

# Child and Adolescent Participation in the Children's Rights and Business Principles Initiatives (CRBPI) - Children's Consultation in Ethiopia

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# **Child Rights and Business Principles Initiative (CRBPI)**

## **Report from children's consultation in Ethiopia**

### **1 – Preparations for the Consultation**

**1.1. Involvement of stakeholders:** A joint team consisting of UNICEF, Ethiopian Human Rights Commission, Save the Children and Plan held the initial meeting in Ethiopia concerning the CRBPI. In that meeting, it was decided that the appropriate government agency the Ministry of Women, Children and Youth Affairs (MOWCYA) takes the leading role in organizing the consultations with children. The team held two subsequent discussions in which it was decided that while the Ministry takes the lead role, the facilitation and consultation with children at field level will be facilitated jointly by MOWCYA and UNICEF, Save the Children and Plan. It was agreed that NGO staff, with experience of working with children will lead and record the consultation while staff from the Regional Offices of the Ministry were involved as supervisors and co-facilitators in the consultations with children. Project areas and implementing partners were selected on the basis of their implementation in different geographical locations and direct work with children.

**1.2. Preparation of materials:** the resource materials -the Consultation Package for Children and Adolescents and Q & A for Children CRBPI- were translated to the national language and copied in sufficient numbers for distribution to the facilitators and rapporteurs. This was done by the lead consultant who was assigned by the joint team.

**Training of facilitators & rapporteurs:** Facilitators, rapporteurs, and observers from the regional Bureaus of Children, Youth & Women Affairs were trained for one day. The training focused on introducing the idea of the Initiative, introducing the material (the proposed steps) and the approaches to be used. The training participants were taken through the process in a practical manner. The staff selected to attend the training all had experience of working directly with children, organizing and discussing with child led groups. The main emphasis was on working with different methodology of encouraging children to explain their ideas (as opposed to only holding discussions). Three main

methods were agreed to be adopted with the children: Activities in the consultations should be Fun to the children – Practical/ concrete – and colorful.

**1.3. Practical arrangements:** once the training of the facilitators and rapporteurs was finalized, practical arrangements such as required number of copies of materials, budget, purchase of materials, and date of submission of reports from the regions were agreed upon. The selection of children was also done according to the Checklist for Selection of children.

All the discussion groups were conducted in mixed groups. It was not found necessary to have groups of girls and boys separately, as it was not a barrier for discussion.

All the consultations were carried out in Amharic, the national language, except for the consultation in Oromia, where one group discussed in Amharic and another in Oromiffa. The translations from the discussion language to English were done by the rapporteurs and facilitators. The reports from the discussions in the regions were submitted in Amharic and English after which they were compiled into one report.

## 1.4. Demographics

### Where and when did the discussion take place?

Country: Ethiopia

Location: capital city, Southern Nations and Nationalities Peoples Region, Oromia

Region, Amhara Region

### Facilitators and participants

All facilitators were adults. Two of the facilitators were women.

### Number of participating children and dates of consultation

	Region	City/ Location	Girls	Boys	Total <sup>1</sup>	Ages in yrs	Dates of consultation
1	SNNPR	Shebedino	20	21	41	10-15	16 & 17/ 7
2	Amhara	Woldiya	7	13	20	12-17	16 & 17/ 7
3	Dire Dawa	Dire Dawa	9	11	20	13-17	
4	Oromia	Shashemene	20	20	40	Under 18	16 & 17/ 7
5	Addis Ababa	Hiwot office	10	10	20		16 & 17/ 7
6	Addis Ababa	FSCE	10	10	20		16 & 17/ 7
7	Addis Ababa (FGD)		3	2	5	14-16	20/7
<b>Total</b>			79	87	166		

Diversity of the group: all of the groups indicated below were represented, except

Children living in institutional care.

- ☐ Children with disabilities
- ☐ Minority ethnic group
- ☐ Minority language
- ☐ Orphaned or without appropriate parental care
- ☐ Children living in institutional care
- ☐ Children living below the national poverty line
- ☐ Children displaced by natural disaster or conflict
- ☐ Religious minorities
- ☐ Children in exploitative forms of work (e.g. street children, children on the move, former child soldiers, and representatives of working children)

Many of the participants are members of child rights clubs or other clubs and are used to similar meetings concerning various topics.

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<sup>1</sup> A focus group was conducted with a group of 2 boys and 4 girls with leaders of working children to find out supplementary information about the concerns of children about the situation of working children, and their relations with businesses in the area.

## **2 – Proceedings of the consultations**

### **2.1 Expectations**

What did children hope to get personally from this meeting/experience?

- Boys and girls, 15 year olds
- To know what activities are ongoing with regard to children and understand them well
- To see how children can contribute to what is happening in matters that affect them.
- To see if businesses will take children's ideas.
- To learn new things

What children hoped to see happen during this meeting:

- Participants respecting each other
- To generate good ideas so that businesses take children seriously
- To understand how working children live and cope with their situation
- To know the perception of businesses on children's rights

What children want to see happen after this meeting:

- Discussions between children and businesses being facilitated.
- Children being able to feel free to speak about their rights with businesses.
- To see trafficking of children from rural areas (for the purpose of having them employed in small businesses) stopped. (13 year old boy)
- To see change (15 year old girl)
- To see what will happen after the discussions we have here
- To share what I learned with others.
- To know how to support children to escape from the burdens they face and to inform more working children to know about and exercise their rights in businesses. (13 year old boy).
- Businesses that have bad practice to change their ways.
- To see my country work for the well being of children. (15 year old boy).

## **2.2 Understanding businesses**

In order to make children understand what businesses are, practical exercises were conducted where children were asked to map out the businesses in their surroundings. The mapping out exercise was followed by efforts to present the ideas more concretely to the children:

- Models of different sizes were constructed by children using colored papers, cardboard boxes, old bottles, etc. These were done, in many cases, to indicate the size and sometimes the importance of the businesses in the children's environment.
- The businesses were also divided in terms of the extent to which the children have access to them, thus businesses that children are familiar with and those they do not have access to. The latter are places such as shops, grinding mills, metal workshops, and 'film houses'. These were further divided into places which children have to go to perform their duties to their family (such as grinding grains) and some are places where they frequent for pleasure (such as 'film houses').

A wide variety of businesses were described by the children – ranging from big factories to big flower farms, construction sites and small shops providing goods and services. The different groups of children mentioned the following businesses:

Businesses that are not accessed by children:

- Car assembly plant
- Flour factories
- Cement factory
- Printing houses

Businesses that are somehow accessible but are not frequented by children

- a local chain of stores selling fruits and vegetables
- Garage
- Hotels
- Bars
- Metal workshops

Businesses with which children have daily contacts

- Grain mills
- Shops
- Small cafes

A 13 year old boy reported that *“in small businesses, the basic needs of children are not met and they are exposed to exploitation. The small businesses are struggling, and so are the owners and the workers engaged therein.”*



### 2.3 How businesses affect the lives of children at different levels

Levels	Positive effects	Negative effects
Personal life	<p>Easier to buy things and get services nearby.</p> <p>Children can get some money by working in businesses.</p> <p>Create job opportunities for the future. Increase individual incomes</p> <p>Enable the children to create opportunities to help themselves financially and as a result they get social acceptance,</p> <p>Build up self confidence of the children</p> <p>Children are taught skills</p>	<p>Prohibit the family from spending quality time with their children</p> <p>May not be profitable</p> <p>Can be cause for child trafficking and labor exploitation</p> <p>Children may be attracted to earn income from businesses instead of continuing with schools</p> <p>Some businesses can be a cause for child sexual abuses.</p> <p>Some businesses are located near schools, where they are not supposed to be. These are businesses such as ‘chat’ houses and film houses. As a result, children are attracted to spend time in those places rather than attending schools.</p> <p>They do not give similar services to adults and children this makes parents think that children who run errands are not serious in carrying out their tasks.</p> <p>May not be profitable</p>
Family life	<p>Parents get jobs. When parents are happy and get jobs, they respect the rights of their children. Mothers with young babies get leave to take care of their babies.</p>	<p>They can be cause some health problems</p> <p>They can create discriminations</p>
Community life	<p>The availability of businesses in a certain community makes the businesses think of making special provisions to the communities in which they are located. A 15 year old</p>	<p>They can cause deforestation</p> <p>They can cause weather, sound, water...pollution</p> <p>In summer vacations, if businesses could give opportunities for children to work, the children can be</p>

	<p>boy said that in a community where there is a flour factory, the communities around the area are likely to get flour at a reduced price.</p> <p>Fulfill infrastructures in sufficient way, Give chances to the society to get alternative products, Create job opportunities, Build good relationships among societies, regions and countries, The society benefits from humanitarian activities of the businesses organizations</p> <p>If children are exposed to dangers, businesses help out.</p>	<p>better prepared for the future and also pay for the requirements of their school materials.</p> <p>Some businesses take up places intended as playgrounds or football fields usually for expansion purposes.</p>
<b>Country region</b>	<p>The taxes generated from the businesses are used by the government to provide education, health and other facilities for children and others.</p> <p>Increase in foreign exchange</p> <p>Increases the country's economy</p> <p>Increases business relationship in the country</p> <p>Create enough supplies in the country</p> <p>Boost the country's potential in international market</p> <p>Sponsor football and other sports activities.</p>	<p>If businesses could support college students to give tutorials to support younger children who need to improve their studies. (those who do not perform well in schools spend a lot of time with small businesses, and end up dropping out of school or working in the informal sector).</p>
<b>Cultural benefits</b>	<p>In some cases, local traditional handicrafts are produced in a nice and creative manner by businesses.</p> <p>Businesses sponsor cultural activities</p>	

## 2.4 Businesses and their impacts on children's rights

Rights that appear to have been impacted by businesses	Current problems related to the themes	Efforts by businesses to fix the problems and to better support and respect children's rights
Right to education	Children who work are not given time and rest to study or go to school	Willing to consider the rights of children  Small businesses to be helped by big business owners to improve the situation for children
Adequate pay	Children are paid less and they work for a long time	
Rest/Exploitative work	Many children are made to do heavy work such as carrying heavy things to and from shops.	
Contact with parents	Working children from rural areas do not visit their parents for very many years	
Sexual abuse	Some children are subjected to sexual abuse and exploitation, in areas where they work such as in bars and hotels or in shops.	
Bad models	Pornographic films that are easily accessible by children, and circulating in schools.	Age limit for some services <sup>2</sup>  Businesses to be aware of the damage that they are doing to children.
Participation	Businesses do not allow children working with them to participate in activities where other children participate, such as children's clubs	Businesses to support Alternative basic education opportunities for working children.

<sup>2</sup> All the children in one of the Addis Ababa group reported that they saw pornographic images at school with mobile phones or in 'film houses' in their communities.

## 2.5. What other things could business do, in general, to support and respect children's rights?

- Make compromises between the interests of the businesses and the rights of children.
- Stop hiding away children (the following case study was told by children in a focus group discussion)

*Adult weavers of traditional cotton clothes in one location in Addis Ababa use children brought from rural areas to engage in weaving. These children work for very long hours. The business owner sells the woven products for a lot of money, but puts aside a very small amount of money for the children who did most of the weaving. These children are usually not allowed to go to school and are made to work for many hours. Through the activities of one NGO in the area, business owners were persuaded to send the working children to school and reduce the working hours for children. Recently, some weavers started to move their places of work to the outskirts of the city, so that they can not be reached by the activities of children and NGOs.*

*Furthermore, because the police started to control the movement of boys, the weavers started to bring in girls. These girls are not only working with weaving, but they also perform household chores and sometimes they are victims of sexual abuse.*

This shows that the businesses do not feel that they are benefitting from promoting the rights of children. Therefore, small business owners need to be convinced that there are benefits to them and their businesses. These may be 'social' benefits such as appreciation by the local community or ensuring that they get loans, etc, as it is being practiced.

## 3. Comments on the draft Principles

### 3.1. Things missing in the current draft

**Businesses being bad models:** Small businesses rely on children to survive, because they may be owned by their own families, or are businesses that are small and new in their communities and can not afford to make choices as to who they serve or who they employ. In the process of setting up their businesses they communicate bad ideas and practices to children.

**Making work easier for children:** They do not have clear ideas about the concepts of exploitation. Children, who have to work because they have to help out in the small businesses of their families, are better off if they are helped to make their work easier. For example, if small businesses could have access to load lifting and transporting equipments, the work of the children could be simpler.

**Play areas:** Play areas for children should be thought of for children also around their living areas, not only in the places where they work.

**Rural areas:** A 15year old girl stated that “Big businesses are opened in big towns. Therefore, big businesses also should be encouraged to look into how they can help children living in smaller towns or rural areas, where there are no big businesses”. Principles seem to concern only urban areas (cities and towns) but should include rural area

**Forum:** Facilitating forum of stakeholders like school teachers, government body, and others.

**Free education:** Appropriate and free education at appropriate time for children

**a) Are there new things included which the group had not considered?**

The whole idea of involving businesses in children’s rights is new for most of the children, except for those who work with child labor.

**b) What are some of the strong points about the Principles?**

The Principles show a commitment to children and families. This will benefit children and families. “The drafting of the Principles is a strength by itself”. (14 year old girl)

If child labor stops, the future generation will be a healthy, confident, psychologically bright generation.

In general the strong side of these Principles respect and support children’s right, take care of their environments, provide important service and at the same time raise awareness of community and governments.

Businesses to take the Principles as an organizational culture are a strong point.

“I feel that the 2<sup>nd</sup> Principle (Respect Children’s Rights in the Workplace) addresses a highly relevant issue faced by children” (14 year old boy).

### **3.2. Some of the weak points about the Principles**

The Principles should be stronger (more like memorandum of understanding or working rules if not legal rules). This was strongly experienced by children in Addis Ababa.

Children should also be given a chance to **work together** with the businesses in protecting their environment. This may need to be clearly indicated.

Where the principles indicate that businesses should get training, we should also add popularizing the principles through posters, etc. (15 year old boy)

The Principles are not easily understood by children. This makes it difficult to comment on the principles in a strong manner.

Businesses have to celebrate children's days (like World and Day of the African Child). If they participate in these events, they will know more about children and on their own get involved in children's affairs.

### **3.3. Benefits and monitoring**

#### **3.4.1 Benefits**

##### **Benefits to workers, families and communities**

Families of children will be more interested in their work because in their work places they also think about the rights and welfare of children.

Families will have better communications among themselves.

Communities will have good relations with businesses.

Communities and countries will benefit because of the Principle relating to anti-corruption and proper tax payment.

##### **Benefits to children**

A lot of children will have better opportunities to grow up well.

During times of crisis, businesses could help in solving problems of children.

The next generation of children will appreciate that these groups have taken such an initiative.

### **3.3.2 Monitoring**

#### **How can we know if businesses are fulfilling their promises?**

When the Principles are publicized and everybody is aware of the contents, then we can know if the businesses are fulfilling their promises to respect the rights of children.

Businesses may agree to assign dedicated persons to follow up on the implementation of their promises regarding children.

Children could ask how the businesses are implementing their promises.

When people discuss their own affairs, they can think of and discuss the implementation of the Principles.

Businesses contribute in cash or materials to support children in cooperation with government and non government organization.

#### **The role of children and young people in monitoring the promises businesses make to children**

Children and community members could be organized to publicly appreciate and encourage businesses that keep their promises.

We can use the experiences of working with children's rights to advance these Principles.

#### **Role of governments**

Governments can play a role in:

- Accepting the Principles, which is essential for success.
- Eventually making the principles into laws.
- Selecting one person from each organization in the area where the businesses are located to follow up on the progresses made

### Role of non-governmental organizations or other groups

- Business owners are members of traditional CBOs. Therefore, these CBOs are the best to convince business owners to work towards promoting the rights of children.
- Helping to raise awareness with the big businesses.
- Advising on ways of improving working methods and principles in smaller businesses.
- Supporting small businesses to know about the rights of children.

### 3.4. New opportunities offered by the ‘Principles’ initiative

The Principles may be used as a new approach to work for children’s groups.

Children’s groups can hold discussions by focusing on the influence of businesses on children’s rights.

#### 3.4.1. How might children and adolescents use the Principles?

Children and adolescents can make businesses in our areas as partners in the work that we do. (Previously we used to work with NGOs only.) – (15 year old girl)

To ensure that other children understand the Initiative better so that they are aware of the different issues relating to children’s rights and business activities.

Children could also report abuses against other children, as most children will have access to know about the situation of children working in small businesses.

#### 3.4.2. Are there any planned opportunities/events that your group would like to take advantage of? Please provide details?

None are reported

#### 3.4.3. Does your group need to or want to create an event or project to advance their goals?

Yes.



#### 4. Needed Resources

	Resource	Level of interest
1.	Advocacy Planning	Would be helpful
2.	Self-Assessment	We might consider it
3.	Research	would be very useful
4.	Communications	would be very useful
5.	Dialog and planning with adult stakeholders	This would be very useful
6.	Capacity Building	This would be very useful
7.	Information Sharing	This would be very useful
8.	Other	Creating opportunities to engage local CBOs in discussions with businesses is likely to create more interest in the businesses.

#### 5. General observations

The following observations were made concerning the Consultation and the Initiative itself

##### ***A - The consultation***

***Feedback:*** The consultations were appreciated by the children's groups as informative and useful to attend.

***Knowledgeable about children's rights:*** The discussions on Day I were mostly revisions of what the children already knew, as most of the participants were active in child led groups, such as child rights clubs and information about children's rights are given in schools. The children were eager to participate in the discussions, although it seems that some of the concepts were not easy to discuss in depth, for example how children can influence businesses to change their working approaches to make them child friendly.

*Diversity:* The groups of children who participated in the consultations had diversified experiences, because of the diversity in their areas. This has enriched the discussion of children from different angles. Although the discussions were held in different places, it was clear that the children focused on different angles. An area that was not well discussed by one group was discussed in depth by another group.

*Time limitation:* the time allocated for the consultations were not enough. For the children to concretely understand the collaboration of businesses in protecting and supporting children's rights there is a need to revisit the issues more.

### ***B - The Initiative***

***Small businesses:*** From the discussions it could be concluded that small community based businesses had more impact on children than big businesses. At the same time, the small businesses depend on children for labor and for consumption of their products. The small businesses are also those who do not have standards to follow.

***Social responsibility:*** Some children expressed that while dealing with businesses we have to be aware of the social responsibility, because if businesses close, then children and their families will be disadvantaged.