

Project Brief of

Voices of the Children 兒童留聲台

FORWARD

Child participation is one of the basic rights enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) Article 12. It is associated with other civil rights such as the freedom of expression, thought, association and access to information. Involvement of children in their own protection and development is one of the essential principles that embedded in the child rights framework, which guides how we work.

This year, as UNCRC reached its 30th anniversary, we also mark our goal to the empowerment of children so they could actively voice out their opinions and act on their suggestions, supported by adults who have responsibilities. This is also the utmost reason that this pilot project “*Voices of the Children*” is launched.

PROJECT SUMMARY

This project, “*Voices of the Children*”, aims to pilot a community-based practice to

- engage children in the issues most concerning to them at the community level, especially those relating to their protection and development
- nurture a force of adult facilitators through capacity building who support and work along the children to ensure meaningful participation

With reference to *Bamboo Shoots*¹, ***an evidence-based training manual on child-led community actions*** produced by Plan International Asia Regional Office, 5 stages (as illustrated below) are designed for this project.

Stage 1	• Recruit voluntary child participation facilitators
Stage 2	• Train the Trainers (child participation facilitators)
Stage 3	• Capacity building workshops for children
Stage 4	• Child-led issue identification, prioritization and action initiation
Stage 5	• Child-led resource mobilization, advocacy and influencing

¹ Plan International Asia Regional Officer (2013). *Bamboo Shoots: A Training Manual on Child-Centred Community Development/ Child-Led Community Actions for Facilitators Working with Children and Youth Groups*. Retrieved from <https://plan-international.org/publications/bamboo-shoots>

This project was initiated to create a lasting impact to enable children, who are placed at the centre of this project, develop their potential by

- increasing understanding of their rights as enshrined in UNCRC
- building up their awareness and analytical skills to identify situations that their rights are not fulfilled
- providing platforms for them to work effectively with children from different background through meaningful participation
- creating opportunities for them to amplify the impact of actions through collaborating with adult duty bearers including parents, community stakeholders, policy makers, government, etc.

Equally important, we also work with academia to formulate **a localised evaluation framework on child participation²**, as meaningful and ethical child participation is the primary principle that we uphold.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

Since June 2018, in Yau Tsim Mong and the North district respectively, the project has completed stage 1 to 3 and stage 4 and 5 is currently in progress. Please refer to some activity photos in Appendix I. We will publish a detailed documentation after the completion of this pilot phase, which will serve as a handy reference of our approaches and demonstration of the impact of this project is able to make.

Project Beneficiaries			
Project impact groups	Target	Actual	Remarks
Participating children	48	40	
Child participation facilitators			
Recruited	20	20	
Completed stage 2	12	12	
Communities/districts	2	2	North District and Yau Tsim Monk
Community members	60	206	
Other children in the community (engagement through Kid's House, collecting kids' voices and opinions in communities)	1,000	312	• Scale diminished as of the uncertain social events in the communities throughout the summer of 2019.
Organisations/groups	1-3	3	
Government departments	2	2	• Commission of children • YTM District Council

² A concrete Evaluation Framework is to be developed after Phase II.

ACTIVITIES HIGHLIGHTS

Project stage	Actual Output	Remarks
<u>Stage 1:</u> Identify and recruit child participation facilitators	80% completion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 16 facilitators recruited and trained 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open recruitment Facilitators are from different backgrounds, including social workers, children book editor, theatre workers, designers, etc.
<u>Stage 2:</u> Train the Trainers (child participation facilitators)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12 proceeded to be children workshop facilitators 5 capacity building workshops 1 experiential community visit 1 evaluation session 	Capacity building workshops cover <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) knowledge of child rights 2) "what is child participation" 3) child participation ethics 4) facilitation skills 5) how to design workshops for children
<u>Stage 3:</u> Capacity building workshops for children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 districts (Yau Tsim Mong and the North district) 24 children aged 6-15 yrs old 2 groups* 2 districts 3 capacity building workshops* 4 groups 1 community visit* 2 districts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In consideration of maturity and abilities, children are divided into two groups, i.e. 6-10 yrs old and 11-15 yrs old Trained facilitators, supported by workers, conducted the workshops The workshops covers <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) knowledge of child rights and 2) community risk mapping
<u>Stage 4:</u> Child-led issue identification, prioritization and action initiation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 workshops * 2 groups* 2 districts 6 community stations in Yau Tsim Mong district 159 opinions collected from community members in Yau Tsim Mong district 2 community stations in the North District 47 opinions collected from community members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workshops include <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) issues identification and prioritisation 2) design of activities to gather community voices A more detailed issues identification with initial suggestions are shown in the below table
<u>Stage 5:</u> Child-led resource mobilization, advocacy and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 child-led sharing session was held with 2 non-official members of Commission on Children (CoC) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The session has received positive feedback from the attendees and a project brief was circulated among all members The findings was included in the submission "Taking forward age friendly transport planning"

<p>influencing</p>	<p>present</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The findings from children in YTM district was presented by district council member Mr. Alan Yu during the 20th Traffic, Transport and Housing Committee meeting. 1 child representative from the North district shared their findings at the “Forum on Child Rights” 2 child-friendly engagement activities were carried out to gather opinion from the children living in the community 3 child-led community tours are arranged in both YTM and North district 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A project brief highlighting the findings has been circulated to all members in the YTM district council 4 legislative councils and 4 non-official CoC members attended the forum 87 children participated and the activity also drew a lot of attention from other community members The community tours are co-designed by the worker and the children with reference to their own experience and findings. 14 adults observed and experienced the community from the children’s perspective
<p><u>School engagement:</u></p> <p>(Mar-Jun 2019) In collaboration with “Dreamstarter Programme” of VNSAA St. Hilary’s school in YTM district</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8 workshops were delivered covering child rights, community exploration and issue identification. 16 children attended the workshops The findings were presented at the “SH Summer Fete cum DreamStarter Fair” where participating children explained to the audiences about the details. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In consideration of the school setting, the worker rearranged the workshop contents

CONTINUOUS INFLUENCING AVENUES

Influencing targets	Current status	Continued efforts
District council (YTM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Chairman of YTM Traffic, Transport and Housing Committee recognised the findings from the children participating in this project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aim to ask for the Committee to include the discussion of “how to incorporate children’s voice in decisions of district matter” into their agenda, together with the project partner and their established relationship with some district council members
Commission on Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The members who attended our sharing session share aligned vision on promoting child participation A working group on child participation is formed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue our work to provide more exchange platforms between the members and the children that we work with in Phase I to demonstrate how the project facilitated child participation Continue to build up solid relationship with members in order to seize synergy opportunities
Child-related organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hong Kong Council of Social Service (HKCSS) has called a meeting on promoting child participation with a focus on child protection which we attended and shared our project experiences Conducted meetings with potential community organisations in different districts for project scale-up 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain regular dialogues with HKCSS and other like-minded organisations to explore ways to make an collective impact Hold sharing sessions to reach out to practitioners, education institutions and potentially policy makers, working closely with Phase I project partner Pilot a monitoring and evaluation framework to measure the quality of child participation, in view to provide support to make it more clear for the industry to understand how child participation is effective.

SELECTION OF PROJECT DISTRICT

The primary reason that the project is piloted in these two districts is that the Alliance for Children Development Rights has a solid understanding of these two districts and has established a strong connection with children and families after years of community services. The project will be more effective when the worker and the facilitators have an in-depth understanding of the characteristics of the specific districts, this is also the reason that we would like to share our experience with community organisations in all 18 districts and encourage this practice to be taken up.

Besides, the two districts also have specific characteristics which coincide with impact on the lives of children and subsequently the issues they have identified. Relevant information is provided in the below table correspondingly.

FINDINGS IDENTIFIED BY CHILDREN

A more detailed visual presentation of the identified issues will be included in our final documentation. And the children in each district are still engaging the community to collect more evidence for their suggested actions.

Yau Tsim Mong District			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of children (as of 2017): 45,900³ Poverty rate (as of 2017): 18.1% (HK avg. 20.1%)⁴ With Most Sub-divided units (as of 2016): 21,500 (23.3% off all in Hong Kong)⁵ 			
Issues identified by children	Other supporting data	Initial suggestions⁶	
(1) Insufficient duration of green signal of traffic light on strategic route for children <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Junction of Chung Wui Street and Tai Kok Tsui Rd Junction of Argyle street and Reclamation street 	10 other similar places are identified by District councilors and other groups coincide with the issues voiced out by the children	Extend the duration of green signal of traffic light	
(2) Illegal Parking that will block eyesight <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arran street and Canton Road 	3 other similar places are identified by District councilors and other groups coincide with the issues voiced out by the children	Reduce illegal parking	
(3) Lack of age-appropriated recreational facilities and playgrounds for	According to Legislative council document ⁷ , the Area of public playground per children (square meter) is	Increase recreational facilities and playgrounds for children	

³ Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau of HKSAR. Children Statistics and information. Retrieved from https://www.cmab.gov.hk/en/issues/child_statistics22.htm

⁴ Government of HK.(2017). Hong Kong Poverty Situation Report 2017. Retrieved from [https://www.povertyrelief.gov.hk/eng/pdf/Hong_Kong_Poverty_Situation_Report_2017\(2018.11.19\).pdf](https://www.povertyrelief.gov.hk/eng/pdf/Hong_Kong_Poverty_Situation_Report_2017(2018.11.19).pdf)

⁵ 2016 Population by-sensus. Retrieved from <https://www.byccensus2016.gov.hk/data/snapshotPDF/Snapshot09.pdf>

⁶ The project team will continue to coordinate the exchange of opinions from the professionals on related issues to facilitate children to come up with more concrete suggestions.

⁷ Legislative Council. (ISE04/17-18). *Public playground in Hong Kong*. Retrieved from <https://www.legco.gov.hk/research-publications/english/essentials-1718ise04-public-playgrounds-in-hong-kong.htm>

children	0.41 while the average in Hong Kong is 0.27. But the population density is relatively high and the playgrounds are usually crowded. The playgrounds can only be used by children aged 2-12 yrs old.	
(4) The existing parks are too boring <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ivy street rest garden Mong Kok Road Playground 		Equip playgrounds with more interesting and stimulating elements

The North District

- No. of children (as of 2017): 48,5003
- Poverty rate (as of 2017): 22.9% (HK avg. 20.1%)*4
- *Child poverty rate is higher than average

Issue identified by children	Other supporting data	Initial suggestions ⁸
(1) North district does not have a Department of Pediatrics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children have to travel long way to use service • Increase family burden to take care of children if they stay at a far-away district 	Children are engaging with community members to collect more evidence.	Establish a Department of Pediatrics at North District Hospital
(2) The balls will easily fall out of the court and pose potential risks when children have to pick up from outside, normally main roads. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Po Wing Road Playground • Basketball court near Ching Hin House in Ching Ho Estate 		Increase the height of fence of basketball court and soccer pitch
(3) Hard-surface soccer pitch is not suitable for children to play because it will easily cause injury when fall <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Po Wing Road Playground 	13 out of 16 soccer pitches are hard-surface soccer pitch (according to the facilities list in the Leisure and Cultural Service Department)	Replace hard-surface soccer pitches by grass pitches
(4) Playground in Ching Ho Estate is boring and the playground in the North district park is too far away	According to Legislative Council document ⁷ , the Area of public playground per children (square meter) is 0.31 while the average in Hong Kong is 0.27. The playgrounds can only be used by children aged 2-12 yrs old	Design playgrounds with more interesting elements (sand pool, swing)

⁸ The project team will continue to coordinate the exchange of opinions from the professionals on related issues to facilitate children to come up with more concrete suggestions.

PROJECT PROSPECTS

Upholding a strong belief that children's voices are matter and we value every single child voice and capacity, as a project initiator, Plan International Hong Kong will make our best effort to

- 1) share the experience drawn from this pilot project to the community who care and believe in the 110 million children in Hong Kong and,
- 2) invite like-minded organisations to join force to realise children's voice, in respective of their backgrounds, in all 18 districts in Hong Kong.

Especially in this year of 2019, which marks the 30th anniversary of Convention on the Rights of the Child, we continued to join hands with civil society and contribute to the betterment of children's wellbeing.

We will continue to explore and establish avenues to bring children's presence into the decision making that affect children at the district council level and at the same time to keep walking on our path to replicate this project to build more evidence.

Project team

<i>Plan International Hong Kong</i>	
Project lead: Ms. Emily Wong	Tel: 3405 5321 Email: emily.wong@plan.org.hk
<i>The Alliance for Children Development Rights</i>	
Project supervisor: Mr. Lee Tai Shing	Tel: 6644 8440 Email: hermes0814cheung@gmail.com
Project officer: Mr. Chin Kiu Cheung	Tel: 6644 8440 Email: hermes0814cheung@gmail.com

APPENDIX I Gallery highlight

STAGE 2: TRAIN THE TRAINERS (CHILD PARTICIPATION FACILITATORS)



The experiential community- walk during which facilitators sat on a cart and observed the community through the perspectives of a child.



The stimulation activity enabled the facilitators to experience the difficulties that younger children faced when they helped out with house errands, i.e. hang the clothes



The stimulation activity enabled the facilitators to experience the younger children needs more time to cross a zebra line.



This activity reflected that the design of some public facilities are not child-friendly enough, i.e. they cannot reach the button of the lift

SOME QUOTES from facilitators who reflected on the journey⁹

“This project helped me clarify basic concepts of child right”

“The community visit was very inspiring which got me realise the difference in perspectives between children and adults”

“I realise my grow-up experience affect my understanding to children’s voice. I have to be very mindful in some of the listening exercises”

“I realise the importance of listening to children’ voices, but sometimes I still doubt what they suggested. Too impractical. Sometime I am not sure whether I should ban their idea. Would that be not respectful? ”

“I was nervous when first conducted the workshops with children, especially young kids, I did not know how to manage the order. With the help from the worker and the suggestions to set the groups rule with children, the situation improved a lot in the subsequent workshops ”

⁹ We clarified with facilitators some of their concerns and stressed the essence of child participation. What comes along with rights are responsibilities, it is equally important that children understand their responsibilities, how to work with adults and how to contribute to a mutual respect environment.

STAGE 3: CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHOPS FOR CHILDREN

YAU TSIM MONG DISTRICT



Child-friendly approaches were adopted as a way for the younger kids to stimulate children to present their dream playgrounds



Older children were asked to come up with their opinions individually for a group discussion later.



Children and facilitators were exploring the dangerous spots of the rooftops of the 'Tong Lau' during the community visit and documented through photo-taking



The dangerous spots in the Mong Kok wet market had also been pictured by the children

THE NORTH DISTRICT



A board game was used to facilitate the younger children (6-10 years old) to be familiar with community facilities and to lead the discussion.



Role-play and drama was used as another approach to engage with children of aged 11-15 yrs old children.



A community orienteering with check-points activities was conducted for the children and facilitators. The activities shown in the picture was to let them experience the potential danger of the synthetic soccer ground.

This activity was featured by HK01, for more details: [北區兒童社區定向](#). (in Chinese only)



During the community orienteering, children recoded the crowd at Sheung Shui MTR exit. They reflected that the exit was always jammed by tourists with luggage and they were afraid to be hit by the luggage.

This activity was featured by HK01, for more details: [北區兒童玩社區定向](#). (in Chinese only)

STAGE 4: CHILD-LED ISSUE IDENTIFICATION, PRIORITIZATION AND ACTION INITIATION

YAU TSIM MONG DISTRICT



In collaboration with other district based organisations, children were able to approach children of different backgrounds in the community. An ethnic minority girl was being invited by our children to express their opinions.



Collaborated with district councilors, community station was set up in order to collect opinions from the community. And children engaged parents and their child to invite comments and gather opinions.



Children used a visual aid board to introduce child-friendly community and shared their suggestion on community.



Children invited adults to provide their opinions on child-friendly community to enrich children's suggestion

THE NORTH DISTRICT



Children invited adults to provide their opinions on child-friendly community to enrich children's suggestion.




Children used leaflet to introduce child-friendly community and shared their suggestion on community.



Children worked together at a community station. Children aged 11-15 led and assisted the younger children.

STAGE 5 CHILD-LED RESOURCE MOBILISATION, ADVOCACY AND INFLUENCING

YAU TSIM MONG DISTRICT	
	The child representative led a community tour for the non-official members of Commission on Children so that they could see the community from the children's perspectives
	The child representative was introducing their suggestions to a child and his mother and invited him to vote.
	The adult participant was experiencing the playground after the child representative told them about their opinions about the lack of interesting facilities in the community playground

THE NORTH DISTRICT



The child representative was introducing the voting station to her peers from the same community and invited them to vote



The child representative was sharing his experience of how he got hurt when playing in the hard-surface soccer field and briefly discussed about the general situation of soccer fields in the district

We look forward to working together with you on safeguarding children's best interest and right to participate in Hong Kong!

~Thank you so much~