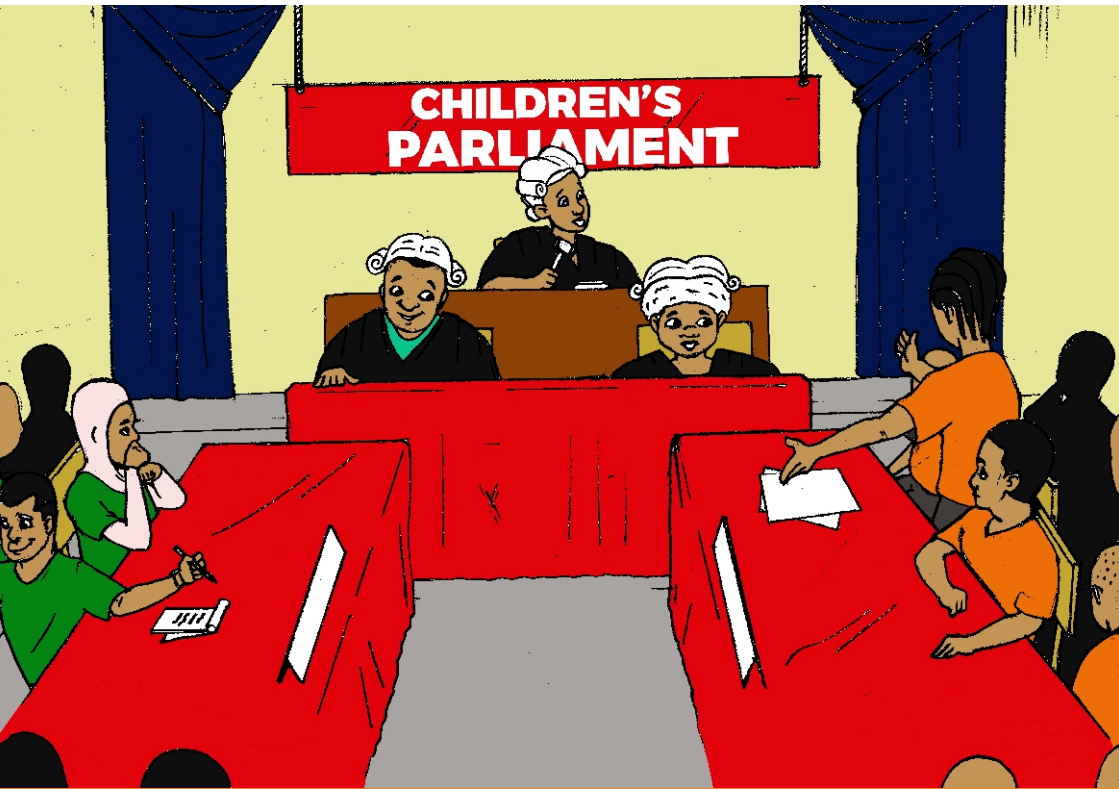




Malawi Government



NATIONAL CHILD PARTICIPATION GUIDELINES





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Produced with support from NORAD through Save the Children

Table of contents

Foreword	iii
Preface	v
Acknowledgement	vii
Acronyms	viii
Glossary	ix
 Chapter 1: Background	 1
Introduction	1
Child Participation	2
Rationale	3
 Chapter 2: Pillars and Principles of Child Participation	 6
Pillars	6
Principles of Child Participation	10
 Chapter 3: Child Participation Settings	 12
Introduction	12
Child Participation in Family Setting	13
Child Participation in Community Setting	16
Child Participation in Council Setting	28
National Child Participation Setting	36
 Chapter 4: Crosscutting Themes	 42
Child Safeguarding and Protection	42
Capacity Building	44
Interface and Feedback Mechanism with Duty Bearers	45
Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation	46

Chapter 5: Implementation and Coordination48
Role of duty bearers 53

Annexes

Annexe 1: Parental Consent form 54
Annexe 2: Terms of Reference for the National Children’s Parliament
..... 55
Annexe 3: Terms of Reference for the District Children’s Parliament
..... 57
Annexe 4: Terms of Reference for the District Child Participation
Committee 59
Annexe 5: Terms of Reference for the District Child Participation
Committee 60
Annexe 6: Child participation Assessment Tool..... 62

Foreword

By virtue of Malawi being party to Convention on the Rights of the Child, it is incumbent upon the Government of Malawi to ensure that it is committed to actively promote the welfare and development of children by progressively adopting and implementing policies and legislation aimed at encouraging and promoting conditions conducive to the full participation, development of healthy, productive and responsible members of society.

In consequence thereof, Government of Malawi has demonstrated this commitment by way of enacting different laws and policies which have been outlined here within to support the progressive realization of the children. However, implementation of laws and policies require increased involvement of stakeholders, some of whom would require simplified versions of expressive provision or indeed a set processes outlined to maximize efficiency and effectiveness.

In view of that, the Ministry of Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare with financial support from Save the Children developed Guidelines for Child Participation with intention to achieve uniformity and setting of minimum standards. These Guidelines will seek to foster meaningful child participation at all levels variously community, district and national levels.

The Government of Malawi recognizes that children are the seed of any society. Their participation is therefore understood as one of the mechanisms for entrenching general development and evolving capacities of children. It is therefore prudent to mobilize stakeholders to embrace child participation as a socio-economic issue and therefore join efforts to permit children to subject them to early stimulation, have their potentials nurtured and their self-esteem systematically elevated.

Ordinarily, these Guidelines for Child Participation are not being developed in a vacuum. It is pleasing to note that notwithstanding the absence, there have been different sets of initiatives that ensured that children still processed their thoughts to be considered in the decision making processes on various issues affecting them.

The Government recognizes different platforms that enhance child participation, children corners in and out of school clubs, religious child participation forums and children parliament. Recently Children parliament has been considered as one form of child participation that has survived all odds to provide sustainable opportunity for the participation of children in developmental process. Different studies conducted however make revelations that initiative ignored the paramount importance of observing non-discriminatory principle.

Child Parliament concentrated engaging with children only at national level and dealing with matters of national importance only ignoring aggravating challenges disenfranchising children at the most remote levels. Non-discrimination is currency of child rights governance. Development of these Guidelines for Child Participation is hallmark for eliminating all forms of discrimination on one hand and on the other hand elevating the concept to inspire a greater deal of stakeholders promoting and protecting this particular fundamental right.

The Government of Malawi is inspired to cascade all child participation opportunities to all the districts as well as revamp the school and faith based child participation activities at the grassroots level.

It is therefore hoped that all partners will adopt the provided guidelines to ensure meaningful child participation in the country.



Honorable Dr. Patricia Annie Kaliati

MINISTER OF GENDER, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL WELFARE

Preface

Malawi signed and adopted the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child of Women and Girls, for the advancement fulfilment and promotion of the principles and rights of the children in Malawi. Through the implementation of these international instruments, the government has registered multiple milestones ranging from legal reforms, policy development and implementation of various programs that promote the rights of the child.

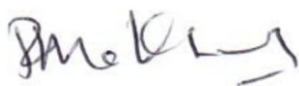
Child Participation in child related activities and programs has been one principle and right that has been mainstreamed into communities, schools and other institutions. However, one key challenge with child participation has been the lack of strategic direction to facilitate the financing of constant implementation of child participation activities. There is also a lack of proper guidance in the participation of the child in these activities.

The Ministry has therefore developed the child participation guidelines and its corresponding strategic plan to guide Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies, Development partners and Non-Governmental Organizations on the implementation of meaningful child participatory activities as well as to ensure that child participation remains a priority. The development of these guidelines are a fulfillment of governments desire to formalize and standardize child participation in Malawi.

The guidelines take cognizance of the human rights principles of the best interest of the child, the evolving capacities of the child, non-discrimination, and the right to life, survival and development of the child. In essence the guidelines provide a systematic way of involving the children in meaningful decision making by linking child participation structures to the local authority structures at all levels including the National Assembly. On matters of children, the guidelines provide that children should be actively involved and engaged to decide on the matters of their concern and interests.

It is the hope of this Ministry that key national child participation guidelines will play a key role in facilitating the scaling up of child participation interventions in the country. Furthermore, these guidelines are meant to address all disparities and abuses that occur when working with and for children.

The Government is very committed to ensure that these guidelines become an integral part of every plan, program implementation, monitoring and evaluation of interventions on matters that affect children. All Partners are therefore called upon to embrace these guidelines as they work for and with children.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Roselyn Makhumula', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Roselyn Makhumula (Mrs)

Secretary for Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare

Acknowledgement

The Ministry of Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare would like to thank all individuals and organizations who contributed towards the development of these guidelines. The Ministry is indebted to Save the Children International for financial support and the NGO Coalition on Child Rights (NGO-CCR) for the coordination role played during the process of developing the guidelines. In addition, the Ministry wishes to acknowledge the tireless effort of the Task Force members that included representatives of Ministry of Education, Ministry of Information, Malawi Human Rights Commission (MHRC), Plan International, Eye of the Child, National Child Justice Forum (NCJF), YONECO, SOS Children Villages Trust, Article III and other members who were co-opted towards the development of the guidelines.

Furthermore, special appreciation goes to the Directorate of Child Affairs in the Ministry of Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare for providing the leadership role and motivation in the conceptualization, resource mobilization, designing, data collection and the actual development of the guidelines. Lastly, the Ministry also acknowledges the role of G Consultancy Firm for kick-starting the process of developing these guidelines.

Acronyms

ACRWC	African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
AU	African Union
CC	Children's Corner
CCP	Community Children's Parliament
CoP	Clerk of Parliament
DCP	District Children's Parliament
ECD	Early Childhood Development
MoGCDSW	Ministry of Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare
NCJF	National Child Justice Forum
NCP	National Children's Parliament
NGO-CCR	Non-Governmental Organizations' Coalition on Child Rights
SCI	Save the Children International
UNICEF	United Nations Children Fund
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

Glossary

Child	Is any person below the age of 18 years
Child friendly	Means any behavior, conduct, practice, process, altitude, environment or treatment that is humane, considerate and in the best interest of a child.
Child participation	An informed and willing involvement of children in different ways and/or in any matter concerning them either directly or indirectly
Child protection	A broad term to describe philosophes, policies, standards, guidelines and procedures to protect children from both intentional and unintentional harm
National Children's Parliament	This is a participation platform for children from the age of 10 to 18 at national level involving children from all the 28 districts in Malawi.
District Children's Parliament	This is a participation platform for children from the age of 10 to 18 at district level comprising child representatives from across the district
Community Children's Parliament	This is a participation platform for young people from the age of 10 to 18 and its structure consists of representatives from various structures such as children corners, child led clubs, student councils and other informal children's structures. This structure will interchangeably be referred to as children's corner at TA level.

Children's Corner	<p>A concept that compliments provision of care for children where families, for whatever reason, are unable to provide all the support they need.</p> <p>A Children's Corner is also a focal point which ensures referrals between service providers. Children aged from 6 to 18 , especially orphans and other vulnerable children, are given holistic care, support and protection</p>
Safe spaces	An environment in which a person or category of people can feel confident that they will not be exposed to discrimination, condemnation, harassment, or any other emotional or physical harm
Duty bearers	These are actors who have a particular obligation or responsibility to respect, promote and realize human rights/child rights and to abstain from human rights/child rights violations
Child safeguarding	The actions that are taken to promote the welfare of children and protect them from intended and unintended harm
Council	This shall refer to District, Town, Municipal or City

Chapter 1

BACKGROUND

1

INTRODUCTION

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the child (ACRWC) present child participation as one of the four fundamental principles of Child Rights. Child Participation is a principle which purports the need for children to be given attention while allowing them to do so through their peer formal or informal social mechanisms. Child participation entails involvement, expression of views design and access to information, influencing decision making and capacity building in an informed and willing manner for all children, including the most marginalized; children living in extreme poverty; those living in hard to reach areas; and children with disability among others. This principle requires member states to in place appropriate mechanisms, systems and procedures for meaningful child participation.

Historically, children in Malawi have participated in several spheres of the social set ups but dynamics in the ever changing environment have influenced their conduct. This was being compounded by lack of a national framework to guide child participation initiatives at all levels. The Guidelines have therefore been developed to provide guidance to the formation and operationalization of the independent structures as social groups of children. The guidelines take cognizance of the roles of adults as duty bearers, and of children themselves as rights holders in respect of the corresponding responsibilities of children in their right to participate.

The Guidelines also take into consideration the various platforms facilitating participation of children while at the same time acknowledging the gaps in participation rights and needs of other

groups and individual child who may be regarded as comparatively more vulnerable. In this context, the guidelines take care of such groups of special vulnerability such as children with special needs, and the girl child as informed by appreciation of gender gaps. Child rights, as shall be in human rights, purport principles of equality and equity, the universality and inalienability.

Furthermore, the guidelines take cognizance of the human rights principles of the Best Interests of the Child, the Evolving capacities of the child, non-discrimination, and the right to life, survival and development/first call for the child'. Children must participate where and when they are the primary beneficiaries unlike where they would be abused or used to benefit other people in other categories. On matters of children, they would rather be consulted, actively involved, and be let to engage among themselves so as to decide on their matters of concern or interests. Policy makers need to be informed by the interests and the decisions of children.

The Ministry of Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare, being a policy holder on all matters of children in Malawi, takes central position in ensuring implementation of the standard Guidelines for Child Participation. Recognizing that children are served by different Ministries, Departments and Agencies and other partners, these guidelines have been developed to guide them in promoting child participation.

CHILD PARTICIPATION

Child Participation is an informed and willing involvement of children in different ways and/or in any matter concerning them either directly or indirectly¹. Child participation is a fundamental right for every child regardless of their circumstances. It is generally realized when a person below the age of 18, is accorded a space or an opportunity at all levels of decision making.

¹Child Protection Training Resource Kit for Malawi

Further to that if the child has been permitted to take positive action to ensure progressive realization of issues affecting their lives either directly or indirectly. It includes children's contribution in and influencing processes, decision making and activities in all aspects of their lives.

However, it must be noted that not all forms of Child Participation are meaningful participation. Meaningful participation puts the child at the center-Making the child subject of the agenda. The guidelines will promote meaningful child participation where all children are accepted as agents of their own change and not mere subjects.

Child participation practice in Malawi has a number of gaps which include:

- a. Deficiency in the promotion of child participation at decision making level.
- b. Children viewed as just beneficiaries and not effective agents of change.
- c. Absence of children at the central point to assess and analyze situations and suggest solutions.
- d. Absence of interface between the children as right holders and the duty bearers.
- e. No provision of relevant feedback to the resolutions and needs from different children forums

RATIONALE

The 2018 Population and Housing Census revealed that children constitute 51 percent of Malawi's population. Notwithstanding this imperative revelation, needs and rights of children are peripheral to national development.

Children are conspicuously missing on most spaces where plans and decisions for development are made particularly at National and local authority levels. This is against the perspective that views of children over issues that affect them differ from adults. As a result, children issues including budgetary allocation for children related services and programs are marginally provided.

Despite Malawi ratifying the UNCRC in 1991 and ACRWC in 1999, the concept of child participation has not been standardized to date. A study on Existing child practices and Standards in Malawi conducted in 2020 indicated that several factors impinge on the participation of children in decision making. The study showed that Cultural orientation came out as one of the outstanding factors, which limits child participation as it is stereotypical that children are characteristic of not making sound decisions. This has become a reason of not providing opportunities for the children to participate in decision-making.

Additionally, the study showed that inadequate engagement spaces and pro-child participation in empowerment opportunities of children remain a challenge. This aggravates the vulnerability of children to rights violations and poverty, that has resulted in some children being subjected to child marriages, teenage pregnancies, child labour, child prostitution, child begging, child trafficking, among others.

Allied to the fore-going, children need empowerment to enable them participate meaningfully in issues that affect them including decision making processes.

Objectives of Child Participation Guidelines

The overall purpose of these guidelines is to ensure better levels of participation of children across all settings so that their right to participate in matters affecting their lives is fulfilled. The guidelines specifically seek to:

- a. Provide standardized approaches and methodologies on how to meaningfully engage children.

- b. Stimulate action towards providing a safe environment and space that promotes the participation of children at the family, community , district and national levels.
- c. Motivate children to independently organize themselves into social groups.
- d. Facilitate effective contribution and decision making from children at all levels and guarantee feedback mechanisms.

>>> Users and how to use the Guidelines

The National Child Participation Guidelines will be used by facilitators of child participation at family, community, district and national levels. These facilitators shall include; CBO members, NGOs representatives, government extension workers, church leaders, teachers, children and community volunteers. They will also be used by children themselves in their child led participation activities and groups.

Chapter 2

PILLARS AND PRINCIPLES OF CHILD PARTICIPATION



PILLARS

This document is being guided by three pillars which are pivotal in achieving child participation. The pillars are arranged according to Value, Visibility and Voice.

2.1.1 Value

Child Participation strengthens familial, community and societal relationships as it promotes positive communication, enhances the effectiveness of community development, and promotes mutual respect between children and adults. Child participation also contributes to a more democratic and equitable society where both children and adults are jointly responsible for child participation. There is, therefore, need to ensure that adults value the participation of children and consider them as respected partners in development. The following Guidelines will help achieve value:

Child Participation should:

- a. Be ethical in that it applies ethical and transparent principles throughout the entire process, ensuring that the best interest of, safety and security of every child is the overarching principles of all engagements with children. This calls for due diligence to encourage children to participate in ways which are safe and do not put them or other children at increased risk of harm.
- b. Be meaningful and sustainable thereby contribute to the well-being and empowerment of children, especially the most vulnerable as active and responsible citizens in ways that are

appropriate according to a child's age, maturity, gender, religion, differing abilities, and context. This principle emphasized the importance of an empowering environment and age-appropriate approaches to child participation throughout the entire life cycle of children and adolescents.

- c. Involve a process and method across different sectors whereby engaging children in meaningful decision making is an ongoing process which need to be mainstreamed in the core business of an organization.
- d. Be facilitative, non-manipulative and values children's input and should promote the best interest of the child and enhance the personal development of each child
- e. Ensure that children and care givers give informed consent for children to participate while recognizing children's right to freedom of association or peaceful assembly.
- f. Involve children in issues and decisions that are relevant to their daily lives and concerns.
- g. Entail legal Protection for Children and young people's right to participate in decision-making is reflected in the national constitution and legislation.

2.1.2 Visibility

The UNCRC and ACRWC recognize that children are not merely passive recipients, entitled to adult protective care, but they are also subjects of rights entitled to be involved, in accordance with their evolving capacities, in decisions that affect them and exercise growing responsibility for those decisions they are competent to take for themselves.

This entails a need for explicit inclusion of children's right to participate in decision-making.

Child Participation should require that:

- a. Adults, relevant partners, people, and youth in the community working with children are continuously sensitized on the importance and value of child participation.
- b. Facilitators of child participation must have the capacity and training to work safely and effectively with children.
- c. It is accessible, inclusive, and non-discriminatory.
- d. It is facilitative, non-manipulative, and values children's input.
- e. Its activities and methods are child-friendly.
- f. It is conducted in ways that lead to empowerment of children to be responsible citizens, and help in community transformation.
- g. Facilitating organizations demonstrate accountability to children through a commitment to timely feedback, monitoring, evaluation and learning cycles with children that improve the quality of child participation.
- h. Child friendly complaints procedures are in place.

2.1.3 Voices

Meaningful child participation is about children having the opportunity to express their views, influence decision-making and the world around them. Children should be given platforms and spaces for their meaningful participation, including their opportunity to learn to participate in decision-making and other spheres of life. Likewise, the State must take measures aiming at removing barriers to effective and meaningful participation of children especially in public life and in making decisions that affect them.

In establishing platforms for child participation, facilitators should ensure that:

- a. Children are represented in forums, including through their own organizations, at school, local and regional and national governance levels.
- b. Child-targeted feedback to participate in the monitoring of their participation in line with international, regional and national and international instruments.
- c. Child protection Standards must be in place and followed.
- d. There is an existence of mechanisms to enable children to exercise their right to participate safely in judicial and administrative proceedings.
- e. Platforms (groups, children corners, child parliaments, etc.) are self-organized by children.
- f. A well-defined manner of identifying leaders for children platforms is communicated among children participating in any platform.
- g. Children are meaningfully involved in the identification of their platform leader and that adults do not impose those leaders on children.
- h. The role of adults in identifying leaders for children platforms is only facilitative.
- i. Adults facilitate the participation of children in decision making processes.

PRINCIPLES OF CHILD PARTICIPATION

This guideline adopted principles which were derived from article 12 of the UNCRC. These principles include the following; Transparent and Informative; Voluntary; Respectful; Relevant; Child Friendly; Inclusive; Supported by Training; Safe and Sensitive and; Accountable.

- a. *Transparent and Informative*** - Ensure children from diverse backgrounds are provided with full, accessible, age-appropriate information
- b. *Voluntary*** – ensure that children's participation is voluntary and that each child is given enough information and time to make a decision about whether they want to participate or not. Children should be able to withdraw or stop participating at any time they wish.
- c. *Respectful*** – children's views should be listened to and respected
- d. *Relevant*** – issues discussed should be of relevance to children's own lives and age appropriate
- e. *Child friendly*** - approaches and methods should be humane, considerate and in the best interest of the child
- f. *Inclusive*** – children of different ages, background, and disability should be given an opportunity to participate

- g. Accountable*** – children should be supported to participate in follow-up and evaluation processes. Duty bears should be able to provide timely feedback.
- h. Supported by training*** - adults need preparation, skills and support to facilitate children's participation effectively
- i. Safe and sensitive*** – safeguarding policies and principles of best interests of the child should be applied.

Chapter 3

CHILD PARTICIPATION SETTINGS

3

INTRODUCTION

Child participation settings are structures, avenues, environments, forums which provide opportunities or spaces to children to take part in decision making on matters that affect them such as policy formulation, implementation and monitoring; district and national budget process, treaty reporting and addressing social norms. Effective child participation can be highly specific to the setting or context within which the activities take place. The characteristics of each context may influence the way and the extent to which children are able to get involved in decision-making processes and to affect matters concerning them. The settings in which children are entitled to have a voice in decisions that affect their lives, include family, community, district and national settings.

In these settings there are formal and informal structures that facilitate participation of children. The formal structures include the National Children's Parliament, the District Children's Parliament, Commemorative Events involving children, School Based Clubs, Children Corners, Girls' Camps, Boys' Camps and other program based initiatives. The informal structures include: faith based gatherings, traditional events, open ground sports events, annual celebration events, weddings. However, most of the informal structures particularly traditional events such as initiation ceremonies, Chiwanja cha Yao, Mthetho, Mlakho wa Alhomwe, Kulamba and other similar events. It is therefore imperative that child participation should be observed at every setting whether formal or informal.



An example of informal child participation

CHILD PARTICIPATION IN FAMILY SETTING

A family is a group of one or more parents and their children living together as a unit. It may also mean a clan which refers to all the descendants of a common ancestor. This setting provides the first and fundamental structure for child participatory experiences and provides the initial learning environment about participation. It provides the opportunity for children to learn to express their views in a safe and supportive environment where they feel valued and respected. At family level children can be involved in decisions such as type of food to eat, type of clothes, investment, play materials school curriculum development and on extended family care. It prepares children for their participation in the wider society.

Despite the key roles that the family plays, there are a number of barriers that limit the participation of children at family level. Some of these barriers include; inadequate knowledge and skills on child participation by parents and guardians; ineffective parenting skills; and cultural stereotypes.

Based on clan context, participation shall provide the opportunity for children to learn to express their views in a safe and supportive environment where they feel valued and respected. At clan level children can be involved in decisions such as, funeral rituals, marriage processes, cultural ceremonies, land acquisitions decisions and disputes, chieftaincy and other decisions that are relevant in their daily life and concerns.



GUIDELINES

- ✓ Community facilitators shall sensitize clan/parents/ guardians and children about the importance of children's participation within the family setting

- ✓ Community facilitators shall encourage clan/parents/ guardians to treat all children within the family equally regardless of whether they are biological or not or any other status including children with disabilities.
- ✓ Community facilitators shall work with families and other care givers to encourage active involvement of children within the family setting.
- ✓ Community facilitators shall ensure that parents/guardians / clan understands and appreciate that children at whatever age have their own opinions and should be encouraged to share them
- ✓ Community facilitators shall ensure that parents/guardians/ clan create a free environment where open dialogue is encouraged, ideas are liberally exchanged and views are shared on daily basis.
- ✓ Community facilitators shall ensure that parents/guardians/ clan are involving children in decision-making processes on issues that affect them.
- ✓ Community facilitators shall ensure that parents/guardians / clan should implement decisions and opinions presented by children. Where the child's opinion or decision cannot be taken up, the adults should explain it clearly and supportively

CHILD PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY SETTING

A community is a group of people living in the same place or having particular characteristics in common. Communities can be significant partners in promoting child participation and rights protection. In order to ensure meaningful child participation, it is important to invest in the community and child participation settings for effective planning design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. However, the design and implementation of effective child participation mechanisms needs a thorough understanding of the social, cultural and political complexities at play in the communities. Some decisions taken by communities might affect the wellbeing of children. It is therefore important for communities to understand their role as contributors to the child's development.

The common community settings where child participation is promoted include, but not limited to family, village, religious institutions, youth clubs, youth organizations, Youth Action Committees, Youth Network, Girls camps, Boys camps, ECD centres, and Children's Corners, Community Child Parliament. Notably, informal child participation platforms such as faith based gatherings, traditional events, open ground sports events, annual celebration events, weddings are more prominent at this setting. At this setting, children should also participate in development of Village Action Plans (VAPs), location of development projects and monitoring of community projects.

Institutions such as schools, churches, and mosques also play a crucial role in promoting child participation initiatives at community level. As such these institutions shall be required to abide by child rights principles and guidelines. School based child participation platforms shall include; Students council, child-Led clubs, Debate clubs, Edzi Toto Clubs, Wild Life Clubs, Child Rights Clubs among others.

It should be noted that there are a number of barriers that limit participation of children at community level. Some of these include inadequate knowledge and skills on child participation; poor coordination among stakeholders; and knowledge gap on child rights related legal instruments and policy frameworks.



GUIDELINES

- ✓ Membership for community setting groups shall remain open to all children regardless of sex, disability, race, culture and ethnicity, religion, economic status or political affiliation of their parents.
- ✓ Children shall be encouraged to register and participate in the specific activities of a given group.
- ✓ Children groups shall be promoted and linked with local governance structures within community set ups such as VCDs and ADCs

- ✓ All facilitators shall provide relevant capacity strengthening initiatives using available government approved training manuals and tools.
- ✓ Office bearers of children groups shall be elected by the members of the group.
- ✓ The term of office for office bearers shall be determined by the rules and regulations of a particular child participation group.
- ✓ All community based children groups shall have a constitution to guide in the proper functioning of the groups.
- ✓ For purposes of meaningful participation, facilitators shall be required to engage children in all stages of project cycle i.e. planning, designing, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.
- ✓ Facilitators including school governance structures shall ensure that the voices or views of all children are heard and considered regardless of age, sex, status, religion, culture and ethnicity
- ✓ Facilitators shall utilize existing community settings (youth clubs) as an entry point for collecting views from children
- ✓ Facilitators shall work with community support groups to facilitate discussions, raise awareness and share best practices on child rights and importance of child participation.
- ✓ Facilitators shall work with existing child participation structures at community level and establish one where there is none.

- ✓ Facilitators shall support government to establish children's parliament at all recommended levels.
- ✓ Forums for child participation shall utilize venues and methods of communication that are comfortable for children
- ✓ Facilitators shall consider that school policies and guideline documents within the schools are written in consultation with learners and are in child friendly language and accessible to children
- ✓ Child participation activities shall be conducted in a child friendly manner

In addition to the above guidelines for community based community based child participation structures, the table below provides specific guidelines for the Community Children's Parliament (CCP), Children's corners and other related structures:

Elements	Participation Structures	
	Children's Corners and other similar structures	Community Children's Parliament
Definition	<p>This is a concept that compliments provision of care for children where families, for whatever reason, are unable all the support they need. It is also a focal point which ensures referrals between service providers. Children aged from 6 to 18, especially orphans and other vulnerable children are given holistic care, support and protection. Children's Corners are spaces where children gather to discuss various issues affecting their lives and the community in which they live. The corners provide opportunities to children to interface with service providers and duty bearers. Children meet after school hours and are guided by a designate facilitator, from the community using a facilitators' guide.</p>	<p>Platform at community level where children will be deliberating issues which affect them and present them in resolution form to authorities to address them. Children are drawn from village level settings and meet at Traditional Authority level. In some situations the Community Children's Parliament shall be replaced by the Children's Corner at Traditional Authority level²</p> <p>This is a participation platform for children from the age of 10 to 18 and its structure consists of representatives from various structures such as children corners, child led clubs, student councils and other informal children's structures.</p>

²Children participating at this structure shall be drawn from all the GVH in a particular TA

Elements	Participation Structures	
	Children's Corners and other similar structures	Community Children's Parliament
Justification	According to Article 12 of UNCRC and Articles of 4 and 7 of ACRWC, the State is obligated to provide the space for children to get engaged and inform the decision making process on matters affecting them.	According to Article 12 of UNCRC and Articles 4 and 7 of ACRWC, the State is obligated to provide the space for children to get engaged and inform the decision making process on matters affecting them. The Pan African Forum of African Union requested Member States to establish children's parliaments in their respective countries.
Location	At community level in places identified by the community leadership in consultation with the children themselves. These places include CBCCs, School premises, community grounds, churches or mosques.	At Community level in places identified by the community leadership in consultation with the children themselves such as (Teacher Development Centers (TDC), Community Based Child Care Center (CBCC), School premises or any other place suitable for such an undertaking.

Elements	Participation Structures	
	Children's Corners and other similar structures	Community Children's Parliament
Identification	All children are eligible to participate in children's corner activities	All children age 10 to 17 are legible to participate The District Social Welfare Officer (DSWO) in consultation with Child Protection Workers (CPW) , Primary Education Advisors (PEA), Teachers and other stakeholders at the Community level shall jointly undertake the process of identifying eligible children where Children's parliament has been earmarked to take place
Consent Acquisition	1. Ordinarily participation at children's corners does not require consent from parents or guardians. However, in cases where the Children's Corner has organized trips or exchange visits, facilitators should obtain prior consent from parents or guardians.	1. Teachers, DSWO, Parents and guardians will be informed and requested for granting of no-objection in respect of involving the child in the Children's Parliament sessions.

Elements	Participation Structures	
	Children's Corners and other similar structures	Community Children's Parliament
		<p>2. Selected children shall be oriented on the details of Children's Parliament and their consent to participate in the occasion shall be acquired without prejudice</p>
Transportation	<p>1. When children are travelling, they must be in the company of both male and female facilitators for supervision.</p> <p>2. Children must be picked from their community and be dropping right in their community.</p> <p>3. Facilitators must be the last to drop (after all the children have been dropped)</p> <p>4. When traveling with children they must have a first aid kit</p>	<p>1. When children are travelling, they must be in the company of both male and female facilitators for supervision.</p> <p>2. Children must be picked from their communities and be dropped back in their community.</p> <p>3. Child minders must be the last to drop (after all the children have been dropped)</p>

Elements	Participation Structures	
	Children's Corners and other similar structures	Community Children's Parliament
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Organizers must provide Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) in times of emergencies such as COVID 19 When traveling organizers must ensure that children are ferried in covered vehicles 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> When traveling with children the transporter must have a first aid kit The organizers must provide Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) in times of emergencies such as COVID-19.
Convening	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct roll call at the beginning of every children's corner meeting. Follow the national facilitators' Guide on Children's corner for smooth running of activities of the day Follow up children that are not attending children's corner activities Encourage participation of children with disabilities and ensure that the place where the children are meeting is disability friendly. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The Community Child Participation Committee (CCPC) shall develop in advance detailed program from arrival, registration, lodging logistics and all other preliminary meetings. The Community Child Participation Committee in Child Parliament consultation with Community representatives shall engage each other to develop and list topical issues to be debated by the Community Children's Parliament (CCP).

Elements	Participation Structures	
	<p>Children's Corners and other similar structures</p> <p>5. Develop work plans to guide operations of children' corners</p>	<p>Community Children's Parliament</p> <p>3. The Community Child Participation Committee shall actively support the children to develop own priority list of issues to be discussed</p> <p>4. The Community Child Participation Committee shall support the children to develop solid Motions from each of the topical issue identified and ensure that they are evenly distributed on the Order Papers throughout period of meeting.</p>
<p>Orientation of Children</p>	<p>1. Activities of the children shall be guided by the Facilitators' Guide</p> <p>2. Child Participation Committees at council level shall ensure that all facilitators of children corners are well oriented on the concept of Children' Corner</p>	<p>1. The Community Child Protection Committee shall engage the Child Parliament Representatives regarding the areas they require to be covered in the orientation in order to improve their participation.</p>

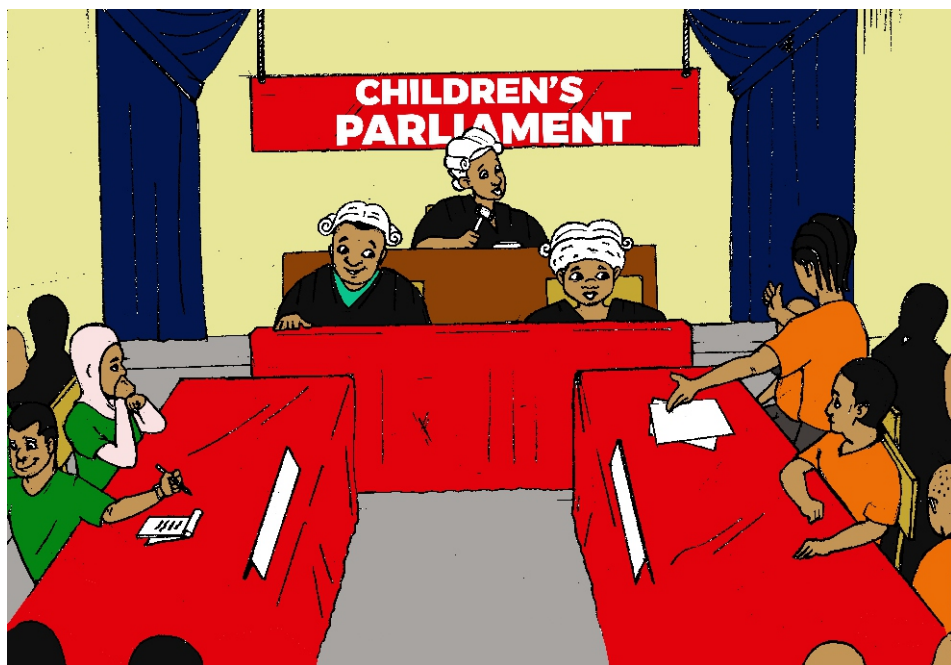
Elements	Participation Structures	
	Children's Corners and other similar structures	Community Children's Parliament
		<p>2. The Community Child Participation Committee shall mobilize resource persons and literature to facilitate the orientation and distribute all the literature necessary for reference.</p> <p>3. The district child protection committee shall provide technical support and guidance to the community task force.</p> <p>4. Orientation shall be mandatory to be attended by all Child Parliament Representatives.</p>
Accommodation of children	<p>Where children have travelled and shall need accommodation:</p> <p>1. Boys and Girls shall be accommodated in separate dormitories or hostels, or rooms.</p>	<p>Where children have travelled and shall need accommodation:</p> <p>1. Boys and Girls shall be accommodated in separate dormitories or hostels, or rooms.</p>

Elements	Participation Structures	
	Children's Corners and other similar structures	Community Children's Parliament
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. The accommodation areas for children must have adequate security. 3. Male and female child minders shall supervise boys and girls respectively in the lodging areas. 4. Management and workers of lodging facilities shall sign and committee to child safeguarding and protection. See Annex 3. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. The accommodation areas for the children must have adequate security. 3. Male and female child minders shall supervise boys and girls respectively in the lodging areas. 4. Management and workers of lodging facilities shall sign and committee to child safeguarding and protection. See Annex 3.

CHILD PARTICIPATION IN COUNCIL SETTING

A council is an important government structure that plans and implements programs, policies and various initiatives on child participation at district, municipal and city level. It is at this level where child participation activities are prioritized, mainstreamed, promoted, resourced and monitored. This is a key structure in addressing or implementing children's voices and resolutions.

The common council setting where child participation is promoted include children's parliament, girls' camps, boys' camps and commemorative events for children. At council level, children can participate in Planning process, developing and reviewing by-laws, lobbying meetings, monitoring through interface meetings with duty bearers and budget consultation meetings.



However, the children's parliament is the most prominent structure at district level as it draws children's representatives of all categories from across the district. Realizing the fact that the children are residents in the jurisdictions of various District councils, and that the District councils are constitutionally mandated to deal with the welfare of the people including children. Some of the key barriers to child participation at the district setting include inadequate resources, poor coordination among stakeholders, knowledge gap on child participation legal instruments and policy frameworks.

GUIDELINES

- ✓ The councils shall lead implementation of all activities aimed at promoting child participation at district level
- ✓ All district councils shall establish and resource district children's parliaments.
- ✓ All district councils shall support the implementation of all activities aimed at promoting child participation at district level e.g. girls and boys camps, commemorative events
- ✓ All stakeholders shall support district councils to establish children's parliament at district level.
- ✓ All stakeholders shall support councils in the implementation of all activities aimed at promoting child participation at that level e.g. girls and boys camps, commemorative events
- ✓ Councils shall consult children when planning, implementing and evaluating all programs that affect children.
- ✓ The council shall consolidate and incorporate all resolutions and contributions coming from children into the council planning and response systems.

- ✓ The council and all stakeholders shall promote gender equality in the conduct of all activities related to planning, implementing and evaluating all programs that affect children
- ✓ The District council and all stakeholders shall always create and sustain an inclusive environment for all children including Children with Disabilities.
- ✓ Councils and all stakeholders shall hold commemorative events and all activities involving children during school holidays or weekends to allow for the participation of school going children.
- ✓ Councils shall establish a task force for child participation
- ✓ The council and all stakeholders shall ensure equal participation and representation of children from all zones

The Children's Parliament at council level shall be the main structure for children at that level to articulate issues and participate in decision making processes on issues affecting children. It shall gather issues unresolved at community level from all the CCPs including related structures and come up with resolutions at that level. The table below provides guidelines.

Element	District Children's Parliament
Definition	An assembly of children from across the council identified by way of selection to represent and pass resolutions on specific topical issues affecting children in that council.
Justification	According to Article 12 of CRC and 14 of ACERWC The State is obligated to provide the space for children to get engaged and inform the decision making process on matters affecting them. Pan African Forum requested AU member states to establish children parliament in 2001. Further, the Constitution of the Republic of Malawi Section 13(h), 20, 23, 211 and 212 provide for child participation. In addition, the national children policy (2019), statement number 3.5.1.3 also provides for active participation of children in the decision making processes on issues that affect them at all levels
Location	Council chambers or any other appropriate facilities such as secondary school hall, or community hall
Timing	Twice a year during school vacations.
Identification	Ordinarily, Representatives are identified by way of interviews, however as a way to enhance participation of children, it is recommended that children must elect amongst themselves

Element		District Children's Parliament
		<p>suitable representatives from all the Community Children's Parliaments of the district. The selection must take into account gender and disability representation of the children. The child parliamentarian can serve a maximum of three consecutive terms of two years each depending on the age of the child.</p>
Guidelines	Consent Acquisition	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Parents and Guardians be notified regarding the election or selection of the child or ward to become a child parliament representative and that their consent is paramount. 2. Parents and Guardians return to Task Force for District Children's Parliament with No -Objection in writing by signing on a preprinted Consent Letter specimen attached hereto as Template 2
	Transportation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The District Child Participation Committee shall announce the strategic collection points in each educational zone-ordinarily in consultation with community child participation task force. 2. At least two child minders per Traditional Authority shall accompany the child parliamentarians to guarantee Safety and security

Element		District Children's Parliament
		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Child minders must be the last to drop after all children have been dropped 4. The organizers must provide first aid kit per Traditional Authority 5. The organizers must provide the PPEs in times of emergencies a such as COVID 19
	Convening	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Task Force shall in consultation with the Clerk to Children Parliament develop in advance detailed program from arrival, registration, lodging logistics and all other preliminary meetings. 2. The children themselves brainstorm issues and prioritize them and develop a list of topical Issues to be discussed resolved by the DCP. 3. The Task force shall actively support the children to develop own priority list of topical issues to be discussed. 4. The Task Force shall support the children to develop solid Motions from each of the topical issue identified and ensure that they are evenly distributed on the Order Papers throughout period of meeting.

District Children's Parliament		
Element		
Orientation of Children		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The District Child Participation Committee shall engage the Child Parliament Representatives regarding the areas they require to be covered in the orientation in order to improve their participation. 2. The District Child Participation Committee shall mobilize resource persons and literature to facilitate the orientation and distribute all the literature necessary for reference 3. Orientation shall be mandatory and be attended by all Child Parliament Representatives.
Accommodation of children		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Boys and Girls will be accommodated in separate dormitories or hostels, or rooms. 2. Male and female child minders will supervise boys and girls respectively in the lodging areas. 3. The Ministry of gender, community development and social welfare shall provide technical support and guidance to the District Child Participation Committee. 4. The accommodation areas for the child parliamentarians must have adequate security.

Element	District Children's Parliament
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Sleeping arrangements must be according to age group and sex. 6. Management and workers of lodging facilities will sign and committee to child safeguarding and protection.

NATIONAL CHILD PARTICIPATION SETTING

The National Child Participation Setting is a national structure that plans and implement programs and policies and various initiatives on child participation. It is at this level where child participation activities are prioritized, mainstreamed, promoted, resourced and monitored. This is a policy and legal structure in addressing or implementing children's voices and resolutions

The national level participation is through the following: national children's parliament, international commemoration days such as International Children's Day, Day of African Child, International Day of Girl Child, National Child Labor Day, Disability Day and Human Rights Day. At National level, children can participate in Planning, implementation and monitoring of child related laws and policies, lobbying meetings on child related issues, budget consultation meetings, hold interface meetings with National Assembly on set dates designated for deliberation of child related matters and Treaty reporting mechanisms.

However, in the event of commemorations or child related events government departments and other stakeholders are at liberty to draw children's representatives of all categories from across the nation. Therefore, all national child participation shall promote the equal participation regardless of cultural and gender background.

GUIDELINES

- ✓ National event will be led by ministry responsible for children before any other actor do the same either at district or regional level
- ✓ The national level events will be done according to the national child safeguarding guidelines

- ✓ The national event will be done through the consultation with children through their local or district structures like schools led clubs, student councils, district parliaments, church led group, or through national children's opinion competitions and shall include children in national initiatives.
- ✓ All stakeholders supporting government in national child initiatives should complement state efforts by collaborating together.
- ✓ All stakeholders convening internationally and regionally sanctioned commemorations should only do so after the national lunch, unless there's no national event.
- ✓ National event shall be a platform at which government will express its commitment and provide for realization of rights and welfare of the child.
- ✓ The national child participation shall have a national representation of children from all districts, unless otherwise the representation of children at a national event will not be less than 14 districts.

The National Children's Parliament (NCP) shall be the main structure for children at national level to articulate issues and participate in decision making processes on issues affecting children. It shall gather unresolved issues from all the District Child Parliaments and come up with resolutions at national level. The table below provides guidelines for the NCP:

Element	National Children's Parliament (NCP)
Definition	An assembly of children from across the country identified by way of selection to represent and pass resolutions on specific topical issues affecting children
Justification	According to Article 12 of CRC and 14 of ACERWC The State is obligated to provide the space for children to get engaged and inform the decision making process on matters affecting them. Pan African resolution of 2001 in Kenya requested all Au states to establish children parliament. Further, the Constitution of the Republic of Malawi Section 13(h), 20, 23, 211 and 212 provide for child participation. In addition, the national children policy (2019) policy statement number 3.5.1.3 also provides for active participation of children in the decision making processes on issues that affect them at all levels.
Location	National Assembly Facilities and or any other facilities suitable for holding the National Child Parliament.
Timing	Once a year during school vacations.
Identification	Ordinarily, Representatives are identified by way of interviews, however as a way to enhance participation of children, it is recommended that children must elect amongst them a suitable representative from the district children parliaments.

Element	National Children's Parliament (NCP)	
	<p>The active district child parliamentarians shall have added advantage or shall be priorities. The selection must take into account gender and disability representation of the children. the child parliamentarian can serve a maximum of three consecutive terms of two years each depending on the age of the child.</p>	
	Guidelines	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Parents and Guardians be notified regarding the election or selection of the child or ward to become a child parliament representative and that their consent is paramount. 2. Parents and Guardians return to Task Force for National Child Parliament with No Objection in writing by signing on a preprinted Consent Letter specimen attached hereto as Template 2
	Consent Acquisition	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The National Child Participation Committee shall announce strategic collection points in each district—ordinarily in consultations with the District Commissioner and the District Children parliament Task force 2. The Representatives of National Children's Parliament shall be allocated at least two child minders per district to guarantee safety and security of the child.
	Transportation	

Element		National Children's Parliament (NCP)
		<p>3. The National Child Participation Committee ordinarily chaired by the responsible ministry in collaboration with stakeholders shall dispatch buses for collection of representatives with a Protocol Officer as Team Leader to exercise child protection rules and regulations.</p> <p>4. The Protocol Officer and the Child minder will cooperate to ensure that transportation of the representatives takes the most direct route and avoid all personal and needless detours.</p>
	Convening	<p>1. The The National Child Participation Committee shall in consultation with the responsible ministry and other stakeholders develop in advance detailed program from arrival, registration, lodging logistics and all other preliminary meetings.</p> <p>2. The National Child Participation Committee in consultations with the responsible ministry, stakeholders and Child Parliament representatives shall engage each other to develop a list of Topical Issues to be discussed by the NCP.</p> <p>3. The National Child Participation Committee in collaboration the responsible ministry and stakeholders shall actively support the children to develop own priority list to be discussed.</p>

Element		National Children's Parliament (NCP)
		<p>4. The National Child Participation Committee shall support the children to develop solid Motions for each of the topical issue identified and ensure that they are evenly distributed on the Order Papers throughout period of meeting.</p>
	Orientation of Children	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The National Child Participation Committee in consultation with the responsible ministry and stakeholders will engage the Child Parliament Representatives regarding the areas they require to be covered in the orientation in order to improve their participation. 2. The National Child Participation Committee in consultations with the ministry responsible shall mobilize resource persons and literature to facilitate the orientation and distribute all the literature necessary for reference 3. Orientation shall be mandatory to all Child Parliament Representatives.

Chapter 4

CROSSCUTTING THEMES

4

CHILD SAFEGUARDING AND PROTECTION

Safeguarding children refers to protecting children from violence, exploitation, abuse, neglect and harm through preventive responsive and referral measures to ensure that children of all groups are safe from harm

GUIDELINES

- a. All child participation activities shall be in the best interest of the child
- b. Children shall participate by their free will
- c. A written consent for child participation shall be obtained from parents /guardians
- d. Participation of children shall be done at an open place and with transparency
- e. Participation shall be done in a child friendly manner
- f. If participation is being done outside their community, boys shall be accompanied by a male chaperone, and girls by a female chaperone
- g. Both female and male chaperones shall accompany a team of girls and boys travelling to events except where such travelling is under the guidance of a professional public officer or one designated as such

- h. Risk assessment shall be carried out on residency, food and transportation of children to ensure safety of the children.
- i. Child participation shall be inclusive, age appropriate and safety measures shall consider children of all social backgrounds groups (*including children living with disability, refugee children, orphans, street connected children etc.*)
- j. A written approval shall be sought from DEM, PEA, head teacher / matrons for all events or activities involving schools.
- k. For children traveling to participate in events outside their community, parents/guardians shall be inquired on any known medical conditions and allergies and management of such conditions.
- l. A background check shall be carried out on facilitators, chaperones, patrons/matrons and all adults handling the children to ensure no criminal record of child abuse.
- m. All chaperones/matrons/patrons shall respect the rights of children.
- n. All child participation activities shall be organized and conducted in line with the school calendar.
- o. In all settings where child participation is taking place, there shall be child friendly reporting mechanisms for child abuses and safeguarding breaches.
- p. Reporting mechanisms for child abuse and safeguarding breaches shall be accessible and communicated clearly in a language that children are familiar with in that context.
- q. An informed consent shall be obtained from child/guardian or responsible NGO to use child images for publicity/fundraising / awareness and media featuring.

- r. Measures shall be put in place to avoid/control the exposure of children to harm by sharing their photos and their particulars from participation sessions on social media, websites, mainstream media etc.
- s. If a child is not comfortable to participate he or she shall be allowed to withdraw any time.
- t. During participation, children shall be supervised and be made aware of their rights and roles.
- u. Children, child minders/ chaperones and stakeholders shall be oriented on child safeguarding.
- v. All organizations working with children shall have a child safeguarding policy in times of natural disasters and humanitarian crisis. All institutions working with children shall observe and implement all gazetted response preventive measures

CAPACITY BUILDING

Capacity building includes strengthening knowledge and skills, abilities, processes, resources and collaboration for effective child participation.

GUIDELINES

- a. Children shall have adequate information on the topics/areas to be covered
- b. Involve children in identifying capacity gaps that need to be addressed
- c. Children shall also be involved in all stages from the planning to review of the child participation process
- d. The content (agenda/minutes / reports) shall be in a child friendly format

- e. Inclusive delivery methodologies (use of braille, large prints, audio and visual etc) shall be inclusive
- f. Capacity building shall be sensitive to gender
- g. Capacity building shall be done in a language children are familiar with
- h. Facilitators shall follow all child safeguarding procedures

INTERFACE AND FEEDBACK MECHANISM WITH DUTY BEARERS

Interface and feedback between children and duty bearers shall take place at all levels in all child participation settings. To ensure meaningful child participation, the following are guidelines that will facilitate meaningful dialogue between children and duty bearers.



- a. The fundamental principle of the best interest of a child shall be the center of all interface mechanisms between children and duty bearers.
- b. Feedback mechanism shall be accessible and inclusive
- c. Feedback mechanism shall use language that children can understand
- d. All feedback mechanism shall consider age and cultural beliefs of children (sensitivity and age appropriate)
- e. Assess risks associated with participation, but also analyze the risks of not consulting and not listening to children (e.g. increased risks of adults abusing children if there are no channels for children to share their concerns and complaints).
- f. Use feedback mechanism that are manageable and will be available to all children without much problems

PLANNING, MONITORING AND EVALUATION

It is important to have a planning, monitoring and evaluation framework for child participation. Planning helps you set targets and outcomes to guide the implementation of child participation. Monitoring is a routine process that helps you assess whether you are adhering to your set targets and outcomes and helps you align your activities to the set targets. Evaluation is a process that helps you assess the impact and effectiveness of your activities.

The participatory planning, monitoring and evaluation with children will be essential for imparting requisite knowledge, skills, capabilities and capacities

Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation shall:

- a. Use child friendly tools
- b. Be in a language that the children are familiar with
- c. Be done in all settings (family, community, district and national)
- d. Encourage child led planning, monitoring and evaluation with evolving capacity
- e. Employ popular planning, monitoring and evaluation techniques that include:
 - i. Use of a simple evaluation survey form or questionnaire
 - ii. An evaluation wheel
 - iii. Use of a body map

Chapter 5

IMPLEMENTATION AND COORDINATION



Implementation of all child participation activities shall take due consideration of the four human rights duties namely: respect, protection, promotion and fulfilment. These duties bind all duty bearers to ensure that implementation of child participation activities is human rights based.

Effective planning, implementation, coordination, monitoring and evaluation require active engagement of multiple stakeholders. It further requires well-coordinated institutional mechanisms that run from national to lower level including line ministries. These include Ministry of Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare, Ministry of Local Government and the National Children's Commission.

Coordination may be viewed from two angles; (1) State policy programming: how government brings together all active and inactive players promulgating child participation and being useful to all the stakeholders. (2) Child structuralization: the ideal structure which bears clear lines of hierarchy across the decentralised system of governance from macro to micro levels respecting the functional positions of each of the structures led by children themselves.

Management of data about child participation mechanisms and population of children, as well of special categories of children who may include, children with any forms of disability, gender as disaggregated into girls and boys, refugee children or children in refugee camps, children in institutions of care (short or long term), orphaned children, children living on the streets, and children in contact or conflict with the law.

For the success of these guidelines, the following shall be adhered to at the appropriate settings:

a. Community setting

- ✓ The ADC shall be responsible for coordinating child participation activities at Area Development Level
- ✓ The ADC Shall collect and consolidate data on child participation through the VCDs

b. District setting

- ✓ At district council level, the District Social Welfare Sector will take a leading role in planning, implementation, coordination, monitoring and evaluation of child participation activities.
- ✓ The Director of Planning and Development (DPD) shall ensure that District Development Plan and other relevant development plans and projects are mainstreaming child participation initiatives
- ✓ Development partners shall provide resources and shall also play a leading role in monitoring
- ✓ COS shall be responsible for complementing government efforts in the implementation, advocacy, monitoring and evaluation of the guidelines

c. National setting

- ✓ The state shall be responsible for overseeing the overall implementation and coordination of the guidelines
- ✓ The policy holder shall be the ministry responsible for children
- ✓ State shall develop policy and programs that promote active implementation and coordination of child participation at all settings

- ✓ The ministry responsible for children (Ministry of Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare) and the Ministry of Local Government shall be the main coordinating agencies for the implementation of the guidelines. They shall provide overall leadership in planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of child participation initiatives.

- ✓ The other line Ministries shall work in partnership with the leading Ministries to implement sector specific interventions.

The Ministry of Finance and the Ministry Economic Planning and Development shall ensure adequate resources are provided in the national budget for child participation activities.

- ✓ Development partners shall provide resources and shall also play a monitoring role

- ✓ COS shall be responsible for complementing government efforts in the implementation, advocacy, monitoring and evaluation of the guidelines

- ✓ Empowerment of children as reliably informed through knowledge and skills acquisition

- ✓ Clear objectives of any of the child participation structures be put in place and accessible to all who associate with it.

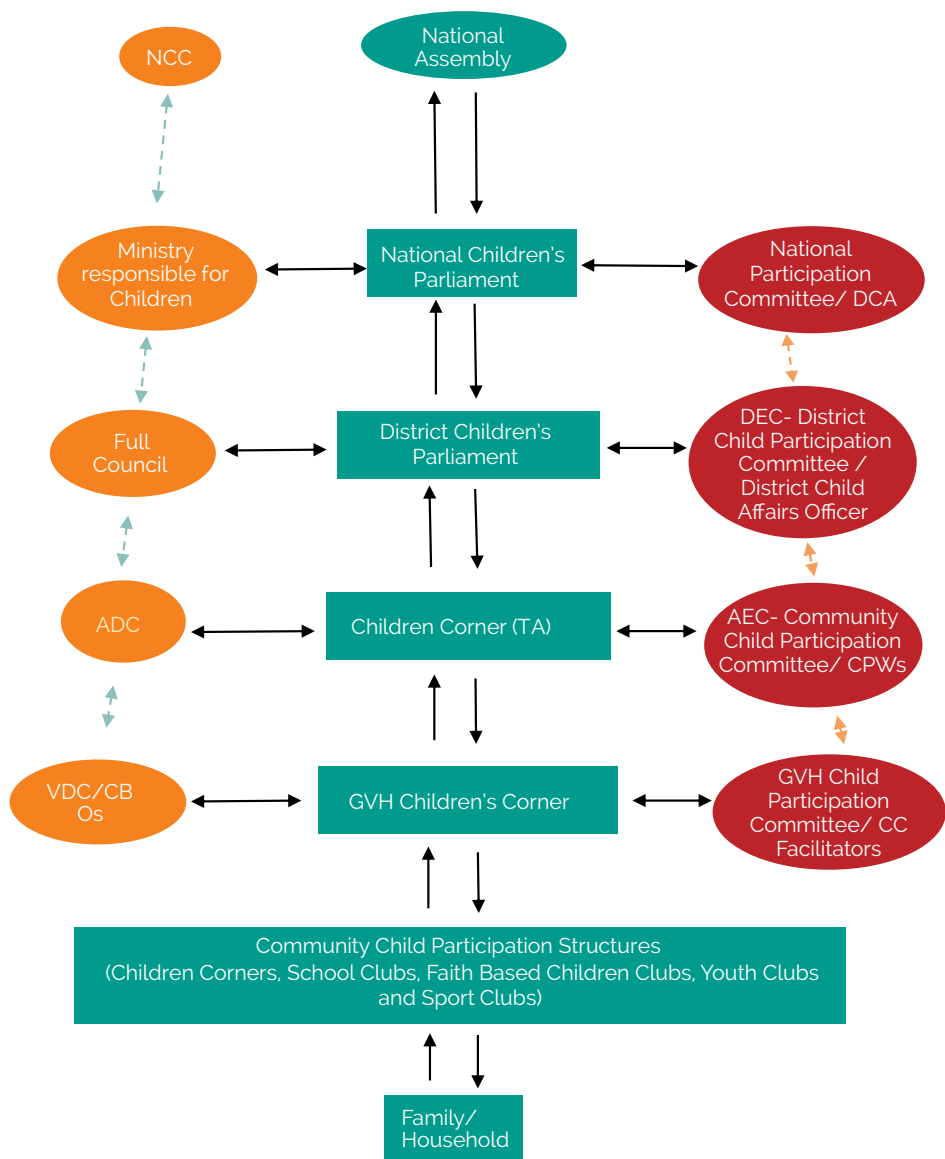
- ✓ Objectives may be put in the form of a Constitution or Terms of reference or as rules governing the purpose and operations of the structures

- ✓ There shall be a Strategic Plan document put to time scale all the times

- ✓ Meetings of Child Participation and Protection (CPP) structures shall be:

- a. Documented and documentation preserved in minutes and other formats

- b. Agenda shall be set for every meeting and such practice shall be exercised by children themselves
- c. Foul or derogatory language shall be prohibited all the times among the children while all adult facilitators shall conduct towards children/child in respect of child safeguarding and child protection policies and to the extent possible, of the laws and national or local government policies governing protection of children
- ✓ Adult facilitators shall hang around children's engagement in their social groups' businesses to:
 - d. Provide more clarity and guidance to critical questions they might have
 - e. Speak on topical subject matter so as to contribute to enlightenment and skills delivery
 - f. May handle disputes/disagreements and counselling as per need might be
 - g. Portray an image of motivation to all children, or special groups as evident models



ROLE OF DUTY BEARERS

Children are learning every time therefore prone to making various types of mistakes or errors in their choices for what to do. It is therefore the role of duty bearers which include parents, community facilitators, caregivers, organization representatives, government officials among others to undertake the following:

- Child rights must fully be understood by children as bearing corresponding responsibilities therefore imperative they acquire the understanding
- Adolescent period may be a delicate period for child development as the child goes through physiology and mental capacity development
- Flexibility of language used in internal engagement of the social group shall be determined by the children members from time to time so that everyone shall be able to contribute
- As a field of practice in futuristic preparation, use of English is a key option since the language is the formal business language in Malawi

Annexes



Annexe 1: Parental Consent form

Date: -----

I (we): ----- authorize my/our
child(dren): -----
----- to: -----
on ----- on -----
----- for -----

----- with -----
Their expected date of return is -----
----- . In addition, I (we) authorize -----
----- to consent to any routine or emergency medical treatment during
the aforementioned activity.

Signed ----- (Parent)

Signed ----- (Parent)

Address -----

Telephone Numbers -----

Annex 2:

Terms of Reference for the National Children's Parliament

The following ToRs shall apply to the National Children's Parliament

- District Children's Parliament shall be composed of 114 children representatives from all the 28 districts, 10% of whom shall be Children with Disabilities.
- Every District Children's Parliament shall elect four members as representatives in the Malawi Child Participation with exceptions of Lilongwe and Blantyre, wherefrom six representatives shall be elected and Likoma wherefrom two members will be elected.
- No person shall become member of the National Children's Parliament if they are not members of their District Children's Parliament.
- Every district shall send equal numbers of boys and girls.
- In the conduct of business in the National Children's Parliament gender shall be particularly promoted.
- Members will hold office for only one three year term.
- The National Children's Parliament shall always create and sustain an inclusive environment for Children with Disabilities.
- Only children will vote in process of the National Children's Parliament.
- The National Children's Parliament shall be held during school holidays to allow for the participation of school going children.
- The age range for children Participation shall be a minimum of 10 years and a maximum of 17 years old.

- The age range for children to be elected into the National Children's Parliament shall be a minimum of 10 years and a maximum of 17 years old.
- National Children's Parliament members shall be informed about the dates for their sessions two weeks prior to the sessions for preparation's sake.
- All children Parliamentarians need to have age certification documents as well as identity cards.

Annex 3:

Terms of Reference for District Children's Parliament

1. The District Children's Parliament activities shall be composed of child representatives from all the recognized structures across the district in the district
2. Ten per cent of the child representatives shall be Children with Disabilities.
3. There shall be guidelines for selection of children based on merit and not cronyism, tokenism and nepotism.
4. Children shall be selected to participate in the District Children's Parliament based their interest, parental consent, capabilities and following the selection procedures as outlined in these guidelines. The District Children's Parliament shall consist of minimum of 40 children.
5. Having been duly elected at a wider level, the members elected shall be assessed to ascertain their fitness for their respective roles and tasks.
6. Every District Child Participation Committee shall select a suitable number of the children to represent the District at national activities and functions with exceptions of Lilongwe, Zomba, Mzuzu and Blantyre, where four additional representatives shall be selected from the cities.
7. The teams selected shall have an appropriate gender mix.
8. Every child shall be eligible to be elected to participate in the community and district where they are ordinarily resident.
9. In the conduct of any business at all levels, gender shall be particularly promoted.
10. Members will hold office for only one three year term.

11. All Child Participation settings shall always create and sustain an inclusive environment for Children with Disabilities.
12. Voting shall be done by children only in any process.
13. Appropriate timing must always be utilized to avoid clashes with educational timetables and calendars where learners are involved.
14. The age range for child participants shall be a minimum of 10 years and a maximum of 17 years old; and their age range for selection into portfolios shall be a minimum of 10 years and a maximum of 15 years old.
15. Communication for meetings and gatherings for child participation shall be done fourteen days prior to the same preparation's sake. This communication shall include venues, dates and times.
16. In the two weeks of communication, chaperons and other responsible persons shall arrange for consent of parents/ guardians for the children to travel.

Annex 4:

Terms of Reference for the National Child Participation Committee

Terms of Reference for the National Child Participation Committee

1. Comprise of relevant professionals from partner organizations under the Technical Working Group for Child protection.
2. The secretariat shall be the MoGCDSW
3. Report to the National Technical Working Group on Child Protection.
4. Organize child participation activities and functions at National level settings in collaboration with the coordinating ministry.
5. Be responsible for the management of child participation in all functions and activities.
6. Prepare Child Participation Action Plans based on resolutions of Child Decision Making Fora in a participatory process with clear roles and contributions of each partner.
7. Facilitate the implementation of Child Participation Action Plan through different partners.
8. Ensure regular interaction with all partners for effective implementation of the Child Participation Plan of Action and report periodically on the progress achieved.
9. Raise and utilize resources for effective implementation and ensure expenditure according to the plan.
10. Plan and implement a monitoring system to know and assess effectiveness of child participation activities.
11. Prepare periodic progress reports and share with National Technical Working Group on Child Protection.
12. The composition of the National Child Participation Committee shall be reviewed every three years to accommodate new members and promote innovation in child participation.

Annex 5:

Terms of Reference for the District Child Participation Committee

Terms of Reference for the District Child Participation Committee

1. Comprise relevant professionals from partner organizations at district level.
2. The secretariat shall be the DSWO.
3. Report to the Malawi Child Participation Committee.
4. Organize child participation decision making and commemorative activities and functions at District and Community settings in collaboration with the coordinating department.
5. Be responsible for the management of child participation in all functions and activities at district level.
6. Oversee community setting activities in collaboration with the Area Level Child Participation Committees.
7. Organize the District Level Interface meetings for sharing resolutions of the children's meetings.
8. Prepare and finalize Child Participation Action Plans in a participatory process with clear roles and contributions of each partner.
9. Facilitate implementation of Child Participation Action Plan through different partners.
10. Ensure regular interaction with all partners for effective implementation of the Child Participation Plan of Action and report periodically on the progress achieved at district level.

11. Raise and utilize resources for effective implementation and ensure expenditure according to the plan.
12. Support planning and implementation of District Child Participation Action Plans.
13. Plan and implement a monitoring system to know and assess effectiveness of child participation activities in the district.
14. Prepare periodic progress reports and share with District Council and the National Child Participation Committee.
15. The composition of the District Participation Committee shall be reviewed every three years to accommodate new members and promote innovation in child participation.

Annex 6: Child participation Assessment Tool

The checklist below is aligned to the child participation principles and will assist in thinking about whether the minimum standards are adhered to in any participatory process with children

1. Questions to assess if participation is transparent and informative	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Have children been given a clear idea of purpose of the participatory process? o Have children been given information about their right to participate in a child-friendly and accessible format? o Does this information clearly state: how they will participate; why they have been given the opportunity to participate; the scope of their participation; the potential impact their participation could have? o Are the roles and responsibilities of all involved (children and adults) clearly outlined, understood and agreed upon? o Has the selection of child representatives been based on principles of democracy and non-discrimination? 		
2. Questions to assess if participation is voluntary	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Have children been given the opportunity to give their personal, informed consent to their participation? 		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Are children aware of that their participation is voluntary and their right to withdraw at any time they wish? o Have parents/guardians, teachers etc. been informed about the need for the participation of girls and boys? 		
3. Questions to assess if participation is relevant		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Are the issues covered relevant to the children involved? o Are children involved in setting the criteria for selection and representation for participation? o Has the process been designed in a way that considers the appropriate level, capacity and interest of those children involved? o Has consideration been given to the social, economic, cultural and traditional practices of the children involved? 		
4. Questions to assess if participation is respectful		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Have mechanisms been put in place to ensure children are able to freely express their views and treated with respect? o Have principles of democracy been utilized to select child representatives? o Have mechanisms been put in place to ensure the process enables children to feel that they have valid experiences and views to contribute? 		

5. Questions to assess if participation is child friendly		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Have children been consulted to find out their preferred mediums of expression? o Have sufficient time and resources been made available for participation process? o Is the meeting place child-friendly? o Is the meeting place accessible to children with disabilities? o Has accessible information been shared with children in child friendly formats and in languages that the children understand, including children with visual or hearing impairments? 			
6. Questions to assess if participation is inclusive		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Have all children been given an equal chance to participate? o Have efforts been made to reach out to children in their local settings? o Has the age range, gender and abilities of children been taken into account in the way participation is organized? o Are those working with children able to facilitate an environment that is non-discriminatory and inclusive? 			

7. Questions to assess if adults have been trained	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Have adults been provided with appropriate training and tools to work effectively and confidently with children of different ages and abilities? o Are mechanisms in place to support and supervise adults, and evaluate their participation practice? 	
8. Questions to assess if participation is safe and sensitive to risk	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Are children aware of their right to be safe from abuse? o Do children know where to go for help if needed? o Have safeguards been put in place to minimize risks and prevent abuse? o Has a system for reporting critical incidents been put in place and understood by all staff? o Has consent been obtained for the use of all information provided by children? o Has a formal complaints procedure been set up to allow children involved in participatory activities to make a complaint? o Are all those involved clear that no photographs, videos or digital images of a child can be taken or published without that child's explicit consent for a specific use? 	

o Have responsibilities relating to liability, safety, travel and medical insurance been clearly delegated and effectively planned for?		
9. Questions to assess if participation is accountable		
	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
o Have follow-up and evaluation processes been included in the process?		
o Are mechanisms in place to give children rapid and clear feedback on the impact of their involvement, the outcome of any decisions, next steps and the value of their involvement?		
o Are mechanisms in place to ensure feedback reaches all children involved?		



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