



Save the Children



**The Open
University**

**Monitoring, Evaluation,
Accountability and Learning (MEAL)**

8 Children's participation in MEAL

Keywords: Participation, Accountability, Quality, Ethics, Practical Tools



Introduction

Save the Children has a strong reputation for its pioneering work on children's participation. We believe that children have the right to be involved in the decisions that affect their lives, in accordance with their age and evolving capacities. We seek to involve children in analysing their life situation, considering solutions, influencing duty bearers and assessing the impact of our activities. Children are the real experts on their own lives but have traditionally been excluded from decision-making and MEAL processes. Their capacity and contributions are often underestimated by adults.

In this session, we will look at why it's so important to involve children in MEAL work, and show how this can be done in an ethical and meaningful way. You will be equipped with an introduction to the knowledge and practical skills necessary for the effective facilitation of children's involvement at all stages of the evaluation process. Honing these skills takes time and practice and cannot be perfected in 1.5 hours, so I hope you will find this a useful introduction.

Learning Outcomes for this Session

Knowledge and Understanding

When you have studied this session, you should be able to:

1. Describe the meaning and importance of children's participation in MEAL
2. Summarise the steps needed to ensure minimum quality standards are met when involving children in MEAL
3. Recognise the considerations needed to facilitate an enabling and empowering environment for children's participation in MEAL

Practical and Professional Skills

When you have studied this session, you should be able to:

1. Recognise the practical steps needed to prepare and support children during their involvement in MEAL
2. Summarise a variety of participatory data collection methods that can be used with and by children in differing contexts

I Describe the meaning and importance of children's participation in MEAL

I.1 What do we mean by children's participation and why is it important?

Participation is:

- about having the opportunity to express a view, influence decision-making and achieve change
- the informed and willing involvement of all children, including the most marginalised and those of different ages and abilities, in any matter concerning them
- a way of working and an essential principle that cuts across all arenas – from homes to government, from local to international levels.

Child Participation is a Right

A child's right to participate is enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. It acknowledges that children are social actors in their own right, and are entitled to be involved in all matters that affect their lives.

In Box 1 I have suggested some of the benefits of involving children in MEAL:

Benefits to Children	Benefits to Save the Children
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributes to personal development • Offers children the opportunity to contribute to positive changes in their communities • It can lead to increased empowerment and motivation • Serves to protect children – they have greater awareness of rights, more likely to voice concerns • Promotes children's capacities for civic engagement, tolerance, respect and inclusion • It can enable access to training and development • Children will receive better targeted and more relevant services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It leads to improved decision-making and better informed responses and outcomes • Demonstrates embodiment of our values • A real insight into children's lives leads to organisational learning • Increased credibility and accountability • Informed advocacy with key stakeholders • A body of evidence from children creates robust policy asks • Participation makes projects more cost effective.

1.2 How can children participate in MEAL?

What stages can children be involved?

Children can be involved at different stages in the process of developing a programme – from the initial concept through to implementation and monitoring and evaluation. The earlier they are involved, the greater their degree of influence.



The main ways in which children could participate in MEAL are:

1. As respondents – being asked questions as part of monitoring and evaluation activities
2. As active participants at one or more stages of the evaluation process (See Figure 1)
3. Both as respondents and active participants

Throughout the programme cycle, the process of monitoring and evaluation needs to take place along the following lines. The programme should result in outcomes linked to the original objectives established by the project. It is possible to measure whether those outcomes have been achieved by reference to the indicators which were agreed at the outset. At all these stages it is important to involve children themselves.



Figure 1 - Monitoring and Evaluation throughout the Programme Cycle

Please note: the extent to which children participate needs to be negotiated and planned and is dependent upon a variety of factors such as capacity and funding constraints. You need to think through the extent to which it's feasible to involve children, and still ensure a quality approach. It may not be possible for children to be involved at all stages. I've discussed some ideas later on that will enable you to determine the extent to which children will be able to participate in any MEAL activities you work on.

1.3. Ways children can participate

There are various ways that children and young people can be involved in monitoring throughout the programme cycle and at key points in the evaluation process, including setting up a monitoring committee, keeping learning diaries, developing evaluation questions, conducting data collection, triangulation/ analysis and communicating the findings:

- As **part of a monitoring committee** taking part in key monitoring activities throughout the programme cycle e.g. monitoring progress and impact as part of a Mid-Term Review or collecting information relating to indicators
- Giving **feedback** to the project team either individually or as part of a group about the progress they think the project is making and giving any suggestions for changes needed in order to achieve the intended outcomes
- As **advisers** to the evaluation team, commenting on the relevance of the evaluation, its scope and content. They can help to draw up research questions and give input to the evaluation design. They could also be members of an advisory or reference group
- As **peer researchers**, helping to collect and analyse data
- As **documenters**, noting their own and other children's views on the project activities and giving their reflections, analysis and suggestions on what can be done better. They could use creative and audio-visual methods of documentation. They could also develop a child-friendly version of the final evaluation report
- As **respondents**, through use of participatory methods and tools
- As **reviewers** of the draft evaluation report
- As **active change agents**, disseminating learning and following up on conclusions and recommendations, contributing their ideas and proposals about how to put recommendations into practice
- As **writers**, children could help with the design of research materials such as an invitation to participate, to make them attractive to other boys and girls. Information sheets and verbal explanations of the research can usefully be tested on more than one group of children before they go into use. Children could help in piloting research techniques and materials.

Which children are involved?

It is also necessary to document which children are participating in a programme. Too often, initiatives involve those children who are the easiest to reach – those in school (more able, better educated children). However, the UNCRC demands that every child has equal rights. Efforts therefore need to be made to reach out to those girls and boys who might find it harder to get involved. By including information in your monitoring about which children participate in a programme, it is then possible to begin to analyse who is getting excluded and this will help you begin to address what action is needed to involve more marginalised children.



Many different groups of children may be at risk of exclusion:

- **Girls** – in many societies, the pressures on girls' time is very demanding. They are expected to contribute significantly to household chores and child care. Parents may also fear that they will be exposed to risk if they are involved in NGO or other activities. They are also less likely than boys to be in school, particularly at secondary level. However, some countries studies are now revealing that more girls than boys are actively involved in Child Clubs or groups. Thus, it is important to monitor and encourage the participation of both girls and boys.
- **Children with disabilities** – huge numbers of children with disabilities are out of school and hidden away at home. They experience profound and multiple discrimination and are often bullied and excluded from school, community activities and play and recreation with their peers.
- **Out of school children** – many participatory initiatives take place within or by the school, and exclude those children who are not registered
- **Poor/low caste/minority children** – children who are socially and economically marginalised often fail to access initiatives within their local communities
- **Out of school children** – some programmes support children's participation through school based projects. However, this means that out of school children, including out of school working children may be excluded from participation opportunities.
- **Younger children** – projects tend to focus on older children or adolescents. However, even very young children are capable of participating in matters that affect them and will have views and perspectives that are important to listen to.

1.4 Different levels of engagement and power-sharing



The balance of power between children and adults is a little like being on a seesaw. Sometimes the children have more power and are higher on the seesaw than adults, at other times adults have more power and they are higher up. Sometimes, where there is true collaboration the see-saw will be equally balanced.

The level at which children are able to engage in any programme can be categorised at three potential levels of engagement for children – consultative, collaborative and child-led. Of course, these levels are not always completely clear cut and children may engage in different parts of a programme at different levels. However, the extent to which children are empowered to exercise agency within an initiative will be influenced by the level at which they are participating.

- **Consultative** participation involves adults **seeking the views of children** to increase their knowledge and understanding of children's lives and the issues affecting them. It recognises children's beliefs as well as their expertise but is **adult-led and managed**. Consultations may be used in **project design and in monitoring and evaluation**.
- **Collaborative** participation involves children partnering with adults in some capacity, through which adults and children work in **partnership** to make decisions and implement projects. Children and adults may collaborate in the **research phase of a project or during project implementation** in initiatives such as school-based clubs.
- **Child-led** participation is when children are **empowered to lead their own projects** or initiatives either individually or as part of their own organisations, clubs or parliaments. Adults may act as facilitators or offer advice and support to children.

All three are valid approaches and can be appropriate, depending on the goals of the programme or initiative, and the context in which it takes place. Programmes will not necessarily remain at one level. There is a dynamic, and often over-lapping relationship between them. A programme can start as consultative process, move on to becoming collaborative and then create space for children to initiate their own agenda as they acquire confidence and skills. For example, a local municipality may decide to consult children on aspects of policy and planning. As the children become more familiar with the governmental processes, they may seek to establish their own council or local parliament through which to take a more proactive and representative approach to bringing issues of concern to the notice of politicians. It is also important to recognise that not all children want to be involved in a child-led initiative. They may prefer to participate on a collaborative basis with adults.

Activity 1 (exploratory)

Think of a time when children have participated in MEAL work that you have been associated with? Reflect upon the way the children were involved. Was their participation a) Negative, b) Consultative, c) Collaborative or d) Child-led? Did their degree of involvement vary at different points, if so how and why?

2 Summarise the steps needed to ensure minimum quality standards are met when involving children in MEAL

2.1 The UN Basic Requirements for Effective and Ethical Children's Participation

In 2005 Save the Children developed 7 Practice Standards for our child participation activities. However, in 2011 we were part of a broad consensus that child participation should in fact meet 9 basic requirements. These were adopted into a General Comment on Article 12 of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child.

The requirements are essential in ensuring effective, ethical, systematic and sustainable children's participation across our programmes. These basic requirements can be used to plan, monitor and/or evaluate the quality of children's participation processes.

Activity 2 (SAQ)

List the Basic Requirements

If you had to come up with a list of 9 basic requirements to ensure effective and ethical practice in children's participation, what would they be? Make a list of 9 requirements starting with the phrase 'Child participation is...'. You should try to guess what the UN 9 Basic Requirements are. Don't cheat by looking at the next page!

2.2 Are you meeting the 'basic requirements'?

You can use the 'basic requirements checklist' shown in Box 2 below to:

- A. Check if current work involving children in MEAL adheres to the basic requirements
- B. Plan future child participation in MEAL work

Requirement	Questions on key indicators
1. Participation is transparent and informative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do children have enough information about the programme to make an informed decision about whether and how they may participate? Is information shared with children in child friendly formats and languages that they understand? Are the roles and responsibilities of everyone involved clearly explained and understood?
2. Participation is voluntary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is children's participation voluntary? Have children been given enough information and time to make a decision about whether they want to participate or not? Provide consent sheets for children and for caregivers Can children withdraw (stop participating) at any time they wish? How will children be selected or elected? Is this a fair process?
3. Participation is respectful	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are children's own time commitments (to study, work, play) respected and taken into consideration? Has support from key adults in children's lives (e.g. parents, carers, teachers) been gained to ensure respect for children's participation? Consider the best way for children to communicate in a given context, e.g. would it be better for them to draw/tell stories/write/discuss? Value what children say, even if it doesn't fit within your agenda
4. Participation is relevant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are the issues being discussed and addressed of real relevance to children's own lives? Do children feel any pressure from adults to participate in activities that are not relevant to them?
5. Participation is child-friendly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are child friendly approaches and methods used? Do the ways of working build children's self confidence among girls and boys of different ages and abilities? Are child friendly meeting places used? Are such places accessible to children with disabilities? Effective planning and contextual knowledge to understand how groups of children might best interact
6. Participation is inclusive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are girls and boys of different ages and backgrounds including younger children, children with disabilities,

	<p>children from different ethnic groups etc given opportunities to participate?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Is the process inclusive and non-discriminatory? ○ Is there a good, representative sample of children? ○ Have you considered splitting groups by gender especially if discussing sensitive topics?
7. Participation is supported by training for adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Are the staff from Save the Children and the NGO partners child friendly or not? ○ Are staff able to effectively support children's participation in your community? ○ Provide a daily debrief and psychosocial support for staff, especially when dealing with difficult issues
8. Safe and sensitive to risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Do children feel safe when they participate? ○ Have risks been identified and ways to keep children safe been identified? A risk assessment has been carried out including the assessment of location safety and an assessment of ethical risks to children e.g. would there be any repercussions for them for the feedback they give? ○ Do children know where to go for help if they feel unsafe while participating in the project? ○ A disclosure and reporting plan is in place. Facilitators should be clear what they must act upon and how ○ Have you considered data management and confidentiality, coding and safety of data? ○ There is potential for children to raise sensitive issues in a group setting. Make it clear to them as part of a 'contract' or introductory session, that there is a dedicated person they can speak to separately rather than in front of the whole group if they prefer.
9. Participation is accountable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Are children supported to participate in follow up and evaluation processes? ○ Do adults take children's views and suggestions seriously and act upon their suggestions? ○ A commitment to follow-up, evaluation and feedback is essential. For example, in any research or consultative process, children must be informed as to how their views have been interpreted and used and, where necessary, provided with the opportunity to challenge and influence the analysis of the findings.

Figure 2 - Basic Requirements Checklist

Activity 3 (SAQ)

Matching missing 'questions on key indicators' to the 'Basic Requirements' checklist

Below you will see a list of 'questions on key indicators'. They have been taken from the right-hand column of the 'Basic Requirements Checklist' in Box 2. Decide which question belongs next to which basic requirement.

Q1 - Are children given feedback from Save the Children about any requested support needs and follow up?

Q2 - Do the staff have sufficient confidence to facilitate children's participation?

Q3 - Are children encouraged to address discrimination through their participation?

Q4 - Do the ways of working with children consider and build upon local cultural practices?

3 Recognise the considerations needed to facilitate an enabling and empowering environment for children's participation in MEAL

3.1 Introduction

Unfortunately, the field of child participation is fraught with challenges. The vast majority of these are associated with a perceived lack of time and lack of capacity to facilitate child participation and/ or a lack of buy-in or support for child participation from various adults in children's lives.

When we involve children in MEAL, it's important that their feedback, ideas and recommendations are respected by Save the Children staff at all levels, and that they are used to truly influence programming. We need Project Managers, Senior Managers, partners and others to be on board with incorporating children's views into future project planning. In order for this to succeed, time must be invested in creating an enabling environment so that children's views and recommendations will be taken seriously and they are able to influence and enhance the effectiveness of programming. Moreover, we can work to sensitise other adults in children's lives, such as teachers, care-givers and community leaders about how we are working with children and why children's participation is important so that their involvement in our work is fully welcomed and supported.

3.2 Anticipated challenges and ways to overcome them

Some of the potential challenges associated with children's participation in MEAL are outlined below along with some practical tips for overcoming them:

Potential Challenges:

- Lack of clarity about the definition of child participation
- Adults lack the skills, attitude and knowledge to facilitate child participation in MEAL
- There is a lack of funding available to enable child participation in MEAL
- There is a lack of buy-in and support for child participation from staff at all levels
- Adults view children as beneficiaries, not as equal stakeholders
- Children may not be interested in getting involved in MEAL or adults think they might not be
- Adults perceive they have a lack of time and capacity to facilitate child participation in MEAL – it is easier for them not to do it
- Adults don't create child-friendly working environments

Responding to challenges and ensuring meaningful and ethical participation:

Within Save the Children, work with your colleagues to:

- Raise awareness about the benefits of child participation in MEAL
- Factor in budget and capacity to support children's participation in MEAL at the beginning of any new project or programme
- Build in indicators for monitoring the effectiveness and quality of child participation into Log Frames for new projects or programmes
- Ensure work on child participation is built into work plans, so it is not considered as an after-thought
- Provide training on quality child participation
- Encourage colleagues to learn from children – they have a unique perspective
- Engage in supportive dialogue with doubting colleagues

Within the wider community:

- Identify cultural practices / values that support or promote child participation. Work with traditional leaders to engage children meaningfully, in ways that are seen as upholding local cultural beliefs
- Ensure that adults in the community are also able to participate and influence decisions which affect them – in communities where adults are marginalised it is less likely that children will be able to meaningfully participate

- Gain family support and consent
- Develop partnerships with parents, teachers, government and others
- Work with children to establish child friendly settings where children feel comfortable participating

There is also a huge amount that Save the Children is doing to work with governments in order that states commit to create an enabling environment for children's participation in wider society. You can find out more about this by visiting the Child Rights Governance section of Save the Children Sweden's Online Resource Centre – <http://resourcecentre.savethechildren.se/child-rights-governance>

3.3. Investing in children's empowerment and development

Meaningful child participation is not just about children's involvement in a one-off monitoring or evaluation activity but is part of a wider process of achievement and empowerment. When planning for children's involvement in MEAL, it is important to consider planning and budgeting for activities that can boost children's skills and confidence such as:

- Training on children's rights
- Training on specific skills such as research methods, data analysis and facilitation skills
- Opportunities to come together with other children, share their ideas and learn together

These skills enable children to continue to advocate for their rights and reach out to more children who can then become involved and lead change through their childhoods and as adults. By investing in children's personal and social development in this way, children may experience more long-term and sustained positive impact upon their lives.

4 Recognise the practical steps needed to prepare and support children during their involvement in MEAL

4.1 Preparation and training of children

Before you prepare children, it is important that an enabling environment has been created through sensitisation and the training of adults (as discussed previously).

Once you have identified opportunities for children and young people to participate in monitoring and evaluation throughout the programme cycle, it will be possible to identify what capacity building they might need. They may be a) respondents, b) active participants, such as data collectors or c) a combination of these. Children will be able to work with you to plan their involvement, and must be given child-friendly information on which to base their decision about how and if they would like to participate. All children are individuals and their learning needs will be different.

Planning an Introductory Workshop for Children

It is important to ensure that time is spent with the children and young people to adequately prepare them to be part of monitoring and evaluation at different points in the programme cycle. A good way to do this is through holding an Introductory Workshop. To plan their involvement in monitoring throughout the programme cycle, this workshop could be held at the planning stage, or for an end-of-project evaluation, it could be run in parallel with the evaluation inception workshop. The Introductory Workshop should:

- Give children and young people the opportunity to fully understand the project to be monitored and evaluated
- Give children and young people an overview of what the objectives of monitoring and evaluation are and the different areas where they can be involved
- Give children and young people an opportunity to understand the themes of the monitoring and evaluation and decide which themes they are interested in being involved in
- Enable the project team to collectively decide which aspects of the monitoring and evaluation process children and young people could be part of as well as the aspects that might be inappropriate for them to participate in, and negotiate and discuss this with children and young people
- Clarify the Child Safeguarding Mechanisms that will be in place throughout the programme cycle
- Clarify the expectations and the roles and responsibilities of the children and young people and also the rest of the project team
- Provide an opportunity for children and young people to get to know each other and the staff
- Provide a space for children and young people to raise any issues or concerns

4.2. Children's involvement in data collection

Make sure that you engage children in the pre-testing of data collection tools. Children will often have the commitment and capacities to be involved in data collection. You will need to ensure that they receive appropriate training to assist them in this role. There are many fun, participatory activities that children and young people can use to collect data for an evaluation. Children and young people can lead or co-lead these activities. These activities can also be used for adults to gather information from children and young people for an evaluation.

- Children can act as peer researchers, carrying out a whole range of fieldwork tasks. Respondents may be more comfortable confiding in others close to their own age and experience. Children can: distribute questionnaires; fill in simple questionnaires with respondents; undertake interviews; facilitate group discussions or workshops using visual methods.

- Children can promote the research and encourage others to take part in this research.
- Children can act as key informants and/or as research assistants, taking part in interviews as an advisor and helping to engage with other children in a positive way.
- Children can interview professionals and other adults, as well as other children.
- At the end of an interview, a child or group of children can be asked to check a verbal summary of what they have said in order to validate the data.

4.3. Involving children in validating and triangulating data

Either as part of monitoring activities, or an evaluation, you could convene a workshop with the children and young people who were involved in collecting data and spend some time reviewing the findings. Ask them to group different themes together and to identify, for example, the five key findings from information collected using participatory tools. Encourage them to ask questions about the findings and to see if there are any issues that are repeated, or even any unexpected findings.

Where children have carried out fieldwork, they can begin the process of analysis by reflecting together on what they feel they are learning from respondents, as they go along.

Children can work on analysing the information gathered either manually or using software tools such as Survey Monkey <https://www.surveymonkey.com> or Excel. Alternatively adult researchers can do the analysis and put the findings in an accessible form to a group of children, and ask their responses.

Children can be consulted further at the stage of developing recommendations: these do not always readily arise from the data. A further level of discussion can also be useful.

4.4. Analysing and validating data with children

Getting children's views on the data collected

You can invite children to participate in the analysis of data. Children have their own interpretations and perspectives based upon their experiences that will contribute to the quality of the data analysis. Analysing the results can be the most exciting stage, but also the most challenging. You may find that it is difficult to reach consensus about the findings, with a number of contradictory findings, as well as unexpected results. It will be important to bring all the differing and contradictory information that has been collected through the participatory activities to an analysis workshop. If there is a lot of information you may want to split the group into smaller groups to look at the different data sets.

Enabling children to come up with solutions

A next step would be to work with the children involved to identify solutions to any problems and to see if they can be active participants in making positive change in their communities – for instance, through campaigning, peer education, developing their own project. Quality and meaningful participation leads to more ideas, plans and initiatives and to positive change. Children will get more out of the experience in the long term if they can be part of that process of empowerment and action.

4.5. Presenting and disseminating the data

Sharing your findings

There are a number of ways you can share the findings, depending on the audience. Think how children can be involved to help you reach other children and young people. Remember to produce a child-friendly version of the report.

- Children can write sections of the report.
- Children can read and comment on draft reports: each member of the group could take on the responsibility of reading a short section and discussing it with others.

Involving children in disseminating the findings

You could work with children to design and produce their own version of the monitoring or evaluation report, making it child friendly. They can communicate the findings back to their peer groups and others involved in the project. A good way of doing this is to ensure that you have an event planned for children and young people – with other stakeholders as appropriate – where the children or young people most closely involved in the process can facilitate the review meeting. Children can give talks presenting part or all of the research findings. This can be very influential.

- Children can actively use the research findings to argue for change, if they are made available to them in an accessible form.
- It may be a good idea to produce materials suitable for an adult professional audience and also for children. Children can helpfully advise on, and contribute much towards, attractive ways of presenting the material to children.
- Children can assist in producing materials other than reports, for example plays, films, or posters, which dramatize the issues explored in the research and bring them to a wider audience.

Activity 4 (exploratory)***Planning an Introductory Workshop***

Spend 15 minutes planning an introductory workshop for a group of children and young people involved in MEAL work with you. You can use the following questions to guide your thinking:

- What information do they need to know?
- What skills would they need to develop?
- What kind of methods would be suitable for creating a participatory and child-friendly workshop?
- How long would different sessions last?

5 Summarise a variety of participatory monitoring and evaluation tools that can be used with and by children in differing contexts

5.1 A list of participatory monitoring and evaluation tools

The following is a list of tools that can be used with and by children within MEAL processes:

Tool	Description	Type of information produced
Before and after Body Mapping	A participatory tool which can be used to explore children and young people's views concerning different ways in which their context has affected them and their lives.	Comparison of children's feelings, emotions, perceptions of health status, living circumstances before and after the intervention, (baseline / endline).
H Assessment	A simple tool that can be used with and by children, young people or other stakeholders to explore strengths, weaknesses and suggestions to improve children's participation / tailor programming to children's needs.	For the purpose of gathering information on the strengths, successes, weaknesses and/or challenges of children's groups or initiatives at different stages in the programme cycle.
Child Satisfaction tool (H Assessment)	Same as 'H Assessment' but with scoring mechanism to measure child satisfaction	
Tableau Vivant	An instrument which enables depiction of a changed condition in a community through a drama scene of the life story of children/young people shown in 3 still frames (or tableau vivant).	1 st Frame: Identifies weaknesses of a child/children's initiative; 2 nd frame: actions under-taken to strengthen the child's capacity / children's initiative; 3 rd frame describes the changed condition.
FGDs	A research method to explore children and young people's ideas and views about how they would like to contribute to thematic evaluation and documentation process.	Children's ideas, feelings, emotions, perceptions, impressions of how an initiative has impacted on their lives.

Most Significant Change stories (can use with participatory video)	Child led documentation and dissemination of children's stories of most significant change (positive or negative) to evaluate projects	Children and young people can express, document and make use of their views about the benefits and/or disadvantages of programmes to 'change' or improve them.
Before and after risk mapping	A tool to explore risks children faced before and after the initiative in their local communities. It can also be used to identify protection factors in their local communities, while also identifying the risks they most want to change / have not yet changed.	2 maps of the community: 1 before the initiative; the other at monitoring / evaluation stage. Map 1 identifies risks that existed before the initiative; Map 2 identifies risks that have been have eradicated by the initiative / remaining risks / protection mechanisms
PhotoVoice / Video diaries	A tool in participatory action research where people can create and discuss photographs as a means of enabling personal and community change.	Children and young people can express, document and make use of their views about the benefits and/or disadvantages of programmes to 'change' or improve them through the medium of photography / video and storytelling.
Pots and Beans	Participatory tool for girls and boys (of different ages) to explore which activities undertaken through an initiative / or daily lives they most prefer and the reasons why	Children are given beans / stones to rank their preferences, perceptions and views. Children can also give reasons for those preferences.
Cobweb Matrix	The Cobweb Matrix is useful for charting people's progress after an intervention in that you can show them the Cobweb Matrix that they created a previous time and discuss if any of the factors' strengths have changed.	Enabling factors and barriers; analysis of progress to eliminate barriers; and increase enabling factors.
Preference ranking	Participatory tool for girls and boys (of different ages) to explore which activities undertaken through an initiative / or daily lives they most prefer and the reasons why	Children's opinions, preferences perceptions & views on activities they participate in and reasons for those preferences.
Child led tours	A child-led method where children identify (through village tour) personal and community change. Can be combined with 'mapping' or before and after activities to identify positive changes resulting from programmes / remaining challenges.	Children and young people can express, identify & document and their views about the benefits / impact and/or disadvantages of programmes to 'change' or improve them through the medium of a walk through their community.
Visioning Tree or 'Magic Wish' drawing adapted with mapping exercise.	Visualisation exercise used to help children, young people dream about their children's groups, their communities and their role as agents of change in the future. Vision tree: 'fruit represent their dreams; roots are collective strengths; trunk used to map recommendation for action planning); 'Magic Wish' drawing of their ideal living situation.	Children identify the situation of their community before the programme, where we they feel they are now – then through a vision tree or Magic Wish drawing, identify their hopes for the future to work towards their dreams.

Summary of this Session

I do hope you have found this a useful introduction to children's participation in MEAL. We have covered the background and rationale for this area of work, as well as some practical approaches to ensuring that children's voices are accurately represented and respected within our work.

Self-Assessment Questions (SAQ) answers

Activity 2

Child Participation must meet the Following Nine Basic Requirements:

Child Participation should be:

1. Transparent and Informative
2. Voluntary
3. Respectful
4. Relevant
5. Facilitated with Child Friendly Environments and Working Methods
6. Inclusive
7. Supported by Training for Adults
8. Safe and Sensitive to Risk
9. Accountable

Activity 3

Q1 Answer: Participation is Accountable

Q2 Answer: Participation is supported by training for adults

Q3 Answer: Participation is inclusive

Q4 Answer: Participation is Respectful

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