

“Child Rights, Classroom and School Management” Training programme supported by
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FINAL PROJECT REPORT

“LISTEN TO OUR VOICES: AN OPEN SPACE TO CHILDREN’S PARTICIPATION”

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Introduction

The present document compiles the experiences implemented in the pilot Project "Listen to our voices: an open space to children's participation", which was proposed by the Colombian team, which participated during the Spring of 2006 in the International Training Program "Children's Rights, School and Classroom Management, offered by Lund University and sponsored by SIDA.

The main objective of the project consists of implementing a series of activities, which promote spaces for children's participation in three different socio-cultural contexts (a rural setting, a private school in Bogota and a public school in the outskirts of the city.

This report initially presents a general view of the right to children's participation in Colombia, the problem and objectives and then contextualizing elements of the institutions where the activities took place. Next, a description of the implemented strategies is presented, facts learnt after carrying out the pilot project. Finally, outcomes of the project are stated as well as the assessment of the results in the Colombian context.

1. Local Background to the Project

In Colombia, children and young people's participation is recognized in Article 45 of the Constitution as a fundamental right that contributes to strengthen democracy, as well as in the General Education Act, and in the Youth Act. Nevertheless, the participation of boys and girls is quite embryonic in practice.

Actions promoted by the government to encourage opportunities for children to participate and give their opinions have not been widespread or significant. Their impact has been limited because they arise in specific situations, and information on these efforts is scanty.

The views that adults hold with respect to children determine the manner in which they relate to them as well as the space that children and young people are allotted to participate in family, school, community, and institutional affairs. The notion of boys and girls as subjects of rights is quite weak in the country, which limits their recognition as social actors, autonomous, reflexive, participatory human being, with a capacity to interpret and reconstruct their reality.

It can be said that in Colombia a traditional view of children prevails: "a vision of the child that commonly causes most adults not to appreciate and stimulate the growth of children's capacities to contribute to their personal development and that of the family and the community. Furthermore, they do not consider the importance to the child's development afforded by the stimulation of their expression, by giving their opinions or participating."¹

Despite the view researchers and Colombian NGOs have about *participation* of boys and girls in society, the Colombian Constitution, 1991, considers to strengthen citizen participation as one of its main guiding principles to be considered in public issues such

¹UNICEF. Presentation in the seminar "La participación de niños y adolescentes en el contexto de la Convención de los derechos del niño: visiones y perspectivas." Cited in the report of the group of researchers and Colombian NGOs to the Committee on the Rights of the Child, 1998.

as education (Gordillo 2005). Then, according to Article 67 of the Constitution, educational policies need to focus on different mechanisms to facilitate individuals' participation in decision making about economic, politic, administrative and cultural life of the Nation. Therefore, important Decrees such as the General Law of Education states that at school level, institutions must set a school government as part of their regulations to promote community participation. In this way, students, parents, teachers and administrative staff initiatives about school regulations, organization of sports and social activities, conformation of youth organizations and other actions are considered as the praxis of "participation" in the school life (Ley 115 de 1994).

The school, as a socialization instrument, is expected to be an adequate reflection of developments in society for children given the fact they spend a considerable part of their lives at school. When a country ratifies the Convention on the Rights of the Child, it imposes three important tasks in its schools: the right *to* education, rights *in* education and rights *through* education (Verhellen 1994). The first one recognizes the right to education as a universal fundamental right in society; the second one clarifies children's legal position in education, related to fundamental freedoms, and the third one indicates education in state parties must aim at promoting respect for human rights. The previous statement suggests that all children in Colombia have the right to education, that children in their educational settings have an important role to exercise their fundamental right as active members of the community no matter their social status, and that the educational system is based on the human rights perspective.

Although the members of the Colombian team understood that the tasks mentioned before are interconnected, they decided to focus their attention on the rights *in* education related to fundamental freedoms children have in terms of the right to freedom of opinion, the right to be heard, the right to freedom of expression, etc, stated in articles 12 to 16 in the Convention on the Rights of the Child – CRC.

2. Formulation of the Problem

Even though the teamwork members shared the main focus of the project, they were aware that the concept of "participation" may be differently interpreted in the educational settings where they are working on given the fact the target groups belong to different socio cultural backgrounds. On the other hand, the team agreed on the fact that even if there are mechanisms for participation practices imposed by the government with a top-down approach, there are missing raising awareness strategies to promote the rights of children and the impact in their own development, the one the their family, their community and their country from a botton up perspective.

With this point of view, the team decided to implement the pilot project using a botton up approach to sensitize or reinforce actions to enhance the freedom of expression of boys and girls in a rural setting, a private school in the capital city and in a public school located in marginal area of Bogotá.

Aim of the project

To promote participation as a strategy to enhance the freedom of expression of boys and girls, through the implementation of tasks based on the construction of committed citizens who understand the need to be heard and listened in school settings.

Objectives

1. Empower teachers to develop the notion of participation within the classroom, by the means of raising awareness activities related to CRC.
2. Implement actions which promote true participation of boys and girls at a school level.
3. Involve other relevant members of the community.

3. Implementation of the Pilot Project

As the teamwork realized the differences in their educational environments, every one shared opinions about them; this to refer to implementation as the first step to set the pilot project based on theoretical principles along with the information provided in the first face of the program in Sweden.

3.1. Defining the task, target group and limitations

Once the team came back to Colombia, a documentary and resource revision about children's participation was developed, framed in Rogert Hart's participation proposals, as well as some interesting experiences of Latin American authors such as Yolanda Corona and Angel Gaitán.

The team then became aware that the concept of participation was much more complex of what was believed in the beginning. The CRC proposes general guidelines within its philosophy, where participation is a fundamental principle for the construction of the child's notion as subject of rights. Nevertheless, when this principle became certain questions such as "How to understand the relation between participation and vital cycle? How to differentiate children's participation from other categories such as children's protagonism, children's organization, children's movements and children's expression? How to advance towards a true participation of children, where the adult slant does not affect the initiatives that arise from children themselves? Which are the criteria for a child to begin exercising social, political and civic participation? How to build towards citizenship through participation within third world socio political contexts where corruption and political tricks are the essence of a cultural inheritance? What is the notion of citizenship of our children who have grown in contexts where they are not recognized as subjects of rights?" arose. The reflection on these questions led the group to consider the concept of participation within a different perspective due to the diversity in their educational contexts.

So, it would not be possible to implement actions identically and furthermore it was necessary to construct the view of what children participation meant considering the following target groups:

In the rural setting in "Municipio de Sutatenza".

- Group of children
- Teacher students
- Local politicians
- Parents

In the private school "Colegio Los Nogales".

- Teachers at the third Grade level (9-10 year old children)
- Students of elementary school

In a public school located in the suburbs of the city in an area called "Ciudad Bolivar".

- Principal and teachers
- Student teachers of humanities from Universidad Distrital
- Pupils of elementary

The main limitation of the project is precisely the differences in the three educational settings in which the members of the team have to implement the actions pursuing the goal of the study. Besides, they have to identify the starting point by means of exchanging information with the target groups as well as to design the appropriate instruments to obtain the required information.

3.2. Choice of methods

Awareness of the differences of social levels and diversity of interpretations on the concept of participation provided the team members with clarity to design appropriate activities framed on the following parameters:

- Use a methodology of a “Know-how” dialog: to recognize and value the local knowledge, and then, create a way towards the transformation of concepts and prejudices of what children’s participation means.
- The notion of the child as a subject of rights: to sensitize the participants of the necessity to approach the perspective of integral protection and to abandon other approaches that regard children as objects of attention and not as subjects of rights.
- View of the children: to set childhood and to recognize needs, on purpose of advancing towards the construction of social capital.

Bearing in mind the parameters above, each member of the teamwork designed activities to develop the implementation of the pilot project.

3.3. Collection of data

The data collection procedure was planned by each member of the team through the implementation of the following activities:

Rural setting	A private school	A public school
✓ Lobby activities	✓ Teachers’ workshop	✓ Interviews
✓ Dialog of “knowledge”	✓ Class Councils	✓ Workshops
✓ Children’s carnival		✓ Group facilitation activities

3.4. Participants in the project

The Colombian team is formed by three professionals from the capital city, Bogotá: a psychologist, a school teacher and a teacher trainer who work in different educational settings as mentioned before:

a. Camilo A. Guáqueta, psychologist who works with teacher students from Universidad Nacional de Colombia and a group of children from a small town in a rural area called Sutatenza.

Sutatenza is a municipality located to the southeast of the department of Boyacá, Colombia. It has a population of 4,583 inhabitants, in which 1,049 are children of ages 0 to 12, and are immersed, in their majority, in a serious condition of poverty. A high number of children participate and take part in the agricultural labor work and therefore, are exposed to chemicals with high levels of toxicity and meet, as well, labor journeys that overpass their physical and emotional development, their access to education, their right to involve themselves in recreational activities and their leisure time.

On the other hand, it exists the notion of children not being recognized as social actors, as participants of a coexistence dynamic with an identity of respect to their territory, all which do not favor the relations of affection to the interior of the family, the ignorance of their rights, and limits their participation in the local decisions and to the interior of the family nucleus.

b. Alejandra Trujillo, an English teacher who works at the private school “Colegio los Nogales” located in Bogotá.

The School *Los Nogales* was born in 1984, from the necessity to offer an integral, high quality Colombian education, consequent with the needs of the country. It is a gender-mixed and bilingual school, to the service of the privileged society and, therefore, excluding the less privileged. The School *Los Nogales* is a Corporation of private education, Calendar B (PJ-12). It has excellent physical facilities and resources for daily education.

The life ethics that prevails the school, finds its framework in the Christian values and due to this, it offers a formation according with the principles of the Catholic Church. Being a bilingual school, the majorities of teachers speak English and are expected to teach their subjects in this language. This fact could be seen as a problem, since the students are expected to speak in a language that is not theirs, leaving behind identity problems and separating them from their own culture. At *Los Nogales* the academic formation is very important. Not so much for what is learned, but because through knowledge an inquisitive, critical and creative intellect is acquired. Therefore, the School, making constant connections with the reality in which their students live, intends to offer a curriculum balanced between what's classic and innovative; Colombian and international; the sciences and the arts.

c. Clara Inés Rubiano, a teacher trainer who works for Universidad Distrital, in charge of the teaching practice. She leads a group of teacher students who are teaching fourth grade children in a public school located in the suburbs of the city which belong to an area called “Ciudad Bolívar”

Ciudad Bolívar is a marginalized area located in the south of Bogotá with approximate 2 million of inhabitants belonging to lower social classes. This area is considered as “red zone” due to poverty, drugs, violence, guerrilla, ‘paramilitares’ and displacement problems.

Because of the variety of conflicts, the National Government has given attention to education and health problematic situations presented by leaders of the community. As a result, there are five public schools and the branch of technology of the *Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas* as a support of the State to the initiatives of the community.

In this community, citizen participation takes a real form in the consolidation of 'community in action committees' identified as the strategy to strengthen politic and social participation. Unfortunately, participation practices are strictly related to politics and democratic power.

3.5. Resources of the project

The seminar in Sweden: the training received in the first phase of the international programme provided the team with practical ideas to implement the CRC in their respective educational backgrounds in Colombia.

The time devoted by each member of the team: the support each participant had from their institutions to discuss, develop and apply the activities designed to implement the pilot project.

The follow up seminar in South Africa: the feedback obtained in the working sessions by participants from other countries gave the team confidence in the process of implementing the project.

The follow up visit: the presence of Mr. Wickenberg was the key to bridge the gap between the efforts to implement the CRC small scale project by each member of the Colombian team and the recognition of the proposed methodology for the implementation by authorities responsible of the development of participatory rights based educational policies.

3.6. Drawing up a work plan and a Time Table

The team started to plan the pilot project since the members participated in the first phase of the international programme in Sweden. The Implementation schedule contains the following activities: 1) researching theoretical background, 2) designing activities, 3) implementing the activities, 4) summing up the experience for South Africa's seminar, 5) collecting data, 6) describing and analysing experiences and 7) outcomes, conclusions and final report. See appendix n° 1 with the time table.

4. Outcomes of the Project

In this section, the results of the implementation of the pilot Project are presented as well as the findings after it was carried out.

4.1. Pilot project

After implementing the activities in every socio cultural background, each member of the team described the outcomes, as follows:

4.1.1. Camilo A. Guáqueta: “Municipio de Sutatenza”

a. Lobby Activities

A meeting with the mayor of the municipality was held, where the pilot project was presented. The mayor was enthusiastic with the proposal and was submitted to the Secondary School Headmaster of the municipality. Unfortunately the answer of the teacher/headmaster was not as favorable as the one of the Mayor and therefore, it is considered that in some sectors of the Secondary teachers community there is a resistance to the new approach of Child Rights and, therefore, they prefer to maintain the vertical teacher-student relations with the purpose of prevailing and *interior order* of the school. Due to the delay in the answer of the principal, the children were out on vacation and the actions within the school were not able to be implemented.

b. Dialog of “Knowledge”

Due that the kids were out on vacation and were not attending school, a series of meetings were held with the Education students of the University, which will allow to recognize the needs of children of Sutatenza and to establish strategies. It was possible to establish that one of the main needs of children’s population was the right to recreation, therefore a program of recreational vacations was proposed, where a set of workshops were developed (cinema, sports, play time, literature and dance) that will involve children in *playful-formative* activities and parents in *cultural transformation* activities around the theme of what it means to be a child and his rights within society. The content of the workshops was established under the approach described above (Task Implementation). For example, the “dance workshop” recognized the importance of children’s right to expression and their need of being recognized, with the purpose of enhancing their self-esteem.

c. Children’s Carnival

When developing the workshops it was established that parents do not recognize their children as subjects of rights. For example, they believe that children are only able to participate as a family member and a member of society, when they bring money to the household and this represents a main risk factor for children to abandon school at their early years.

Due to this “invisibility of childhood”, a closure to the playful-formative vacations was proposed, where a Carnival was supposed to be held, where children took the whole town by expressing their ideas, their wishes, their needs, but above all, the main objective of this carnival was to highlight children’s social recognition as subjects of rights.

4.1.2 Alejandra Trujillo: “Colegio Los Nogales”

a. Teacher’s Workshop

In the first place, a meeting was held with the Professional Development Department (DDP) Director, to organize and implement a Staff Development Day in which the school personnel (teachers, department coordinators, headmasters and principal) could be able to have an open space to discussion and decision making, towards the theme of building citizenship within the school grounds. The decision of developing a set of workshops towards this specific theme of participation and citizenship was made feasible thanks to the efforts and leadership of a group of four teachers which were able to consider the urgency of this subject for the school and for the whole community of learners.

After a date was set for the Staff Development Day, I was able to have an open space to develop a workshop on participation, directed to two different groups of 20 teachers each, for a period of time of 1 hour each. The workshop was titled "Learning to be citizens" and was attended by preschool and elementary teachers of all subjects; the principal and the directors of both sections were participants as well. During this workshop, the concept of citizenship at the elementary level was introduced, along with information regarding the Convention of the Rights of the Child, specifically highlighting the relevance of Article 12, which gives emphasis to children's participation. The main objective of this workshop was to reflect upon children not as objects of protection, but as subjects of rights, capable of taking decisions and participating within their community, with the aim of changing their environment and their own learning process for the better.

It was set clear from the beginning, that the notion of citizenship and participation is closely related to the concept of change and how through decision making and participation, a change within a given community is possible. The workshop also stressed the idea of empowering children to transform their community (the classroom for example) and how, by giving them elements, strategies and opening a space for their voices to be heard, they become more self-assured, understanding, therefore, that they are subjects of rights, capable of changing and transforming their own environment and global communities, as well. This workshop also brought to light the concept of class councils, giving a brief explanation of the purpose of such activity and its implementation, showing and modeling how it aids, within the classroom grounds, to "open a space towards participation" supporting, therefore, Article 12 of the CRC.

b. Class Councils

As a teacher of English in a Third Grade Classroom at the School Los Nogales, I introduced the concept of class councils to 25 gender-mixed children, ages 10-11. I was first faced with the difficulty of finding a space and time to develop a class council within my classroom; pacing for subject themes is tight and the curriculum structure has no *open space* for such activities; so I had argument the idea that this class council was going to be evaluated as "oral skills" and as part of my English schedule. Several conversations were held with the children, explaining the concept of citizenship, democracy, rights, participation and change.

The children were surprised of having this type of opportunity: to really have a space in which their ideas will not only be heard, but actually be taken into account and developed for a specific purpose. They showed themselves to be empowered and therefore, were eager to participate fully in developing the class council. A class election took place, in order to elect a Chairperson, Vice-chairperson and a Secretary. The main objective is for the council to bring up problems that affect the classroom community and that need to be solved with the perspective of transforming the learning environment. Children come up with problems and therefore, come up with solutions as a community, giving opinions, arguments and ideas for change. From this

perspective, children understand that their voices are heard and that they have a saying in their own learning process.

4.1.3 Clara Inés Rubiano: “Ciudad Bolívar”

In order to identify different concepts and beliefs about participation of children in this marginalized area, interviews, workshops and group work activities were carried out:

a. Interviews

There was a strong need to start interviewing three principals of public schools in Ciudad Bolivar to find out the relevance of “participation of children related to the freedom of opinion and expression in their educational settings. The three of them agreed on the fact that freedom of expression presupposes the process of accessing to information of different national and international sources. On the other hand, they pointed out that children need to be prepared or receive training to “participate” properly in their school communities. The principals demonstrated as well a good knowledge and familiarity with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its implementation in their school setting,

b. Workshops

Two workshops were developed; one with in-service teachers in a school in Ciudad Bolivar and the other one with teacher students from the School of Science and Education at Universidad Distrital. The purpose of the workshops was to raise awareness on the rights in education children have under the umbrella of the Convention of the Rights of the Child, in its articles 12 to 16 which contain the right to freedom of opinion, the right to be heard and the right to freedom of expression.

In-service teacher’s interventions contributed to confirm the widespread knowledge they have about legislation and educational regulations on child rights. They also explained the way the school implements mechanisms for children participation not only in the school community but in the socio-cultural community they belong to. In the same way, teachers reaffirmed as a key issue the training children need to participate actively through the access to the information of different national and international sources.

Meanwhile, teacher students thought that there was a need to promote children participation through raising awareness activities with teachers, parents and the same children as community builders. They stressed that real children’s participation does not exist in practice in public schools despite the different mechanisms for participation educational policies have implemented.

c. Group facilitation activities

The group of teacher students from Universidad Distrital needed to understand how to develop citizen participation with children. They agreed on the fact that children are responsible for community building in the future and of course they need to realize they have the right to express their views and opinions.

So, the group worked on the following activities with children in 4th grade:

- Facilitate an open space to talk about an issue of interest.

- Use a structured meeting process to gather diverse points of view about an issue
- Use techniques to build shared framework of understanding and develop inclusive solutions about a community problem.

It was difficult for the group of teacher students to approach the process of participation from activities planned on paper. They suggested instead finding out more about the children, their family and school context and their expectations about their role in the community. As a result, the group designed a plan to implement activities based on the topics mentioned before as it is shown in appendix n° 2.

4.2. After the pilot project

Following, the main results obtained in the rural area of Sutatenza are presented:

- By means of a decree established by the municipality's mayor's office, the Children's Carnival was institutionalized on behalf of the children of Sutatenza. This Carnival will be celebrated annually on the second week of September.
- Within the contents of the course *Infancy: notions and perspectives*, taken by the students of Early Childhood Education, a thematic unit was included, related to the Rights of Children's Participation.
- A proposal of children's workshops was designed, where one of the primary axels is the subject of children's participation.
- An academic debate was developed around the focus of child rights vs the neocolonialist perspective, which allowed to break free from some resistance that was held towards the focus of rights on behalf of some University Teachers.

Within the private school setting, several approaches were undertaken on behalf of Chile Rights Participation:

- First, a series of workshops were developed and directed to primary teachers in order to instruct them on the basic terms and objectives of the CRC. During these workshops, teachers were also instructed in the implementation of the Class Council Method, in which teachers and students have the opportunity to exercise participation rights.
- Second, during the school year 2006-2007, a group of 18 fourth graders had the possibility to implement a project called "Less Noise in the Cafeteria: a space for learning". This group of children was empowered to create new ideas in favor of this project and to develop it on behalf of all the educational levels of the school.
- In third place and last, a pilot project was structured and implemented in one primary classroom. Third Grade C had the chance to open a space for participation within their classroom, developing the notion of class council. During the whole school year, this council gave children the opportunity to make decisions, encourage critical thinking and most importantly, build a direct change in their school environment.

The outcomes after implementing the pilot project in the public school were:

- The Principal and the staff are convinced of the strong need to implement learner centered activities in which children identify real and problematic situations of their community to share individual or group views about a their role in it. So, the school and Universidad Distrital have the agreement to run a weekly workshop for children between 8 and 12 of age in order to develop activities based on 'participation' as fundamental right in a poor and excluded community in which in most of the cases it is difficult to guarantee the implementation of the CRC.
- Teacher students who belong to the humanities and education programme at Universidad Distrital are committed to develop the workshops in public schools in the area of Ciudad Bolivar following the process of implementation of the pilot project in the forthcoming opportunities. In the same way, the teaching practice component should include as pedagogical support the implementation of the CRC perspective as an important variable in the teaching and learning practices by means of working with affective objectives to enhance 'participation' in classrooms.

4.3. Full implementation of the project

The perspective of childhood's rights is positioning itself to the interior of the University's degree in Childhood Education at Universidad Nacional. However, within the University, there are some professors with formation in Anthropology and Sociology who do not consider the perspective of child rights to be pertinent within the rural realities; therefore, the academic debate has been a good strategy to demonstrate the benefits of the Rights approach, starting off from the recognition of the cultural relativism.

At the end of school year 2006, 2007 at 'Los Nogales School, after developing the Child Rights' projects, the directives of the school decided that it would be useful, not only for children, but for teachers, to expand the Class Council Pilot Project, to all the levels of Third Grade. This means a great progress in relation to the pilot project, since in a way, it means that the school is envisioning that all levels of primary develop a Class Council in the future, which translates into a big success for children's participation in the school grounds.

-As a continuation of the projects developed, the Primary School Director has decided that the projects on participation will continue, in order to foster a better and stronger community of learners. In these terms, a group of fourth grade students will begin developing projects that directly affect the learning possibilities of all the students in the school.

-As a product of the class council developed last year in one of the classrooms, the primary school has decided to develop for this coming year, a Primary Student Council, which directly communicates new ideas to the Secondary Student Council.

When socializing the experience of implementing the pilot project in a public school located in the marginalized area of Bogotá with a group of educational policy makers at the Ministry of Education, the commitment to support this kind of projects with the public sector emerged. As a result, the Distrital University has been participating in projects coordinated by the Ministry of Education in which the main purpose is to

restructure undergraduate programme components to train future teachers to make contributions to guarantee a better quality in education.

5. Evaluation or assessment of the results of the project

The results of the project “listen to our voices: an open space to children’s participation” carried out in Bogotá by a teamwork of three Colombians demonstrated that:

- ‘Participation’ can be promoted as a strategy to enhance the freedom of expression of boys and girls in a different way given the fact its concept is culturally bounded by the differences of existing socio cultural backgrounds in educational contexts.
- The implementation of raising awareness activities related to CRC in the three educational backgrounds was a successful experience because each member of the Colombian team could realize to what extent ‘participation’ as a right of the child was evident or neglected by the members of the community.
- In service teachers, pre-service teachers and in general relevant members of the community in every educational context need to be empowered to develop the notion of ‘participation’ within their classrooms and/or other spaces to allow the recognition of children as active community members able to take part in promoting chance and decision making.
- Authorities from Sutatenza, the Head Master at ‘Los Nogales’ school and the Ministry of Education branch in charge of educational developments are aware of the need to stimulate actions on rights based education at classroom level from a bottom up approach to enhance educational policies from a top-down perspective into a participatory rights based education.

6. Conclusions

In general, the team realized from the very beginning of the implementation of the pilot project that the concept of children’s participation was much more complex of what could be viewed at first sight and moreover they were conscious that *participation* as a general principle of the CRC in most of the cases is not manifested by itself explicitly regarding the diverse interpretations of what it means in every educational context; so the team arrived to these conclusions:

- ✚ The school is the ideal place to promote children’s participation and to structure the notion of citizenship. “The child is good for democracy and democracy is good for the child”, nevertheless, in some contexts of our country it is relevant to look at children within other spaces that allow their recognition placing them apart from *invisibility*.
- ✚ In some territories of our country, such as Sutatenza, the precarious situation causes the right to participation to take a second place, due that other basic needs have to be met on first hand, such as nourishment and health, as one of the teachers declared: “With hunger no one want, or can participate”.

Therefore, it is important to take into account the human rights principle of integrity and interdependence.

- ✚ Some teachers showed more concern for the duties and responsibilities than for the rights themselves, and therefore, they presented resistance by considering that the empowering of children as subjects of rights may generate a type of anarchy and sublimation of the established order within society.
- ✚ The CRC allows generating extraordinary developments within the particular contexts and must be understood as a minimum *floor* upon which to build a society and not as a *sealing* that limits possibilities. This metaphor was important for the comprehension of the people that participated in the different activities that were developed within the framework of this pilot project.
- ✚ The students were able to understand how they can become participate members of their community, whichever it is. Through the class councils they grew a critical point of view that was not there before and that gave them the chance to come up with new and innovative ideas that were created to foster a more positive and challenging learning environment.
- ✚ Teachers must learn how to effectively elicit the views of children and young people and to recognize their multiple voices; the various ways in which children express themselves and how to interpret their messages.
- ✚ In pre-service teacher training programmes, the role of “facilitator” needs to be emphasized as someone who has expertise and techniques in child participation. A facilitator is the one who elicits the views of children and promotes real participation by ensuring the freedom of expression of boys and girls.
- ✚ Colombia is a multiethnic country made up of diverse childhoods that coexists one same territory. The reality of the rural childhood is very different to the one that lives in the cities; from this perspective, it is due to recognize a differential approach where the infantile participation adjusts to the life expectancies of these children.
- ✚ The promotion of the infantile participation in the classroom must include the recognition of other structural variables (political, social and economic) related to the critical situation of children’s rights in the country. Only through critical thought, the cultural transformation could be generated.

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Appendix n° 1

The project activities were carried out as follows

Activiti es	Jun e	Jul y	Augu st	Se pt	Oc t	No v	De c	Ja n	Fe b	Marc h	Apr il	Ma y
1	X	X										
2		X										
3			X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
4				X	X							
5			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
6				X					X			
7										X	X	X

Appendix nº 2

<i>Unit</i>	<i>Theme</i>	<i>Child Rights</i>	<i>Activities</i>
UNIT 1 Who am I?	1. Looking at me	To be aware of myself	<p>Children draw their own body and write their interests.</p> <p>Children make a drawing about their future dreams and how they would help their community.</p>
	2. Belonging to a family unit.	To identify my role as a family member	<p>Children make a booklet in which they draw the different members of their family and identify their qualities, weaknesses and necessities.</p> <p>Children make a scale model of their house and describe its features.</p>
	3. Belonging to a school community	To identify my role as a child in a school	<p>Children make the school map and describe its characteristics</p> <p>Children draw the route from their house to the school and recognize the safety and dangers of crossing this way daily.</p> <p>Children make a fan about the weakness, opportunities, strengths and menaces of their school and community.</p> <p>Children make a compromise letter in which they reflect the help that they can bring to their community.</p>
UNIT 2 What can I bring?	1. Identifying self-strengths	To be aware of abilities on a healthy child	<p>Students close their eyes and caress their body, then they are divided by pairs and each of them plays a role of an incapacitated person who has to overcome some obstacles.</p> <p>Children draw themselves trying to be as much specific as possible in order to increase their self-esteem.</p>
	2. Identifying social values through of daily situations.	To recognize and respect children rights and duties through daily situations.	<p>The whole class is divided on six groups, each group has to represent a daily situation related to the following values: love, honesty, solidarity, respectful, participation and tolerance.</p> <p>They make a left-side tree drawing and write in front of the roots their names and ages, in front of the trunk two values that describe themselves, in front of the branches the actions that they developed taking into account these values and finally in the fruit how they feel doing those actions and what they hope as outcomes.</p>
	3. being a leader	To participate as a leader in their school environment and assume the responsibilities and implications of it.	