal, T. and B. Faedi Duramy (eds.) (2015), *Children and young people's participation in research.*, Oxford University Press. [51]

García-Carrión, R., B. Villarejo-Carballido and L. Villardón-Gallego (2019), "Children and Adolescents Mental Health: A Systematic Review of Interaction-Based Interventions in Schools and Communities", *Frontiers in Psychology*, Vol. 10, https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.00918. [207]

Gilleece, L. and J. Cosgrove (2012), "Student civic participation in school: What makes a difference in Ireland?", *Education, Citizenship and Social Justice*, Vol. 7/3, pp. 225-239, https://doi.org/10.1177/1746197912448715. [288]

Goldberg, J. et al. (2018), "Effectiveness of interventions adopting a whole school approach to enhancing social and emotional development: a meta-analysis", *European Journal of Psychology of Education*, Vol. 34/4, pp. 755-782, https://doi.org/10.1007/s10212-018-0406-9. [198]

Golinkoff, R. and K. Hirsh-Pasek (2016), *Becoming brilliant : what science tells us about raising successful children*, https://www.apa.org/pubs/books/4441027 (accessed on 1 December 2022). [236]

Gottschalk, F. (2022), "Cyberbullying: An overview of research and policy in OECD countries", *OECD Education Working Papers*, No. 270, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/f60b492b-en. [152]

Gottschalk, F. (2020), "Child empowerment, well-being and inequality", in *Education in the Digital Age: Healthy and Happy Children*, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/2af6f0b7-en. [1]

Government of Ireland (2021), *National Framework for Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-making*, https://hubnanog.ie/participation-framework/. [271]

Graham, A. et al. (2018), "Exploring student participation across different arenas of school life", *British Educational Research Journal*, Vol. 44/6, pp. 1029-1046, https://doi.org/10.1002/berj.3477. [282]

Guha, M., A. Druin and J. Fails (2013), "Cooperative Inquiry revisited: Reflections of the past and guidelines for the future of intergenerational co-design", *International Journal of Child-Computer Interaction*, Vol. 1/1, pp. 14-23, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijcci.2012.08.003. [136]

Habashi, J. et al. (2010), "Constitutional Analysis: A Proclamation of Children's Right to Protection, Provision, and Participation", *The International Journal of Children's Rights*, Vol. 18/2, pp. 267-290, https://doi.org/10.1163/157181809x12615514762046. [41]

Habashi, J., L. Wright and J. Hathcoat (2011), "Patterns of Human Development Indicators Across Constitutional Analysis of Children's Rights to Protection, Provision, and Participation", *Social Indicators Research*, Vol. 105/1, pp. 63-73, https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-010-9763-8. [42]

Halfon, E. (2012), *Student councils in state and religious state high schools: Typology construction, variable identification and an examination of the influence on school climate, teaching democracy, student rights, community volunteering and student leadership*, Bar-Ilan University. [169]

Halfon, E. and S. Romi (2019), "High-school student councils: A typological approach", *Education, Citizenship and Social Justice*, p. 174619791988688, https://doi.org/10.1177/1746197919886880. [171]

Hammond, C. et al. (2014), *Programs of study as a state policy mandate: A longitudinal study of the South Carolina Personal Pathways to Success Initiative*, National Dropout Prevention Center. [257]

Harris, C. (2021), "Looking to the future? Including children, young people and future generations in deliberations on climate action: Ireland's Citizens'Assembly 2016–2018", *Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science Research*, Vol. 34/5, pp. 677-693, https://doi.org/10.1080/13511610.2021.1968356. [91]

Hart, R. (1992), *Children's Participation: From tokenism to citizenship (Rep. No. 4)*. [49]

Harwood, P. (2008), "Consistency Management and Cooperative Discipline programme", *London Digest*, Vol. 2/3. [255]

Hayward, B. (2012), *Children, Citizenship and Environment: Nurturing a Democratic Imagination in Changing World*, Routledge. [89]

Helker, K. and M. Wosnitza (2016), "The interplay of students' and parents' responsibility judgements in the school context and their associations with student motivation and achievement", *International Journal of Educational Research*, Vol. 76, pp. 34-49, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2016.01.001. [70]

Henderson, K. and D. Tilbury (2004), *Whole-School Approaches to Sustainability: An International Review of Sustainable School Programs*, The Department of the Environment and Heritage, Austraian Government. [201]

Hester, S. and A. Moore (2018), "Understanding Children's Participation through an Eliasian Lens: Habitus as a Barrier to Children's Everyday Participation Rights", *The International Journal of Children's Rights*, Vol. 26/3, pp. 446-467, https://doi.org/10.1163/15718182-02603002. [53]

Hill, J. (2022), "Policy responses to false and misleading digital content: A snapshot of children's media literacy", *OECD Education Working Papers*, No. 275, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/1104143e-en. [122]

Honkanen, K., J. Poikolainen and L. Karlsson (2017), "Children and young people as co-researchers – researching subjective well-being in residential area with visual and verbal methods", *Children's Geographies*, Vol. 16/2, pp. 184-195, https://doi.org/10.1080/14733285.2017.1344769. [148]

Huitsing, G. et al. (2020), "A Large-Scale Replication of the Effectiveness of the KiVa Antibullying Program: a Randomized Controlled Trial in the Netherlands", *Prevention Science*, Vol. 21/5, pp. 627-638, https://doi.org/10.1007/s11121-020-01116-4. [220]

Hutchings, J. and S. Clarkson (2015), "Introducing and piloting the KiVa bullying prevention programme in the UK", *Educational and Child Psychology*, Vol. 32/1, pp. 49-61, https://doi.org/10.53841/bpsecp.2015.32.1.49. [221]

Iivari, N., M. Kinnula and L. Kuure (2015), "With best intentions", *Information Technology & People*, Vol. 28/2, pp. 246-280, https://doi.org/10.1108/itp-12-2013-0223. [133]

Independent Schools Inspectorate (n.d.), *How are pupils involved in an inspection?*, https://www.isi.net/support/faqs/how-are-pupils-involved-in-an-inspection (accessed on 7 April 2023). [268]

Ito, M. et al. (eds.) (2021), *Algorithmic Rights and Protections for Children*, PubPub, https://doi.org/10.1162/ba67f642.646d0673. [314]

Iversen, O., R. Smith and C. Dindler (2017), "Child as Protagonist", *Proceedings of the 2017 Conference on Interaction Design and Children*, https://doi.org/10.1145/3078072.3079725. [130]

James, A. and A. James (2012), *Key concepts in childhood studies*, Sage Publications. [137]

James, A., C. Jenks and A. Prout (1998), *Theorizing childhood*, Polity Press in association with Blackwell Publishers.

[299]

John-Akinola, Y. and S. Nic-Gabhainn (2014), "Children's participation in school: a cross-sectional study of the relationship between school environments, participation and health and well-being outcomes", *BMC Public Health*, Vol. 14/1, https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2458-14-964.

[71]

Jones, T. (2017), "Unsatisfactory Progress: Article 12 and Pupil Participation in English Schools", *The International Journal of Children's Rights*, Vol. 25/1, pp. 68-84, https://doi.org/10.1163/15718182-02501003.

[52]

Kärnä, A. et al. (2011), "A Large-Scale Evaluation of the KiVa Antibullying Program: Grades 4-6", *Child Development*, Vol. 82/1, pp. 311-330, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8624.2010.01557.x.

[215]

Kilkelly, U., R. Kilpatrick and L. Lundy (2005), *Children's rights in Northern Ireland*, Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People.

[36]

Kokotsaki, D., V. Menzies and A. Wiggins (2016), "Project-based learning: A review of the literature", *Improving Schools*, Vol. 19/3, pp. 267-277, https://doi.org/10.1177/1365480216659733.

[186]

Korte, J. et al. (2023), "Editorial: Pushing the boundaries of Participatory Design with children", *International Journal of Child-Computer Interaction*, Vol. 35, p. 100547, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijcci.2022.100547.

[131]

Kosher, H. and A. Ben-Arieh (2020), "Children's participation: A new role for children in the field of child maltreatment", *Child Abuse & Neglect*, Vol. 110, p. 104429, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2020.104429.

[150]

Kosher, H. and A. Ben-Arieh (2017), "What children think about their rights and their well-being: A cross-national comparison.", *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, Vol. 87/3, pp. 256-273, https://doi.org/10.1037/ort0000222.

[54]

Krnel, D. and S. Naglic (2009), "Environmental literacy comparison between eco-schools and ordinary schools in Slovenia", *Science education international*, Vol. 20, pp. 5-24.

[232]

Landsdown, G. (2018), *Conceptual framework for measuring outcomes of adolescent participation*, http://www.unicef.org/media/59006/file.

[21]

Landsdown, G. (2001), *Innocenti Insight: Promoting children's participation in democratic decision-making*, UNICEF Office of Research - Innocenti.

[57]

Langford, R. et al. (2014), "The WHO Health Promoting School framework for improving the health and well-being of students and their academic achievement", *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews*, https://doi.org/10.1002/14651858.cd008958.pub2.

[196]

Lansdown, G. (2018), *Conceptual framework for measuring outcomes of adolescent participation*, UNICEF.

[7]

Lansdown, G. (2011), *Every child's right to be heard*, Save the Children.

[83]

Larkins, C., J. Kiili and K. Palsanen (2014), "A lattice of participation: reflecting on examples of children's and young people's collective engagement in influencing social welfare policies and practices", *European Journal of Social Work*, Vol. 17/5, pp. 718-736, https://doi.org/10.1080/13691457.2014.928269.

[82]

Lievens, E. et al. (2018), "Children's Rights and Digital Technologies", in *International Human Rights of Children, International Human Rights*, Springer Singapore, Singapore, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-4184-6_16. [104]

L'Isoloir (n.d.), *L'Isoloir*, https://www.isoloir.net/ (accessed on 27 April 2023). [114]

Livingstone, S. and A. Blum-Ross (2020), *Parenting for a Digital Future*, Oxford University Press, https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190874698.001.0001. [125]

Livingstone, S. et al. (2019), *Is there a ladder of children's online participation? Findings from three Global Kids Online countries*. [124]

Lloyd, K. and L. Emerson (2016), "(Re)examining the Relationship Between Children's Subjective Wellbeing and Their Perceptions of Participation Rights", *Child Indicators Research*, Vol. 10/3, pp. 591-608, https://doi.org/10.1007/s12187-016-9396-9. [69]

Lundy, L. (2018), "In defence of tokenism? Implementing children's right to participate in collective decision-making", *Childhood*, Vol. 25/3, pp. 340-354, https://doi.org/10.1177/0907568218777292. [38]

Lundy, L. (2012), "Children's rights and educational policy in Europe: the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child", *Oxford Review of Education*, Vol. 38/4, pp. 393-411, https://doi.org/10.1080/03054985.2012.704874. [310]

Lundy, L. (2007), "'Voice' is not enough: conceptualising Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child", *British Educational Research Journal*, Vol. 33/6, pp. 927-942, https://doi.org/10.1080/01411920701657033. [58]

Lundy, L. et al. (2021), "Life Under Coronavirus: Children's Views on their Experiences of their Human Rights", *The International Journal of Children's Rights*, Vol. 29/2, pp. 261-285, https://doi.org/10.1163/15718182-29020015. [95]

Lundy, L. et al. (2019), *Two clicks forward and one click back: Report on children with disabilities in the digital environment*. [134]

Lundy, L. and A. Cook-Sather (2016), "Children's Rights and Student voice: Their intersections and the implications for curriculum and pedagogy", in *The SAGE Handbook of Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment: Two Volume Set*, SAGE Publications Ltd, https://doi.org/10.4135/9781473921405.n17. [307]

Lundy, L., C. Marshall and K. Orr (2015), *Advancing Children's Rights through Advocacy: Capturing the Learning of the Atlantic Philanthropies Grantees in Northern Ireland*, Queen's University Belfast. [39]

Lundy, L. and L. McEvoy (2011), "Children's rights and research processes: Assisting children to (in)formed views", *Childhood*, Vol. 19/1, pp. 129-144, https://doi.org/10.1177/0907568211409078. [142]

Lundy, L. and L. McEvoy (2009), "Developing outcomes for educational services: a children's rights-based approach", *Effective Education*, Vol. 1/1, pp. 43-60, https://doi.org/10.1080/19415530903044050. [43]

Lundy, L., L. McEvoy and B. Byrne (2011), "Working With Young Children as Co-Researchers: An Approach Informed by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child", *Early Education & Development*, Vol. 22/5, pp. 714-736, https://doi.org/10.1080/10409289.2011.596463. [14]

Lundy, L. et al. (2015), "What if Children Had Been Involved in Drafting the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child?", in *Law in Society: Reflections on Children, Family, Culture and Philosophy*, Brill | Nijhoff, https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004261495_013. [55]

Lyle, S., D. Hendley and J. Newcomb (2010), "The Teaching and Learning Research Programme in Wales: Improving Learning by Taking Account of Learners' Perspectives", *The Teaching and Learning Research Programme*, http://www.tlrp.org/proj/phase1/phase1esept.html (accessed on 27 March 2023). [172]

Macken, G. (2019), "Student Voice: opportunities and challenges in an Irish context", *ETBI Education Journal*, https://www.jct.ie/perch/resources/publications/etbi-journal-of-education-october-2019.pdf (accessed on 21 February 2023). [284]

Mairie de Paris (2020), *BUDGET PARTICIPATIF DES ÉCOLES*, Mairie de Paris, Paris. [239]

Mäkelä, T. et al. (2017), "Student participation in learning environment improvement: analysis of a co-design project in a Finnish upper secondary school", *Learning Environments Research*, Vol. 21/1, pp. 19-41, https://doi.org/10.1007/s10984-017-9242-0. [274]

Marwick, A. and D. boyd (2014), "'It's just drama': teen perspectives on conflict and aggression in a networked era", *Journal of Youth Studies*, Vol. 17/9, pp. 1187-1204, https://doi.org/10.1080/13676261.2014.901493. [153]

Matthews, H. (2001), "Citizenship, Youth Councils and Young People's Participation", *Journal of Youth Studies*, Vol. 4/3, pp. 299-318, https://doi.org/10.1080/13676260120075464. [101]

Mcfarland, D. and C. Starmanns (2009), "Inside Student Government: The Variable Quality of High School Student Councils", *Teachers College Record*, Vol. 111/1, pp. 27-54. [167]

Mcfarland, D. and C. Starmanns (2009), "Inside Student Government: The Variable Quality of High School Student Councils", *Teachers College Record: The Voice of Scholarship in Education*, Vol. 111/1, pp. 27-54, https://doi.org/10.1177/016146810911100106. [179]

McMellon, C. and E. Tisdall (2020), "Children and Young People's Participation Rights: Looking Backwards and Moving Forwards", *The International Journal of Children's Rights*, Vol. 28/1, pp. 157-182, https://doi.org/10.1163/15718182-02801002. [18]

Merrell, K. et al. (2008), "How effective are school bullying intervention programs? A meta-analysis of intervention research.", *School Psychology Quarterly*, Vol. 23/1, pp. 26-42, https://doi.org/10.1037/1045-3830.23.1.26. [211]

Middaugh, E., L. Clark and P. Ballard (2017), "Digital Media, Participatory Politics, and Positive Youth Development", *Pediatrics*, Vol. 140/Supplement_2, pp. S127-S131, https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2016-1758q. [115]

Milfont, T. and C. Sibley (2012), "The big five personality traits and environmental engagement: Associations at the individual and societal level", *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, Vol. 32/2, pp. 187-195, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jenvp.2011.12.006. [31]

Ministry of Education New Zealand (n.d.), *Book 4: Children contributing to their own assessment – Ngā huanga tamariki ki tō rātou aromatawai*, https://www.education.govt.nz/early-childhood/teaching-and-learning/assessment-for-learning/kei-tua-o-te-pae-2/children-contributing-to-their-own-assessment-nga-huanga-tamariki-ki-to-ratou-aromatawai/ (accessed on 7 April 2023). [263]

Mitra, D. (2004), "The Significance of Students: Can Increasing "Student Voice" in Schools Lead to Gains in Youth Development?", *Teachers College Record: The Voice of Scholarship in Education*, Vol. 106/4, pp. 651-688, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9620.2004.00354.x. [174]

Montà, C. (2021), "The meanings of 'child participation' in international and European policies on children('s rights): A content analysis", *European Educational Research Journal*, Vol. 22/1, pp. 3-19, https://doi.org/10.1177/14749041211034971. [305]

Moran-Ellis, J. and E. Tisdall (2019), "The relevance of 'competence' for enhancing or limiting children's participation: Unpicking conceptual confusion", *Global Studies of Childhood*, Vol. 9/3, pp. 212-223, https://doi.org/10.1177/2043610619860995. [297]

Mühlbacher, S. and F. Sutterlüty (2019), "The principle of child autonomy: A rationale for the normative agenda of childhood studies", *Global Studies of Childhood*, Vol. 9/3, pp. 249-260, https://doi.org/10.1177/2043610619860999. [321]

Nawaila, M., S. Kanbul and F. Ozdamli (2018), *A review on the rights of children in the digital age*, Elsevier Ltd, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2018.09.028. [109]

Nishiyama, K. (2021), "Democratic education in the fourth generation of deliberative democracy", *Theory and Research in Education*, Vol. 19/2, pp. 109-126, https://doi.org/10.1177/14778785211017102. [90]

Nishiyama, K. (2017), "Deliberators, Not Future Citizens: Children in Democracy", *Journal of Public Deliberation*, Vol. 13. [24]

Nocentini, A. and E. Menesini (2016), "KiVa Anti-Bullying Program in Italy: Evidence of Effectiveness in a Randomized Control Trial", *Prevention Science*, Vol. 17/8, pp. 1012-1023, https://doi.org/10.1007/s11121-016-0690-z. [219]

Nolas, S., C. Varvantakis and V. Aruldoss (2016), "(Im)possible conversations? activism, childhood and everyday life", *Journal of Social and Political Psychology*, Vol. 4/1, pp. 252-265, https://doi.org/10.5964/jspp.v4i1.536. [301]

Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People (n.d.), *Democra-School*, https://www.niccy.org/background-to-democra-school/ (accessed on 28 March 2023). [163]

Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training (2019), *The Norwegian Education Mirror, 2019*, https://www.udir.no/in-english/education-mirror-2019/school-environment-and-well-being/. [145]

O'Mahony, C. (2015), *Making Rights Real for Children: A Children's Rights Audit of Irish Law - Chapter 6*, Child Rights International Network, https://archive.crin.org/en/library/publications/making-rights-real-children-childrens-rights-audit-irish-law.html (accessed on 19 April 2023). [290]

OBESSU (2023), *Organising Bureau of European School Student Unions*, https://obessu.org/ (accessed on 3 August 2023). [181]

OECD (2023), "Engaging young citizens: Civic education practices in the classroom and beyond", *OECD Education Policy Perspectives*, No. 65, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/2166378c-en. [233]

OECD (2023), *Equity and Inclusion in Education: Finding Strength through Diversity*, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/e9072e21-en. [315]

OECD (2023), *Student Voice in Upper Secondary Education*, https://issuu.com/oecd.publishing/docs/student_voice_in_upper_secondary_education. [264]

OECD (2023), *Young population* (indicator), https://doi.org/10.1787/3d774f19-en (accessed on 30 October 2023). [326]

OECD (2022), "Are students ready to take on environmental challenges?", *PISA in Focus*, No. 120, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/8148c568-en. [143]

OECD (2022), *Companion Document to the OECD Recommendation on Children in the Digital Environment*, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/a2ebec7c-en. [25]

OECD (2022), *Declaration on Building Equitable Societies Through Education*, https://legalinstruments.oecd.org/en/instruments/OECD-LEGAL-0485 (accessed on 2 May 2023). [2]

OECD (2022), *Declaration on Building Trust and Reinforcing Democracy*, Compendium of Legal Instruments of the OECD, https://legalinstruments.oecd.org/en/instruments/OECD-LEGAL-0484. [22]

OECD (2022), *Delivering for youth: How governments can put young people at the centre of the recovery*, OECD Publishing, https://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/delivering-for-youth-how-governments-can-put-young-people-at-the-centre-of-the-recovery-92c9d060/. [94]

OECD (2022), *Recommendation of the Council on Creating Better Opportunities for Young People*, Compendium of Legal Instruments of the OECD, OECD/LEGAL/0474, https://legalinstruments.oecd.org/en/instruments/OECD-LEGAL-0474. [23]

OECD (2022), *The future youth want: Elements of a youth manifesto*, https://www.oecd.org/about/civil-society/youth/The-Future-Youth-Want-MCM-synthesis.pdf (accessed on 2 May 2023). [8]

OECD (2021), *Measuring What Matters for Child Well-being and Policies*, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/e82fded1-en. [118]

OECD (2021), *Recommendation of the Council on Children in the Digital Environment*, https://legalinstruments.oecd.org/en/instruments/OECD-LEGAL-0389. [108]

OECD (2021), *Reinforcing Democracy: 21st Century Governance Challenges – Framing the Issue*, OECD Internal document. [10]

OECD (2020), *Governance for Youth, Trust and Intergenerational Justice: Fit for All Generations?*, OECD Public Governance Reviews, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/c3e5cb8a-en. [63]

OECD (2020), *PISA 2018 Results (Volume V): Effective Policies, Successful Schools*, PISA, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/ca768d40-en. [67]

OECD (2020), *PISA 2018 Results (Volume VI): Are Students Ready to Thrive in an Interconnected World?*, PISA, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/d5f68679-en. [30]

OECD (2019), *Conceptual learning framework: Student agency for 2030*, http://www.oecd.org/education/2030-project/teaching-and-learning/learning/student-agency/Student_Agency_for_2030_concept_note.pdf. [28]

OECD (2019), *Improving School Quality in Norway: The New Competence Development Model*, Implementing Education Policies, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/179d4ded-en. [323]

OECD (2019), *PISA 2018 Results (Volume III): What School Life Means for Students' Lives*, PISA, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/acd78851-en. [160]

OECD (2019), *Trends Shaping Education 2019*, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/trends_edu-2019-en. [12]

OECD (2018), *Engaging young people in open government: A communication guide*, https://www.oecd.org/mena/governance/Young-people-in-OG.pdf. [59]

OECD (2018), *The future of education and skills: Position paper*, https://www.oecd.org/education/2030-project/about/documents/E2030%20Position%20Paper%20(05.04.2018).pdf. [11]

OECD (2018), *The Future We Want*, http://www.oecd.org/education/2030/E2030%20Position%20Paper%20(05.04.2018).pdf. [29]

OECD (2018), *Youth Stocktaking Report*, OECD Publishing, https://www.oecd.org/gov/youth-stocktaking-report.pdf. [9]

OECD (2018), *Youth Stocktaking Report*, OECD. [234]

OECD (2017), *PISA 2018 Database*, https://www.oecd.org/pisa/data/2018database/CY7_201710_QST_MS_WBQ_NoNotes_final.pdf (accessed on 15 May 2023). [144]

OECD (2017), *Recommendation of the Council on Open Government, OECD/LEGAL/0438*, OECD Publishing, http://legalinstruments.oecd.org. [60]

OECD (2016), *Open Government: The Global Context and the Way Forward*, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264268104-en. [86]

OFCOM (2022), *Children and parents media use and attutides report*, OFCOM, https://www.ofcom.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0024/234609/childrens-media-use-and-attitudes-report-2022.pdf (accessed on 21 November 2022). [111]

Olchfa School (n.d.), *Olchfa - CHAT*, https://www.olchfa.org.uk/page/?title=CHAT&pid=258 (accessed on 17 April 2023). [190]

Ombudsman for Children (2018), *Children's Participation in Decision-making*, https://www.oco.ie/app/uploads/2018/12/OCO_Participation-Guidelines_English_WEB.pdf (accessed on 28 March 2023). [316]

Ombudsman for Children's Office (2022), *No Filter – A survey of children's experience of the Covid-19 pandemic*, https://www.oco.ie/app/uploads/2022/04/No-Filter.pdf (accessed on 28 April 2023). [291]

Ombudsman for Children's Office (2022), *Ombudsman do leanaí; for children*, https://www.oco.ie/. [292]

Orr, K. et al. (2016), *Enabling the Exercise of Civil and Political Rights: The Views of Children*, Save the Children. [40]

Partridge, A. (2005), "Children and young people's inclusion in public decision-making", *Support for Learning*, Vol. 20/4, pp. 181-189, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0268-2141.2005.00386.x. [77]

Patton, G. et al. (2016), "Our future: a Lancet commission on adolescent health and wellbeing", *The Lancet*, Vol. 387/10036, pp. 2423-2478, https://doi.org/10.1016/s0140-6736(16)00579-1. [5]

Pearse, H. (2021), "Refurbishing Democracy: More Direct, More Deliberative, and Younger", *Perspectives on Public Management and Governance*, Vol. 5/1, pp. 11-15, https://doi.org/10.1093/ppmgov/gvab029. [88]

Pennycook, G. et al. (2021), "Shifting attention to accuracy can reduce misinformation online", *Nature*, Vol. 592/7855, pp. 590-595, https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-021-03344-2. [116]

Percy-Smith, B. and M. Taylor (2008), "Children's Participation: Learning from and for Community Development", *The International Journal of Children's Rights*, Vol. 16/3, pp. 379-394, https://doi.org/10.1163/157181808x311213. [32]

Perry, C. (2015), "Young People's Views on School Inspection", No. 98/15, Northern Ireland Assembly, http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/globalassets/documents/raise/publications/2015/education/9815.pdf (accessed on 7 April 2023). [267]

Perry-Hazan, L. (2016), "Children's participation in national policymaking: "You're so adorable, adorable, adorable! I'm speechless; so much fun!"", *Children and Youth Services Review*, Vol. 67, pp. 105-113, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2016.05.015. [85]

Powell, M. and A. Smith (2009), "Children's Participation Rights in Research", *Childhood*, Vol. 16/1, pp. 124-142, https://doi.org/10.1177/0907568208101694. [154]

Quaglia, R. and M. Corso (2014), *Student Voice: The Instrument of Change*, SAGE Publications. [161]

Ratna, K. and N. Reddy (2002), *A journey in children's participation*, The Concerned for Working Children. [81]

Rees, G. et al. (2020), *Children's views on their lives and well-being in 35 countries: A report on the Children's Worlds project, 2016-19*, Children's Worlds Project (ISCWeB), https://isciweb.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Childrens-Worlds-Comparative-Report2020.pdf. [146]

Reid, A. et al. (eds.) (2008), *Stepping Back from 'The Ladder': Reflections on a Model of Participatory Work with Children*. [48]

Roulstone, S. and S. McLeod (eds.) (2011), *Children's voice and perspectives: The struggle for recognition, meaning and effectiveness*, J and R Press. [50]

Ruck Martin, D. and M. Peterson-Badali (eds.) (2017), *Child participation in local governance*, Taylor & Francis. [19]

Rudduck, J. and D. McIntyre (2007), *Improving learning through consulting pupils*, Routledge. [309]

Ruiz-Casares, M. et al. (2016), "Children's rights to participation and protection in international development and humanitarian interventions: nurturing a dialogue", *The International Journal of Human Rights*, Vol. 21/1, pp. 1-13, https://doi.org/10.1080/13642987.2016.1262520. [303]

Salmivalli, C. and E. Poskiparta (2012), "Making bullying prevention a priority in Finnish schools: The KiVa antibullying program", *New Directions for Youth Development*, Vol. 2012/133, pp. 41-53, https://doi.org/10.1002/yd.20006. [217]

Sant, E. (2019), "Democratic Education: A Theoretical Review (2006–2017)", *Review of Educational Research*, Vol. 89/5, pp. 655-696, https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654319862493. [259]

Sargeant, J. (2017), "Towards Voice-Inclusive Practice: Finding the Sustainability of Participation in Realising the Child's Rights in Education", *Children & Society*, Vol. 32/4, pp. 314-324, https://doi.org/10.1111/chso.12247. [159]

Scottish Government (2021), *Whole School Approach Framework for Schools to Support Children and Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing*, http://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/advice-and-guidance/2021/08/whole-school-approach-mental-health-wellbeing/documents/whole-school-approach-mental-health-wellbeing/whole-school-approach-mental-health-wellbeing/govscot%3Adocument. [214]

Shephard, M. and S. Patrikios (2012), "Making Democracy Work by Early Formal Engagement? A Comparative Exploration of Youth Parliaments in the EU", *Parliamentary Affairs*, Vol. 66/4, pp. 752-771, https://doi.org/10.1093/pa/gss017. [92]

Sherman, M. (2018), "Hearing student voices on school councils", *Connect*, Vol. 229/5, https://search.informit.org/doi/abs/10.3316/informit.405427579642636 (accessed on 27 March 2023). [173]

Shier, H. (2019), "Student Voice and Children's Rights: Power, Empowerment, and "Protagonismo"", in *Encyclopedia of Teacher Education*, Springer Singapore, Singapore, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-1179-6_27-1. [45]

Shier, H. (2012), *What does 'equality' mean for children in relation to adults? [Official background paper for UN Global Thematic Consultation on 'Addressing Inequalities Post- 2015]*, CESESMA. [302]

Shier, H. (2001), "Pathways to participation: openings, opportunities and obligations", *Children & Society*, Vol. 15/2, pp. 107-117, https://doi.org/10.1002/chi.617. [47]

Simovska, V. (ed.) (2012), "Is school participation good for children? Associations with health and wellbeing", *Health Education*, Vol. 112/2, pp. 88-104, https://doi.org/10.1108/09654281211203394. [74]

Simovska, V. (ed.) (2012), "Student councils: a tool for health promoting schools? Characteristics and effects", *Health Education*, Vol. 112/2, pp. 105-132, https://doi.org/10.1108/09654281211203402. [170]

Simovska, V. and B. Jensen (2009), *Conceptualising participation - the health of children and young people*, WHO. [80]

Skelton, T. (2007), "Children, Young People, UNICEF and Participation", *Children's Geographies*, Vol. 5/1-2, pp. 165-181, https://doi.org/10.1080/14733280601108338. [306]

Slavin, R. and C. Lake (2008), "Effective Programs in Elementary Mathematics: A Best-Evidence Synthesis", *Review of Educational Research*, Vol. 78/3, pp. 427-515, https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654308317473. [254]

Sorrell, J. and F. Sorrell (2005), *Joinedupdesignforschools*, Merrell Publications. [275]

Stanford Online High School (n.d.), *Student-Led Initiatives | Stanford Online High School*, https://onlinehighschool.stanford.edu/student-led-initiatives (accessed on 17 April 2023). [192]

Stoilova, M., S. Livingstone and D. Kardefelt-Winther (2016), "Global Kids Online: Researching children's rights globally in the digital age", *Global Studies of Childhood*, Vol. 6/4, pp. 455-466, https://doi.org/10.1177/2043610616676035. [147]

Stronati, C. (2023), "The design of upper secondary education across OECD countries: Managing choice, coherence and specialisation", *OECD Education Working Papers*, No. 288, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/158101f0-en. [33]

Templeton, M., P. Cuevas-Parra and L. Lundy (2022), "Children's participation in international fora: The experiences and perspectives of children and adults", *Children & Society*, Vol. 37/3, pp. 786-805, https://doi.org/10.1111/chso.12629. [96]

Texas Association of Student Councils (n.d.), *Texas Association of Student Councils*, https://www.tasconline.org/overview-goals (accessed on 21 March 2023). [165]

The Council of the European Union (2009), *Council Resolution on a renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018)*, Official Journal of the European Union, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32009G1219%2801%29 (accessed on 24 April 2023). [293]

The Lego Foundation and Tænketanken Mandag Morgen (2021), *The good life - according to children*, https://learningthroughplay.com/explore-the-research/the-good-life-according-to-children. [37]

The Swedish Schools Inspectorate (2008), *School inspections in Sweden*, https://schoolinspections.eu/impact/sweden/ (accessed on 7 April 2023). [269]

Theobald, M., S. Danby and J. Ailwood (2011), "Child Participation in the Early Years: Challenges for Education", *Australasian Journal of Early Childhood*, Vol. 36/3, pp. 19-26, https://doi.org/10.1177/183693911103600304. [75]

Third, A. and L. Moody (2021), *Our rights in the digital world: A report on the children's consultations to inform UNCRC General Comment 25*, 5Rights Foundation and Western Sydney University. [65]

Tisdall, E. (2018), "Challenging Competency and Capacity?", *The International Journal of Children's Rights*, Vol. 26/1, pp. 159-182, https://doi.org/10.1163/15718182-02601003. [141]

Tisdall, E. (2016), "Conceptualising children and young people's participation: examining vulnerability, social accountability and co-production", *The International Journal of Human Rights*, Vol. 21/1, pp. 59-75, https://doi.org/10.1080/13642987.2016.1248125. [20]

Tisdall, L. (2022), "Should school students get a say? Why fifty years of 'pupil participation' hasn't changed the UK education system – and what we might do differently", *Discourse*, History & Policy, https://doi.org/10.1080/01596306.2020.1795623. [178]

Trafford, B. and B. Griffiths (2005), "How do student councils encourage student participation?", *Education Review*, Vol. 18/1, pp. 90-95. [175]

Transparency International (2019), *Participatory budgeting at your schools: What is it and where to start?*, https://transparency.lt/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/practical-guide-2019.pdf. [243]

Trott, C. (2019), "Reshaping our world: Collaborating with children for community-based climate change action", *Action Research*, Vol. 17/1, pp. 42-62, https://doi.org/10.1177/1476750319829209. [187]

Tūturu (2022), *Supporting student-led action: Helping students promote wellbeing through learning-based activities*, https://tuturu.org.nz/assets/Resources/Supporting-student-led-action.pdf. [195]

Uğraş, T., K. Rızvanoğlu and S. Gülseçen (2022), "New co-design techniques for digital game narrative design with children", *International Journal of Child-Computer Interaction*, Vol. 31, p. 100441, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijcci.2021.100441. [277]

UK Children's Commissioners (2020), *"Are we there yet?" Our rights, our say*, https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/resource/are-we-there-yet-our-rights-our-say/. [312]

UN Comittee on the Rights of the Child (2013), *General comment No. 14 (2013) on the right of the child to have his or her best interests taken as a primary consideration (art. 3, para. 1)**, United Nations, http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/docs/gc/crc_c_gc_14_eng.pdf. [56]

UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (2009), *General Comment No. 12 The Right of the Child to be Heard*, http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/docs/AdvanceVersions/CRC-C-GC-12.doc. [46]

UNESCO (2022), "Global Standards for Media and Information Literacy Curricula Development Guidelines". [117]

UNESCO (2020), *Education for Sustainable Development. A roadmap*, UNESCO Publishing, https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000374802.locale=en. [226]

UNICEF (2013), *TAKE US SERIOUSLY! Engaging Children with Disabilities in Decisions Affecting their Lives*, https://www.unicef.org/documents/take-us-seriously. [62]

UNICEF and Eurochild (2019), *The Europe Kids Want: Sharing the views of children and young people across Europe*, http://eurochild.org/uploads/2020/11/Euro_Kids_Want_Brochure_Nov2019.pdf. [35]

United Nations (2006), *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*, https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities-2.html. [317]

United Nations (1989), *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, United Nations, https://treaties.un.org/doc/Treaties/1990/09/19900902%2003-14%20AM/Ch_IV_11p.pdf. [13]

United Nations (DESA) (2007), *World Youth Report 2007: Young People's Transition to Adulthood*, United Nations. [6]

Valenzuela, D. et al. (2022), "Effectiveness of the KiVa Antibullying Program with and without the Online Game in Chile: a Three-Arm Cluster Randomized Controlled Trial", *Prevention Science*, Vol. 23/8, pp. 1470-1482, https://doi.org/10.1007/s11121-022-01379-z. [223]

van der Hof, S., B. van den Berg and B. Schermer (eds.) (2014), *Minding Minors Wandering the Web: Regulating Online Child Safety*, T.M.C. Asser Press, The Hague, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-6265-005-3. [105]

van Doorn, F. (2016), *Children as co-researchers in design: Enabling users to gather, share and enrich contextual data*, T/U Delft. [129]

Vare, P. (2021), "Exploring the Impacts of Student-Led Sustainability Projects with Secondary School Students and Teachers", *Sustainability*, Vol. 13/5, p. 2790, https://doi.org/10.3390/su13052790. [185]

Venninen, T. et al. (2013), "Supporting Children's Participation in Finnish Child Care Centers", *Early Childhood Education Journal*, Vol. 42/3, pp. 211-218, https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-013-0590-9. [280]

Voight, A. and M. Nation (2016), "Practices for Improving Secondary School Climate: A Systematic Review of the Research Literature", *American Journal of Community Psychology*, Vol. 58/1-2, pp. 174-191, https://doi.org/10.1002/ajcp.12074. [68]

Waldrip, B., D. Fisher and J. Dorman (2008), *Students' perceptions of assessment process: Questionnaire development and validation*, Curtin University of Technology, https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/16670891.pdf (accessed on 7 April 2023). [261]

Williford, A. et al. (2013), "Effects of the KiVa Antibullying Program on Cyberbullying and Cybervictimization Frequency Among Finnish Youth", *Journal of Clinical Child & Adolescent Psychology*, Vol. 42/6, pp. 820-833, https://doi.org/10.1080/15374416.2013.787623. [216]

Wojciechowska, M. (2019), "Towards Intersectional Democratic Innovations", *Political Studies*, Vol. 67/4, pp. 895-911, https://doi.org/10.1177/0032321718814165. [93]

Wolk, S. (1994), "Project-Based Learning: Pursuits with a Purpose.", *Educational Leadership*, Vol. 52/3, pp. 42-45. [189]

Wyness, M. (2009), "Children Representing Children", *Childhood*, Vol. 16/4, pp. 535-552, https://doi.org/10.1177/0907568209344274. [103]

Wyn, J. et al. (2000), "MindMatters, a Whole-School Approach Promoting Mental Health and Wellbeing", *Australian & New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*, Vol. 34/4, pp. 594-601, https://doi.org/10.1080/j.1440-1614.2000.00748.x. [212]

Yang, A. and C. Salmivalli (2014), "Effectiveness of the KiVa antibullying programme on bully-victims, bullies and victims", *Educational Research*, Vol. 57/1, pp. 80-90, https://doi.org/10.1080/00131881.2014.983724. [218]

Young Social Innovators (n.d.), *About | Young Social Innovators (YSI) - Young Social Innovators Changing the World for Good*, https://www.youngsocialinnovators.ie/about/ (accessed on 17 April 2023). [184]

Youth Wiki, T. (2019), *National youth councils*, https://national-policies.eacea.ec.europa.eu/youthwiki/comparative-overviews/participation/national-youth-councils/2019 (accessed on 27 April 2023). [97]

Zhao, J. et al. (2019), "`I make up a silly name'", *Proceedings of the 2019 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems*, https://doi.org/10.1145/3290605.3300336. [110]

Zipin, L. (2013), "Engaging middle years learners by making their communities curricular: A Funds of Knowledge approach", *Curriculum Perspectives*, Vol. 33, pp. 1-12, http://vuir.vu.edu.au/ (accessed on 13 July 2023). [246]