

DRAFT CONCEPT NOTE

REGIONAL COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE for FoRCESA – Frontiers of Resistance-championing children’s rights across ESA

This concept note provides information pertaining to the FoRCESA project and specifically to the establishment of a Community of Practice, focussing on strengthening and harmonising the mainstreaming (or integration) of children’s participation in and through education systems.

Introduction

FoRCESA is a partnership project between Save the Children International and MIET AFRICA and funded by SIDA. It is a three year project (2017-2019). In the first year, research in the ESA region was undertaken to understand how civil and political rights of children can be realised so as to enable their meaningful participation in matters affecting them. Findings from this research identified the education system – and specifically 21st century learning - as a potentially effective platform for advancing a vision for the ESA region of *children engaged as citizens in democratic, inclusive, child-sensitive governance that shape decisions that affect them*. Informed by the research, years’ two and three (2018-2019) will focus on strengthening the education systems for children’s participation through 21st century learning.

Background

Children have an internationally and regionally recognised right to participate in all decisions that affect them. The enjoyment of this right in turn depends on the protection and realisation of a full suite of children’s civil and political rights, including the rights to be heard, access to information, freedom of expression, freedom of association and to express one’s opinion freely. In addition, children have a right to a basic education that supports fulfilment of their rights, and which supports the development of their skills, capacities, knowledge and competencies to exercise their rights - now, and in the future as engaged citizens.

This creates a duty on the custodians of education systems to mainstream children’s participatory rights in at least two respects:

1. Through institutional and educational governance arrangements that enable children to meaningfully participate in decisions regarding their education and the use of education resources; and
2. Through the provision of education based on a curriculum that supports the development and nurturing of their knowledge, skills and capacities to enable them to be engaged 21st century citizens.

In short it requires the development of education systems that are inclusive, democratic, and child-sensitive.

Save the Children ESA has partnered with MIET Africa to advocate for evidence-based strengthening of education systems in the region through 21st century learning so that children's citizenship rights are exercised in and through education.

The realisation of the project goals requires an ecosystemic approach. It requires a revisioning of education as an inclusive platform for teaching and learning where teaching is not only done by teachers and learning not only by students; but rather that schools become a hub for bringing together the diversity of knowledge, assets and role players responsible for building the competencies and capacities children need to fulfil their role as engaged citizens in the 21st century – of schools, communities and society more broadly.

This requires the transformation of education systems into rights-based, inclusive, democratic platforms shaped by multiple role players. This in turn requires that multiple role players be given the space to contribute to the transformation of education systems – and not just role players in education, but those in children's rights, those responsible for establishing and maintaining democratic principles and practise, and many more. They must all have a voice in shaping an appropriate, lawful and effective education system that provides 21st century learning.

To facilitate the required levels of inclusion, dialogue and discussion, as well as cross-sectoral learning, a foundational building block of the project will be a community of practice (COP).

Purpose and Objectives of the COP

The purpose of the COP is to provide a platform for bringing together a diversity of role players - experts, partners, youth and individuals – that can and should contribute to the thinking and operationalisation of the transformation of education systems to become inclusive, democratic, child-sensitive spaces that give effect to the aims of education as determined by human rights treaties, development and democratic responsibilities.

The establishment of the CoP seeks to engage experts and harness their collective energy and expertise to co-construct a children's participation framework for the education system; discuss topics of interest; share working practices, resources and materials; and collaborate in innovative ways.

The objectives of the CoP are to, inter alia, support the following processes:

- To interrogate the viability of, and identify and capitalise on opportunities within the concept of 21st century learning as an effective vehicle for strengthening democratic and inclusive, child-sensitive governance of education systems
- The co-development of an evidence-based and consulted regional Children's Participation Framework for guiding and harmonizing the use of 21st century learning as a vehicle for facilitating child participation in and through education

- To harness CSTL as a vehicle for strengthening education systems to achieve the stated child participation aims through the application of 21st century learning principles and practices.

COP membership and roles

The COP members will be drawn from:

- Education role players
- Children's participation experts and advocates
- Child rights networks
- Human rights institutions responsible for monitoring education of children's rights and democratic practices, such as Human Rights Commissions and Electoral Commissions
- Other

The envisaged roles of the COP members includes:

1. Reference team/provision of expertise and guidance in the development of the Framework and research outputs
2. Sharing information and best practices
3. Development of advocacy plans of action to implement the Framework nationally and sectorally

COP logistics

The COP will be managed by MIET Africa, whose role will be to facilitate and coordinate the COP towards achieving its objectives. To this end, MIET AFRICA will develop an on-line portal for facilitating communication and learning. Members will be encouraged to share their working practices, resources and materials through this portal. This will be used together with the scheduled meetings to promote and support the domestication of the Framework by the Ministries of Education.

Following this inception meeting, there will be two more e-meetings of the COP. Notification of these meetings will be communicated by MIET AFRICA via email and will include any relevant resources/documentation pertaining to the meetings.