



plataforma
de infancia
españa



Consultation on the
status of child and youth
participation in Spain



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01 PLATAFORMA DE INFANCIA

- The Plataforma de Infancia (Children Rights Platform) is a network of 68 non-profit organisations that work towards the full realisation of the rights of children and adolescents. It was created in 1997 with the mission to protect, promote, and defend the rights of children and adolescents in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Its vision is to achieve the full realisation of the rights of children and adolescents, harnessing the efforts of children's organisations and all social stakeholders. Plataforma de Infancia develops specific actions to promote the active participation of children in the creation of proposals related to child welfare, particularly children's rights and policies in Spain.

Based on the "Children Speak Out" strategy, Plataforma de Infancia's actions and proposals are designed to focus on what children and adolescents think when it comes to issues affecting childhood and adolescence, providing an opportunity to be the spokespeople for their own proposals, such as "The Child Act" in Congress and the delegation of children who went to Geneva to present the proposals on the process called "Grading our Rights" to the Committee on the Rights of the Child, within the framework of the periodic review of the application of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in Spain.

02 CONSULTATION OBJECTIVES

- The aim of the focus groups is to pool together children's perspectives and capture their perceptions, understanding, and positions on the mechanisms of children's participation. The study will thus provide qualitative input on the status of their right to participate in public decision-making. The conclusions drawn from the consultations with the participants will contribute to the final reports prepared by the study team.



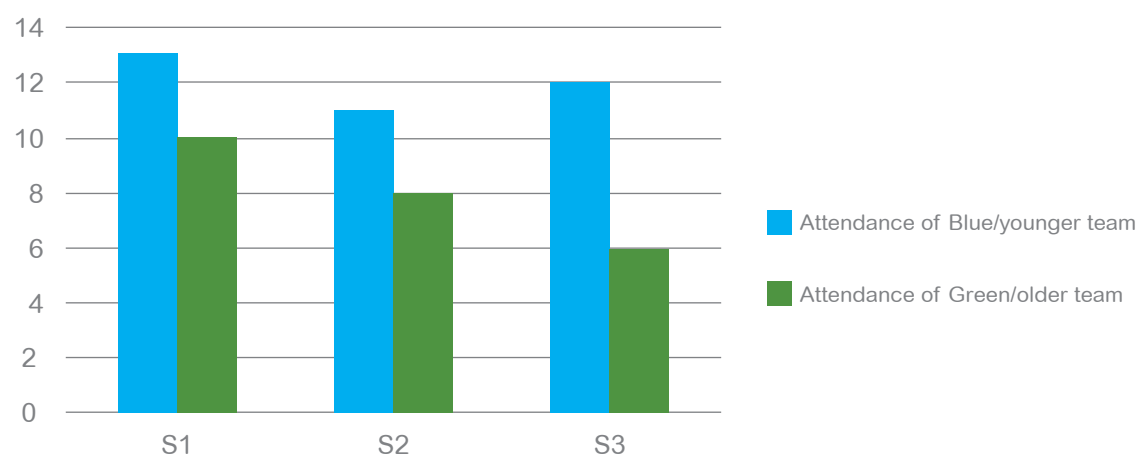


03 FOCUS GROUP DESCRIPTION

- ➔ A total of 30 children (boys and girls) participated in the development of the focus groups, which were divided into two subgroups according to age. One group covered the age range of 10 to 14 years (Blue team, younger) and another the age range of 15 to 17 years (Green team, older).

Participation in group attendance was mixed. Participation remained constant in the Blue team and dropped in the Green team week after week.

Attendance by sessions



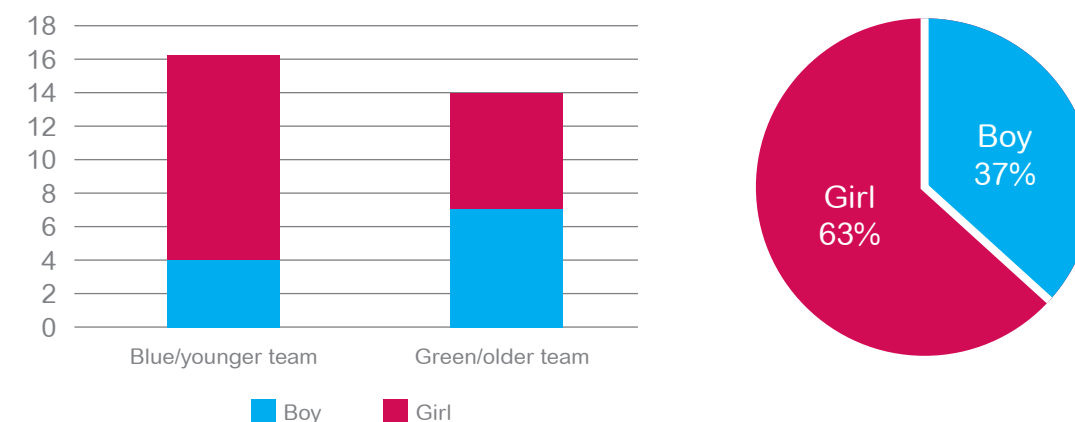
- ➔ The age ranges were from 10 to 17 years, with 13-14-years-old and 16-17-year-olds the most prevalent.

Participant ages



- ➔ 19 girls and 11 boys participated. This balance was maintained in the younger group, while there was equal participation of boys and girls in the older group.

Participation by gender

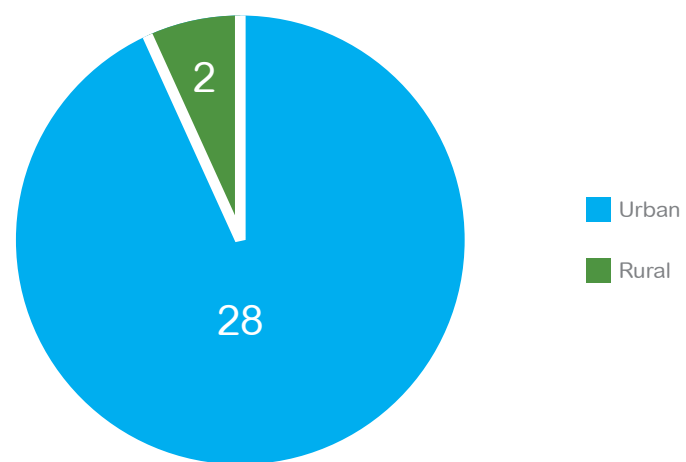


- ➔ Children from six autonomous communities participated, most from the Community of Madrid. Moreover, most of the participants live in urban areas (towns with more a population over 2,500), with only two of the participants living in rural areas.

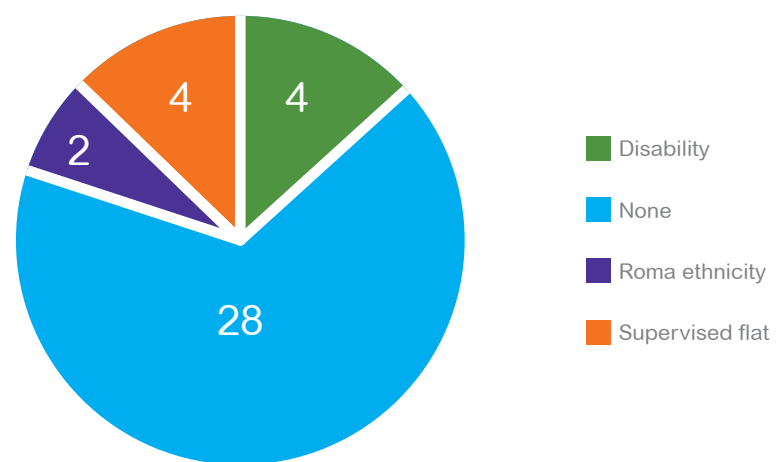


➔ In terms of the background of the children who participated: four have some disability, two are of Roma ethnicity, and four live in a supervised flat, with no background of note in the case of the other 20 children who participated.

Location



Participant backgrounds





04 CONSULTATION PROCESS

→ Schedule and location

The sessions were held virtually during three consecutive Wednesdays from 5 to 7 pm.

→ Objectives

Each session aimed to answer the following questions:

→ SESSION 1: Consultation introduction and overview

What participatory structures do children know and use? Identify organisations, entities. Characteristics. If there is support, if mechanisms are put in place to guarantee access.

→ SESSION 2. Participatory experiences and sound practices

What is the real influence of child participation in decision-making?

→ SESSION 3. Plenary session and evaluation

What are the challenges to achieving meaningful and influential child and youth participation in decision-making?

→ Motivational roles and adults

The roles the adults played in the sessions were:

- Two facilitators: their role was to introduce the sessions and guide each group during the consultation.
- Two translators and interpreters: they transcribed and subtitled the conversations simultaneously, ensuring inclusion and the right to participate.

→ Tools

Three were three main tools used to develop the sessions:

- Zoom www.zoom.us for video calls. Different rooms were used for the plenary sessions so that each group had their own working space.
- Miro www.miro.com used for notes and group activities.
- Email: used as a means of communication for sharing resources and information between sessions

The following were also used to develop activities:

- Genially <https://www.genial.ly/> questions and answers activity.
- Kahoot <https://kahoot.it/> evaluation questions and answers activity.
- Youtube: videos.

→ Activity Programme

SESSION 1. CONSULTATION INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

- 1. Welcome and presentation of the Plataforma de Infancia team.
- 2. Zoom tutorial.
- 3. Breaking up groups into colours and changing names, using the group name as the surname.
- 4. Process presentation
 - a. Icebreaker: My favourite t-shirt
- 5. Children's rights and the CDN
 - a. Watch video on rights
 - b. "Right or wrong" game related to the previous video
 - c. The right to participate and express opinions: Roger Hart's Ladder of Participation
- 6. Estructuras de participación que conoce el grupo. Characteristics. Through questions prepared using MIRO.
- 7. End of session.
 - a. Session feedback.
 - b. Questions.
 - c. Next session: date and tasks (research on organisations that give voice to children / "My YouTuber moment", prepare a video about a participatory experience)

SESSION 2. PARTICIPATORY EXPERIENCES AND SOUND PRACTICES

- 1. Welcome and separate into groups.
- 2. "My YouTube/YouTuber moment" participatory experience, watching two videos and commenting on them.
- 3. Organisations that give voice to children. Participants share which organisations and spaces they know.
- 4. Challenges.

Open chat: each participant must think of several challenges to participate in and pass it to another participant. To close, the chat is shared, and the challenges proposed are discussed.
- 5. Farewell.
 - a. Session feedback.
 - b. Reminder about the next session date.
 - c. Whoever takes notes prepares them for the next sessions, the group will complete the information.

SESSION 3 DISCUSSION GROUP RESULTS

- 1. Welcome.
- 2. Process overview.
 - a. Summary document using Genially to report on some of the results.
 - b. Session evaluation.
- 3. Separate into groups.
 - a. Assign one or more spokespersons.
 - b. Prepare the report with each focus group.
- 4. Plenary session: pooling working groups.
- 5. Space for opinions and comments.
- 6. Evaluation: using Kahoot.
- 7. Information, next steps, thanks, and farewell.



05 CONSULTATION RESULTS

→ Can you think of ways in which children can participate in decision-making? (Information for the facilitator: this could be surveys, consultations like the ones we have today, etc.).

Spaces for consultation and political advocacy

- Assemblies
- Forums
- Child and Youth Councils
- Surveys

Youth advocacy spaces and actions

- Youth in political groups
- Strikes
- Unions
- NGOs that focus specifically on child participation

Local participation

- Spaces managed by young people
- Children and youth groups
- Youth associations
- Activities in the public space

→ Can you think about what kind of meetings children can participate in with decision-makers? (Information for the facilitator: children can make a presentation, participate in digital meetings, meetings can be regular or ad hoc, etc.)

The most common meetings are ad-hoc, requested by young people through child and youth entities or agencies for the presentation of proposals and initiatives.

Also, there are institutional spaces that are regularly opened where young people meet with political representatives or decision-makers, in plenary sessions or assemblies.

Virtual meetings with political representatives were held during the lockdown in Spain. An interview-style meeting was also held where children posed questions via video call to the Minister of Science and the Ministry of Health's Director of the Coordination Centre for Health Alerts and Emergencies.

5.1 Current situation in the EU regarding the participation of children in decision-making processes at local, national, and European levels.

→ Do you know what children's rights are? Can you name what rights you have? If necessary, explain what children's rights are.

From the activities carried out, it can be concluded that all the children who participated in the focus groups were able to recognise their rights, although they are not always able to name and explain them.

→ What does the participation of children in decision-making mean?

They positively value being able to have spaces to express their opinion, think, invent, design, and develop proposals for the improvement of their neighbourhood and the quality of life of the children around them.

They consider it a responsibility to submit proposals to policy-makers or adults responsible for their environment (for example, the headteacher at their school). This is something they take very seriously, and they believe it important not to put their own criteria above that of the group.

To that end, they think that knowing and understanding the reality of their community is vital, as it generates internal participation structures that promote the inclusion of any young person in their city, neighbourhood, or rural area.

"I've recommended the CYC¹ to several friends and sisters because I think it's a place where you can feel involved in policy". María. 13 years old. Younger team. Community of Madrid.

→ Can they express their ideas to decision-makers? How can they do this - through what process/activities/action/institution? Discuss this for your town/city/region and country.

In general, the participants say that they can express their ideas to policy-makers, particularly to local government decision-makers with whom they have a closer relationship.

1. Child and Youth Council (CYC)



This relationship, however, varies according to how high up the policy-makers are in government and the administrations' willingness and openness, considering that the capacity for advocacy is greater in smaller towns than in large cities, where bureaucracy is more extensive and there is little or no relationship with national or international bodies.

Also, they believe that an important factor in this relationship and ability to share proposals involves the background and recognition of the group or participatory space.

The ways children express their ideas to adults varies, although the most prominent ways are holding meetings or plenary sessions through the Child and Youth Council. There are also other spaces such as gatherings and events in which they participate together with public representatives, and video calls and emails have recently emerged as popular methods of expression.

In almost all cases, these relationships are mediated by agencies or entities that facilitate and support young people during the participation process and help develop and raise awareness about the process.

➔ Do politicians where the children live include solutions to children's issues in their policies/work? Can you explain/give an example?

The experiences of young people in relation to political solutions concur in that "they don't always listen to us". More often than not, their proposals receive no feedback from political representatives.

Example 1: Their proposals are accepted.

Planting trees in a park in a municipality of Madrid. Each tree will have an associated story about the child who planted it, childing being participants not only in the concept but in its development.

Example 2: Their proposals are rejected.

Proposals for leisure and free time, such as having a space where children can spend time regardless of the weather.

Example 3: Their proposals are accepted but go unrecognised.

Organisation of a children's fair. The city council implemented the proposals but failed to give the Child and Youth Commission recognition for coming up with the idea.

➔ Is there any support for all children, without discrimination, to participate in decision-making where they live (village/city/region/country)?

The issue of discrimination and participation generates a lively and intense debate between children from both groups.

This topic provokes several different opinions and experiences, although, they all coincide in the need for inclusion of people with different abilities. However, exclusive participatory spaces still predominate according to abilities, a segregation that stems from school, where in many cases the prospect of giving the right attention to diversity is non-existent, save exceptions like the creation of accessible rooms.

Beyond the school environment, there is some functional diversity among the members of the child and youth participation groups and commissions. However, it is also noted that there are significant barriers to the integration and normalisation of people with diverse abilities.

"People with different abilities do not like to participate, they have stage fright, they do not like to talk to people, they are shy". Alejandra. 13 years old. Younger team. Community of Madrid.

The Green team identified discriminations that included social class, age, and gender. On age, they believe that there are differences between the attention and seriousness political groups give to contributions from the older group as opposed to those from younger group.

"When we held the first congress with the district councillor and with three political party representatives two years ago, no one except for one from the parties had read the proposals, they said things that we didn't discuss, and paid less attention to the younger ones who come up with more ideas and more proposals than we did, and gave even more attention to the older kids". Julián. 16 years old. Older team. City of Madrid.

They believe that the opinions of the older group are more transcendent than those of the younger, but that younger children are more visible and the focus of more public debate, while there are stereotypes that tend to "criminalise" adolescents.

In this sense, gender discrimination in particular leads to the most vehement discussion, where the need for girls to frame their image in the female role in order to be heard as a valid voice and have the same impact as a boy is expressed with indignation.

"When I have a "public event" I find it harder to get dressed because they might label me differently than you (a man), who's all sorted with a pair of jeans". Alba. 17 years old. Older team. Valencian Community



- ➔ **Do you think that your country or community has developed appropriate structures so that the voices of children, including those from different backgrounds, can be heard? Do they allow you to meet regularly (and, if so, how often) and do you think these structures help you have an actual influence on decision-making? Please explain.**

The structures generated, in terms of the child and youth commissions, feel open and accessible to participation. These committees or participation groups meet regularly, generally once a month.

In any event, it is through these structures that they develop their activities, design their proposals, and agree to contact policy-makers at different levels, most frequently local governments or schools, where they spend a large part of the day.

They believe that these structures make it easier for their proposals to reach political representatives and allow them to be heard. However, after submitting the proposal there is no feedback on their requests and ideas, and they feel ignored and unrecognised.

“As I said earlier, I belong to the UNICEF Advisory Group at the country level and as a result, I have the opportunity to relay proposals and ideas to people beyond my group, such as to Prime Minister or to the different ministers and the High Commissioner for the Fight against Child Poverty, among others.

At another level, children and adolescents can participate in spaces where they are heard and their proposals are taken into consideration, for example, in the school council or by being a student representative; in youth associations; in centres managed exclusively by young adults, etc.” Santiago. 14 years old. Younger team. Extremadura.

“We have no way to control the people responsible for decision-making. There are structures for participation, but reaching the institutions depends solely on the will of the people responsible” Jorge. 17 years old. Older team. Community of Madrid.

- ➔ **Do you know which institutions in Europe deal with children’s rights?**

They do not know which European institutions and bodies defend children’s rights. Nor did they find clear and accessible information through the internet search they conducted during the session.

At a European level, they recognise the Eurochild platform itself as a defender of children’s rights, as well as major NGOs such as the Red Cross, UNICEF, Save The Children, etc.

They also connect international movements like Fridays for Future to the defence of children’s rights at the European level.

- ➔ **Do you think the EU listens to children and, if so, in what way?**

They see the EU as a very distant and inaccessible institution. They do not understand or know its role or influence at the local level. Nor how they can access their structures and express their needs and concerns.



5.2 Children’s experiences and knowledge of child participation activities in their own country

- ➔ **Do you know any organisations that represent the voices of children in your town/city/region? In your country?**

None of the participants are aware of other organisations that represent the voices of children and adolescents beyond those already involved.

“I think that beyond the group in which I participate, kids have few spaces left to participate and submit our proposals to the different politicians”. Santiago. 14 years old. Younger team. Community of Madrid.

- ➔ **How can you contact the authorities/decision-makers in your town/city/region/country? Are there organisations that can help?**

There are different opinions on this issue, depending on the relationship with the administration and the size of the municipalities; there may be less bureaucracy and greater approachability when it comes to contacting public officials in smaller municipalities, however, this relationship is subject to the willingness and character of professionals and managers.

Organisations and entities are important partners as intermediaries between public administrations and young people by opening channels of communication and supporting the processing of applications.

Another noteworthy factor in the ease of relating with public representatives is the background and experience of the participatory space. Spaces with more experience and a more extensive background have a more direct, agile access to public representatives.

- ➔ **Do you think your voice is heard by people who make decisions in your village /country/ at a national and European level? If so, what has been the impact of the decisions made?**

In general, they believe that they are heard; but this hearing does not translate into the development of their proposals or solutions to their needs.



“I don’t think most of the advice will be heard. High-ranking and even low-ranking politicians don’t listen to us. Nothing we’ve proposed has been implemented during the pandemic, except close parks and go outside in summer during the hottest part of the day”. Santiago. 14 years old. Younger team. Extremadura.

“They have listened to us, but then they made the decisions they wanted”. Lucia. 13 years old. Younger team. Extremadura.

➔ What are some of the main challenges faced by children in your country when it comes to having their views heard by decision-makers?

The main challenge they identify is **THE LISTENING TO AND EFFECTIVE DEVELOPMENT OF THEIR PROPOSALS AS PART OF THE POLITICAL AGENDA** and the implementation of the political decisions that affect them.

IMPACT AT NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL LEVELS. Create a consultative body to work with politicians at the state level to develop legislation and policies related to children and adolescents.

To that end, they call for **BINDING SPACES** where not only can they present their proposals, but where decision-makers commit to studying proposal feasibility and development.

They demand **HONESTY AND RESPECT** for the viability and follow-up of the initiatives they present; they ask that decision-makers stop responding with evasiveness, condescension, and statements that masks indifference to their ideas.

They call for **EQUAL, CROSS-CUTTING SPACES**. Neutral spaces for dialogue and participation, where a “friendly language” is used, free of symbols of adult superiority and authority.

CLOSING THE GAPS IN PARTICIPATION. Generate more and diverse spaces for participation so that all children can be involved in decision-making regardless of their socio-cultural situation.

OVERCOME PREJUDICES ABOUT ADOLESCENCE AND CHILDHOOD. They feel undervalued because they are children, and in the case of adolescents, they face stigmatisation and criminalisation which they describe as unfair.

➔ Can you provide some examples of when children’s voices are heard in decision-making in your community? How do you feel when your voice is heard/not heard? For those who are not heard: Do you give up or find another way to express your opinion (and what is it)?

Some examples of situations where your needs and proposals have been met are:

➔ After a traffic accident at the entrance to a school, the children asked for more protection at a pedestrian crossing. In a question of days there was an agent directing traffic.

- ➔ Plant trees (this proposal has been repeated several times).
- ➔ Holding meetings and fairs in public spaces aimed at young people and children.
- ➔ Preparation of the municipality’s Children’s Plan.
- ➔ Placing bins on certain streets.

In general, the proposals that are usually accepted and developed by administrations, according to the different experiences reported by young people, relate to:

- ➔ Activities and meetings in the public space.
- ➔ Adding basic street furniture to public roads.
- ➔ Alterations and repairs.
- ➔ Revegetation and reforestation.

They feel happy, relevant, socially recognised, and treated as equals when adults listen to them. And ignored, undervalued, defrauded, angry, unheard, unseen, and frustrated when they are not heard.

They are particularly upset at the lack of recognition of their proposals. They believe that their proposals are often implemented but they are given no credit in speeches and public events, with politicians “appropriating” their ideas.

On other occasions, they are invited to participate, but there is no real interest in listening to what they have to contribute or say; they are merely props, their presence endorsing an activity designed and created by adults.

“They always take credit, they’re almost never the ones that come up with the ideas we have for young people, and you feel disappointed”. Judith. 14 years old. Younger team. Extremadura.

In these cases, when they are not heard, they try to set new meetings with policy-makers and send their proposals to them through different channels or people within the administration. Other times, they give up after several attempts and promote another proposal or initiative.

➔ What would be your ideal way of participating in decision-making?

SPACES AND PROCESSES ADAPTED TO THEIR SCHEDULES and that enable them to develop personally and socially.

USE OF ACCESSIBLE AND INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE, without complicated terms but and without being condescending.



BALANCED RELATIONSHIP. Spaces where they can express themselves on equal footing with adult decision-makers, respected and recognised as capable stakeholders.

LESS RED TAPE, reducing the number and complexity of administrative procedures and processes.

CHILDREN'S ADVISORY COUNCIL working in partnership with councillors and policy-makers.

- ➔ **Would you like someone to help guide you through this process, including by informing you about how your opinion influenced the decision made? Who do you think is best suited to guide someone through a child participation process, an adult or an older or more experienced child?**

They rate very positively the role that the adults who support children in participation processes as motivators and facilitators play. They believe that their experience and knowledge facilitate sessions, the agreement on ideas and proposals, and effectively guide dialogues with administrations.

They express, at different points during the sessions, the need for feedback on their contributions and initiatives. They consider that meetings are usually one-sided: young people express their ideas, opinions, and proposals, but there is usually no reciprocity on the part of public representatives.

- ➔ **How would you encourage more children to participate?**

INFORM them about the spaces and ways to participate: associations, CYC, forums, etc.

MOTIVATE FROM THE EXPERIENCE of the young people themselves in participation processes and methods.

Use social media to **RAISE AWARENESS** about the achievements and results achieved through participatory processes.

ORGANISE ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS to promote recreational and leisure spaces and meetings that make it possible to share the spaces and activities implemented as a result of child participation.

- ➔ **What can adults do to help ensure that more children can participate in decisions in their cities/countries?**

LISTEN: show genuine interest in the ideas and proposals of young people and enable spaces where this dialogue can be freely developed.

FACILITATE AND MOTIVATE PARTICIPATION: sharing their initiatives and demands, supporting them in activities and events, supporting them in the organisation of meetings or in other ways that young people suggest.

“To facilitate participation, adults can start by listening to us more and stop ignoring most of the things we say. In addition, it would be good if they would support our activities and help us organise and promote them. Also, it would be great if they relied on us more in the different activities that are organised and take us into consideration more”. Santiago. 14 years old. Younger team. Extremadura.

DO NOT BLOCK THEIR INITIATIVES: sometimes initiatives driven by young people are negatively judged or ignored by adults.

“We gave everything to get everyone who wanted to participate, (...) the parents then blamed us and said we couldn't do this because then there was controversy, because we were just children, and we did not know what we were talking about”. Julia. 12 years old. Younger team. Community of Madrid.

RESPECT OUR SCHEDULES: do not require the same schedules and workspaces in participation processes, when young people have limited time.

“They passed a law, and involved a lot of associations, entities, councils and so on. We were given the same schedule as the adults, and it was a lot harder for us to work than the adults. In other words, we need our schedules, with respect to work, with respect to discussion, with respect to development”. Alba. 17 years old. Older team. Valencian Community.

- ➔ **Is there anything in particular you don't feel heard about but would like to be? How could this be accomplished?**

In general, all topics are discussed within the participation groups and committees, although they are subsequently prioritised.

“Young people can participate on any topic”. Judith. 14 years old. Younger team. Extremadura.

However, there are some issues on which they believe their opinion is not considered:

- ➔ Education policies.
- ➔ Topics related to games and video games.
- ➔ Subjects related to free-time and leisure.
- ➔ Budgets and funding.
- ➔ Equality policies, particularly regarding generational equality that goes beyond adultocentrism and includes friendly language as part of inclusive language.



➔ **Have you or your friends ever influenced decision-making in your town/city/region/country? In what way? Has it been achieved through a formal process or otherwise?**

In general, the influence of young people is framed in the supralocal sphere and through formal processes or structures.

They have been able to have an influence through national participation institutions, albeit still limited at the state level.

The methods are through reports, meetings, and events in which they present their proposals, concerns, and needs to political representatives.

“Thanks to the activities we developed within the advisory group, we have been able to do our part to improve things, for example, preparing a report on proposals for the Prime Minister and ministers, which was distributed at the beginning of last year; meeting with the High Commissioner for the Fight against Child Poverty to share the proposals in this report with him and to tell him all our concerns and suggestions first-hand; passing on questions and proposals to the different candidates for Prime Minister in the last general elections, etc.”. Santiago. 14 years old. Younger team. Extremadura

➔ **Can you share some examples of how children are participating in the decisions of your town/city/region/country?**

- ➔ Through school councils, where children can, through representatives, express their proposals.
- ➔ Events like Children's Day, where different activities and workshops are held in public spaces.
- ➔ In the Child and Youth Commissions: they meet and make proposals to public representatives and participate in the development of plans for children and youth.
- ➔ Through participation in self-managed spaces. Like the Casas de La Juventud (Youth Houses), where the administration's public multipurpose spaces are used by young people, who plan activities and use it as a meeting and recreational space.

➔ **Have you received any training that will allow you to participate and make you feel safer to share your opinions?**

“Participate and you learn by participating”. Alba. 17 years old. Older team. Valencian Community.

This statement is repeated in both the older and younger groups. They do not think that they have received specific training on participation or that such training is necessary, however, they consider that being part of participation groups has allowed them to develop skills and abilities, as well as tools that allow them to better communicate and relate with other people.



5.3 How child participation has been affected by the COVID-19 crisis

➔ **Can you explain how the COVID-19 crisis has affected children's ability to participate in decision-making?**

PROCESSES IN PROGRESS PUT ON HOLD: the strategies and proposals that were being implemented before the lockdown were put on hold, which particularly affected in-person initiatives that could not be moved to a virtual space, and which, given the health protocols, are no longer viable in the “new normal”.

“The adolescents/older kids have started up again. For the younger ones it's quite difficult, because of the protocols, security and other measures, the project, for example. What we took from the Child Council isn't that they haven't been implemented because it split us in half, but rather that we were already in the action plan that also had to impact a lot of things, you can't do that. It's not feasible”. Alba 17 years old. Older team. Valencian Community.

DECREASE IN PARTICIPATION: not all the spaces for participation managed to resume contact, and there were connection issues when it was possible to make video calls. Digital gaps had a profound effect on relationships among young people. The lockdown kept young people away from their real lives and thus limited their ability to discuss and develop proposals

“When it came to formulating proposals we didn't have much idea of what to say because we were at home and didn't see what had gotten worse or what had improved, all we could see was what was outside our window and that's it. Also, they could not be implemented until the lockdown ended”. Eva 12 years old. Younger team. Community of Madrid

NEGLECT OF THE NEEDS AND PRIORITIES OF YOUNG PEOPLE: The proposals that were transferred to public representatives from some areas were not incorporated into the reopening measures.



➔ **Do you know how children continued to participate in the decisions in their village/city/region or country during the lockdown?**

The form of participation, when possible, was through video calls at the village/city/etc. level. Meetings were held with public representatives (district councillors or state representatives) in some cases, but these proposals were not then subsequently developed or implemented by those representatives.

“Yes, it is true that some councils have been meeting virtually during the lockdown and pandemic and have been able to make proposals and pass them along. What I don’t know is if they paid any attention to them afterwards”. Santiago. 14 years old. Younger team. Extremadura.

In some cases, when meetings could be set up via video call, the complexity and uncertainty of the situation and context made the development of a real and useful space for participation complicated.

“We held meetings, but I think we have these meetings because they have to pay the coordinators because they were not productive at all. There was also a sort of role of the adults to try to entertain children; to get that space back. But I really don’t think that was a space for participation”. Alba. 17 years old. Older team. Valencian Community.

Only where participation has a state dimension have meetings and dialogue been streamlined by moving to a digital format instead of an in-person one.

“Those of us on the UNICEF advisory group are from many parts of Spain, we met in Madrid every three months, but during that time we met weekly and we were able to make a lot of progress”. Roberto 17 years old. Older team. Asturias.

After the end of the strict lockdown, small meetings started to be held again in some cases, like in rural areas, for example, where rotating meetings have been held in different towns or villages.

➔ **Can you think about the lessons learned from the COVID-19 crisis and how we can ensure that children can participate more effectively in future decisions?**

There was no answer to this question.





06 EVALUATION

- ➔ The evaluation system was developed through a set of questions and answers using the Kahoot tool. Thirteen questions were asked and closed answers were given.

The evaluation involved 15 young people: 9 girls and 6 boys.

In general, the focus groups were rated positively. Considering that sessions were properly well-organised, the information was clear from the start, with well-prepared and interesting activities, and with useful sessions in which they learned a range of things. The three initial questions are generally considered to have been addressed, although most young people consider the sessions to have been short or pressed for time.

Most would repeat if there was a second meeting and would recommend it to a friend. Most would rate the sessions as outstanding.

Potential limitations or biases of the evaluation system:

- ➔ When you do it with another tool it makes it difficult to access the game platform and manage this space. Thus, even though they accessed the platform, there was one person who did not vote on any of the issues.
- ➔ The competitive model that gives priority to whoever answers first can limit the reading of the questions in detail and thinking about the answer.

A qualitative evaluation was conducted after the Kahoot Q&A, in which each participant expressed their opinion about the meeting and sessions; all coincided in that having shared a space that had been generated with other young people was positive, as was discovering that other initiatives and participation in other spaces and with different administrations exist.

“I loved the three Wednesdays we met here. Although I honestly felt lost at first with the Green team and Blue team and which one I belonged to, but I felt very relieved to learn about different areas of Spain, to learn how the government is in different areas, how they behave, how the administrations with whom we work are managed, although we still have many issues to discuss. And finally, this Eurochild is fantastic and it’s a way that we are heard all over the world and it’s really cool”. Julian. 17 years old. Older team. Community of Madrid.

“I loved Eurochild because I met more people from all over Spain, you all seemed really nice to me, and because as children we can also give opinions, age does not matter”. Lucia. 13 years old. Younger team. Extremadura.

REMARKS

- ➔ Although no questions were asked during the final evaluation in Kahoot about the use and handling of the tools, intermediate evaluations on how this issue was handled were conducted during the different sessions. Improving tools and permissions to streamline and facilitate accessibility and training in tools and digital environments and adapting the group’s own activities within the possibilities.

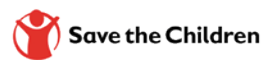
Some of the difficulties encountered during the sessions on participation in the digital environment:

- ➔ Communication gets bogged down. Sometimes the voice is lost and distorted, unable to express ideas and proposals.
- ➔ Interaction is not only limited by the screen and the communication steps are complicated by having to mute and unmute microphones. The latter was eventually resolved by leaving the microphones on.
- ➔ The introduction to the platforms and their use took longer than expected, causing a delay in the remaining sessions. However, this space was necessary and important as a way to generate a space of trust where adults and children felt comfortable and safe.
- ➔ Digital platforms present changes and limitations depending on the device participants use to connect. Content viewing or editing is complicated on mobile phones and tablets.

The sessions coincided with the start of the school year, which, together with the fact that the sessions were spaced out over a week, led to a drop in participation. However, the young people who participated through to the end found each session more comfortable, to the point of proposing that the sessions continue after the focus group finished with the space.



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