



- It's Time to Talk! - Children's Views on Children's Work

*Lessons learned
from a global participatory
research project*



**TIME TO
TALK!**

#talkaboutchildwork

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1 Introduction and methodology

In March 2016, 'It's Time to Talk! – Children's Views on Children's Work' (hereafter: Time to Talk), a global campaign and research project was launched by Kindernothilfe and Terre des Hommes. With co-funding from the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, the campaign and research project intended to support working children's views so that they would be heard and considered in local, national, and global meetings on child labour, including at the IV Global Conference on the Sustained Eradication of Child Labour in Argentina (14-16 November 2017). Working in collaboration with more than 50 civil society partners worldwide, the project undertook consultations with 1,822 children aged five to 18 across 36 countries. The main objective of the consultations were to better understand the motivations and reasons, benefits, challenges, risks and complexities of children's work, and to listen to girls' and boys' suggestions on how best to improve their lives.

Time to Talk committed itself to a research approach based on children's rights (Beazley et al., 2009; Lundy & McEvoy, 2012a, 2012b) and the nine basic requirements for the effective and ethical participation of children (CRC/C/GC/12, 2009). To support children's participation at each stage of the project, civil society partners were invited to form and support a Children's Advisory Committee (CAC) in each region, or to invite existing working children's associations to engage in the Time to Talk project as a CAC. Through such an approach, 17 CACs were established in 13 countries across Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, and the Middle East, involving 217 working children (110 girls and 107 boys) aged nine to 18.¹

One virtual Adult Advisory Committee (AAC) was also formed including academics and practitioners with significant experience in children's rights advocacy and children's work issues (16 women and eight men). At different stages of the process, the AAC

members provided insightful feedback to improve both the design of the research toolkit ensuring a balanced focus to explore children's views on the positive and negative aspects of their work, and the project's draft report.²

Decisions regarding the scope of the research, the sampling strategy, and the decision to collaborate with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) were influenced by the research aims, and the available human and financial resources. The Time to Talk research was exploratory, and purposeful sampling was used to consult children from diverse working backgrounds. The 1,822 children consulted were engaged in a diverse range of paid and unpaid work in urban, rural, and camp settings, including: unpaid household and agricultural work; paid domestic work; paid agricultural work; small scale vendors; work in gold mines and stone mines; construction work; brick or stone making; waste collection; work in a shop; work in the weaving and textile industry; factory work; shoe-shining; hotel and restaurant work; making deliveries and porters; carpentry; work in the fishing industry; barbers and hairdressers; cleaning buses/cars; begging; work in massage and dance parlours; and commercial sexual exploitation. NGO engagement was also intended to enhance child safeguarding and a sensitive response to any disclosures of abuse that might occur.

Partners included local, national, and international NGOs, as well as existing associations and movements of organised working children. Due to the interest in Time to Talk from different NGOs, the consultations expanded from an initial 25 to 36 countries, and in the process greater proportions of non-organised working children were involved. Of the children consulted, 19% were members of organised working children's associations (from Latin America and Africa). Furthermore, specific partnerships were made with NGOs who had expertise in engaging with disabled working children,

refugee and/or internally-displaced working children. Proportionately more children were consulted in Asia (32%), Latin America (29%), and Africa (27%), with small samples from the Middle East (8%), and Europe (4%) that made regional comparisons difficult.

The research was primarily qualitative, while encompassing some quantitative data collection to capture key background information relating to each participating child. Building upon existing good practices in undertaking participatory research with children and learning from the paradigm of childhood studies (James & Prout, 1990, 1997; Morrow 2008), the research toolkit included guidance for the use of timelines, body mapping, drama, and other forms of creative expression with small groups of girls or boys of similar ages, who were involved in similar types of work (Boyden & Ennew, 1997; Crivello, Camfield & Woodhead, 2009; Hart & Tyrer, 2006; James, Jenks & Prout, 1998; Johnson, Hart & Colwell, 2014; Nieuwenhuys, 1996; ODI, 2015; O'Kane, 2008, 2017; Veale, 2005). The participatory tools were selected for their power of communication, as well as for their suitability to research meetings which were structured in space and time (O'Kane, 2008). To enhance gender analysis, separate-gender group activities were encouraged when using some activities, and children were prompted to reflect on the similarities and differences between girls' and boys' views and experiences (Mayall, 1996; ODI, 2015; O'Kane, 2017).

¹ Six of the CACs were based on existing associations of organised working children, while 11 of the CACs were formed explicitly for the Time to Talk project.

² Time pressures to produce a publication prior to the Global Conference (in November 2017) resulted in the report being finalised and published prior to a second review by AAC members. Subsequent critical and constructive feedback from the AAC members contributed to renewed efforts by the Time to Talk consultancy team to undertake further analysis, to better desegregate the views of organised working children and to produce a revised version of the report that was released in June 2018.

Methodology:

This report outlines the results of the lessons learned and validation process of the Time to Talk project, undertaken from January to July 2018. This process aimed to identify, analyse and document the:

- **Scope, quality and outcomes of children's participation in Time to Talk**

- **Lessons learned on the participation of working children in advocacy and research projects**

- **Recommendations to improve the effective and ethical participation of working children in ongoing research, practice and policy developments**

The lessons learned and validation process used qualitative and quantitative methods and engaged different project stakeholders. Data included findings from:

- Seven Children's Advisory Committees (CAC) from Asia, Europe and Latin America who used consultation activities to assess the scope, quality and outcomes of their participation;
- Online questionnaire results from 29 NGO partners from Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Middle East;
- Online questionnaire results from four Adult Advisory Committee (AAC) members;
- Transcripts from two, half-day online consultations with four Time to Talk Steering Committee members, and two consultants;
- A review of existing documents providing feedback (e.g. observation and documentation forms from earlier consultation activities with NGO partners, email correspondence with AAC members etc.);
- Interview transcripts from four, in-depth interviews with selected NGO partners.

The civil society partners for the interviews were purposefully selected in order to explore particular diversity issues concerning the participation of: organised; non-organised; disabled; and refugee working children encompassing children living in rural, urban, and camp settings. The selected organisations permitted interviews with at least one NGO from Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East. Furthermore, the civil society partners selected were diverse in terms of their own organisational structure including: a national NGO, working children's movements (national and regional), and an international NGO.

Participatory tools were developed for CACs and Steering Committee members to assess the scope, quality and outcomes of children's participation in the project, as well as and the project itself. Online questionnaires were designed for NGO partners and AAC members to address the practicability, purposefulness and suitability of the project and research tools.

Key consultation tools used with CAC members, and with Time to Talk Steering Committee members:

- **Timeline of the Time to Talk project** to identify key strengths and weaknesses, and successes and challenges at different stages of the process, reflecting on the scope of children's participation, lessons learned and recommendations for improvement.
- **"Pots and stones" activity** to analyse the quality of children's participation by assessing the extent to which the nine basic requirements for effective and ethical participation were applied during the project.
- **Children in context: analysis of change** to assess the outcomes of children's participation in the Time to Talk project, reflecting on key successes and limitations in relation to the outcomes and exploration of the reasons and other factors that influenced the project's success and limitations.

Additional consultation tools used by NGOs to seek feedback from working children who participated in the Time to Talk consultations

- **"H-assessment"**: A tool to collect working children's views about the positive and negative aspects of the Time to Talk consultations (and other related activities) and suggestions for improvement.
- **Use of the "Stories of most significant change and stories of most significant challenges" activity** which allowed children to prepare **drawings, poetry, drama, and/or writings, individually or collectively**, to identify the experiences from the project they thought were most significant, and why.

All of the NGO partners involved in the validation process undertook consultations with working children. However, not all of them engaged in other, related activities of the project including supporting the creation of a CAC, or organising Public Actions or National Exchanges³ between working children and policy-makers. This may have influenced some of the results outlined in this report, as NGO partners' perception of the scope and outcomes of the project vary depending on their level of engagement in supporting different children's participation opportunities. In contrast, feedback from children was primarily received from CAC members,

who were more actively engaged in the Time to Talk project, as compared to children who may have been involved in only one consultation.

³ The Public Action and National Exchange activities took place in ten countries and enabled meetings of working children with different stakeholders such as: governmental and UN representatives; local and regional politicians; family and community members; peer groups; and media representatives in order to present and discuss their suggestions on how to improve the lives of working children in their specific context.

⁴ The National Exchange between working children and government delegations in the run-up to the IV Global Conference on the Sustained Eradication of Child Labour was implemented with additional funding from the German Federal Foreign Office in ten countries between March and October 2017.

2. Scope of children's participation

The Time to Talk project supported different types of children's participation (Lansdown, 2011) namely:

- **The consultation** of 1,822 children (52% girls, 48% boys) in focus group discussions and participatory activities, as well as through the use of individual interviews to complete questionnaires on each participant's key background information. The consultations were primarily adult initiated and facilitated.
- **The collaborative participation** of over 200 children aged nine to 18 who were actively involved in CACs, drawing upon working children's expertise and insights. Opportunities for collaborative participation, where there was a greater degree of partnership between children and adults, were also supported through the Public Action events and National Exchanges where children interacted with key duty bearers.⁴
- **Child-led participation**, where working children had the space and opportunity to initiate and plan their own activities, and to advocate for themselves on issues affecting them. These activities were also supported through some of the Public Action events. For example, child-led actions took place in Costa Rica, Guatemala, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Kenya, Peru and the Philippines. The types of actions organised by working children were diverse and included rallies, workshops, press tours, video productions, and press releases.

Compared with children who may have only participated in a one-day or half-day consultation activity, active participation of children in CACs allowed for more genuine participation at different stages of the project, and enhanced their sense of ownership of the Time to Talk project. While all civil society partners involved in the Time to Talk project were encouraged to support follow-up action initiatives with and by working children on their priority messages following the children's consultations, it was the NGOs that supported CACs that tended to provide more collaborative support for working children's action and advocacy initiatives.

The Time to Talk project supported children's participation in analysis and reporting but recognises the limitations to the scope of children's participation in each of these aspects. The participatory process and tools used were designed to enhance children's own engagement in analysis on issues concerning them. For example, during the main consultation workshops (with more than 1,800 children) girls and boys reflected on the differences between work they undertook on school and non-school days. Furthermore, they worked in gender-based groups to analyse and share their likes and dislikes about their work and their views and experiences on work they felt they could and could not do. Together, girls and boys identified messages for key groups of people in order to improve the lives of working children in their particular context. In plenary discussions, children were encouraged to

reflect on the possible similarities and differences in their perspectives based on gender, seasons etc., and to reflect on whether their work contributed to or hindered fulfilment of their aspirations. Children were also encouraged to use creative expression such as drama, posters or poetry to highlight their greatest likes and dislikes about their work. Such plenary discussions enhanced gender analysis, and understanding of children's perspectives and priorities. Unfortunately due to time constraints faced by working children and NGO partners, the plenary discussions were not always facilitated after each focus group discussion.

The CAC structure and process were critical components of the Time to Talk project, recognising working children as right holders with expertise on their own lives, and enabling them to engage in each stage of the project cycle as advisers, analysts, and/or advocates. CAC members from India and Nepal were involved in piloting and providing feedback on the research toolkit; and CAC members were consulted about their preferred participation options for engaging in advocacy in the lead up to the IV Global Conference. CAC members were encouraged to analyse their reasons and motivations for children's work; to share their perspectives on the group's strengths and weaknesses; and their suggestions to improve existing policies and practices concerning children's work and labour. In addition, they analysed risk and protection factors that influence negative and positive outcomes of children's work. CACs had the time to review key findings from the main draft report, and had further opportunities to plan and undertake advocacy initiatives.

An overview of the CAC meetings

- 1) Orientation on the Time to Talk project and consultation on participation options for working children at the IV Global Conference
- 2) Consultation activities on the reasons and motivations for children's work; an "H-assessment" of laws and policies; and some training activities (e.g. on policies and laws).
- 3) Meeting to analyse risk and protection factors relating to working children
- 4) Options to apply for funds to plan and implement Public Action and/or National Exchange
- 5) Public Action preparations
- 6) Review of the Time to Talk results for the consultation research report
- 7) National Exchange preparations, and actual National Exchange meetings to share their views and key messages with national-level duty bearers
- 8) Meeting to review options for presenting the Time to Talk report at the global level
- 9) Meeting to evaluate the scope, quality and outcomes of their participation

CAC contributions deeply enriched the analysis process, however there were hindrances to their contributions. Again due to time constraints, not every CAC used each of the analysis tools; nor did all of them share feedback on the draft report findings. CACs that were formed explicitly to support the Time to Talk process tended to meet more regularly than CACs that built upon existing associations of organised working children. A key challenge facing all CACs, as well as children in the broader consultations, was time constraints, as children were busy juggling existing work, study and other commitments. Thus, it was challenging to secure sufficient time to organise and participate in regular CAC meetings which usually lasted about two hours. Prior permission needed to be sought from children's parents and employers to reduce the risk of scolding (an issue especially emphasised by CAC members from India, Indonesia, and Nepal). For

working children busy with existing associations, they tended only to prioritise Time to Talk meetings that had a clear focus on action and advocacy, such as the Public Action and National Exchange meetings that were most relevant to them.

In order to comply with the administrative requirements, the Time to Talk team created partnership agreements with NGOs who took on the responsibility of organising consultations with children, and wherever possible worked collaboratively with Children's Advisory Committees. Lack of direct communication between Time to Talk project organisers and members of existing associations of organised children deterred active participation of CACs in some Latin American countries. More consistent communication was also encouraged by a coordinator with the African Movement of Working Children and Youth. In future processes,

direct coordination and enhanced communication is needed with organised working children's associations to explore the most effective strategies for collaboration, and to identify likely barriers to active participation and their proposed local solutions.

In each context, opportunities and challenges needed to be overcome. For example, in Jordan it proved more challenging to get parental permission for refugee Syrian girls to regularly participate in CACs due to socio-cultural attitudes. Some adolescent girls even stopped attending CACs when they were engaged to be married. It was also challenging for Syrian boys and girls to miss paid work in order to join regular CAC meetings. Similar financial challenges were also mentioned by an NGO partner in Latin America.

"Most of the children were the only ones working in their family and the parents were not willing to let them participate in all the meetings because they would then skip work."

(NGO working with Syrian refugees, Middle East)

As will be described in the outcomes section of the report, active participation in CACs enhanced children's confidence and their ability to express their views in their own families, communities, workplaces, and beyond, which helped them defend their rights. Moreover, funds provided to CACs for Public Actions either on the occasion of International Child Workers' Day (30 April) or the World Day against Child Labour (12 June), allowed children to organise collaborative or child-led action and advocacy initiatives to present their priority messages. Diverse types of actions organised by working children included rallies, workshops, radio programmes, gallery displays, press releases, and other interactions with the media. Through their Public Actions children were able to raise awareness about their work and their rights among local officials, and community and family members.

The National Exchange meetings organised between September and October 2017 also provided crucial opportunities for CAC members to prepare for, and to present Time to Talk findings and their own priority advocacy messages to national government representatives and other concerned duty bearers. This included members of government delegations who were due to attend the IV Global Conference on Child Labour in Argentina. However, despite these efforts, the goal to ensure children's rights to be heard at the global level was not met. The International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Argentinean Government decided to exclude working children (e.g. persons below the age of 18) due to claimed, "logistical and security concerns". This resulted in the exclusion of working children's representatives from the IV Global Conference in November 2017.

The Time to Talk plans and budget did not enable CAC members from different countries to come together for exchange and collaborative analysis of the key findings. Such spaces for sharing and dialogue among CAC members would have been beneficial, especially considering the diversity of views and messages that were shared by working children in different contexts. A collective meeting with CAC members would have enabled the exchange of views and opportunities for working children's representatives to generate their own set of agreed recommendations for inclusion in the final report. The project design also did not allow for direct interactions between AAC members and CAC members, which may have provided an opportunity for exchange and learning in relation to current and historical efforts by working children to assert their rights.

Ten to 17-year-old girls from a CAC in Peru sharing reflections on their experiences as part of the Time to Talk project

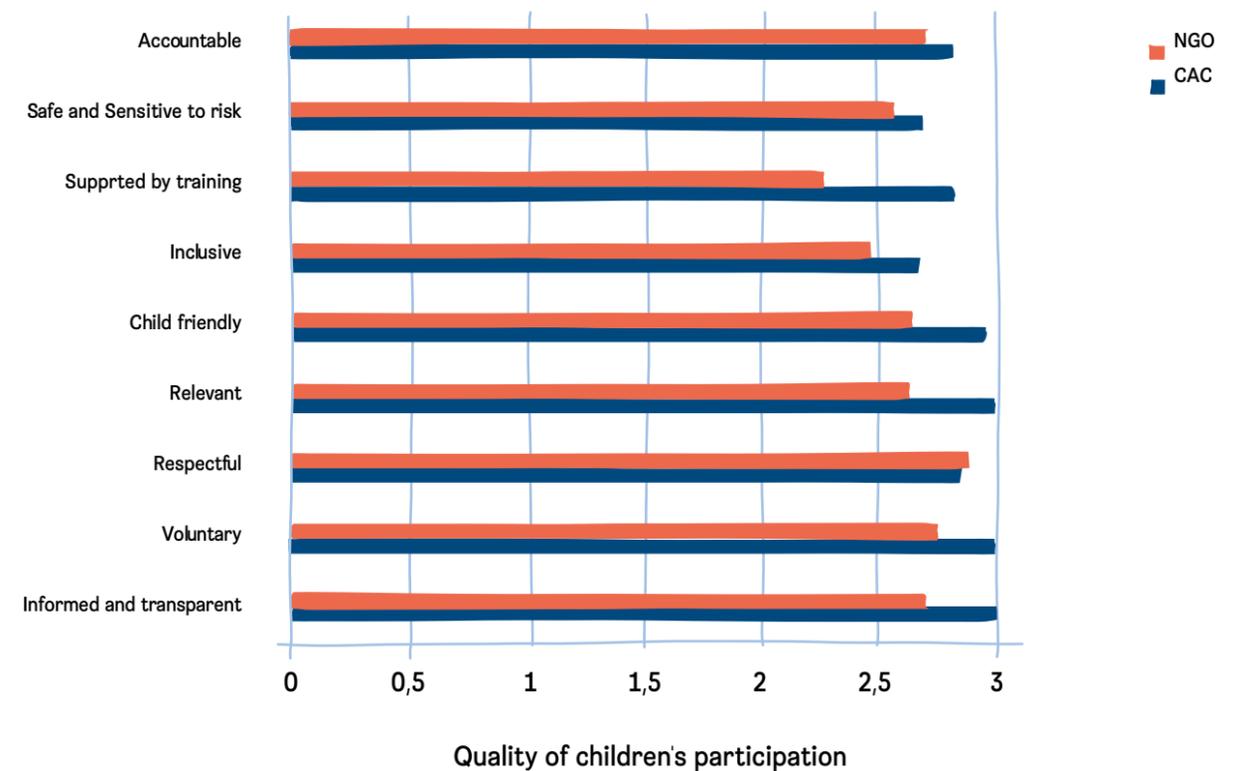


3. Quality of children's participation in the Time to Talk project

The nine basic requirements for effective and ethical participation of children (CRC/C/GC/12, 2009) were used to inform guidance and capacity building of civil society partners. When planning, implementing and following up on the consultations, the partners had practical guidance on how to ensure participation that is: 1) transparent and informative; 2) voluntary; 3) respectful; 4) relevant; 5) child-friendly; 6) inclusive; 7) supported by training; 8) safe and sensitive to risk; and 9) accountable.

Figure 1: NGOs' and CAC's assessment on the quality of children's participation

NGOs' and CAC's assessment on the quality of children's participation



These nine basic requirements were used to evaluate the quality of children's participation in the Time to Talk research and campaign project. The following findings are based on the answers from NGO partners and CAC members when asked to assess the extent to which each basic requirement was applied in the Time to Talk project (not at all = 0, to a small extent = 1, to a moderate extent = 2, to a large extent = 3).

3.1 Participation was informed and transparent

According to the CAC members, this requirement was applied throughout the project during consultations, CAC meetings and advocacy activities such as the Public Action or National Exchange. Systematic efforts were made to ensure that parents/caregivers and children gave their informed consent to participate in the activities. In some contexts, the NGO partners also informed the schools and children's employers about the project and children's participation in consultations.

“This requirement has been met because they have provided us with constant and relevant information on the situation of working children and adolescents. It is transparent because the information is true.”

(10 to 17-year-old girls and boys, Guatemala)

The NGO partners indicated meeting this requirement through transparent communication with children and the accurate and timely information provided to them. The child-protection focal point and allocating staff to take on the roles of documenters was another strength mentioned by the NGO partners as they felt this supported systematic efforts to carefully record children's views, and to sensitively respond to any questions or concerns they raised. In addition, the research toolkit provided guidance on the basic requirements, as well as an informed consent form for use with children and their parents/guardians.

In some cases, it was difficult to get parents'/guardians' consent. Although the NGO partners made sure to explain the purpose of the consultation and children were interested in participating, some parents/guardians did not provide their consent and the NGO partner was obligated to exclude the child from the consultation activities. One NGO suggested that in future research children aged 14 or older should be exempt from obtaining parental consent.

In terms of transparency, one NGO partner indicated that the report was limited in comparison to the magnitude of the consultation results, especially given the wide diversity of working children's realities that may not all be reflected in the report. However, other NGO partners commented on the effectiveness of the report in capturing the diverse perspectives and realities of working children.



Participatory tools were used to enable girls and boys to express their views and opinions, Peru

“Initially some parents were fearful that if their children spoke up about their work that the parents may be punished/sanctioned for asking children to work.”

(NGO, Africa)

A child-friendly version of the report was produced and translated into nine local languages (Arabic, English, French, German, Hindi, Kyrgyz, Nepali, Spanish, and Thai) and disseminated to NGO partners to share with working children who had been consulted. The child-friendly version was appropriately developed using cartoons to make it more accessible for children, but was not fully accessible to children with limited literacy. To further increase the informed and transparent participation of children in all project phases, increased efforts are needed to ensure that all information leaflets, research publications and tools, along with any other documents related to the campaign and research project are available in local languages.

To share information with children, partners, and other interested stakeholders, some important efforts were made to develop and maintain a Time to Talk website <http://www.time-to-talk.info/en/home/> which shares campaign messages, updates from the project,

examples of children's action and advocacy work, and links to various publications and the toolkit. Additionally, a regular newsletter for partner organisations and AAC members, and two specially designed child-friendly newsletters were developed and disseminated to enhance information sharing, communication, and ongoing action planning with and by working children. In addition, short advocacy films on the Time to Talk process and messages were also prepared and disseminated through the website and other related advocacy events, including at the Global Child Forum in Stockholm in April 2018.

3.2 Participation was voluntary

“Children are aware that they are not obliged to participate ... Remembering a phrase used in the groups, ‘my opinion counts.’”

(NGO, Latin America)

Apart from the informed consent, efforts were made to ensure that children's participation at every step was voluntary, and that children could withdraw at any stage of the process. Furthermore, children were encouraged to answer only the questions they understood or felt comfortable talking about.

Children were also consulted about the most suitable time and day to participate. For example, in several countries, consultations and CAC meetings were held during weekends or evenings so that the workshops would not interfere with school hours. However, CAC members and the NGO partners indicated that the main difficulty in meeting this requirement was the time constraints, especially due to children's working hours and responsibilities, including school work, household work, and paid work.

“In the first meeting I only came because I was asked to, but after that I decided to attend regularly.”

(12-year-old boy, Kosovo)

“It would be good if the CAC members could facilitate consultations with other children, it will [help them] gain confidence. Next, it will be good to make mixed facilitation, adult/children, with the members.”

(NGO, Asia)

The Time to Talk research and campaign was framed to promote voluntary participation without any kind of remuneration. The challenges of organising consultations with working children if they result in a loss of earnings were mentioned by more than three NGO partners.

Opportunities for voluntary participation could have been strengthened if children and young people were more actively engaged as co-facilitators of consultations or CAC sessions. This could have strengthened their leadership skills, confidence, and trust towards adult/child collaborative participation.

3.3 Participation was respectful

“All children were encouraged to participate in the discussions and all of them were listened to carefully by the animators, but also by their peers. The positive rules were set by children with the aim of respecting the opinions of all children and their participation.”

(NGO, Europe)

CAC members and NGO partners felt that the requirement of respectful participation was met due to the various opportunities that the consultations and the CAC meetings provided for girls and boys to express their views and to be heard.

Facilitators encouraged respectful communication during the consultations and children were actively involved in developing positive ground rules at the beginning of the workshops to encourage respect for one another.

During regional training and tutorials emphasis was placed on avoiding influencing working children's views. Some Adult Advisory Committee members and a few NGO partners shared concerns about how children's views may have been influenced by their prior engagement with NGOs who have different philosophies and approaches to children's work and labour issues (see chapter 5.3). More training should have been provided to adult facilitators to consider how their own perceptions, opinions and experiences of children's agency, and children's work/labour influence the way they facilitate and ask probing questions to children about their work.

Despite continuous advocacy efforts to bring working children's views to the IV Global Conference on the Sustained Eradication of Child Labour, children were not given the opportunity to participate in the conference or in any other closed-door dialogue with the ILO. Similarly, in some countries where a National Exchange took place, ILO officials and some government authorities did not accept the invitation to participate in this dialogue with working children. The limited interest from the ILO and government officials in listening to working children's views created an environment of disrespect towards their participation in the Time to Talk activities and their need to share their realities and concerns.

“We were treated in very good manner, there was not any sort of discrimination among the group. Our views were respected by the facilitator, child protection focal person and other staff of that organization.”

(12-17-year-old girls and boys, Nepal)

3.4 Participation was relevant

The CAC members and NGO partners indicated that this requirement was met, as children's work is part of children's daily lives. The tools allowed girls and boys to reflect upon their realities as child workers and to develop and share advocacy messages. For some children, it was the first time that they were consulted about their work, which made them feel proud and taken into account.

The consultations allowed working children to identify messages for key groups of people who they felt could improve their lives and were thus relevant and responsive to their ideas. Particularly in contexts where Public Actions and National Exchanges took place, children could plan and implement actions with key relevant stakeholders.

“Members were able to connect themselves with the process. They were able to answer the questions based on their experiences and also shared their views openly.”

(NGO, India)

The safe environment that was created in most of the consultation workshops allowed girls and boys to share their experiences, listen to each other, and to explore and challenge stereotypes around children's work. In one Latin American country, the Time to Talk project encouraged collaborative participation between

“The information and the implemented activities really described our lives so far and has greatly affected and changed our lives.”

(13 to 17-year-old girls and boys, Indonesia)

organised and non-organised working children, from urban and rural areas, in the preparation of a National Exchange with government officials to raise their key messages and suggestions.

In the case of organised working children, the NGO partners suggested that this requirement could have been strengthened if working children had taken a leading role in coordinating the activities and interacting more with authorities. Increased time for analysis and reporting, with increased opportunity for direct participation and exchange among working children's representatives from different geographical areas would also enhance respectful participation.

“The focus on unpaid and paid work, including household and agricultural work for families, made “It's Time to Talk!” more relevant to wider numbers of children.”

(Steering Committee members)

3.5 Participation was child-friendly

Many of the NGO partners had existing experience in supporting children's participation and protection. They were able to mobilise existing staff and volunteers who had relevant knowledge and skills to organise and facilitate the children's consultations in ways that created a safe, child-friendly environment allowing for the free expression of views, and respect for different opinions in their own local languages.

While some NGO partners commented upon children's initial shyness and hesitation to express their views, particularly when working with girls and boys in rural areas, many NGO partners also described how the ice-breaker activities and participatory tools enabled girls and boys to open up and articulate their thoughts.

“When children were divided into groups by similar type of work in the activity “Body mapping: Likes and dislikes of child work”, children were very active, collaborative and open to sharing their own experience as working children, and the group cohesion increased.”

(NGO, Kosovo)

Moreover, opportunities for children to work with others with whom they had prior contact, including existing groups and associations of working children, created opportunities for free expression, strengthening

“The research tools were very easy and friendly to use with children. The “Body mapping” tool children really liked, because from head to toe they came out with what are the bad things, what are the good things, what are their feelings. Through this “Body mapping” they shared so many things and so we plan to use this tool in our wider work.”

(NGO working with disabled working children, Bangladesh)

of group cohesion, and action planning by working children. Prior contact with children and communities also made it easier for NGOs to secure informed consent and permission from children and their guardians.

Children reported that the consultation tools were enjoyable and that most of the questions were easily understood. The NGO partners acknowledged that the methodology allowed the creation of a safe environment in small groups and encouraged friendship amongst the participants. The tools were innovative and enabled girls and boys to share their views and experiences. The tools that children enjoyed using the most were: 1) Body Mapping, 2) Timeline, 3) Creative Expression such as drawing, 4) Flowers of Support, and 5) Mapping of work we can and cannot do (see Appendix 2).

“I liked ‘Body mapping’, because we see the reality of our companions... I liked the timeline because we tell about our life, what we do and we know each other better... I liked the ‘Reasons why children work’, because the reality of the children was known... I liked everything because the tools were novel.”

(12 to 17-year-old girls and boys, Nepal)

thus required skilled interviews from the NGO partner to use it effectively with children. Furthermore, some NGO partners described how it was more challenging for some children to participate in activities that required additional knowledge and/or analytical skills, e.g. the ‘H-assessment’ on existing policies, or the ‘Mapping work we can and cannot do’. Working with children with different literacy rates and different local languages also created challenges for some facilitators. However, the visual nature of the tools was identified as a clear advantage when used with girls and boys of different ages and abilities.

In some cases, children and NGO partners did not find appropriate venues for consultations with children. Some NGO partners suggested that would be more effective to undertake consultation activities in outdoor spaces, but in many cases, they were unable to do so due to logistical constraints. An additional challenge identified by a number of NGOs was that the tools took longer than planned, thus requiring longer workshops and/or more flexible planning.

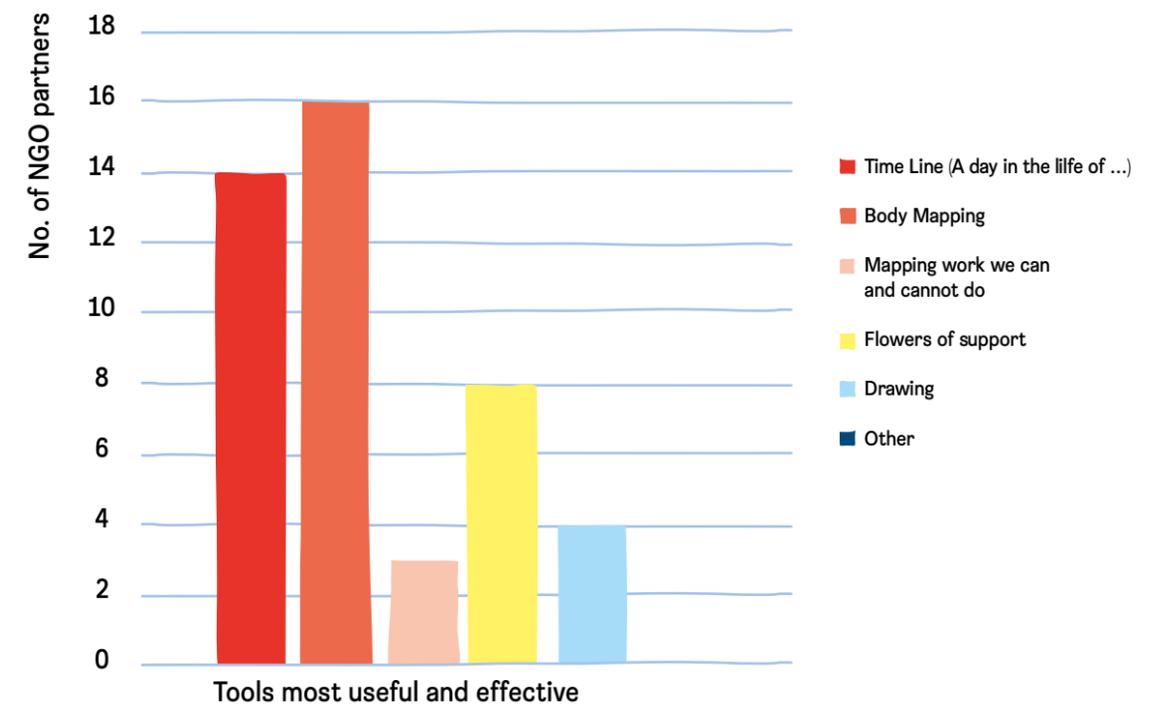
“Regarding the ‘mapping’ tool, children were very confused between the work they can do and the work they cannot do. They did not find it interesting as well. They could not differentiate between which work is right for their age and which is not, as they perceive all sort of work as normal and have the habit of doing it.”

(NGO, Asia)

The top three tools that NGO partners felt were most useful and effective in the general consultations were the: 1) Body mapping, 2) Timeline, and 3) Flowers of support (see figure 2). Some children who were part of CAC meetings also commented upon the usefulness of the ‘Why, why, why’ tool to explore motivations and reasons for children’s work. They also cited the risk and protection factor analysis activity, and the ‘visioning tree’ as useful to explore their visions and hopes and to develop action plans (see Time to Talk, 2016).

While the majority of NGO partners shared positive feedback about using the ‘Body mapping’ and timelines, a minority of NGOs reflected on the limitations of these tools (see appendix 3 and 4). For example, the ‘Body mapping’ tool can be tiring to children if they are asked too many questions. If children did not have prior experience with drawing or writing poems, they hesitated to communicate using such mediums. The questionnaire for gathering information on children’s background information was not child-friendly, and

Figure 2: NGO partners' views on tools that were the most useful and effective



Working children presenting their Body Map, Peru

3.6 Participation was inclusive

The consulted children were engaged in a wide variety of paid and unpaid work, both in the informal and formal sector, and many boys and girls combined different types of paid and unpaid work. However, the sampling strategy was not sufficiently developed. There was over-representation of girls and boys doing unpaid household and/or agricultural work; and unequal representation in terms of children from different regions. More diversity in the types of work could have been ensured by more careful planning and communication with civil society partners at the outset of the consultation planning process. Also, increased

“One could argue that a limitation is that Time to Talk only worked with children via NGOs/working children's organisations, so did not elicit data from children not in touch with organisations. However, given the time pressures and difficulties of undertaking research in the number of countries covered, I don't see how the Time to Talk research could have been undertaken in any other way.”

(Adult Advisory Committee member)

efforts should have been made to reach out to working children who had no prior contact with NGOs. In the Time to Talk consultations 43% of the children consulted had regular contact with NGOs, while 23% had occasional contact, and 34% had rare or no contact with NGOs prior to the consultation. Members of the Adult Advisory Committee (AAC) raised concerns that NGO staff may have (inadvertently or otherwise) influenced children's views about their work.

The working children consulted were from diverse backgrounds and included: children living with different caregivers; children from ethnic and indigenous minorities; children from migrant families; refugees, or stateless and internally displaced children; and children with disabilities. However, increased efforts are needed to engage more children with disabilities, street-connected children, refugee or stateless children, minority ethnic groups, and younger children under ten.

The consultations engaged children from rural settings, small towns, big cities, and IDP/refugee camps doing a diverse range of paid and unpaid work. Despite intentions to reach a balanced sample of organised and non-organised working children, only 19% of the children consulted were members of organised working children's associations, primarily from Africa and the Latin America regions where there are established associations and movements of working children.

“The tools were also suitable for children with learning disabilities as they liked the visual things, including the body shape and the ‘Flowers of support’ – they like these pictorial things. So when we drew the ‘Body mapping’, and the flower they were so enthusiastic and participated very nicely.”

(NGO, Bangladesh)

NGO partners undertook successful efforts to ensure age and gender balance during consultations with children, and when organising CACs. Of the 1,822 children consulted, there were 52% girls, and 48% boys. The children consulted were aged five to 18, with the majority aged ten to 17.

Socio-cultural attitudes towards girls, and child marriage negatively affected the regular participation of girls in one country in the Middle East. In Indonesia, CAC members identified the need to engage more working children who are out of school, including disabled working children. Some NGO partners included working children with disabilities in their consultations, and one NGO partner whose work is focused on this particular group, organized focused group discussions and activities specifically with groups of disabled working children in rural and urban contexts. One of the suggestions from two NGO partners was to provide additional guidance to strengthen the parti-

cipation of children with disabilities. CAC members also highlighted the importance of making braille versions of the report and consultation documents available. Language did not represent a barrier to undertake consultations in most of the implementing countries, and the NGO partners reported efforts such as involving volunteers or staff to ensure translation whenever it was needed. However, this could be strengthened by allocating budget lines for translations into local languages during consultations and not exclusively for the reporting stage.

“At the moment, it is the girls who bring the boys to the organization. Girls are more aware of the advantages of being organized due to the violence and vulnerability to which they are exposed. The internet is a strong factor because boys also prefer to go to internet booths to play, etc. and then they stop attending the meetings.”

(NGO, Peru)

3.7 Participation was supported by training



Asian Time to Talk! facilitators during the training workshop in 2016, Philippines

Four, regional, face-to-face training workshops were organised for NGO partners. The workshops provided an important opportunity to ensure clearer understanding of the campaign, the research tools, the documentation guidance, and the importance of applying the nine basic requirements for the ethical and effective participation of children. In addition, recorded tutorials were made available. The NGO partners indicated that the online support and tutorials were useful for understanding the goals of the project and the research tools, as well as the role of facilitators, documenters and child protection focal point (see appendix 6). Nonetheless, they gave higher value to the face-to-face training workshop as it allowed a deeper understanding of the project and increased their knowledge on the ethical participation of children, as well as their confidence in using participatory tools with them.

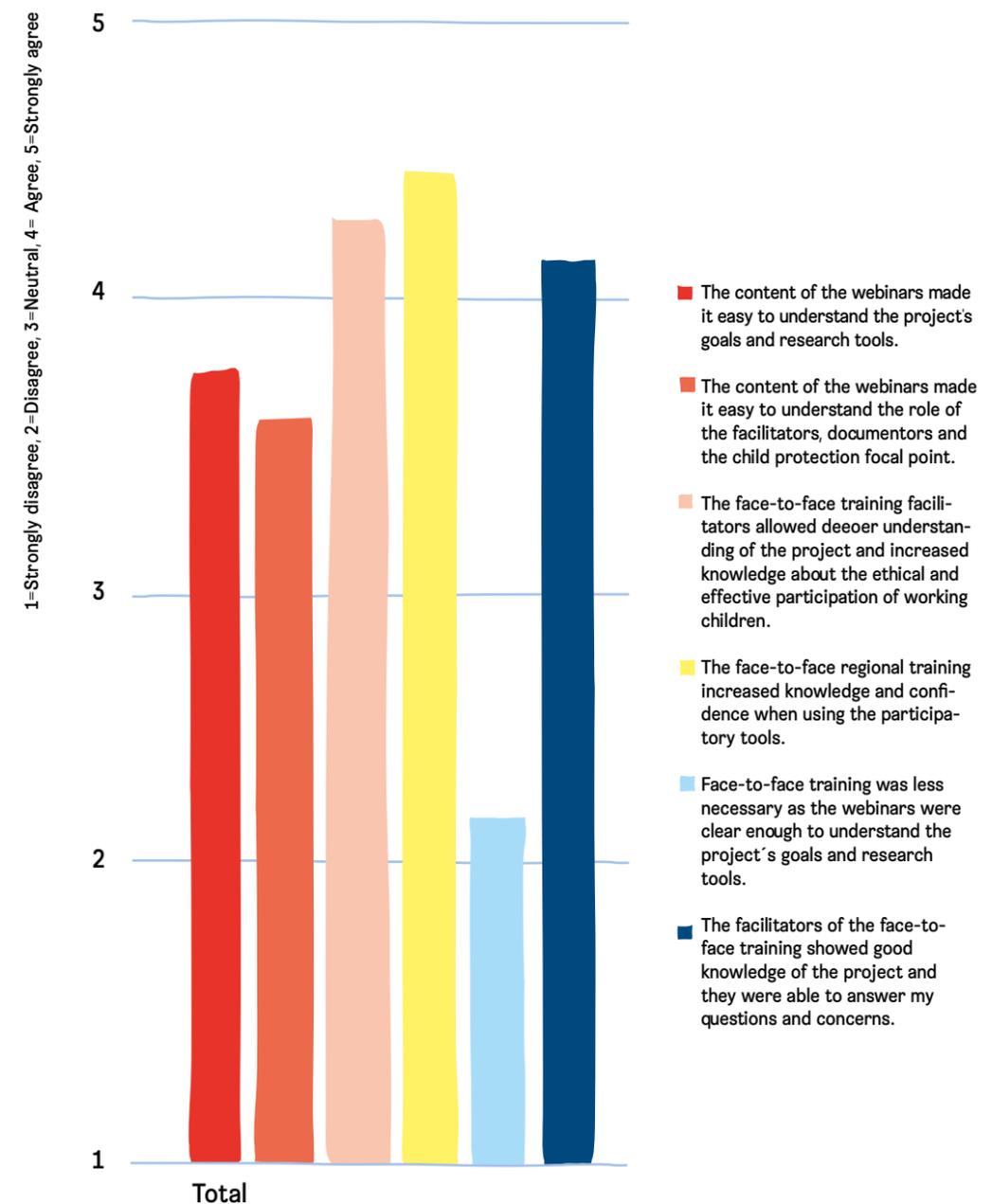
The three-day training workshop allowed the introduction of the project, research tools and documentation process. However, longer regional training

would have helped to sensitize adults and facilitate the consultations with children in ways that allow probing questions without influencing children's views. Longer trainings would have also allowed more time for advocacy planning to address the campaigning component of the project, including advocacy tools and support for child-led advocacy initiatives.

The regional face-to-face training workshops proved effective, especially in countries where the adults facilitating the consultations had attended the training. The quality of the consultation results and documentation was lower in the countries where the facilitators had not attend the face-to-face training and lacked individual support and communication with the Time to Talk team, attended.

Figure 2: NGO partners' views on tools that were the most useful and effective

NGO partner's responses to statements on training



3.8 Participation was safe and sensitive to risk



A girl wearing her individual code tag to assure her privacy and anonymity during consultation, India

“[The most significant success is] implementing such a project with partner organisations that work with this particular group and have the expertise to approach working children and ensure protection standards while carrying out the project.”

(NGO, Middle East)

The NGO partner facilitation teams were committed to creating safe environments during consultations with children and CAC meetings. All partners agreed to appoint a child-protection focal point person who was responsible to coordinate risk assessments and to ensure sensitive follow up and referrals to disclosures of abuse or harm during the consultations.

Except for a few cases (that were not included in the analysis), all children involved in consultations and

CACs gave their informed consent to engage in the process, and so did their parents/guardians.

Additionally, in many consultations children developed their own positive rules at the start of the consultation workshops.

CAC members and NGO partners highlighted the opportunities that the Time to Talk project created for working children to speak up and be heard. These opportunities increased their protection as girls and boys felt more confident to express their views and supported each other throughout the process. Further discussion with children about risk factors prior to the consultations or CAC meetings could strengthen this requirement.

“I always felt safe and comfortable here with you.”

(11-year-old boy, Kosovo)

“We were always protected in the environment and our views were safe and respected, our names have been codified for our protection, and they have asked our parents’ permission for us to participate.”

(9 to 17-year-old girls and boys, Peru)

In some contexts, CAC members reported external risks that affected their participation. For example, in two countries, children expressed feeling unsafe on their way home after the meetings, as activities were held until late in the evening. Some children were also unable to attend all the consultation workshops or CAC meetings as they could not get permission from their parents/guardians or employers.

All the NGO partners used individual codes when recording children’s views to ensure privacy and anonymity, although some names were revealed in the transcription tables due to confusion. The working structure of the Time to Talk campaign, included an international Steering Committee coordinated with local NGO partners, which made it difficult to establish control mechanisms for child protection standards and case management. Although the NGO partners reported

certain risks and follow up actions were taken, there is no precise data on the number of child protection cases that may have arisen throughout the project. Therefore, more one-on-one communication and follow-up with partners on child protection issues related to the consultation process is crucial for future research.

“Children sometimes felt unsafe on their way home because the meetings were held until late in the evening. Therefore, our staff usually advised them to book an online taxi for their safety. However, they sometimes still felt unsafe on their way home”

(NGO, Indonesia)

3.9 Participation was accountable



"Pots and stones" tool to assess the quality of children's participation during a CAC meeting, Kosovo

"Timing between the different tools was a weakness. The feedback about what was done with the information shared by children took way too long, which affected children's interest in the process."

(NGO, Latin America)

CAC members played a crucial role in meeting this requirement. CACs had many opportunities to be actively involved from early phases of the project and were asked for advice on the research tools. The CACs were also asked for feedback on the draft report findings through a facilitation guide, visual cards of the findings, and PowerPoint slides. Their input on the

findings they agreed/disagreed with, found interesting or surprising were all integrated into the final report.

Children's engagement in the project was higher in countries where children met more than once, which happened in the cases of the CACs, and in countries where a Public Action or a National Exchange took place between working children and government officials. Budget constraints did not allow involved partners to host additional follow-up meetings

"We've been informed about everything and I truly believe that our messages have been sent."

(10 to 12-year-old girls and boys, Kosovo)

"We were able to share children's views only at state level. We have not been able to follow up with the government, what steps have been taken up."

(NGO, Asia)

with children and CACs in order to share the final report, or to plan additional meetings or activities.

The campaign organisers made sure that regular newsletters in English, French and Spanish were circulated to the NGO partners and the Adult Advisory Committee. However, the project did not have a mechanism to identify if and when the updates were shared with child participants or with CAC members. The Time to Talk report has been translated into English, French, German, and Spanish. A child-friendly summary version of the Buenos Aires declaration, the official outcome document of the IV Global Conference on the Sustained Eradication of Child Labour (No-

vember 2017) has been developed. The dissemination and integration of the child-friendly comic, "In simple words" (Time to Talk, 2018) is recommended to inform local, national, regional, and international advocacy activities.

Efforts to engage with the media were also made by the Time to Talk team at global and domestic (Germany) levels, and by Time to Talk NGO partners and working children. Press releases and/or engagements between working children and the media (radio, print, online) were undertaken in Argentina, Germany, Guatemala, India, Indonesia, Peru, and Sweden. A press conference was organised at the IV Global Conference to share concerns about working children's exclusion from the event, and to share highlights from the research findings. Social media channels on Facebook and Instagram were established which have 450 active followers. Increased media interest could have been generated through more strategic planning and communication with working children at different levels.

4. Outcomes of children's participation in the Time to Talk project

The outcomes of children's participation in the Time to Talk project reaffirm the importance of approaching working children's diverse realities in a wider socio-ecological framework so that the policies and practices respond effectively to children's development, protection and wellbeing. This chapter outlines the positive and negative outcomes identified by CAC members, AAC members, NGO partners, and Steering Committee members as a result of children's participation in the project at the child, families, and workplace and community levels. Other outcomes at sub-national and national levels, and the NGO partner, and international levels are also described.

4.1. Outcomes at the child's personal level

Each of the CACs consulted and many of the NGO partners identified the increase in children's confidence when expressing their views in front of their peers, families, communities, and in some contexts their employers. The methodology of the consultation and the advocacy activities provided different opportunities for children to reflect on their experiences and to express themselves both individually and collectively through small group discussions and activities. Through their participation in CACs, working children also engaged in action and advocacy initiatives to share their key messages and dialogue with government officials and other concerned duty bearers. Children indicated feeling more confident when speaking both in public and private settings, they felt more encouraged to express agreement or disagreement, and they developed their leadership skills. In contexts where children with disabilities were consulted, they also reported feeling included and empowered through this experience.

The project also increased children's knowledge about child rights and how to defend them. For example in India, migrant working children were granted their right to education due to advocacy actions undertaken by CAC members. In Nepal, advocacy by children resulted in a CAC member securing her birth certificate, enabling her to register for and subsequently complete her school exams.

“We used to not know the rights of the child, but we know them better now. We are more confident to express our views. We used to be shy and afraid.”

(CAC members, Indonesia)

“We gained confidence to share our views in front of others – we worked in a group and came out with suggestions to improve the living condition of working children. Without any hesitation we shared our problems and views in front of a mass of people.”

(CAC members, Nepal)

Public Action leads to increased access to education for migrant children in India

On the occasion of World Day Against Child Labour on 12th June, 2017, CAC members and other working children in Mysore City, India organised themselves and submitted their demands to the Corporation Commissioner and officials from the Department of Education. As a result of their demands, a non-formal educational school was founded by the Department of Education, and migrant children have since been enrolled.



Members of a Children's Advisory Committee during a Meeting, Rwanda

*"They let me participate at home and I have more communication with my parents."
(13-year-old boy, Peru)*

Children reported increased knowledge on child work/labour issues, especially those who participated in CAC meetings, Public Actions, or National Exchanges. For example, many children indicated that the tools allowed them to reflect on protection and risk factors that they may face at work and learn about the importance of their participation and protection. According to NGO partners, children also increased their awareness of working conditions and the situation of working children in their context and in other countries. The CACs that received regular support from NGO partners reported having gained visibility and recognition by government officials who attended the National Exchanges, support which empowered them to continue advocating for their rights.

Stories of the most significant change, CAC members, Guatemala:

During the preparatory workshop for the National Exchange, the children participated in an activity to identify key messages that would be presented to government authorities. Girls and boys aged 11 to 13 identified significant improvements in their confidence when speaking in public, as they described how they were able to overcome shyness and nerves, allowing them to more clearly express their ideas and defend them, so as to be taken into account.

Friendship and solidarity, 15-year-old working girl, Peru:

On the left-hand side of the drawing, a lonely child is depicted saying: "I feel so lonely...I wish I had friends." Whereas on the right-hand side, the working girl expresses her gratitude to the campaign, "It's Time to Talk!" The speech bubbles therefore say: "It is so nice to be in a group!" "Yes, because we all get to share our views!" "Besides, we can play and have fun."

Interconnectedness and solidarity was another outcome of the project. Children's higher capacity to support and relate to each other's situations as child workers was mentioned as a significant change due to the Time to Talk project. According to CAC members, making new friends and feeling supported by other working children strengthened their groups and encouraged them to continue participating in the process. In the case of organised working children, their engagement in the CACs allowed for opportunities to increase their empathy, solidarity and understanding of other working children's realities without compromising their own identity.

Creative Contribution from a working child, Bolivia



4.2 Outcomes at the familial level

Improved relationships and non-violent communication with parents in Indonesia:

A group of male and female CAC members in Indonesia described improvements in their relationships and communication with their parents resulting in reduced violence and increased respect:

"My parents used to beat me when I could not finish my work. Now, they do not do that anymore" (15-year-old girl)

"My family used to refuse to listen to me, but they respect my opinions now" (17-year-old girl).

"I used to be silent when my mother was angry at me, but now I can tell her that she does not need any abusive way to discipline me." (14-year-old girl)

"Our parents care for us more. They often advise us to keep our health and food. They also fully support us to participate in the project" (17-year-old boy)

"My parents are more familiar with the Time to Talk project, and understand my work better because we often talk." (16-year-old boy)

"My parents encourage and advise me to continue my studies." (17-year-old boy)

The main outcome noted at this level was the improved communication between children and their parents/guardians. Many CAC members indicated that after their participation in the project; their parents/guardians were more active listeners and approached them with respect. Some children reported facing less physical violence and experienced more non-violent forms of discipline in their families.

Some NGO partners described how after their engagement in the project, parents/guardian were more aware of children's rights and their responsibility for

child upbringing. However, there is no concrete evidence on how precisely the project contributed to these changes at the level of parenting. Nevertheless, the close communication between parents/guardians and NGO partners encouraged by the campaign to ensure informed and transparent participation, may have facilitated parents' interest in listening to children's views at home. It may have also contributed to the marked increase in children's confidence when speaking up in Time to Talk meetings and consequently increased girls and boy's confidence to speak up at home.

4.3 Outcomes at the workplace and community levels

The increased awareness of children's rights was the main change at this level. Some children and adults indicated that employers and community members became more aware of working children's views and demands, especially after CAC members shared the information from their meetings with other community members. In some contexts, change was also seen in working conditions. For example, in some countries by the end of the project, children were able to continue their education due to the flexible working hours negotiated with their employers. Some children also indicated having more time to play as a result of talking to their parents or employers about their needs and rights.

In contrast, children from some contexts described that while there was indeed increased awareness of their rights at their workplace, no change in working conditions had taken place. The CAC members and the NGO partners acknowledged that changes at this level require more time, and additional efforts and resources are needed to yield a higher advocacy impact among employers and communities.

"Now I am brave to ask permission from my employer to go home earlier... My employer respects me more and he wants to listen to me."

(17-year-old-girl, CAC member, Indonesia)

"There have been some changes because some children and adolescents can now go to school."

(CAC members, Guatemala)

"Children are part of the solution": Draw and write activity by a 17-year-old boy, Peru:

I have drawn a big eye that personifies everything that it sees, and in the retina, it shows children working, with the message of "help me to look". I believe that this challenge is significant because we must always look, look at the reality of children, knowing that we are going to contribute to the solution of this problem and make society know.

4.4 Outcomes at the sub-national and national levels

“The Time to Talk project was an eye-opener in getting children to air their views on what they like or dislike. The methods used were very effective and will form the basis of future engagement with children.”

(NGO, Africa)

Most of the outcomes seen at sub-national and national levels took place in countries where children participated in Public Action or National Exchanges. These events provide examples of good practice where working children discussed and prioritised the key messages they wished to share and dialogue on with key duty bearers at local and national levels. For example, in a Public Action organised by a CAC in Bhubaneswar, India, the young members shared messages with the local authorities to advocate for social development policies in order to improve job opportunities for parents and prevent school dropouts.

NGO partners supporting Public Actions described them as an opportunity for raising awareness of children's rights and work. In some cases, the visibility that the CACs gained through their Public Action initiatives, facilitated subsequent dialogue with government officials at the National Exchange.

“For children and adolescents [the National Exchange] was a very important experience because they had the opportunity to share their realities and aspirations as child workers, as well as to propose actions to decision-makers to improve the situation of working children.”

(NGO, Guatemala)

“[The National Exchange was a success] to be able to speak in front of government delegations and pass key messages and hopes from working children to them.”

(CAC members, Indonesia)

The National Exchange was reported as the most influential activity at this level. According to the CAC members, it was the opportunity to establish a direct dialogue with policy-makers in their countries. For example, in India, child-led advocacy efforts resulted in the establishment of a non-formal school from which many migrant children benefited. In a minority of contexts, children also met ILO representatives and businesses during the National Exchange. For example, in Indonesia, CAC representatives were invited as speakers to national meetings on child rights in the palm oil industry. Furthermore, through working children's participation in “It's Time to Talk!” some children's associations have been strengthened and some local governance structures have become more inclusive of working children's representation, such as a provincial-level children's forum in Indonesia.

In some contexts, children indicated that although there has been increased awareness and interest among decision-makers about their situation as working children, there have not yet been any changes in terms of labour policies, nor working conditions. Thus, further advocacy through children's participation is needed.



Children during a national exchange meeting with local government, Thailand

“We listed out the nine suggestions to improve conditions of working children and we shared those suggestions in front of country delegates, representatives of INGOs and NGOs.”

(CAC members, Nepal)

“The most significant success was that the members of the CAC are now included in the bigger forum, the child forum at provincial level. Before, this forum only contained school children.”

(NGO, Indonesia)

4.5 Outcomes at the NGO partners' level

NGO partners were key to the achievements of the project. Although all of them have experience working with children, their participation in the project allowed them to further strengthen their structures and processes for children's participation. The project strengthened NGO partners' capacities through opportunities to improve their facilitation skills and advocacy planning and their implementation with children. Many of the NGO representatives indicated that the research toolkit was very useful when approaching children's diverse realities in a sensitive yet participatory way. Some of them also reported the ongoing use and adaptation of the tools to consult working children and to involve them in programming on a broader range of issues.

"I have learnt more skills, knowledge and tools to be used in child advocacy, and would be glad to be involved in upcoming projects and activities to promote child participation in decision making and national development."

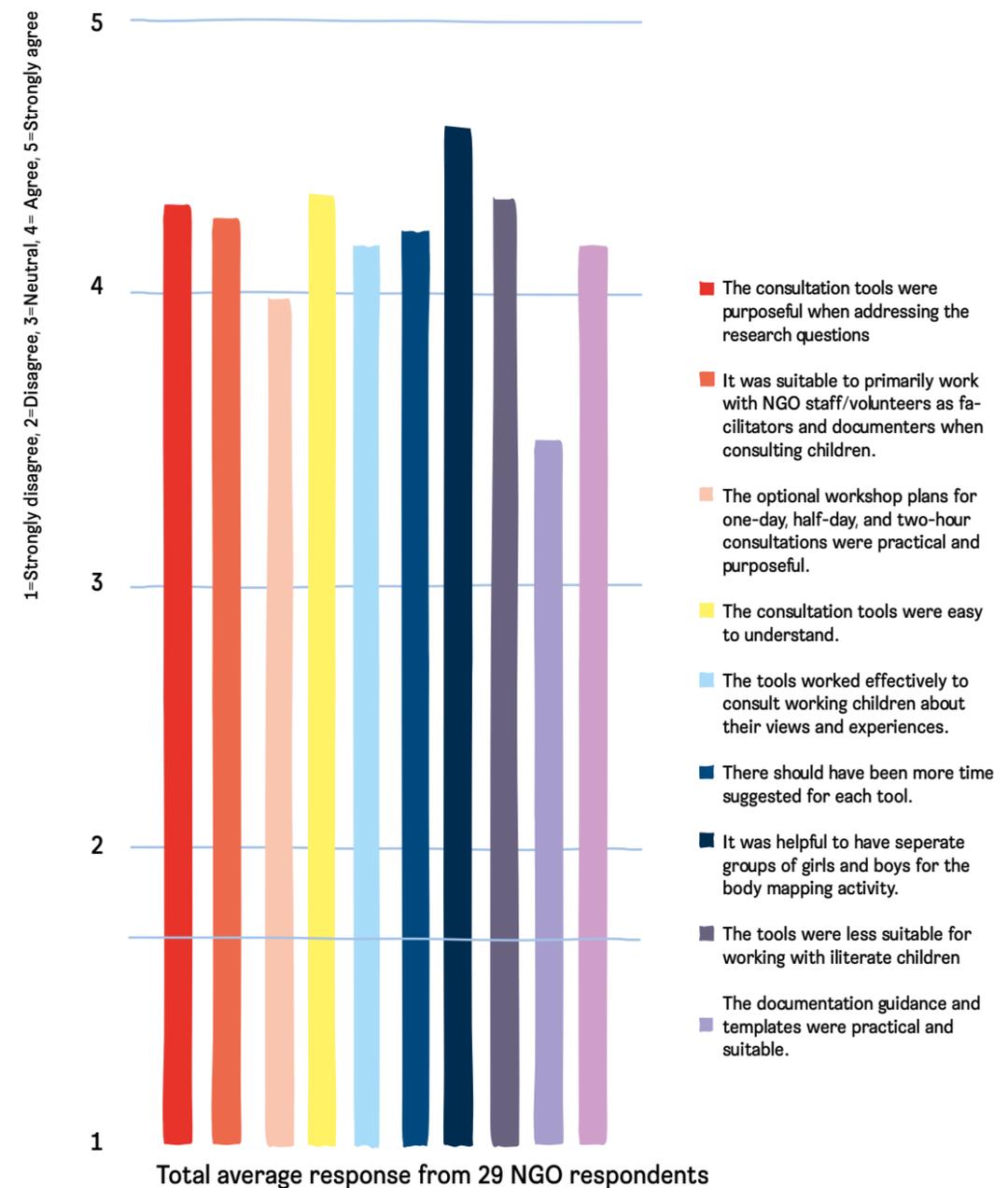
(Representative, Working Children and Youth Association, Africa)

Some NGOs also described wider improvements to organisational practices, including increased use of child protection standards, and the nine basic requirements for ethical participation. For example, in one of the countries where the NGO partner used to obtain only verbal informed consent from parents/guardians, the team adapted the form used for the project in order to begin ensuring written informed consent for all their activities. In addition, some of the 17 CACs that were formed in 13 countries across Asia, Africa, Europe, Latin America, and the Middle East for Time to Talk, continued as ongoing structures for working children's participation in organisational work.

The project also increased NGO partners' awareness of children's rights by approaching working children's situations from a child rights-based approach, prioritising children's participation as a means to understanding working children's realities and building upon their capacities as rights-holders. Many NGO partners indicated having increased knowledge of the importance of children's participation and its role as children claim and defend their rights. Similarly, the project allowed NGO partners to evolve their differentiated understanding of children's work.

Figure 4: NGO partners' perspectives on the research toolkit

NGO partner's responses to statements on the practicability, purposefulness and suitability of research tools



4.6 Outcomes at the international level

“Children’s views were shared at the Global Conference on Child Labour but there was not one child attending the event... It would be better if we could directly attend the event and express our views.”

(CAC members, Indonesia)

CAC members were consulted to consolidate their suggestions about the most meaningful forms of children’s participation at national, regional and global levels (Time to Talk, 2017; van Daalen, 2019). Yet, despite a relentless advocacy campaign undertaken collaboratively with working children, civil society organisations, and some governments, working children themselves have not been invited as active participants at the conference. Working children under the age of 18 were denied opportunities to participate and represent themselves at the conference, on the grounds of logistical obstacles and safety risks. The Time to Talk project team organised a Side Event as well as a Press Conference to present the key findings of the consultation process as published in the main report and working children’s policy recommendations.

The Time to Talk project was provided two opportunities to present the projects’ research report, informing the conference attendees on the participatory approach and key findings and messages of our worldwide consultations with working children and youth. A public press conference was held with representatives of the Time to Talk Steering Committee which was attended by national and international press representatives. To address the conference participants the Argentinean government provided space for a civil

society organisations event under the motto “Children’s Views on Children’s Work”. To this Side Event the organisations UNICEF, Young Lives and ECPAT contributed with their organisational experiences on children’s participation and further underpinned the need for further participatory tools and spaces for working children to contribute in meaningful ways to debates that concern them. The interest in the Time to Talk! presentation and findings was huge and diverse follow up talks emerged afterwards.

However, one of the campaigns aims to enable working children and youth themselves to have the opportunity to present and integrate their views, suggestions and reflections on the current debate on sustainable solutions on child labour was not achieved.

In the lead up to the IV Global Conference, CACs’ and NGOs’ expectations for children’s participation were raised. Disappointment and frustration about children’s exclusion was cited as one of the biggest negative outcomes of the project. The campaign organisers informed children about the possibility of not having this space at the Conference beforehand, but raised expectations were inevitable. Some CAC members expressed feeling represented by the side-event that was held during the IV Global Conference, while some children were frustrated by their exclusion, and expressed not having seen any positive changes as their working realities currently remain the same.

Despite limited successes concerning the conference, important conversations about the rights of working children to participate and the relevance



Time to Talk!-Steering committee members presenting the campaign and the global report during a press conference at the Conference, Argentina

of participatory action research took place. Some AAC members and the project’s Steering Committee highlighted Time to Talk’s progress within the ILO when considering the insights of working children in policy-making processes. Although children were not granted the space to share their views at the IV Global Conference, other positive results of these advocacy efforts included: a side-event on children’s voices at the Conference in Argentina; round tables between the ILO and civil society organisations; and closed-door meetings with ILO officials.

Furthermore, several lobbying communications were undertaken by members of the Time to Talk team with civil society organisations, governments and ILO delegates during the Global Conference. In

addition, some working children’s representatives from Argentina, Bolivia, and Senegal who had been part of Time to Talk, shared some of the research findings during the Foro Internacional, an international academic conference on public policy and working children held in La Paz in October 2017. Additionally, working children’s representatives from the Time to Talk project from Indonesia presented a keynote speech at the high-level, Global Child Forum on children’s rights and business that was hosted by the Swedish royal family in April 2018.

Building upon investments and outcomes of the Time to Talk project, ongoing advocacy efforts are needed by working children and their supporters in order to ensure that working girls and boys get the chance to enter into a regular dialogue with decision-makers. Duty bearers like the ILO and government representatives at multiple levels— local, sub-national, national, regional and global should regularly meet with and listen to working children, in order to refine, implement and monitor responsive, flexible policy and practice developments that are in their best interests.

“There was powerful advocacy by working children’s representatives in the Global Child Forum on children’s rights and business”

(CAC members, Indonesia)

5. Lessons learned on the participation of working children in research and advocacy

Nine key lessons from the Time to Talk project have been identified based on findings from the validation and lessons learned process:

1. The child rights-based approach increases the recognition of children's ability to express their views and experiences and to assert their rights.
2. The importance of ensuring that child rights-based research is grounded in a solid understanding of social science research methods.
3. The need for researchers and practitioners to explore and be transparent about their own perceptions of childhood, and children's work and labour in order to reduce bias and undue influence.
4. The use of child-friendly participatory tools enhances opportunities for, and the confidence of, girls and boys to express their views and ideas.
5. The active participation of children increases the recognition of the diversity of working children's experiences and living conditions, and therewith the importance of a differentiated understanding of children's work and labour concepts.
6. The need for sustained efforts to support working children and their engagement as protagonists in power struggles to challenge exclusion and oppression.
7. The need to design and implement child rights-based campaigns and research in ways that promote local ownership, collaboration and child led initiatives.
8. The importance of ensuring appropriate time, human and financial resources are allocated to support the effective participation of children in research and advocacy.
9. The importance of recognising and building upon "small steps" of change by children and their allies.

5.1 Recognition of children's capabilities

The child rights-based approach increases the recognition of children's ability to express their views and experiences and to assert their rights

"[One success] was the openness of the children in sharing their experiences. It was indeed an eye-opener for us."
(NGO, Asia)

Many of the civil society organisation representatives who supported the implementation of research with children reflected on their increased knowledge and appreciation of working children's capabilities to express themselves. They also recognised the importance of providing opportunities for children to assert and defend their rights. Many adults recognised that girls and boys often have different perspectives than adults based on their own direct lived experiences, and they described the need for increased efforts by adults to listen to girls' and boys' perspectives in order to better fulfil children's rights.

"The main lesson learned through our participation in the Time to Talk project is that children have another vision, another way of seeing than us adults, so if we want to meet their needs we will have to let them express themselves."
(NGO, Africa)

"The opportunity to advocate with and for working children was a great strength. Feeling part of it is very positive. It was also the opportunity to read other perspectives."
(NGO, Latin America)

5.2 Importance of social science research methods

The importance of ensuring that child rights-based research is grounded in a solid understanding of social science research methods

Child rights-based research is relevant to ensuring a central focus on: engaging with children as social actors and rights holders; using research evidence as an advocacy tool; and expanding spaces for children to assert their rights and hold duty bearers accountable. However, it is essential that child rights-based research is grounded in a solid understanding and application of social science research methods. In the case of the Time to Talk project, additional efforts were needed to develop the research strategy and the implementation of robust sampling strategies to enhance representativeness and external validity. At the outset of any future study, a research strategy should be elaborated articulating epistemological and methodological positions and assumptions, sampling strategies, and ethical considerations.

Knowledge and insights from research undertaken as part of the relatively recent paradigm for the study of childhoods inform child rights-based research (see James & Prout, 1990; 1997; Morrow, 2008). The paradigm recognises the social construction of childhoods and the diversity of childhood experiences (James & Prout, 1990; 1997). Children are recognised as active participants in the construction and determination of their experiences, who both influence, and are influenced by other people's lives and the societies in which they live (see Spyrou, 2018). An understanding of context is crucial and childhood is identified as only one variable of social analysis, alongside others, such as class, gender, culture or ethnicity (James & Prout, 1990; 1997). Increased reflexivity and transparent documentation on epistemological positions, and local researchers' perceptions of children and children's work is also needed to better understand how and to what extent such positions influence the data collection and analysis processes (Brewer, 2000; Charmaz, 2014; Morrow, 2008; Spyrou, 2018).

"The 'template analysis' methodology is useful to analyse data across groups, but it tends to be weaker when analysing complexities within each group. Perhaps this type of analysis could be complemented by some case studies that analyse in more detail certain topics of interest."
(AAC member)

Traditional guidelines about research quality focus on validity, reliability and generalisability. However, their appropriateness for qualitative research has been debated (Gibbs, 2007), especially by researchers working from a constructivist paradigm (Charmaz, 2014). Complementary criteria which increase the quality of qualitative research focus on: reflexivity; constant comparison (to keep checking your analysis to increase the richness of the analysis and to describe differences and variation); and use of evidence from your research to demonstrate how the analysis is grounded in collected data (Gibbs, 2007). The consultancy team used template analysis to support systematic, thematic analysis of the qualitative data, while also seeking to balance flexibility and structure (King & Brooks, 2017; Time to Talk, 2018). However, despite concerted efforts, the de-contextualisation of findings (and quotes) posed a significant challenge, due to the large scale of data collected from more than 130 consultations with working children across 36 countries. Contextual factors (socio-cultural, economic, political and historical context) did not receive sufficient attention when analysing and reporting on findings from children across so many different contexts. Having such a heterogeneous sample allowed the creation of a network amongst NGO partners and CACs across different countries, and became an instrument to empower children by including them in the larger mobilisation efforts toward a common goal. Nonetheless, working with such a diverse sample limited the level of detail and made it difficult to identify trends for specific types of work in specific regions or contexts. More steps and resources are needed to ensure genuine spaces for children's views and experiences to be heard and understood, particularly with opportunities for working children's representatives (from different working backgrounds) to meet and discuss in order to generate and agree upon a set of recommendations based on their different experiences and perspectives.

In future research, large scale consultations should ensure the use of more representative samples of working children, which could be complemented by more in-depth qualitative research collaborating with child researchers in a smaller number of contexts, including close collaboration with organised working children. This would enable comparative case studies which would allow for the greater contextualisation and description of different perspectives and experiences of working children in specific socio-cultural, historical

and political contexts. Critical paradigms which have a historical lens and a clear focus on power relations, marginalisation and social justice (Scotland, 2012; Spyrou, 2018) could also be applied in order to better understand and address the unequal power relations which impact upon children's rights.

“I think one thing we can learn from this experience is that there are good reasons why both the politics of direct representation and the research of social science come with their own rules of discipline and method necessary to guarantee credibility.... I question whether in our hurry to get the project done in time for the ILO meeting in Argentina, we did due diligence in checking on our epistemological and methodological assumptions by consulting prior experience, widely accepted social science guidelines and standards, and rather substantial literatures on both participation and querying children.”

(AAC member)

5.3 Perceptions of childhood, child work and labour

The need for researchers and practitioners to explore and be transparent about their own perceptions of childhood, and children's work and labour in order to reduce bias and undue influence

The Time to Talk consultations intended to provide a neutral, non-biased space for girls and boys to share their views, experiences and suggestions regarding children's work, their well-being, development and protection. However, consultations are unavoidably affected by the quality of the facilitation, and the values and skills of facilitators. This includes their ability to encourage dialogue among children, to explore similarities and differences in perspectives, and to use probing questions to further explore issues (Boyden & Ennew, 1997; Hart & Tyrer, 2006; O'Kane, 2008). In some contexts, adults' presence facilitates explanations and effective communication with children, however, this also carries the risk that adults regulate children's voices by shaping, challenging or redefining what they say (O'Kane, 2008).

More subtle forms of influence are also pervasive (Spyrou, 2018). As human beings and social actors, children both influence, and are influenced by people around them. While 34% of child participants had had rare or no prior contact with NGOs, the majority of the child had had prior contact with the NGO partners who organised the consultations. Thus, when children engage in NGO activities, their views and perspectives may be influenced by the values and ideas promoted by that specific NGO. For example, if children are engaged with an NGO that promotes the dignity and value of being a working child, they may feel more encouraged to discuss positive aspects of their work. Conversely, if children are engaged with an NGO that promotes the eradication of child labour, they may focus on the negative aspects of their work. For example, in India, in preparation for the National Exchange meeting, members of a campaign against child labour shared their NGO position paper with CAC members, which is likely to have influenced children's own positions and statements.

“[An important lesson learned is that] the relationship between children's views and those of adult supporters is complex. On the one hand, children (like anyone else) require help from others to collect information and form their views; on the other hand they are not simply passive receivers of knowledge...”

Since I believe that adult influence is important for the sound formation of children's views, I am not sure how important it is to limit such influence. Rather, we should consider whether adults provided sufficient information and stimulus for children to form their own views on a sound basis.

We should be aiming for appropriate influence rather than no influence.”

(AAC member)

The Time to Talk research toolkit actively encouraged facilitators to seek children's views on both the positive and negative aspects of their work, and it laid down a golden rule for facilitators and documenters: *"Try not to influence what children say. Even if you sometimes do not agree with children's perspectives, please do not influence or change children's views during or following the consultation."* Many NGO partners commented upon the impartiality and neutral space that was provided to working children to express their views, while some NGOs identified that their organisational philosophy (towards children's protagonism and/or protection) had influenced the way they approached children. AAC members expressed concerns about potential adult influence, and had differing advice on how to manage influence and be more transparent about it.

"A strength [of the consultations] is the fact that it was the working children themselves who spoke about their work. Impartiality in the process was also a great strength. The fact that everyone has been heard was also of great value to the working children."

(Adult collaborator, Peru)

Recognising the polarised views among some NGOs who focus on promoting the rights of working children (see Bessell, 2011), in hindsight it may have been naïve to consider that neutral space could be provided during the Time to Talk project. Reflecting on research and advocacy by working children, Bessell (2011: 565) has described how *"the representation of children as fulfilling social responsibilities and demanding their rights was ideologically confronting. Moreover, such a construction of childhood is incongruous with the notion of childhood that underpinned the abolitionist campaigns."*

Social anthropologists James et al. (1998) provided a four-fold typology, illustrating how the way we "see children informs the selection of our research methods and techniques. Four models: "the developing child", "the tribal child", "the adult child" and "the social child" are described (see James et al., 1998). The developing child is seen as incomplete, lacking in status and relatively incompetent (e.g. Piaget, 1968). In contrast, the tribal child is viewed as competent, part of an independent culture which can be studied in its own right, but not as part of the same communicative world as the researcher (e.g. ethnographic work of the seventies). Thus, in both these constructions children are unable to have the same status as adults.

"The main challenge is how to make sure that the local partners and facilitators are indeed independent and minimize interference of children's ideas and messages."

(AAC member)

In contrast, the adult child and social child do have this status. Whereas the adult child is seen as socially competent in ways comparable to an adult (e.g. Alderson 1993), the social child is seen as having different, though not necessarily inferior social competencies (e.g. Johnson et al., 1995). With particular adherence to a rights-based approach to research which recognises children as social actors and rights-holders, the Time to Talk research toolkit was designed with the "social child" in mind, whilst also exhibiting aspects of the "adult child". Morrow (2008) has also articulated how researchers' views of children influence theories, methods, and ethics and their intersections.

Yet in the Time to Talk project, we recognise that insufficient efforts were made to explore NGO facilitators' perceptions of childhood, children and work prior to using the Time to Talk research toolkit. Such perceptions are important, especially in relation to working children who may be differentially perceived as: resilient actors fulfilling family responsibilities; victims of labour exploitation; or delinquents in need of rehabilitation (see Aufseeser, 2014; O'Kane, 2003; Spyrou, 2018).

In the future, as part of research preparations, each researcher should be encouraged to explore and articulate their own perceptions of children, and children's work, in order to reflect upon how their own views influence the way they engage and communicate with working children. Increased efforts are also needed

to link independent researchers with NGOs during consultations and documentation processes to enhance reflection and action in order to prevent bias. Hart (2008) has also warned against one-off consultations with children by NGOs, and has encouraged more sustained dialogue involving the open-ended, co-construction of knowledge by children and adults together. This creates spaces for children to reflect upon their situation, including efforts to look at socio-cultural and political economic factors affecting their lives, and to engage in political processes that concern them. Increased opportunities to work directly with child researchers in each stage of the process can enhance children's power and their direct influence. In seeking support for participatory action research which recognises the dignity and rights of working children, ongoing collaboration and dialogue with working children's associations is encouraged, especially as they can provide necessary space for regular meetings, information sharing, dialogue, analysis and action planning for children to articulate and defend their rights.

5.4 Child-friendly methodology



Girl during the „A day in the life of“-method, Ecuador

The use of child-friendly participatory tools enhances opportunities for, and the confidence of, girls and boys to express their views and ideas.

Each CAC and many of the NGO partners noted the increased in confidence among children as they expressed their views in front of their peers, families, communities, and in some contexts their employers. The consultation methodology and the advocacy activities provided different opportunities for girls and boys to reflect on their experiences and to express themselves individually and collectively through small group discussions and activities. The lessons learned process validated the purposefulness and relevance of using child-friendly participatory research tools, such as “body mapping”, timelines, drawings and matrices. Furthermore, it was relevant and important to undertake some of the activities separately among divided groups of girls and boys in order to reflect on gender differences and similarities. Participating children, and many of the NGO partners commented upon the effectiveness of the tools which enabled interesting and engaging opportunities for girls and boys to: discuss their concrete daily experiences; reflect on differences

related to gender, season, and other factors; and share their suggestions to improve their lives.

Children indicated feeling more at ease when speaking, both in public and private settings. Children are more able to express agreement or disagreement. They also developed their leadership skills. In contexts where children with disabilities were consulted, they also reported feeling included and empowered through this experience.

A number of NGO partners commented that they would continue to use these tools in their ongoing work with children, due to the effectiveness of the tools for girls and boys when analysing their situation and sharing their views and suggestions. Staff also complemented the adaptability of the tools when working with children of different ages and abilities, while additionally recognising the need to further adapt some tools to ensure inclusivity of children with limited literacy or drawing experience. Some NGO staff also emphasised the importance of adapting and contextualising the participatory research tools to their own specific socio-cultural contexts.

5.5 Recognition of working children's diverse contexts

The active participation of children increases the recognition of the diversity of working children's experiences and living conditions, and therewith the importance of a differentiated understanding of children's work and labour concepts.

The Time to Talk project contributed to an increased appreciation among different actors of the diversity of working children's experiences and perspectives on their work among different actors. An understanding of the diversity of working children's experiences, and recognising differences in work that can be appropriate or harmful to girls and boys in different contexts is crucial, as it necessitates more nuanced policy and practice developments that are informed by the perspectives of working children and their families in local contexts (Bessell, 2011; White, 1996). Understanding children's diverse experiences in holistic ways necessitates inter-sectoral, gender-sensitive responses to children and families that build upon the resilience, rights and aspirations of girls, boys and their families, and considers their best interests. For example, a number of NGO employees who supported the research consultations identified how they now have a better understanding of the reality of children's working lives, including the ways that some children combine school and work, as some work in order to continue their studies.

The research engaged girls and boys doing different types of paid and unpaid work, including household tasks, also considered as a type of work. The data revealed a wide range of tasks and hours spent undertaking household work, depending on the child's context and area (urban or rural), gender and sibling order.

“[The biggest success of Time to Talk is] respect for diversity, culture and experience and to consult the working children. Making this a collective process recognises them as social, political and protagonist actors... Having several perspectives is very valuable. It has been wonderful to see that there are working children's associations that advocate for their approach to children's work but that are also interested in knowing more about other approaches. It is an opportunity to build bridges between the different approaches and organizations.”

(NGO, Latin America)

Children's engagement in household work varied from light tasks such as making the bed, to many hours of household work, including heavy work such as carrying firewood. However, some girls and boys did not identify household tasks as work—as it was something they did every day to help their families and to fulfil their responsibilities as a member of the family—even when the work necessitated a few hours a day.

The Time to Talk research identified how many working children are active agents in decisions about their work, and they pro-actively choose to work. Some children felt compelled to work by their circumstances, or by elders who had relatively more power than them. Such differences in power and agency need to be acknowledged, in order to develop strategies that support increased power and choice for girls and boys in decisions affecting them. Bessell (2011: 565) has suggested “how in overestimating the extent to which children can claim and exercise their agency, those advocating the right to work failed to acknowledge the structural factors that shape and severely constrain the choices that children can make.”

Differences in working children's perspectives were sometimes expressed by children when talking about their current experiences and their future aspirations. For example, some children were more critical about their working experiences if they felt their work hindered their study opportunities and/or future goals. While other children were more positive about their current work experiences when they felt their work enabled them to fulfil their aspirations (for example by gaining relevant skills or earning money to pay for their studies).

Differences when talking about their past or present experiences have also been identified by Klocker (2012).

“[The most important lesson learned is] it is difficult – or impossible – to generalize or universalize children's views”

(AAC member)

“[The most important lesson learned] was the focus on gender and age differences. ‘Child labour’ debates tend to homogenise children and childhood but there are big differences between eight-year-olds and 15-year-olds. [Also] the focus, derived from children's data, on seeing children's work in the context of other aspects of their lives, most importantly poverty status; but also schooling; youth employment; quality of relationships with their employers; and how violence affects them when working; again, not often covered in research.”

(AAC members)

Klocker has reflected on differences in child domestic working experiences reported by current and former child workers, with the latter group reporting far higher rates of dissatisfaction with their work, and far more experiences of exploitation and abuse, than those currently employed in the sector. Klocker (2012) encourages research with both current and former child workers to gain more nuanced and complex perspectives and understanding of children's work experiences.

Understanding different perspectives can help to build a bridge for dialogue and collaborative action planning between parties who have held polarised positions on children's work and child labour. Bessell (2011: 567) previously identified how, “Research from a diversity of perspectives, and particularly children-centred research, offered a means not of resolving debates but of bringing deeper understanding of a complex social phenomenon”.

5.6 Transformation of unequal power relations

The need for sustained efforts to support working children and their engagement as protagonists in power struggles to challenge exclusion and oppression.

Ongoing efforts are needed to use the Time to Talk findings to inform advocacy for more nuanced policies guided by children's best interests and views. Both the successes and limitations of the Time to Talk global campaign and research project illustrate the importance of sustained efforts to sensitise and convince duty bearers (governments; the ILO and other relevant UN agencies; businesses and employers; parents and caregivers etc.) to listen to the views of working children and to respect their rights to participation, information and association. Deep-rooted, socio-cultural, legal, and political barriers to children's participation need to be addressed, and unequal power relationships between children and adults need to be transformed.

“We need continuity to share this information about the experiences of working boys, girls and adolescents. We knew that the project was going to end, and the consultation has been a very good opportunity; but in reality the challenge is to take these results and the tools to continue making national and international impact.”

(Collaborator supporting organised working children, Latin America)

Increased steps are required to analyse adult/child power relationships in families, communities, workplaces, NGO projects, and in wider political processes, in order to further evolve good practices and to transform unequal power relationships that hinder children from fulfilling their rights. The Time to Talk research found that some children had good relationships with their parents, caregivers, and/or employers and were able to express themselves and take part in decisions about their work. This contributed to their overall self-esteem and the pride they took in their work. Children explained that when their preferences on what work they can and cannot do, and their working hours are considered by their parents, caregivers or employers, this has a direct positive impact on their protection and wellbeing. In contrast, children's exclusion from decision making increased the risk of them taking on harmful work. Some working children described how adults often do not give them choices about the work they do, or listen to the child's views or preferences. If children raise their concerns, they risk being scolded, beaten, or denied wages. Imbalances in power between children and adults increase rights violations. Gender also plays a role, for example in Kenya, girls' views were not considered in family decisions about their work, while boys' views were more likely to be heard.

Beyond families, further initiatives are needed to understand and constructively respond to the politics among organisations advocating for the rights of working children. Organisational ideologies and perceptions of children influence the way organisations engage with working children, and tensions between children's rights to participation and protection are at play. Some organisations advocate for children's protagonism and children's right to work. Other organisations are more focused on children's protection, seeking to protect children from different forms of labour and work. Greater dialogue is needed to ensure more space for children's own perspectives and consideration of their best interests to guide decision making.

Ongoing efforts are needed to counter the power struggles that exclude working children from policy developments in which that they have civil right to take part. Increased efforts are required to ensure that working children and their families have access to information on policies affecting them, and spaces that support working children to come together collectively to analyse their situation and to organise actions to defend their rights should be expanded. Increased efforts must also be taken to sensitise a wider range of adult duty bearers including governments, the ILO and other UN agencies, businesses, academia, media, and civil society organisations. This will allow them to better understand the diversity of children's work and the importance of children's participation in policy developments, so that they can help counter resistance, and support and monitor policy and practice developments in children's best interests.



“Looking at children, I think they need an environment where they are not only respected, but also find social spaces where they can trust each other and themselves. In this respect, participatory educational projects or a pedagogy of respect (Janusz Korczak) or tenderness (Alejandro Cussianovich) are indispensable.”

(AAC members)

5.7 Promoting local ownership through project design

The need to design and implement child rights-based campaigns and research in ways that promote local ownership, collaboration and child-led initiatives

“I think a key lesson that shows what we could do better is managing the tension between a structured project while still allowing for localisation and ownership from the partners. This is the heart of the success and the difficulties of what we have seen. How do we find ways of keeping ownership at the local level? How do we put children at the centre? Should the goal be around ownership and how to make something that is global, local?”

(Steering Committee member)

Child rights-based campaigns and research should be designed and implemented in ways that promote local ownership among children and other civil society actors. More time in the preparatory phase would have been beneficial to dialogue with civil society partners and existing working children's associations and movements, and to identify strategic and practical

opportunities to build upon their existing expertise, structures and processes. This would have improved local engagement in, and ownership of, the Time to Talk research and campaign process. Close collaboration with Children's Advisory Committees and/or existing associations and movements of working children did enhance local ownership but this could be further enhanced through increased channels of communication and training between those committees and networks of civil society organisations supporting working children's rights to participation. Future adaptation of participatory action research tools and processes to best fit the local context, will also promote increased enquiry, and analysis and action planning by working children based on their priority messages. Collaboration with working children's parents and caregivers—both to seek their support for working children's participation in practice and policy developments, and to encourage their own role as protagonists for improved family and child-centred policy developments—is also important.

Research processes can build upon existing structures such as children's groups or working children's associations, while also ensuring opportunities to reach out to working children who have never before been consulted. Focus group discussions are more effective when they bring together girls and/or boys with their peers (of similar age, gender and working background). Child-friendly participatory research tools (e.g. “body mapping”) can also be effectively integrated into focus group discussions. To build trust and create an environment where girls and boys can more freely express their views and suggestions, it is encouraged both to have independent facilitators, and to organise two, three or more consecutive consultation and action planning meetings with the same group of children. Moreover, child-led research, action and advocacy initiatives should be supported.

5.8 Effective participation requires resources

The importance of ensuring appropriate time, human and financial resources are allocated to support the effective participation of children in research and advocacy

“We currently have a more top-down structure where we communicate with NGO partners and with CACs, but a network should have more horizontal and bottom-up communication.”

(Steering Committee member)

sations during a two-year project. Time constraints and delays to the project resulted from the time necessary to follow administrative procedures and to release and account for funds to so many partners. These delays negatively impacted the time available for data analysis. Thus, in future research processes, it may be more effective to use the allocated resources with a more limited number of partners, to increase the collaboration of children as researchers and explore children's work in particular contexts more in detail. More regular communication between research and campaign organisers and each partner, with increased opportunities to communicate directly with Children's Advisory Committee members would further enhance ownership and quality processes. Collective analysis and action planning workshops bringing together CAC representatives from different contexts would be of great value. Furthermore, in efforts to develop effective child rights campaigns engaging children, the general public and other allies, increased time and resources are needed by coordinators at local, national, regional and global levels. Increased efforts to support horizontal exchange and local-level action and advocacy are necessary.

“The process is carried by the working children and it is with them that they must coordinate. For future opportunities, it is important to coordinate with working children delegates from an early stage to take the organizations' realities more into account.”

(NGO, Latin America)

Sufficient time and appropriate human and financial resources must be allocated to support effective communication, research and campaign processes. From the outset, a more elaborate research and campaign strategy would have informed more robust sampling strategies, which in turn would have shaped the strategy for establishing and maintaining partnerships with civil society partners; working children's associations and movements; academia; independent facilitators; governments; UN agencies; and the media. Transparent expectations and the clear allocation of roles and responsibilities among Steering Committee agencies is needed, together with effective communication mechanisms between Children's Advisory Committees and the Adult Advisory Committee.

It was time consuming and administratively complex to partner with more than 50 civil society organi-

5.9 “Small steps” of change

The importance of recognising and building upon “small steps” of change by children and their allies

Recognising the relevance and efficacy of children's participation in local action and advocacy initiatives, increased efforts are needed to support child-led and collaborative planning in children's communities, families, and work places. Equally, increased opportunities to support working children's participation in local governance mechanisms are needed. Ongoing efforts are needed to engage with children, families, and



Creative Contribution by a nine year old girl, Burkina Faso

communities in respectful ways that acknowledge and build upon their aspirations and strengths, and foster respectful adult/child relationships, and make space for children's participation in decision making. Positive shifts in power relationships, and increased opportunities for girls and boys to express their views and influence decisions in families, workplaces, and communities should be celebrated and built upon.

Through children's participation and representation in local governance, children are also able to influence budget allocations and services which can contribute to realisation of their rights. In change processes, small

“In our Public Action we created awareness on the conditions of work and children's participation within the family. We shared children's messages with the local authorities in order to advocate for social development policies to improve job opportunities for parents and to prevent school drop out. The government representative recognised the genuine problems of children. She heard everything from the children directly.”

(CAC members, India)

steps of change should be valued and built upon as they contribute to an empowering process where children's agency is recognised and expanded. Freire's (1970) work on conscientisation is a good example of how making people critically aware of their situation, encouraging them to reflect on their experiences and to express their feelings on issues that are important, can be key to their transformation.



6. Recommendations

Ten main recommendations to consider for effective child rights-based research with children, particularly working children, to inform their participation in policy and practice developments affecting them

- 1. Apply child rights-based research approaches with a central focus on engaging with children as social actors and right holders to express their views and assert their rights, and to strengthen duty bearers to be more accountable to children.**
- 2. Ensure that child rights-based research is grounded in a solid understanding of social science research methods, with improved sampling and increased efforts to support independent facilitation of research with children by:**
 - Allocating more time for desk reviews to inform research design, analysis and reporting;
 - Ensuring a detailed research strategy from the outset of the process articulating epistemological and methodological positions and assumptions, sampling strategies, and ethical considerations;
 - Improving sampling strategies to engage both organised and non-organised working children of different ages and working backgrounds (with increased efforts to reach working children who have had no prior contact with civil society organisations);
 - Adopting capacity-building initiatives that support child-led and collaborative research involving children;
 - Developing the skills of NGO staff, volunteers, and children (through online and face-to-face training) as researchers on: ethics; approaches and tools for research; power issues; and personal perceptions of children and children's work;
 - Strengthening partnerships between NGOs and local academic institutions to enhance independent facilitation and reflexivity.
- 3. Support ongoing efforts to use the nine basic requirements for effective and ethical participation of children as a tool for planning and monitoring children's participation in research and campaign processes.**
- 4. Continue to use and adapt child-friendly participatory tools that are effective in enabling girls and boys of different ages and abilities to express their views, analyse their experiences and share their suggestions.**



5. Continue to undertake research in close collaboration with children's groups and adult advisory groups.

6. Increase efforts to promote local ownership and local action among children and civil society partners who are engaged in research and campaign processes by:

- Consulting civil society organisations and children's associations/clubs about existing structures and processes that could be mobilised to support ongoing research, action and advocacy processes with, and by, children;
- Ensuring more regular communication among campaign and research organisers, civil society partners, and involved children;
- Continuing to use child-friendly participatory tools that encourage reflection and action planning; and developing and using additional, adolescent-friendly research tools such as social media, photography and other digital media for research and advocacy purposes;
- Continuing to engage with children's groups to support action and advocacy work focused on their priority messages, and to strengthen local accountability mechanisms;
- Providing funds for child-led action and advocacy initiatives;
- Ensuring opportunities for working children from different socio-cultural political contexts to come together to discuss and develop recommendations for international political stakeholders.

7. Ensure in-depth analysis and disaggregation of different views, experiences and suggestions of working girls, boys, and adolescents by:

- Ensuring local focus group discussions and activities with children of the same gender, age group and type of work; and improving questionnaire design to enhance analysis of quantitative and qualitative data in order to determine similarities and differences among different groups of working children;
- Ensuring sufficient time and allocation of human resources for in-depth data analysis;
- Undertaking analysis in close collaboration with working children, including opportunities for working children's representatives to come together for a reflection and analysis workshop;
- Ensuring sufficient time for feedback on draft reports from children's and adults' advisory groups prior to publishing;
- Continuing to use software to support systematic coding of qualitative data and careful attention to different factors such as: age; gender; sibling order; disability; type of work; ethnicity; educational status; family setting; rural/ urban/ camp location; socio-cultural political context; membership in working children's association; etc.
- Increasing the use of in-depth case studies and critical analysis providing historical, socio-cultural and political context to children's working situations and perspectives.

8. Ensure sufficient time and appropriate human and financial resources are allocated to support effective communication, research and campaign processes by:

- Developing detailed research and campaign strategies at the outset of the process with attention to the human and financial resources required for their implementation;
- Ensuring the expectations and allocation of roles and responsibilities are clearly defined among project team members, NGO partners, children, and advisors;
- Considering options to collaborate with fewer partners in order to have more time for quality communication and engagement;
- Ensuring regular communication with NGO partners, children, and advisors;
- Carefully considering children's availability, and planning research meetings at times that suit them; allowing for sufficient planning time to secure permission from children's parents/caregivers;
- Ensuring sufficient time for focus group discussions, use of participatory research tools, and plenary discussions among girls and boys;
- Allocating time and resources to NGO partners for project management and campaign coordination at local, national, regional, and global levels.

9. Build upon the knowledge, partnerships, advocacy initiatives, and capacities of children and civil society partners that have been established through the Time to Talk project to strengthen the accountability of duty bearers to fulfil children's rights by:

- Promoting networking and ongoing exchanges on working children's rights to active participation among Time to Talk partners;
- Extending financial and capacity-building support to the Children's Advisory Committees allowing them continue their advocacy work at different levels for at least one year, particularly at local and sub-national levels;
- Supporting the CACs' capacity building on advocacy, organisation-strengthening (using article 15 resource kit), and participation in local governance;
- Continuing advocacy and campaigning with duty bearers (at multiple levels) to dialogue with working children's representatives, including efforts to support follow-up dialogue and action planning;
- Using the research tools, data and lessons learned from the Time to Talk project to inform and influence other research and advocacy strategies concerning working children.

10. Undertake further research to:

- Explore how children's agency and participation in decision making in their families, workplaces, associations, and wider governance processes enhances their protection and influences positive and/or negative outcomes of children's work;
- Explore barriers to working children's participation in policy and practice developments;
- Better understand children's perspectives on children's work, both as children and as adults, through longitudinal research.

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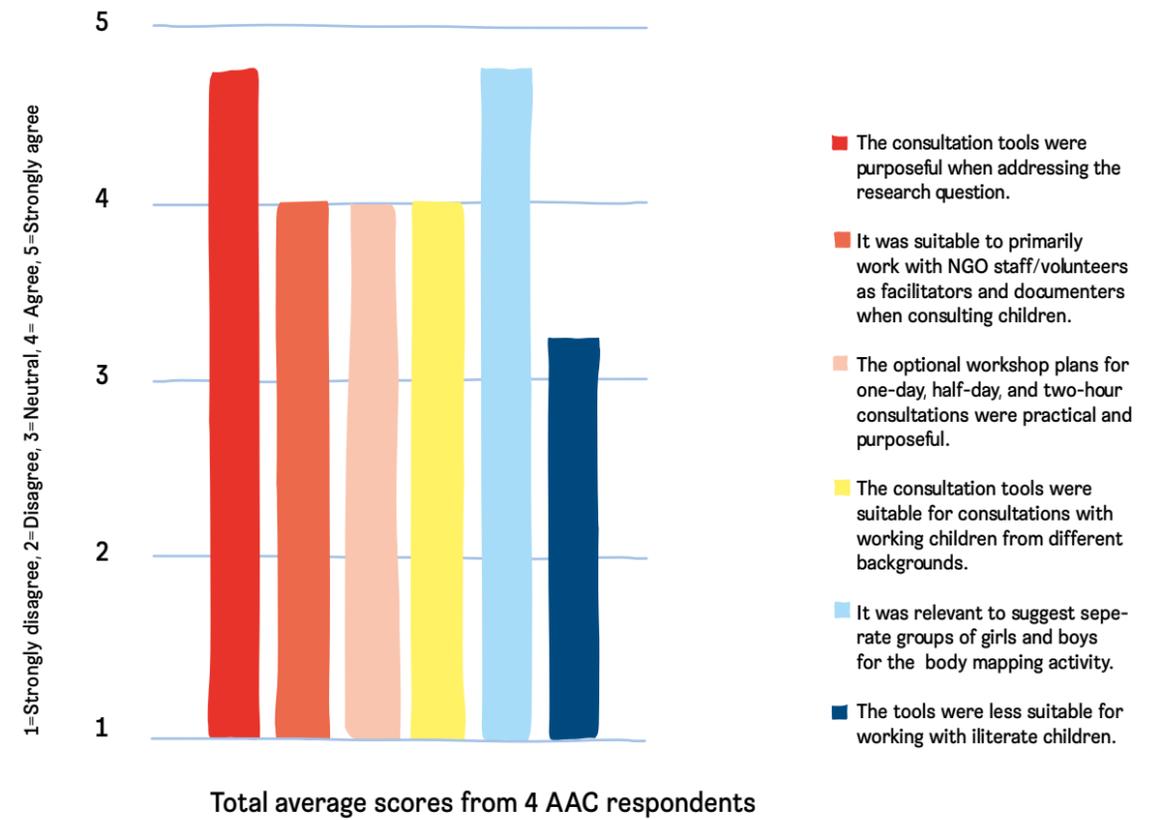
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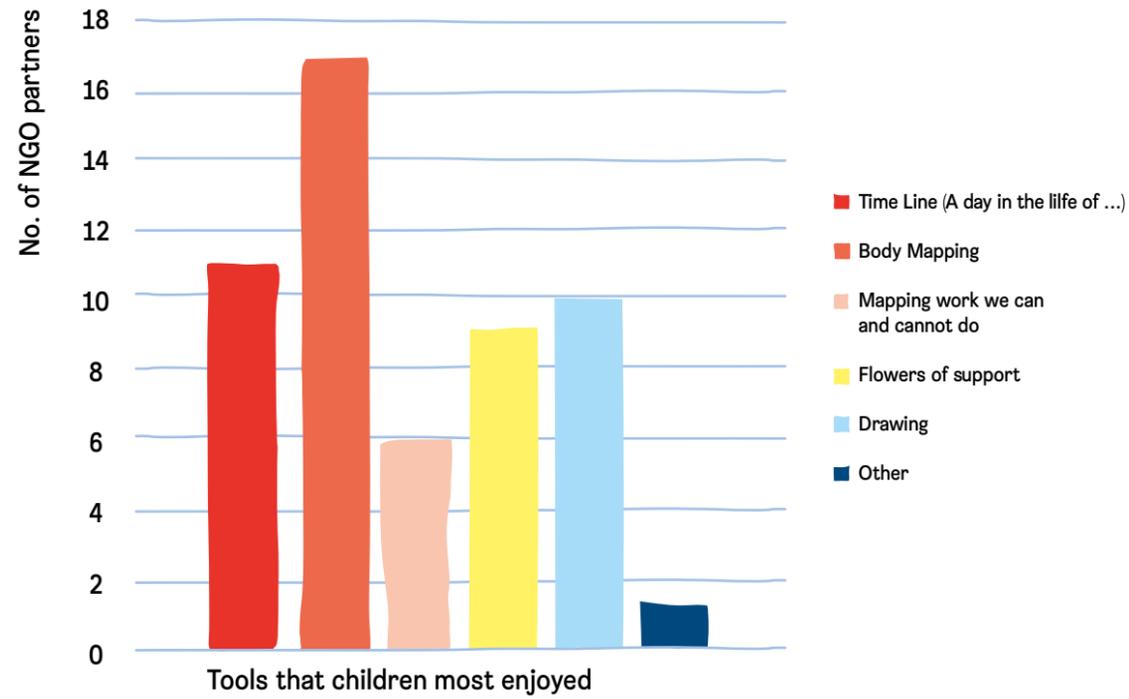
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Appendices

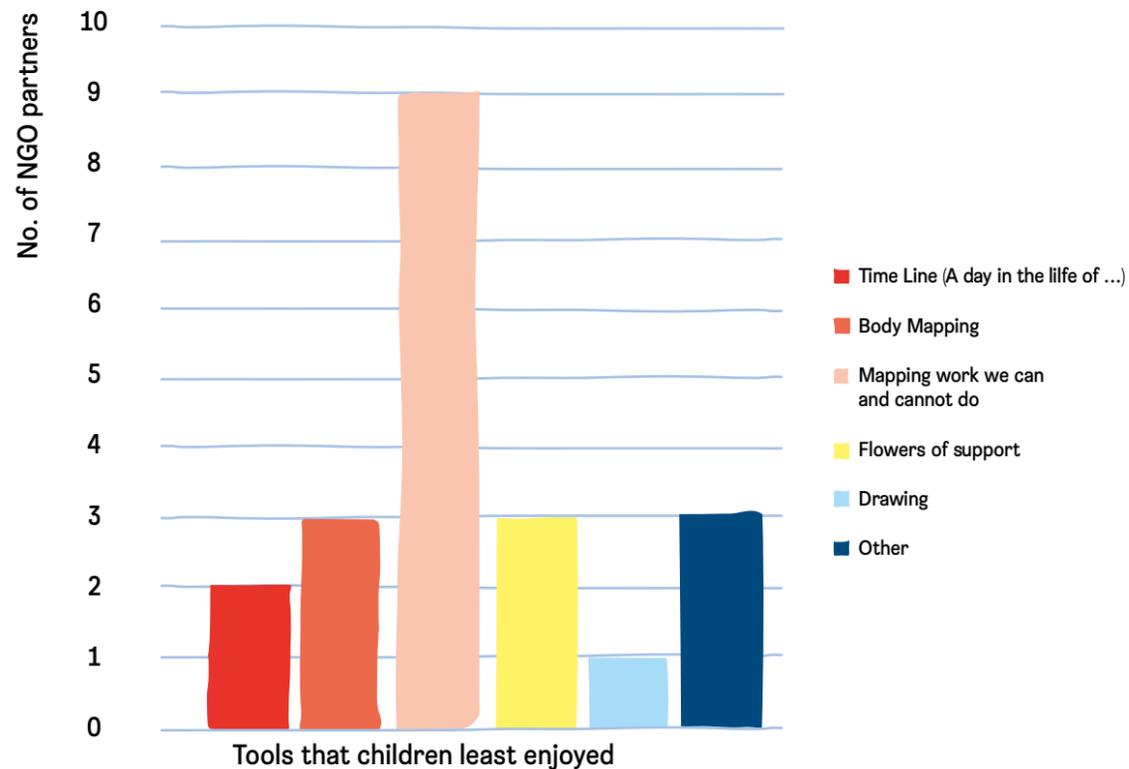
Appendix 1: AAC responses to statements on the practicability, puposefulness and suitability of research tools



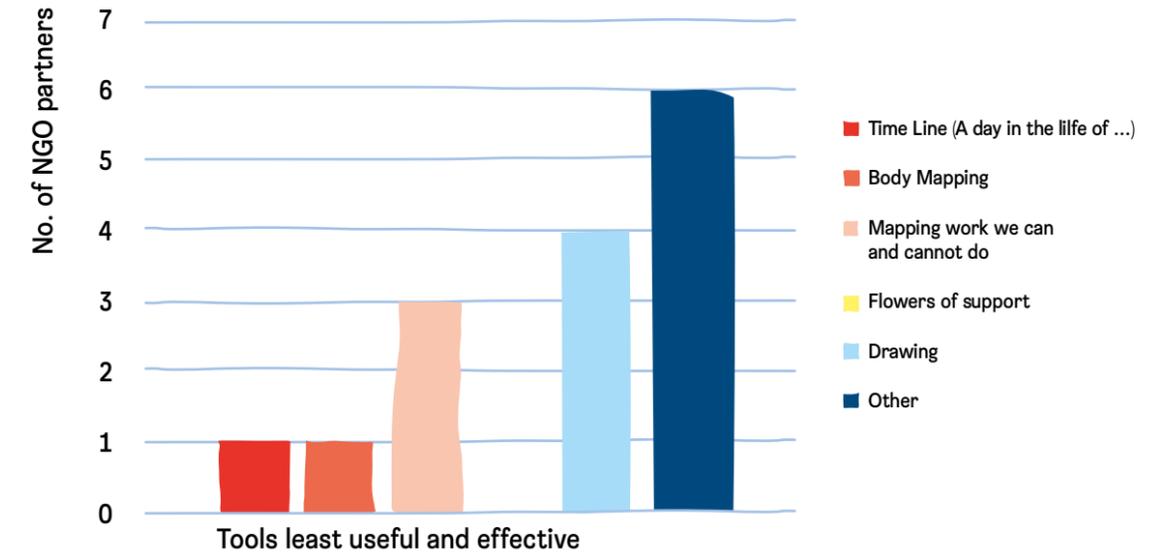
Appendix 2: NGO responses on tools children most enjoyed



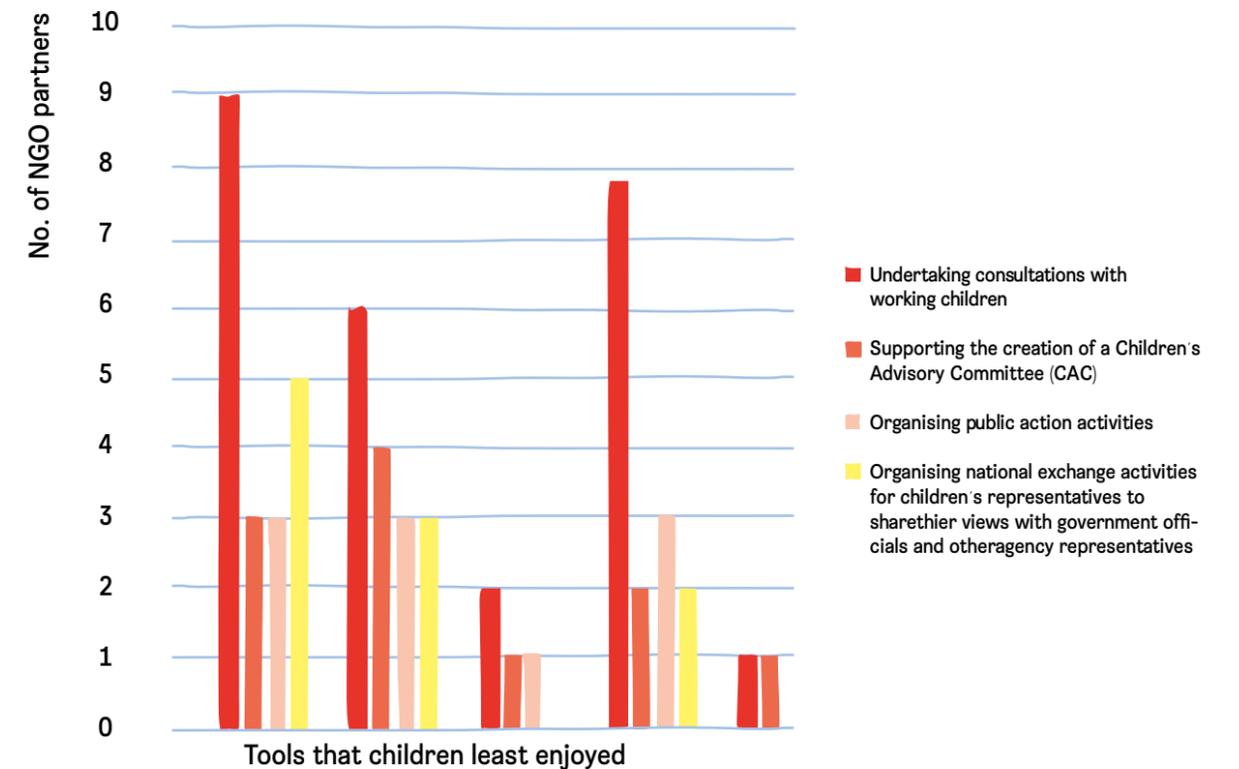
Appendix 3: NGO responses on tools children least enjoyed



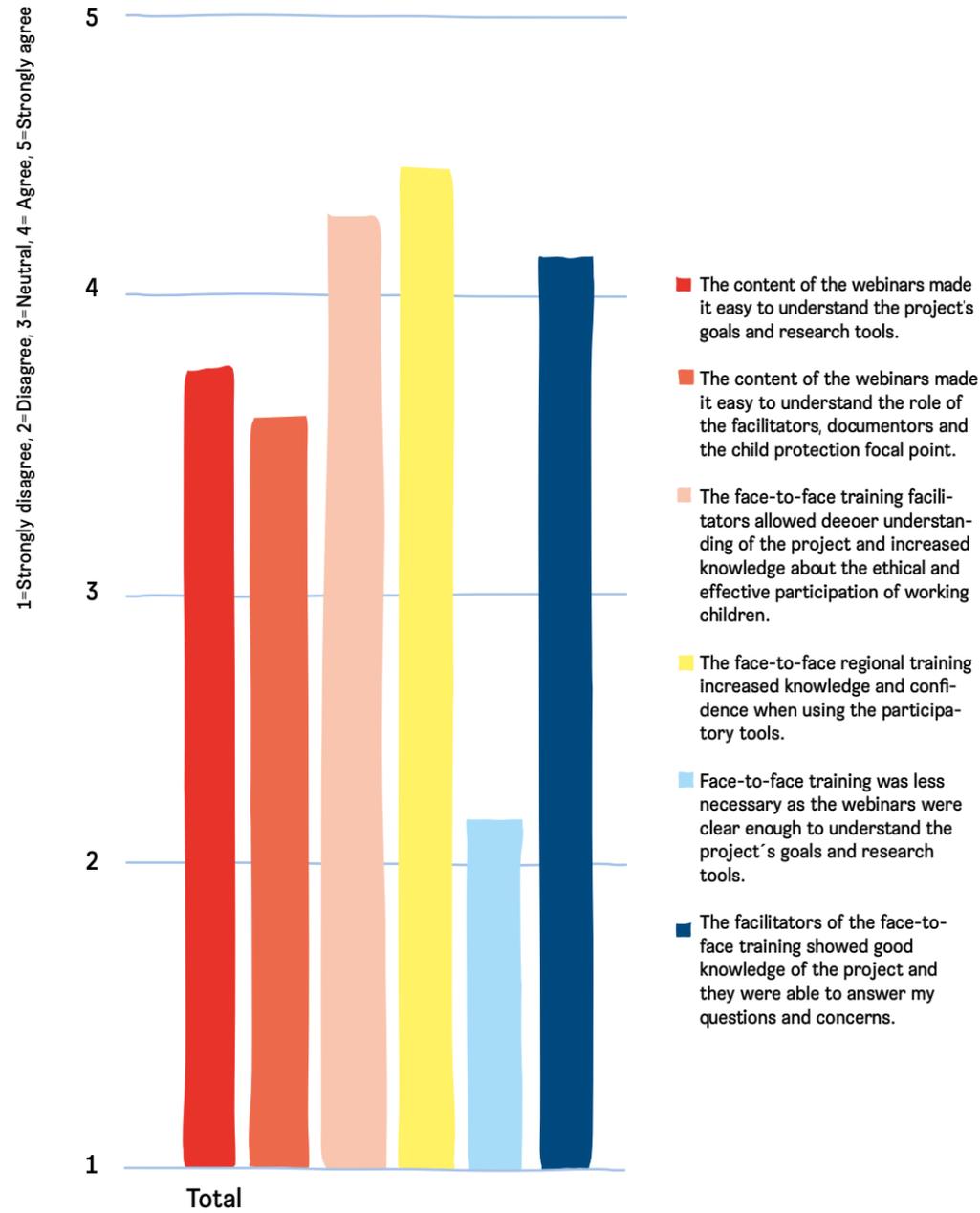
Appendix 4: NGO partner responses on tools they found to be least useful



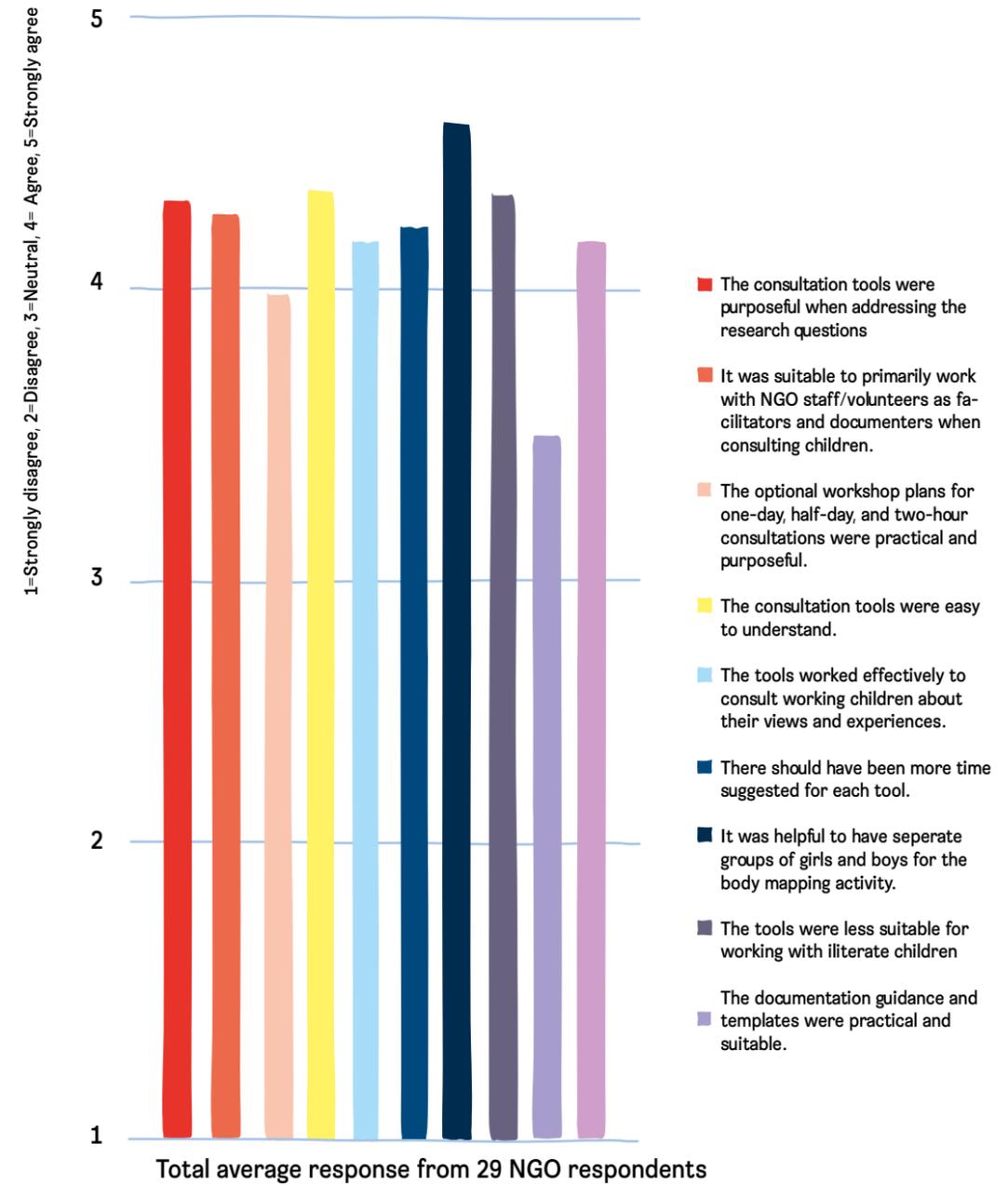
Appendix 5: Nature of engagement of NGO partners participating in the lessons learned process and validation of findings



Appendix 6: NGO partner responses to statements on training quality



Appendix 6: NGO partner's responses to statements on the practicability, purposefulness and suitability of research tools





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