



VOICES TO BE HEARD

Citizens of the World. . .

There is an echo reverberating around Tajikistan today — it is the joyful sound of children's voices as they begin to express their opinions and ideas and take centre stage with regard to issues that affect their lives.

UNICEF and its implementing partner, Nasli Navras a local NGO, have achieved concrete results in effectively promoting children's participation, their empowerment, building national alliances and in demonstrating productive examples of the consultative process.

The first National Children's Forum was held in Dushanbe in 2003, in partnership with Save the Children, UK and Nasli Navras. Children reviewed the draft National Plan of Action on Children. The process leading to the forum demonstrated how young people will take hold of opportunity if presented to them in a manner that is constructive.

Although the forum and other discussion groups were valuable experiences, the ability of the government, NGOs, communities and adults in general to involve children and work with them as partners remains limited. For participation to be

a truly meaningful process, it is important that sufficient time be set aside to equip both children and adults with proper skills.

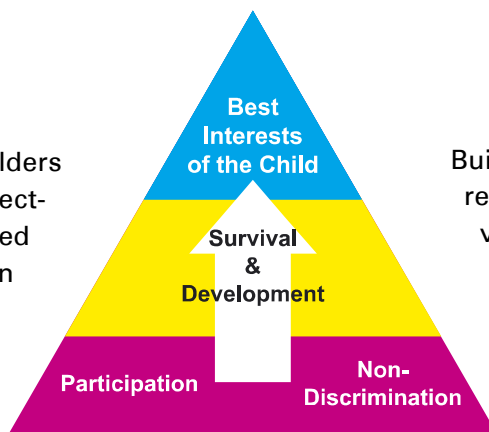
UNICEF and its partners, will continue to make the investment necessary to develop the capacity of children to express and represent their views and at the same time work with adults, communities and institutions to create the enabling structures and mechanisms for children's ideas to be given serious consideration.

The empowerment of children and youth to be active is the key to helping them bridge those difficult years between childhood and adulthood. Activities being carried out emphasize advocacy and training on the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Training peer educators to mentor young people-at-risk is a priority. Already a number of adolescents have volunteered their time at a local drop-in centre for street children in Dushanbe. This spirit of volunteerism has always been there, but it is being tapped into for the first time and is yielding results that will be seen for years to come.

“Young people are not the sources of problems — they are the resources that are needed to solve them”

GOAL

Empower children as right-holders to participate in decisions affecting them through strengthened partnership between children and adult decision-makers.



OBJECTIVES

Build capacity of children to represent, facilitate & advocate their views, rights and interests; and Create a forum for consulting children’s opinions.

STRATEGY

The improvement in the status of children so that they can fully enjoy their rights and help to build societies that acknowledge and respect children’s rights is based on the principles of the UN Convention on Rights of the Child, which include: the right not to be discriminated against; the right to be heard; the right to survival and development; and, pursuit of what is in the best interests of the child.

EXPECTED RESULTS

- Adult decision-makers will recognize the importance of consulting and involving children in matters that concern them;
- The Child Reference Group will expand and be replicated in other localities to take up discussion and co-operation with the National Commission on Child Protection and the Child Rights Monitoring Centre;
- The Child Reference Group will continue to develop child-friendly versions of rights-based documentation and reporting;
- Training modules and training will be provided on an on-going basis to children’s groups and organizations in communities and schools;

CHALLENGES

- Designing child-friendly innovative training and getting feedback in a timely manner;
- Insufficient knowledge and skills about child participation and children’s rights among policy makers and general population; and
- Reluctance of adult policy makers to fully understand the importance of children’s participation to the society.

BENEFICIARIES

- School children ages 6 to 18 years old;
- Vulnerable children, including children in conflict with the law, disabled children, children in state institutions, street & working children;
- Child rights and child-focused NGOs; and
- National & local government structures and representatives.

APPEAL SUMMARY 2005-2009 (US\$)

Child Participation & Civil Society Involvement	750,000
Child Rights Advocacy	750,000
Programme Support	300,000
Budget Appeal to Donors	1,800,000
UNICEF Contribution	300,000
TOTAL BUDGET	2,100,000