



A PLACE FOR CHILDREN IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT AGENDA

A WORKING MANUAL FOR MUNICIPAL LEADERS
AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICERS



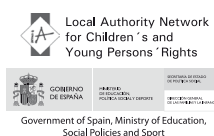
Ciudades
Amigas
de la Infancia

Child Friendly Cities

A place for children in local government agenda

A working manual for municipal leaders
and local government officers

Partners



With the collaboration of:



Acknowledgments:

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The authors.

A Place for Children in Local Government Agenda. A Working Manual for Municipal Leaders and Local Government Officers.

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*“Children have their own way of seeing things,
of thinking and feeling; there is nothing more
senseless than our trying to impose ours on them”*
Rousseau

Introduction

This document, written by way of a practical guide for setting up integrated policies for children and young people in a local environment, aims to be a mechanism for working towards the promotion of children's rights in Spanish municipalities.

The Child Friendly Cities programme is a UNICEF initiative, promoted in Spain by the Spain Committee of UNICEF, mindful of the need to extend knowledge of and respect for the Convention on the Rights of the Child at the level of the day-to-day life of the child in the local municipality.

To this end, UNICEF Spain numbers amongst its partners the Ministry of Health and Social Policies, the Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces and the Local Authority Network for Children's and Young Person's Rights, as well as counting on the collaboration of the University Institute for the Needs and Rights of Children and Young Persons (IUNDIA).

Our partner and associate in compiling this Handbook has been the Principality of Asturias Observatory for Children and Adolescents, whose work in promoting, disseminating and implementing the Convention on the Rights of the Child in Asturias has been recognised by the achievement in 2008 of the UNICEF Spain Foundation National Award in the category of promotion of public awareness and community action.

The municipalities in Spain have been outstanding for the degree of enthusiasm they have been showing in the deployment of policies for young persons, women, the elderly and, naturally, for children. Within the framework of this manifestation of growing interest in developing integrated policies for children, municipal leaders have made plain, on more than one occasion, the need for some kind of document that would bring together all the basic concepts for the construction of a municipal project in favour of children's rights.

This present document, then, is conceived with the intention of responding to that demand and of providing municipal leaders and officers with a basic, conceptual and methodical instrument to enable them to construct and deploy at local government level policies designed specifically for the benefit of their youngest citizens: the children and youngsters that live, play and grow up in the communities for which they hold responsibility.

It could not be otherwise but that the conceptual, legal and ethical framework set out in this Manual springs from the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the United Nations Action Plan “A World Fit for Children”, from the bibliography collated at the initiative of the Child Friendly Cities programme, and from the experiences and conclusions of those municipalities and institutions that have for years been working in the fields of promotion and development of local government policies for children.

In consequence, for all those interested in the building of “Child Friendly Cities”, the model set out in this Manual offers an unparalleled opportunity, since it demonstrates how the concept of the “Child Friendly City” can be utilised and developed in order to achieve a greater contribution to the nationwide process of implementing the Convention on the Rights of the Child and, in short, to safeguard the best interests of the child and to build a world fit for children.

Consideration of the best interests of the child should be a priority for any municipality. In the first place, because it is a legal requirement, in accordance with the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. But beyond this legal requirement there are other just as convincing reasons why it is necessary to bring children to the forefront of the local government agenda:

- Children are individual human beings, with equal status to adults. They are not possessions of their parents, nor products of the State, nor projects for the future.
- Children’s healthy development and active participation are crucial for the future of any society.
- Children are born totally dependent and grow to reach full independence with the help of adults.
- Their dependence and stages of development make them particularly vulnerable, for which reason they are more affected than adults by the conditions in which they live, such as poverty, poor housing and pollution.
- Children are likewise more affected by the actions or inactions of government than any other group. Almost every area of local government policy affects children to some degree, either directly or indirectly. The state of children is a very sensitive barometer to the effects of social, environmental, economic or other changes.
- Children have no vote and can play no significant part in the conventional political process. Without special arrangements, children will have no influence on the huge impact that governments have on their lives.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child acquires special relevance this year (2009) which marks its twentieth anniversary. Twenty years work by towns and cities in Spain promoting children’s rights, taking the Convention as a reference point for the promotion of their rights, prevention and protection and the active participation of our youngest citizens.

Human rights are interwoven, in many respects, with people's needs to live life with dignity.

Adela Cortina (1) asserts that the construction of a human right always follows the same pattern:

1. The demand to live a dignified life.
2. International recognition that such a demand is in fact a right.
3. The imperative to satisfy that right legally and institutionally.

We thus, according to Adela Cortina, talk of such rights as being "moral rights", because they are demands which morally bind both specific communities and the international community as a whole to recognise them as rights, and at the same time recognise their responsibility to satisfy them. They are moral demands, moral rights, which have to be recognised, not just granted.

This line of thinking therefore implies having to define human needs, in order to be able to decide which of them should be recognised as human rights and then satisfied as such.

Starting from this premise, Félix López (2) suggests a functional classification of human needs during childhood and adolescence, with four divisions:

1. Physical and biological needs (food, hygiene, etc.).
2. Mental and cultural needs (sensorial stimulation, physical and social exploration, acquirement of a set of rules and values, etc.).
3. Emotional and affective needs (the need for emotional security, protection, respect and affection: the bond of attachment; the need for a network of social relationships, etc.).
4. The need for social participation.

2. Children have certain basic needs, the satisfaction of which is guaranteed by human rights

**Social participation is a basic need during
childhood and adolescence**

(1) "Ética de la razón cordial. Educar en la ciudadanía en el siglo XXI". See Bibliography.
(2) "Necesidades en la infancia y en la adolescencia. Respuesta familiar, escolar y social". See Bibliography.

3.

Current thinking regarding children and adolescents sheds a new focus on the development of their human rights

The Convention on the Rights of the Child brings about a conceptual change, whereby consideration of the needs of children gives way to recognition of their rights.

This has resulted in a new focus on the construction of a human rights edifice for children.

This new focus reformulates the concept of children's right to protection, which exists in Spain and in most of the developed countries since the end of the twentieth century, and basically replaces it with the full recognition of children's ownership of rights as such, and of their progressive capacity to exercise those rights.

Post-constitutional development of legislation reflects this tendency, by recognising the status of minors as possessor of rights. In this way, the concept of "to be listened to if he/she has sufficient reasoning power" has gradually come to invade the whole of the legislative framework affecting children. This concept introduces the dimension of evolutive development in the direct exercise of their rights.

Current scientific knowledge allows us to conclude that there is no vast difference between the needs for protection and needs related to the child's autonomy, but that on the contrary the best way of safeguarding legally and socially the protection of children is by promoting their autonomy as persons in their own right. In this way they can progressively build up a perception of control over their personal situation and projection for the future. This is the critical point of all children's protection systems that exist at present. And consequently, the challenge that faces all legislators and legislative frameworks for the promotion and protection of children and young people.

The legislative framework increasingly reflects the concept of children as persons in their own right, creative and participative, capable of modifying their own personal and social environment; of participating in seeking and satisfying their own needs as well as those of others

Even though the United Nations has proclaimed and agreed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth therein and that, in consequence, all children equally enjoy these same rights, it has been considered necessary to draw up and approve a Convention on Rights specially adapted to the particular circumstances of children.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 20 November 1989, ratified by Spain on 6 December 1990, published in the Spanish Official State Bulletin on 31 December 1990 and came into force in Spain on 5 January 1991.

A few of the Articles of the Convention:

Article 1

For the purposes of the present Convention, a child means every human being below the age of eighteen years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier.

Article 3

In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration.

Article 12

1. States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.
2. For this purpose, the child shall in particular be provided the opportunity to be heard in any judicial and administrative proceedings affecting the child, either directly, or through a representative or an appropriate body, in a manner consistent with the procedural rules of national law.

Article 13

The child shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of the child's choice.

Article 16

No child shall be subjected to arbitrary or unlawful interference with his or her privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to unlawful attacks on his or her honour and reputation.

Article 17

States Parties recognize the important function performed by the mass media and shall ensure that the child has access to information and material from a diversity of national and international sources, especially those aimed at the promotion of his or her social, spiritual and moral well-being and physical and mental health.

4. The Convention on the Rights of the Child

A child
means every
human
being below
the age of
eighteen
years

A Convention on Rights specially adapted to the particular circumstances of children

Article 28

States Parties recognize the right of the child to education.

Article 29

1. States Parties agree that the education of the child shall be directed to:

- (a) The development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential;
- (b) The development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and for the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations;
- (c) The development of respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values, for the national values of the country in which the child is living, the country from which he or she may originate, and for civilizations different from his or her own;
- (d) The preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin;
- (e) The development of respect for the natural environment.

The right of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life, in recreation and leisure activities

Article 18

States Parties shall use their best efforts to ensure recognition of the principle that both parents have common responsibilities for the upbringing and development of the child. Parents or, as the case may be, legal guardians, have the primary responsibility for the upbringing and development of the child. The best interests of the child will be their basic concern.

Article 24

States Parties recognize the right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health and to facilities for the treatment of illness and rehabilitation of health.

Article 27

States Parties recognize the right of every child to a standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development.

Article 30

In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities or persons of indigenous origin exist, a child belonging to such a minority or who is indigenous shall not be denied the right, in community with other members of his or her group, to enjoy his or her own culture, to profess and practise his or her own religion, or to use his or her own language.

Article 31

1. States Parties recognize the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.

2. States Parties shall respect and promote the right of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and shall encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activity.

In 2002, the United Nations General Assembly approved an action plan entitled “A World Fit for Children”, in which it urged all members of society to join the United Nations in a global movement to help create a world fit for children, through the adoption of the following principles and objectives:

1.Put children first. In all actions relating to children, the best interest of the child shall be a primary consideration.

2.Eradicate poverty: invest in children. We reaffirm our vow to break the cycle of poverty within a single generation, united in the conviction that investments in children and the realisation of their rights are among the most effective ways to eradicate poverty. Immediate action must be taken to eliminate the worst forms of child labour.

3. Leave no child behind. Each girl and boy is born free and equal in dignity and rights; therefore, all forms of discrimination affecting children must end.

4. Care for every child. Children must get the best possible start in life. Their survival, protection, growth and development in good health and with proper nutrition is the essential foundation of human development. We will make concerted efforts to fight infectious diseases, tackle major causes of malnutrition and nurture children in a safe environment that enables them to be physically healthy, mentally alert, emotionally secure, socially competent and able to learn.

5. Educate every child. All girls and boys must have access to and complete primary education that is free, compulsory and of good quality as a cornerstone of an inclusive basic education. Gender disparities in primary and secondary education must be eliminated.

6. Protect children from harm and exploitation. Children must be protected against all acts of violence, abuse, exploitation and discrimination, as well as all forms of terrorism and hostage-taking.

7. Protect children from war. Children must be protected from the horrors of armed conflict. Children under foreign occupation must also be protected, in accordance with the provisions of international humanitarian law.

8. Combat HIV/AIDS. Children and their families must be protected from the devastating impact of human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS).

9. Listen to children and ensure their participation. Children and adolescents are resourceful citizens capable of helping to build a better future for all. We must respect their right to express themselves and to participate in all matters affecting them, in accordance with their age and maturity.

10. Protect the Earth for children. We must safeguard our natural environment, with its diversity of life, its beauty and its resources, all of which enhance the quality of life for present and future generations. We will give every assistance to protect children and minimize the impact of natural disasters and environmental degradation on them.

5.

The United Nations Plan of Action : “A World Fit for Children”

1. Put children first
2. Eradicate poverty: invest in children
3. Leave no child behind
4. Care for every child
5. Educate every child
6. Protect children from harm and exploitation
7. Protect children from war
8. Combat HIV/AIDS
9. Listen to children and ensure their participation
10. Protect the Earth for children

To put this Plan into action, we shall reinforce our links and alliances with all those institutions and individuals able to make valuable contributions, and we shall promote all areas of participation and partnership to this common cause, namely the welfare of children and the promotion and safeguarding of their rights:

- Children and adolescents
- Parents and families, guardians and others charged with the care of children
- Central governments and local authorities
- Members of parliament and of central and local government assemblies
- Non-governmental organisations and community-based organisations
- The private sector and corporates
- Religious, spiritual, cultural and indigenous leaders
- The media, their networks and organisations
- Regional and international organisations, and in particular all those within the umbrella of the United Nations

What we understand by integrated and cross-sector policies for children are those which have as their objectives the promotion, deployment, management and coordination of actions which are taken in a certain territorial area by diverse public and private sector bodies emerging from different scenarios with the common object of fulfilling the needs of children.

The Convention maintains that the rights of the child set out in the document are both interdependent and indivisible and requires that each of the rights be interpreted from the perspective of the remainder. At the same time, the rights need to be interpreted in accordance with the General Principles set out in articles 2, 3, 6 and 12 of the Convention, which form the core principles of non-discrimination, the supremacy of the best interests of the child, the right to life, survival and development, and the right to participate and to be listened to in respect of all issues that concern him or her, and have his or her opinions taken into consideration in line with his or her age and maturity.

6. Integrated policies for children

Thus the Convention is based on a conception of children as a group with certain rights that are required to be recognised in order to safeguard the satisfaction of all their basic and specific needs.

From this point of view, the child stops being treated specifically as a sufferer of abuse or abandon, or as a student, sick person, immigrant or delinquent, and comes to be regarded from the perspective of a whole individual.

The process of bringing about this whole-person perspective has generated a movement designed to promote the development of cross-sector interventions, through the coordination of the activities of a range of organisations engaged in meeting the basic needs of children.

Any attempt to make a real impact on creating a greater and more effective safeguarding of children's rights, should encompass an integrated approach and a cross-sector perspective

7.

Municipal policies for children.

A little bit of history

The cross-sector perspective needed for the design of child-care policies springs from recognition that the growth and development of children take place in countless different scenarios, but which themselves share substantial areas of intersection.

Thus an integrated and cross-sector approach has to be made in order to mobilise effectively resources, opportunities and aspects of protection available in different contexts, while at the same time reducing possible shortcomings and negative and risk factors affecting the quality of the growth, development and learning ability of the children.

Local government bodies in Spain have an outstanding role in promulgating the Convention on the Rights of the Child and in the development of policies for promoting and safeguarding these rights from an integrated and cross-sector perspective.

The initiative known as **“Mayors Defenders of Children”**, which emerged from a proposal by the Executive Director of UNICEF back in 1991, brought about the first meeting of these local government leaders in Pamplona on 7 and 8 October 1993, in collaboration with UNICEF-Spain Committee.

In 1995, the Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces (FEMP) joined this initiative and undertook to disseminate its objectives and encourage the adherence of all Spanish local authorities.

In January 1996, representatives of central and local government, mayors and other public sector leaders launched the initiative of a network of municipalities as an instrument of mutual support and guidance, based on the coordination of actions and the sharing of experiences concerning preventive and integrated policies for child welfare.

Town councils and city corporations undertake to promote and defend the rights of children and adolescents

This initiative underlines the importance of the local community as the ideal environment for the design and execution of such policies.

The councils and corporations backing this initiative undertake to promote and safeguard the rights of children and young people and to draw up integrated plans to give priority to preventive actions and care of children in difficult social situations. The participation of the children in the decision-making processes is an explicit commitment.

This initiative thus gives birth to the Local Authority Network for Children’s and Young Person’s Rights.

From the turn of the century, and in line with conceptual changes in the international ambit, the commitment to the promotion of children’s rights ceases to be centred on the mayors alone and becomes an undertaking of the municipality, town council or city corporation as a whole.

At the same time, UNICEF – Spain launches the **Child Friendly Cities** programme.

On 15 March 2004, the Child Friendly City International Secretariat, part of the Innocenti-UNICEF Investigation Centre in Florence, published the document “Building Child Friendly Cities. A Framework for Action”.

This document provides in effect a framework for defining and developing a Child Friendly City. It identifies the steps to be taken to build a local system of administration committed to fulfilling children’s rights.

The concept of Child Friendly Cities is equally applicable to all communities which include children – from large cities to small towns, communities urban or rural. The framework is thus intended to provide foundations adaptable to suit any type of locality.

The Child Friendly Cities Initiative emerged in recognition of several important trends: the rapid transformation and urbanisation of global societies; the growing responsibilities of municipalities and communities for their populations in the context of decentralisation; and consequently the increasing importance of cities and towns within national political and economic systems. The Initiative promotes the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child at the level where it has the greatest direct impact on children’s lives. It is a strategy for promoting the highest quality of life for all citizens.

A Child Friendly City is one that is committed to the fullest implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

8. Building child-friendly towns and cities

So a Child Friendly City guarantees the right of every young citizen to:

1. Influence the decisions taken by the local administration
2. Express their opinion on the kind of town or city they wish to have
3. Participate in family, community and social life
4. Receive basic services such as health care, education and protection
5. Drink safe water and have access to proper sanitation
6. Be protected from exploitation, violence and abuse.
7. Walk safely on the streets where they live
8. Meet up with friends and play
9. Have green spaces for plants and animals
10. Live in a pollution-free environment
11. Participate in social and cultural events
12. Be an equal citizen of their town or city, with access to all services regardless of ethnic origin, religion, wealth, gender or disability.

The Child Friendly Cities initiative is intended to provide foundations that can be adapted to suit any type of locality

The process of creating a Child Friendly City is in fact the process of implementing the Convention on the Rights of the Child at local level, spearheaded by the local government administration. The objective is to improve the lives of children now, by recognising and fulfilling their rights and in consequence by changing communities for the better for the present and the future. The building of Child Friendly Cities is a practical process which should actively involve the children it benefits.

The creation of a Child Friendly City, however, cannot be the work of local government alone. There need to be partnerships and associations with the children themselves, with their families and with all institutions and individuals involved with children.

The concept of a Child Friendly City does not conform to a standard model nor to an ideal final set of circumstances. It is merely a framework to assist any town or city in becoming a better place for children to grow up in and develop.

This framework document is a description of what could be called the “building blocks” for creating a Child Friendly City: structures and activities necessary for the active involvement of the children, for ensuring that the perspective of children’s rights is kept to the forefront of all decision-making processes, and for ensuring equal access to all basic services. The process of creating a Child Friendly City not only requires political commitment, although this is fundamental, but also concerted actions across the whole spectrum of the local government administration.

The building of child-friendly towns and cities is a practical process which needs to count on the active involvement of the children themselves

The nine building blocks or elements of this framework, set out below, are inter-connected and inter-dependent, all focused on the common aim of improving the day-to-day lives of children. The first building block – promoting children’s active participation – is fundamental to the entire process and to every other element.

1. CHILDREN’S PARTICIPATION: promoting children’s active involvement in the issues that affect them; listening to their opinions and taking them into consideration in the decision-making processes.

2. A CHILD-FRIENDLY LEGAL FRAMEWORK: ensuring that legislation, regulatory frameworks and procedures are compatible with the promotion and safeguarding of the rights of all children.

3. A CHILDREN’S RIGHTS STRATEGY FOR THE WHOLE OF THE TOWN, CITY OR MUNICIPALITY: developing a detailed, comprehensive strategy or agenda for building a Child Friendly City, based on the Convention.

4. A CHILDREN’S RIGHTS COMMISSION OR SIMILAR COORDINATING MECHANISM: developing permanent structures in the local government administration to ensure priority consideration is given to children.

5. CHILD IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION: ensuring that there is a systematic process of assessing the impact on children of laws, policies and practices, before, during and after their implementation.

6. A CHILDREN’S BUDGET: ensuring the commitment of adequate funding and budgetary analysis for child-targeted policies and activities.

7. REGULAR REPORTING ON THE STATE OF THE CHILDREN in the town, city or municipality, ensuring adequate monitoring and data collection on the state of children and their rights.

8. MAKING CHILDREN’S RIGHTS KNOWN: ensuring awareness of children’s rights among adults and the children themselves.

9. INDEPENDENT ADVOCACY FOR CHILDREN: supporting non-governmental organisations and developing independent human rights organisations (children’s commissioners or ombudsmen) to promote the rights of children.

9.

Building blocks for creating a child-friendly town or city

10.

The foundations for building a Child Friendly City

The foundations for building a Child

Friendly City are **the four key principles of the Convention:**

Non-discrimination (article 2)

A Child Friendly City is friendly and inclusive for all children. So it needs to seek out and give special attention to any children who are suffering discrimination in access to their rights. Discrimination affects children in very many different ways – children living on the streets, disabled children, children from ethnic minority or other groups, working children.

Best interests (article 3)

A Child Friendly City ensures that the best interests of the child are a primary consideration “in all actions concerning children”. A first call for children, putting children first, is the hallmark of a Child Friendly City. Most actions of local government affect children, directly or indirectly – so all departments and levels of local government administration need to be aware of and sensitive to the impact that existing and new policies and practices have on children.

Every child’s right to life and full development (article 6)

A Child Friendly City seeks to maximise the survival and development of all its children – providing the optimal conditions for childhood, for the child’s life now. And “development” in the context of the Convention means children’s physical, mental, spiritual, moral, psychological and social development.

Listening to children and respecting their opinions (article 12)

Children are seen and heard in a Child Friendly City. Their active participation as citizens and rights-holders is promoted, ensuring them the freedom to express their views on “all matters affecting them” and making sure that their views are taken seriously – in local government, in their neighbourhoods and schools and in their families. The process of building a Child Friendly City must involve children as active, informed participants.

The Child Friendly Cities programme is designed to:

- Support the drawing up of Municipal Children's Plans.
- Promote the active involvement of all children in the public life of the municipality, particularly by means of purpose-built structures and vehicles.
- Promote intramunicipal networking with partners and institutions within the local community, as well as externally with other local and regional organisations, both public and private sector.
- Promote the design and execution of all kinds of municipal policies favouring the integrated promotion and development of children's rights.

11.

Objectives of the Child Friendly Cities programme

12.

Core principles of effective children's plans. The UNICEF-Spain proposal

1. Plans should be based on the **Convention on the Rights of the Child**, in its entirety.
2. Plans should promote **non-discrimination** and encompass **all** children.
3. Plans should establish priorities and **targets** and contain a **timescale** for action and implementation.
4. Wide-ranging **consultations** should take place in drawing up the plan.
5. The municipal authority should give **priority** to implementation of the plan.
6. The children's plan should be **part and parcel of the municipal planning process as a whole**.
7. The plan should guarantee the **effective implementation** of all actions and activities included therein.
8. The plan should be widely **disseminated** and made known particularly to all those to be involved in its implementation.
9. The plan should be **periodically reviewed and revised**.

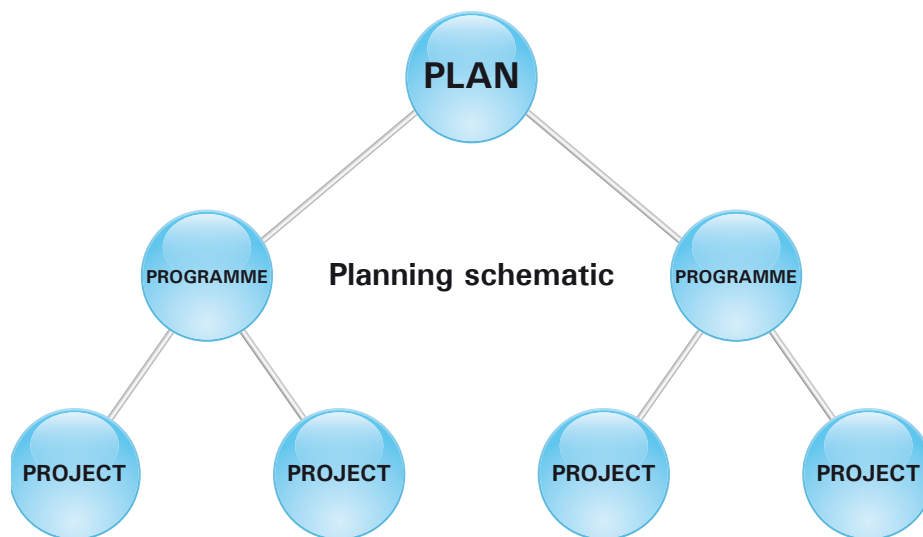
The definition of planning

A rational decision-making and management system the finality of which is the determination of the allocation of resources in order to achieve multiple objectives through the deployment of the means adequate to their achievement.

Implicit in the planning process is the definition of instruments or elements at the initial stage (plans), intermediate (programmes) and final stages (projects) which contribute to the final planning product.

13.

Definition and key elements of the planning process



PLAN	PROGRAMME	PROJECT
Global / comprehensive	More specific than the plan	The most specific planning vehicle
Sets general objectives and targets	Sets specific objectives and targets	Sets specific objectives and targets
Identifies the means to be used to reach these objectives	Identifies specific projects	Details the means to achieve objectives and targets
Generally long-term (3-year, 5-year plans)	Generally medium-term	Generally short-term
Strategic	Tactical	Operational

Formulation of the project

Collect and systematize all the information in order to create a product effective in its application, monitoring and evaluation.

The project should serve as a guide for actions to be taken, a means of communication and a tool for decision-making

IT SHOULD COMPRISE	WE MUST KNOW
Objectives	Context of the project
Results expected	Beneficiaries of the intervention
Resources / means	Principal effects
Budget	Justification for the project
Timescales	Resources available and obtainable
Activities	Capacity to organise and mobilise support
Schedule	Possible obstacles
Indicators	
Means of verification	

Children's plans should establish specific objectives and actions, generally around four axes considered fundamental to children's growth and development:

- 1) The promotion of their rights
- 2) The prevention of situations of risk
- 3) Protection
- 4) Their participation in all matters that affect them

The base line for drawing up children's plans must of necessity be the existing situation of children in the municipality, as detailed in studies and reports either pre-existing or commissioned for the purpose. These include:

(a) **Sociodemographic data on children and young persons in the municipality:** this is basically a statistical collection of population data, schooling, care services... etc.

Sources for this information include: the municipal records of residents and general archives, schools and colleges, courts of justice, child-care and reception centres, etc.

Collation and analysis of this information may lead to the detection of areas in need of attention or intervention by the local government administration or community representatives. The information may, in fact, serve as an introduction or stepping stone to the next section:

(b) **Starting point:** this is a section where the actual present-day situation of the municipality is analysed. This answers the questions: "What do we have?" or "What are we doing for children or with children?": parks, play zones, leisure and recreation areas, health centres, schools and colleges, specific programmes, care services, grants and subsidies, parkland and other green spaces, level of children's participation, needs and requirements...

Compilers of this section may find particularly useful the document entitled "Indicadores Municipales de Aplicación de la Convención sobre los Derechos de la Infancia" (Municipal Data on the Degree of Implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child), which provides a methodical and rational collation of information preparatory to a full diagnosis.

Time and effort dedicated to this section of the study will be invaluable in identifying the community's more important opportunities, strong points and deficiencies, problems and needs (truancy, school dropouts and under-achievers, maltreatment, poverty or poor living conditions, the existence or lack of adequate infrastructures, health care . . .). Once these are uncovered, they can then be tackled through specific measures which will be detailed in the plan. The work done at this starting point is thus crucial when it comes to defining why the plan is being drawn up and for whom, and what are to be its specific objectives.

Having identified the opportunities, strong points and problems and, in consequence, the objectives of the plan, specific measures can be defined to promote children's rights, to prevent the occurrence of situations of risk or to protect children from the same, and to encourage their participation in all matters in the municipality that concern them. It is a process of proposing actions ("what we are going to do") to fulfil the objectives set, which then requires a methodology, on the lines of "how to do it".

(c) **Methodology or strategies:** In general, several municipal areas, departments or services will be involved in this section: such as family and protection, education, health and consumer affairs, leisure, culture and sports, urban planning and environment, citizen's participation...

This section will identify all those individuals (children, adolescents and adults) and private and public sector institutions which are collaborating in drawing up the plan and assisting in its implementation and evaluation.

14.

Aspects to bear in mind in developing a municipal children's plan

The process of municipal planning for children can be seen as the commitment the town council or city corporation assumes in relation to the children of its locality.

Leadership

The responsibility for compiling and developing a Plan lies with the body that has to approve it.

The participation or collaboration in the planning process of non-municipal organisations and institutions should not confuse the issue of whose responsibility it is to exercise the rights and assume the commitments for municipal planning. We are not all at the same level. So it is the town council or city corporation, through the persons to whom it delegates at political or administrative levels, that takes on the orientation and leadership of the planning process.

Community participation

In drawing up the Plan, the collaboration has to be sought and secured of society in general and of persons and institutions that work with children, in particular.

Children's participation

In the same way, it is considered fundamental to count on the active collaboration of children and young people in the planning process.

Route-mastering

The town council or city corporation will need to re-route or give guidance to external organisations that appear to have only a partial vision or perspective of the situation of children in the municipality. This guidance or direction is legitimate and compatible with the collaboration the local government administration seeks from public institutions and the community in order to maintain the minimum targets it has set, and will avoid later on falling into the trap of discussions and time-wasting which point everywhere and lead nowhere. The principle of route-mastering requires that the team spearheading the planning process starts out with a scheme or idea of what it wants the Plan to be and to achieve in terms of actions, objectives, spheres of operation and activities, priority-attention groups, coverage, etc. And also, importantly, recognition of what the team is able to do, what is within its grasp to do, and what are the limits of its reach.

Take nothing for granted

We have to define clearly who we refer to when we speak of childhood. As regards central, regional and local government planning, a child is a minor, under the age of adulthood. In accordance with article 1 of the Convention, a child is a person under 18 years of age. The collaboration in drawing up the Plan of persons and institutions of different origins and backgrounds means that the terms and concepts more frequently used may have to be defined and made clear to them.

It is important to define exactly what we are going to plan, what type of actions we are going to include in the Plan. In practice, there are several ways of drawing up a Plan:

- Include the actions and activities of each of the local government areas and departments targeted at children or which have children as beneficiaries.
- Those being undertaken by public sector institutions, including the local government administration, and by private sector organisations operating in the municipal area.
- Include only new actions, new commitments concerning children to be undertaken by the local government during the time-scale of the Plan.
- Emphasise cross-sector actions. Rather than aggregate isolated actions, it is a question of uniting efforts to a common end. The intention is to involve diverse institutions and organisations in order to work together in the elaboration and development of common projects.
- It is important to know that if the Plan is being drawn up by the local government body, the latter can in fact take on the commitments on matters within its competence. It is also possible and in fact necessary to include actions to be carried out jointly in agreement with different administrations or organisations operating in the municipality, either comprehensively or for specific activities only.
- It is advisable also to include actions and activities which introduce into the life of the municipality a culture of collaboration and cooperation between institutions.
- If the Plan includes actions and activities in which non-municipal organisations take part, these should have given their prior consent.
- In the same way, the planners will need to inform and seek the consent of the various municipal departments and areas which are to be involved in the implementation of actions within the scope of the Plan.

The Municipal Children's Plan can be seen as the town council's or city corporation's commitment to its children and young people.

- Leadership
- Community participation
- Children's participation
- Route-mastering
- Take nothing for granted
- Important to define what we are going to plan, what kind of actions and activities to include in the Plan
- Resources available for implementing the Plan
- Timescale
- Resources, duration of the Plan, programming of actions
- Implementation of the Plan

Resources available for implementing the Plan

It is important to take into account the resources and funding available for carrying out the Plan, and consequently to set limits to the municipal commitment. Naturally, the Plan can only include what can be achieved. Each municipality will need to prioritise the actions and activities to be included in its Plan. It is natural also that not everything proposed can be in fact achieved. There will be time enough to include in future plans what has to be omitted for the present.

It is also imperative that a financial memorandum accompanies the Plan. This memorandum is a forecast of the cost of putting the Plan into action. Approval of the Plan implies an undertaking to assume this future expenditure.

Timescale

We must bear in mind the time available for implementing the Plan, and calculate our commitment accordingly.

Although it does not always happen, in principle it seems necessary for the timescale of the Plan to coincide with the period of government of the council or corporation that approves it. That is, up until the next municipal elections. That is the logic of a Plan which bears the commitment of local government politicians.

If, on the other hand, the Plan achieves the approval of all political groups represented in the municipality, then the Plan's timescale can be very different.

Resources, duration of the Plan and programming of actions and activities

Considerations of time and resources are responsible for the temporal programming of actions included in the Plan. Not all the actions planned can commence at the same time. Some of them may in fact commence in the final year of the Plan.

Consequently, for some actions we may have to admit just how far our commitment can reach, since for some of them we may only be able to get as far as the planning, programming or design stages, and leave their implementation to the next Plan. For example: the design of a children's park.

Implementation of the Plan

The Plan itself should create a structure which

- Guarantees its implementation,
- Facilitates coordination at both political and administrative levels of all municipal departments which carry out some kind of activity targeted at or for the benefit of children and young people,
- Promotes the collaboration and communication of the departments and areas with community bodies and institutions and
- Makes children's participation possible.

The town council or city corporation should maintain its leadership and route-mastering of the Children's Plan both at its design stage and in its implementation.

15.

Actions to be included in a municipality's first Children's Plan

Actions in respect of the management and coordination of children's policies

- Create a municipal body, essentially political in essence, to coordinate policies for children.
- Create a municipal structure, essentially managerial/administrative in nature, to manage implementation of the Plan.
- Create a municipal committee to comprise both public sector entities (national, regional and municipal) and private institutions and organisations that undertake activities related to children's rights, with the aim of monitoring the situation of children in the locality and the progress and form of implementation of the Plan.
- Have the council/corporation subscribe to and participate in the various initiatives and networks composed of regional, national and overseas municipalities committed to the rights of children.

- Promote the organisation of seminars and meetings of local authority politicians, managers and administrators charged with the planning and development of children's policies, with the object of exchanging news, views and experiences.

Actions designed to increase public awareness

- Celebrate each year an official International Children's Day.
- Compile a Guide to resources, benefits and social services for children and young people.
- Celebrate each year some form of activity which promotes awareness of and respect for children's rights.
- Create a bulletin or web page to publish information on the needs and rights of children, on municipal resolutions and legislation impacting on children and on municipal services targeted at children and adolescents.
- Seek out the collaboration of the media in disseminating a positive image of children and young people.

Actions designed to set in motion and maintain the impetus of children's participation

- Create some form of permanent structure for children's participation which facilitates consultation by municipal leaders of the views of children and young people with regard to the matters that concern them.
- Install suggestion boxes in the various municipal areas and departments in order to collect children's views on the services provided.
- Set up an e-mail address or website to gather the views and demands of children on any municipal matters that concern them.
- Promote the celebration of an annual event in which children and young people involved in the participation process meet up with their counterparts from other municipalities.

Municipal leaders and others in positions of authority in the town council or city corporation have the right and the responsibility to take the decisions they see fit in all matters within the competence of the local government administration.

The rights of municipal leaders on the one hand and of the children and young people on the other, converge at the point of exercise of children's participation.

Children's participation is thus introduced as just another ingredient in the processes of assessment and decision-taking by the municipal authorities in the exercise of their functions.

Municipal leaders see children's participation as a positive factor.

Through participation, children and young people have the opportunity to acquire a real and worthwhile experience. At the same time, children's participation in family life, in their schools, etc., should be exercised in respect of matters that these institutions are capable of planning, developing and implementing, so that the participation of the children can give rise to practical results.

The type of children's participation we advocate here stems from the initiative of the municipal authorities, with the aim of learning the views of their young citizens and of taking them into account in all municipal affairs that affect them. In this way the participation of the children becomes not just possible but specific and practical as well.

Children's forms of expression should be respected.

Their participation should be well-informed.

The opinions of the children, though not binding, should be taken into account.

The participation should be centred on and adapted to the realities of the municipality, and on proposals within the realms of possibilities and practicalities.

Ways should be sought to make the participation process a permanent feature of municipal life, not just a one-off, isolated exercise. At the same time, it should be made possible for children to be entitled to take part as and when, outside the confines of any formal participatory protocols.

The participation process should be open to all children and young people, and voluntary.

Having reached this stage, various forms of children's participation are possible.

16.

Participation of children and adolescents

Children's participation should never be manipulated

By means of their participation, children contribute to moulding the political commitment of local government leaders.

From this perspective, the participation that the local government administration needs and requires from the children should bear relation to matters within the competence of the administration and thus subject to debate and proposal.

The form of participation should be adapted to the age and maturity of the children taking part.

In every case, the children taking part in the process should be subsequently kept informed of any decisions taken, and why their views and proposals have or have not been taken into account.

The participation must be inclusive, all-embracing. We must avoid giving the impression that the children speak with one voice, one single view of the world. Therefore it is necessary when gathering the opinions of the children to include each and every one, so that no one opinion, even if majority held, excludes any other. The Mayor should receive each and every opinion of the children on the matter subject of consultation. And the children and young people should be made aware of the fact that all their ideas are welcome, irrespective of whether they represent majority or minority views, the opinions of many or of one single person.

A broad-based children's participation scheme should be capable of providing in respect of each subject matter consulted a response reflecting the plurality of views of children and their diverse forms of feeling and understanding the reality of their environment.

Direct, live participation by the children is preferable to their reliance on representatives or spokespersons. The experience of participating is something personal and inalienable.

It is important to bear in mind that, apart from the children's right to participation as such, it is an indispensable constituent of their development, since it facilitates the obtainment of competencies and the acquisition of skills essential to cognitive, emotional, social and cultural development.

Participation is an intrinsic part of human life, since it is related to the capacity to act in a certain environment or set of circumstances and to bring about change to them, thus forming part of an individual's adaptive capability.

Participation implies the development of initiative, creativity, responsibility, compromise, communication, self-confidence... It is the essence of development, since individuals learn by it to take charge of their lives and solve their own problems in cooperation with others.

In short, children's participation is an essential instrument for learning and development which, competently used and managed in respect of matters that concern them, favours their emergence as full citizens and rights-holders. It can thus be defined as an essential tool in the formative processes of children and young people.

Article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, based on acknowledging that all children throughout the world are entitled to full legal rights, urges the signatory nations:

- 1) to guarantee to a child with sufficient capacity to form his/her own judgement the right to freely express his/her opinions on matters that affect him/her, and
- 2) that his/her opinions will be duly taken into account in accordance with the age and maturity of the child expressing them.

With this aim in mind, Article 12 calls for the need to give the child the opportunity of being heard, either directly or through an appropriate intermediary, in the course of any procedures affecting him/her.

17.

Basis for a debate on children's participation in a local context

Child Friendly Cities

The UNICEF-Spain programme entitled "Child Friendly Cities" proposes that all children should have a public voice in the 8,164 municipalities in Spain so that they can contribute to making their town or city a better place to live and grow up in. The benefits of children's participation are numerous:

- It contributes to the appropriate personal development of the children since it highlights their abilities and engenders self-confidence;
- It improves the decision-making process because it involves a wider social collective and a sector often overlooked during such processes – i.e. Children – whose contributions may enhance the final outcome;
- It helps to protect children against abuse and, more generally, against any action that violates their rights, because it offers them the opportunity to denounce the perpetrator;
- It facilitates the acquisition of democratic values and allows these values to be put into practice, thereby forming better citizens.

What do we understand by "children's participation"?

A process by which children and young people, together with other people within their social environment, tackle issues that affect the way they live, both individually and collectively. The participants interact, respecting the dignity of others, with the intention of achieving shared objectives. Throughout the process, the children feel that they are developing a useful role at the heart of the community.

How to promote children's participation

The first step should involve making both adults and children aware that participation should take place naturally and frequently in all areas of activity.

Points to bear in mind:

1) Speak and listen

The first and most important step is to let the children themselves take the floor, letting them express their views and opinions while the adults listen and try to understand them, with a firm commitment to take into account all their comments.

2) Encourage dialogue

Encourage dialogue, the projection of their own projects and proposals, promoting their own commitment to matters that affect them and thus society as a whole.

3) Guarantee the permanence of the children's participation process

The actions and activities involved should not be one-off, isolated events, but must be integrated and coordinated to achieve a comprehensive, permanent learning process.

4) Formulate specific proposals for projects and keep within horizons and timescales compatible with the children's perception of their capabilities

It is counter-productive to begin a session with a group of children by asking such generalised questions as "How would you like your town or city to be?". According to the experts, this is NOT the way to start off, because it overwhelms the immediate capacity of children to respond.

Practical criteria for children's participation schemes

- Plan and evaluate all the proposals carefully and rigorously, incorporating any analysis made beforehand, plus the results expected from the actions proposed, and indicators to be able to assess the degree of completion achieved, etc.
- Plan the carrying out of any proposal with a logic that children can comprehend
- Do not try to be too ambitious: construct the children's participation process consolidating each step along the way. Bear in mind that small achievements will motivate children to reach for new objectives, but unobtainable targets merely create disillusionment.
- Study and take advantage of the experiences of earlier projects and initiatives, or of those currently underway with similar parameters and objectives, in other words : learn from our own past experiences and from those of others
- Try to involve the families (where possible, in suitable venues) and the rest of the community
- Use appropriate techniques and methods that children will understand and are used to. Make use of the potential offered by play and the children's own games. And try to draw on the knowledge and experiences of those who work with children either at school or in extracurricular activities, sport, leisure time, etc.
- Ensure that information given out to children is clear and honest. This principle should be borne in mind always, not just when dealing with the youngest age groups. Any information aimed at the whole community should be drafted in such a way as to be understood by children as well. In this task, the youngest children will also be able to help
- Make the whole community aware of the project – its objectives, contents, methodology, achievements...- making use of the available media or the municipal press office and the internet. The information given out should be clear and honest, stressing the children's participation aspect but avoiding protagonisms and specific cases. This publicity effort should start at the very outset of the project, so that the public are made aware of the importance given to it by the municipality. And this importance should find reflection also in the availability and willingness of councillors and the mayor to meet up with the children and discuss their proposals.
- In making the whole community aware of the project, keep in mind that both the channels of communication and the content need to be adapted to suit the youngest audience
- Meet the commitments undertaken, fulfil the promises made. This does not mean doing everything the children want, but it does mean keeping the children informed, giving feedback and responding to the proposals and requests. And within a reasonable timeframe, even if it means explaining that (and why) a certain proposal or request cannot be granted.
- Share the learning process with other projects. Share with both children and adults, both within the local government administration and with other independent institutions. At times there may be environmental or school projects which share similar objectives, but whose project leaders are scarcely aware of others working in similar fields let alone share information and experiences.
- Learning is an ongoing process. There are projects and initiatives that have been going on for some years and appear to have reached a stage of perfection. There are others which every four years appear to come up with a new formula for participation which nobody had until that moment dreamed of. In both cases it is worth remembering that one can never stop learning, even from newcomers to the field.

Clearly, this list of practical criteria could be expanded even further. Each situation calls for its own particular criteria. Our aim here has been to provide guidelines to help both the beginners, those who are on the first step of the ladder, and those, more expert, who wish to widen their experience.

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<http://www.ciudadesamigas.org./documentacion.html>

19. On-line sources for children's rights in a local context

UNICEF Spain Programme "Child Friendly Cities"

<http://www.ciudadesamigasdelainfancia.org/>

International Secretariat for the "Child Friendly Cities" programme

<http://www.childfriendlycities.org>

Observatory for Children and Adolescents, of the Ministry of Education, Social Policies and Sport.

<http://www.mepsyd.es/observatoriodeinfancia/>

Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces (FEMP)

<http://www.femp.es/>

FEMP Guide to documentary sources on families and children

<http://www.ciudadesamigasdelainfancia.org/etc/Familiainfancia.pdf>

Local Authority Network for Children's and Young Person's Rights

<http://www.redinfancia.org/>

University Institute UAM-UNICEF for the Needs and Rights of Children and Young Persons

<http://www.uam.es/otroscentros/iundia/>

Principality of Asturias Observatory for Children and Adolescents

<http://www.princast.es/observainfancia>

Educational Action

<http://www.accioneducativa-mrp.org/ninos/nuevo/publicaciones.htm>

Andalucia Observatory for Children

<http://www.juntadeandalucia.es/observatoriodelainfancia/oia/esp/index.aspx>

Cities for a more sustainable future

<http://habitat.aq.upm.es/>

Cities for Children

<http://www.citiesforchildren.eu/>

Council of Europe. Building a Europe for and with children

http://www.coe.int/t/transversalprojects/children/default_en.asp

Child in the City

<http://www.europoint-bv.com/events/?childinthecity/659>



www.ciudadesamigasdelainfancia.org

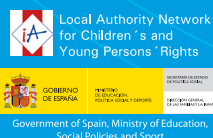
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