

Plan

# Plan's advocacy work with children and adolescents from the gender perspective

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**Plan**  
Be a part of it.

## Plan's Human Rights Based Approach

CCCD and Advocacy

Child Centered Community Development addresses children's concerns at all levels; it is firmly rooted in the child's community but effecting change at this level alone does not create sustainable development. The concerns need to be raised from community to district, national and international levels. Our approach empowers people to mobilize and influence policy change at all these levels. Child centred advocacy refers to coordinated efforts to change values, behaviour, practices and policies that perpetuate inequality, prejudice and exclusion of children. It strengthens girl's and boy's capacities to negotiate in their best interest, to take decisions, and to organize in accountable and equitable organizations.

## Child Participation does not equal Child Advocacy

Advocacy is a conscious,  
*political* and strategic  
process!

But the level of child/youth  
engagement may vary



Why is participatory advocacy work with children and adolescents important?



## Because it is a universally agreed human right!

- The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the general human rights conventions provide children with a clear framework for child advocacy. Children's civil (and political) rights and freedoms are particularly relevant;
  - Right to name and nationality (art 7)
  - Freedom of expression (art 13)
  - Freedom of thought, conscience and religion (art 14)
  - Freedom of association and peaceful assembly (art 15)
  - Protection of privacy (art 16)
  - Right to access appropriate information (art 17)
  - Right not to be subjected to violence or torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (art 19, 37)

# Indivisibility and interdependence of human rights

The Social, economic and cultural rights are also important for advocacy work!

General Principles (umbrella rights) of the CRC, all interrelated;

- **The best interest of the child:** requires a proper risk analysis in order to guarantee protection and what's best for the child
- **Non Discrimination** – due to gender, age, race, ethnic background, political or other opinion
- **The right to life, survival, development to the maximum extent:** Provides optimal conditions for the child's life now
- **Respect for the View of the Child:** ensure that views of children are heard in all matters concerning the child, given due weight in accordance with age and maturity of the child

## The Benefits of Children's participation in Advocacy

- An expanded view on development issues/problems
- Preparing and practicing citizenship
- Development of life skills
- Increase in children's self-confidence and adult respect for children's capacities
- Increased space for children & youth in civil society

Examples of activities for child advocacy; use of media, child hearings, adult-child conferences, theatre for development, petitions, exhibits etc..





## An ideal: Child-led advocacy are efforts in which children have:

- a clear understanding and have shaped their own definition of advocacy;
- analyzed the political and gender dimension of their problems (political in its wider sense as informal and formal politics);
- analyzed existing power relations and understood their own power position in its different dimensions;
- discussed and shaped their own understanding of democracy, citizenship, social justice and rights and duties;
- developed clear objectives and a plan

# The Challenges of involving children in advocacy: Experiences from West Africa NGO's (and UN)

- Staff's socio-cultural background
- Staff working hours
- Staff capacities and fears
- Problem analysis practice (excluding power analysis)
- Funding strings
- Staff profile (gender, age, educational background)
- Resistance among parents or in community

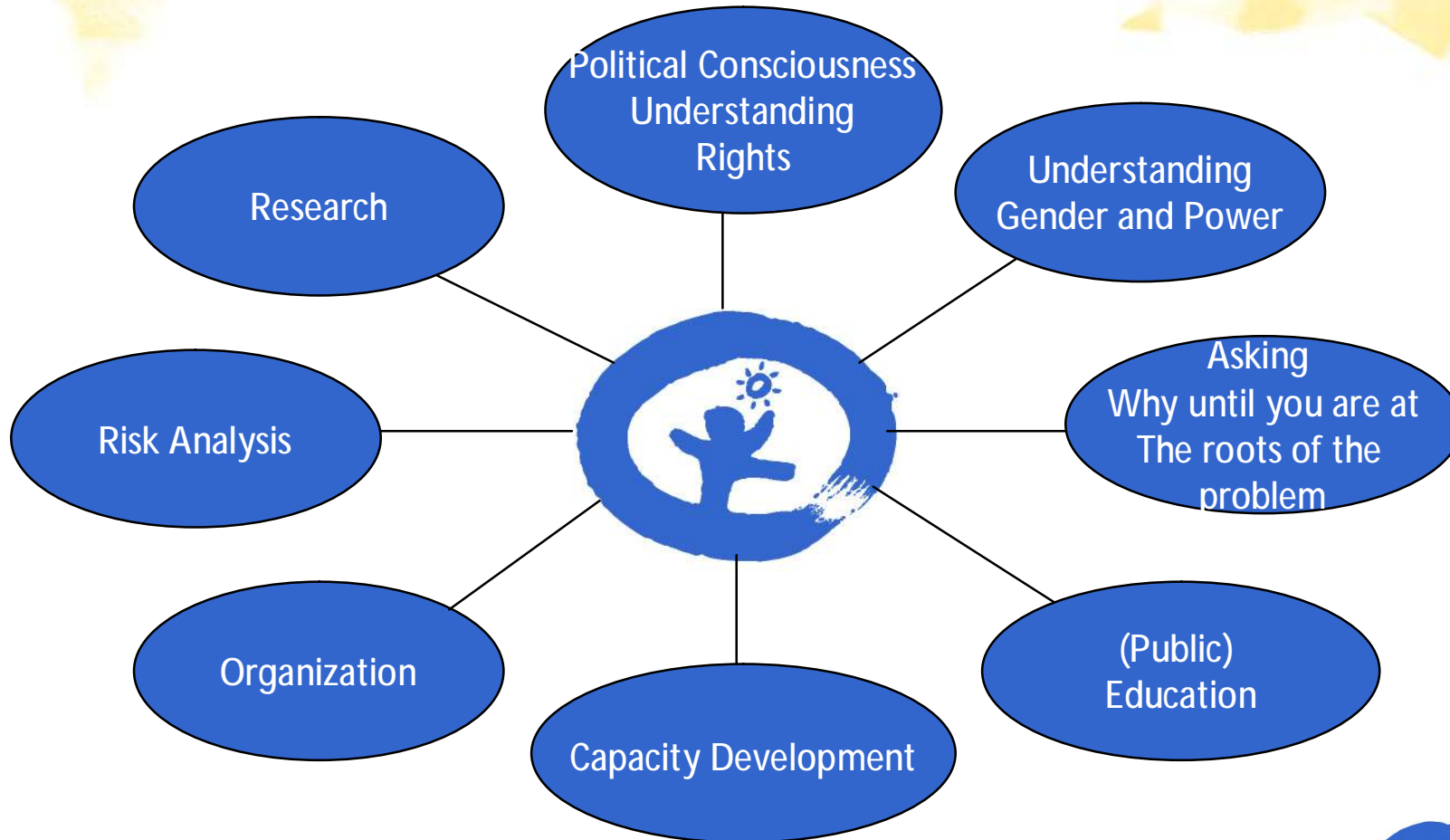
## Challenges: Children

- Children's evolving capacities and age
- The education system they are in
- The family environment they come from
- Their busy agenda
- The level of children's organization and participation in civil society
- Children's organizations institutional capacity
- The difficulties of accompanying children's rights awareness and empowerment

## The gender dimension of child advocacy

- Issues to consider and to be addressed with the children
  - Who makes up the advocacy group?
  - What is the gender division of labour?
  - What is the gender and hierarchy profile of the group?
  - Is the group meeting at times or at locations/premises that hinder girl participation?
  - Does the issue the group is advocating for have risks to girls and boys?
  - What are the social and cultural limitations to the girl/boy participation?
  - Are there local female/male role models in advocacy that may encourage girls and boys?
  - What are the perceptions and attitudes of the girls and boys about each other's participation in the group and in advocacy?

# Essential Elements of Advocacy in a HRBA



## Girl's and boy's participation in advocacy must be

- Safe
- Inclusive
- Meaningful for both sexes
- Voluntary
- Fun! Children also have a right to leisure and play and by including this dimension, children may also find it more meaningful and engaging.