



INSTITUT  
INTERNATIONAL  
Des DROITS  
De L'ENFANT

NOVEMBER 13-14, 2018  
GENEVA

**MEETING ON CHILD  
PARTICIPATION**

Professionals, Parents, Children...  
EVERY Children !

Which Tools ?



## Meeting on Child Participation

### How Can Professionals Foster Real and Effective Child Participation?

#### Argument

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) does not especially mention the concept of child participation. CRC Article 12 calls on States to listen to, and hear, children who are capable of discernment on all issues that are of concern to them. General Comment (GC) no 12 of the Committee on the Rights of the Child broadly specifies that participation is a term used to describe:

*"ongoing processes, which include information-sharing and dialogue between children and adults based on mutual respect, and in which children can learn how their views and those of adults are taken into account and shape the outcome of such processes".*

This definition of participation does not enjoy unanimous support from thinkers and practitioners, who believe that the concept is too vague, and regret the absence of consensus as to its importance. As a result, it is difficult for the concept of child participation to assert itself as a fundamental principle to a system, be it social, political, educational or familial, despite the interest that it stirs. The means of how to guarantee full child participation while avoiding all forms of manipulation is a current topic, which is the subject of many research projects, conferences and programs. In addition, its implementation is thwarted by adults who fear losing authority and power over children. It has been stated by Thomas Hammaberg, the ex-Commissioner to Human Rights at the European Council: *"Our objective is to be more receptive to, and respectful of, the opinions of children. But unfortunately, many adults seem to find this idea threatening."* (Hammarberg, 2007)

On the eve of the 30-year anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, it is necessary to share experiences and tools borne from past practices and research from Switzerland and abroad. However, adult-focused training is far from satisfactory, and adults still need to change their behaviour vis-à-vis children by treating them as equals, a situation which can not only serve to undermine social statuses, but may bear unintended consequences on children when their right to participate is put into practice.

In order to respond to the challenges posed by child participation, the International Institute for the Rights of the Child, with the support of the City of Geneva, organizes a colloquium that will present the different experiences by the States, cantons and non-governmental organisations working on the issue of child participation. Special attention will be given to children in vulnerable situations, given that children's rights are the rights enjoyed by all children. During the meeting, children will be given the opportunity to express themselves on how participation in projects has impacted their lives.



## Meeting Objectives

- Map, in Switzerland and from an international perspective, theoretical and practical examples of tools that foster effective child participation in various fields.
- Create dialogue between the points of view of adults and children on the topic of participation.
- Bring special attention to children in vulnerable situations, because children's rights are the rights of ALL children (art. 2 CDE).

## Target audience

- Professionals from all fields working with and/or for children.
- All children and young people.

## Place

Centre international de conférences de Genève (CICG)  
Rue de Varembé 17, 1202 Geneva  
T +41 22 791 91 11 / E-Mail: [info@cicg.ch](mailto:info@cicg.ch)

<https://cicg.ch/en/node/261>

## Dates

13 -14 November 2018

## Languages

Simultaneous interpretation in French, German and English

## Fee

CHF 150.-

Student CHF 75.-

Free admission for children under 18 (registration is mandatory)



## PROGRAM

**Tuesday 13 November 2018**

- 08:30 Welcome
- 09:00 Opening speech  
**Mrs Anne Emery-Torracinta**, State Councillor, Department of Education, Culture and Sports, Canton of Geneva  
**Mme Esther Alder**, Administrative Advisor, Department for Social Cohesion and Solidarity, City of Geneva  
**Mrs Paola Riva Gapany**, Director, International Institute for the Rights of the Child

Moderators: Mrs Paola Riva Gapany and Mrs Chiona Perruchoud

1<sup>st</sup> panel: **child participation: sharing experiences on normative frameworks**

### IDE Introduction

- 09:30 Child Participation and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child: Article 12 CRC, General Comment n° 12 and the Voice of Young People in the State Reporting Procedure  
**Mr Bernard Gastaud**, Member of the Committee on the Rights of the Child  
**Mrs Aline Sermet**, Child Rights Network Switzerland

10:30 *Coffee break*

- 10:50 Child Participation: a National Strategy for Child Participation: the Example of Ireland and of the Canton of Valais (Switzerland)

The development and implementation of the 'National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision Making' (2015) in Ireland.

**Dr Shirley Martin**, Co-Director, BA Early Years and Childhood Studies, School of Applied Social Studies, University College Cork, Ireland

Young people and participation: an underestimated will?

**Mr Cédric Bonnébault**, Delegate for Youth of the Canton of Valais and  
**Mrs Gwendoline Guérin**, Student, President of the Youth Society of Vionnaz,  
Member of the Cantonal Youth Observatory

DEBATE WITH THE SPEAKERS AND THE AUDIENCE



12:15 *Lunch break*

2<sup>nd</sup> panel: **the Participation of ALL Children: What Tools Can Be Used by Professionals?**

## IDE Introduction

13:30 The Participation of Young Children in Everyday Crèche Life  
**Mrs Pascale Camus**, PhD Student in Education, University of Liège, University Paris  
13 Sorbonne Paris Cité, Pedagogical Advisor to the ONE, Belgium

14:30 Children with Special Needs

Project *Speak out!*: Giving a Voice to Asylum Seeking Unaccompanied Minors and Undocumented Children

**Mrs Mathilde Hofer**, *Speak out!* Project Manager, Swiss Council for Youth Activities, and testimony of **Amar**, participant to the project the *Speak out!* MNA, Bern

Parents and professionals: two voices tackling the challenge of participation for children with disabilities

**Mr Jérôme Laederach**, Director, Ensemble Foundation, Geneva and  
**Mrs Floriane Baltzinger**, Parent, Geneva

When a Parent is incarcerated: the Challenge of Participation for Children in the Shadows, the Experience of the REPR Foundation

**Mrs Viviane Schekter**, Director, Relais Enfants Parents Romands (REPR), Lausanne

DEBATE WITH THE SPEAKERS AND THE AUDIENCE

16:00 *Snack and showing of drawings by children*



**Wednesday 14 November 2018**

Moderators: Mrs Paola Riva Gapany and Mrs Chiona Perruchoud

3<sup>rd</sup> panel: **Participation of ALL Children in All Fields**

### **IDE Introduction**

- 09:00 My project experience on youth participation in Chippis, municipality of central Valais  
**Mrs Chiona Perruchoud**, Intern HES, Cantonal Youth Service, Sion
- 09:30 *Coffee break*
- 10:00 Supporting and Freeing Children's Voices  
**Mrs Françoise Laville-Chappuis**, Special Education Teacher, Interdisciplinary Master in Children's Rights Studies, Bulle
- 10:30 National Conference for Children  
**Mrs Léa Meister**, Swiss Council for Youth Activities (CSAJ), Bern
- 11:20 Debate: What Conference for Children in Switzerland?
- 11:45 Final Review
- 12:00 End of Colloquium