



Reflecting on Child and Youth Participation

A publication for programmers and policy
makers in East and Southern Africa

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“Developing better methods of working with children and enabling their participation is beneficial not only to children... we are making our research, our programmes and our communities more inclusive, more functional and effective.

If we are unaware of the problems and issues that concern children and young people we cannot hope to devise strategies or solutions that will address their concerns, and will constantly be struggling to make sense of the world without some of the vital information we need.”¹

(Ivan-Smith and Johnson, 1998)



Introduction

Whilst positive efforts are now being made to include children and young people in many processes, many who work in the development sector are not confident about how to practice these ideals. Opinions vary widely regarding the specific objectives of children and young people's participation, and the appropriate approaches. As Naker² points out,

“... this debate is healthy, as it enables us to examine the gap between what we would like to do, and what we are able to do in practice”.

As a contribution to this debate RIATT-ESA commissioned a review of methodologies that involved child and youth participation in the Eastern and Southern Africa region in the context of HIV and AIDS. The review focused particularly on children's involvement in relevant decision-making processes at policy and programming levels, in research, including monitoring and evaluation, and in conferences.

A number of descriptive reviews of child participation have already been undertaken in recent years. In order to build on these reviews, the RIATT-ESA review decided to take an analytical approach. Therefore, the review is not a 'how to do' nor a description of what is being done in the region, but rather an attempt to highlight important issues that need to be thought about when considering how to encourage greater child and youth participation in policy making initiatives and in our programming.

The intention of the review was to delve beneath the surface of the rhetoric around child and youth participation, and ask some tough questions about what we as development professionals - in our various roles - understand about this topic, and how we perceive our own involvement. Whilst the full review is available from the RIATT-ESA secretariat, this publication is a summary of the key issues.

RIATT-ESA's ongoing collaboration, through its child rights and participation working group, with the SADC secretariat was the initial motivation for the review, and it is hoped that it will also be used to get organisations talking about how children participate in their programmes. It can also be used for advocacy purposes to raise key issues with donors, programmers and policy makers.

The RIATT-ESA review of child and youth participation activities in Eastern and Southern Africa shows that the last five years have seen a marked increase in efforts to create spaces for young people's opinions to be heard and to influence public decision-making.

1

Children and Youth are already participating in Research



Over the last few years in Eastern and Southern Africa children and young people have been involved in a wide range of different research projects. At one end of the spectrum there are consultations with children designed to understand their experiences or views on a topic as a means of informing organisational or policy responses.

For example, children have been asked to comment on child labour legislation, they have been asked about which of their rights are most often violated and their perceptions and experiences have been sought to shape media.

At the other end of the spectrum are processes of enquiry, analysis and action involving young people in ways that enable reflection, reciprocal learning, renewed definition of questions and transformation at both personal and social levels. Some have sought to involve children more fully in the research by involving them in shaping the research questions and conducting research themselves.

“I am happy now after sharing my problems in the workshops and the questions I asked changed my life because I found out that the problems are not only mine but other children have the same problems.”
(Boy, 16)

Child-carers as researchers³

During 2009 Save the Children with funding from the Ford Foundation conducted child-led research with children who were caring for sick adults, elderly grandparents and younger siblings in a village in Central Uganda⁴.

The children talked about their own situation and then identified a set of research questions to ask other child-carers known to them. Using tape recorders they then went out and interviewed these children. In addition to the recorded interviews they also took photographs that told a story about ‘being a child-carer’. The photographs then formed the focus of discussion with adult researchers.

The use of the photographs allowed the child-researchers to collect intimate and detailed information that adult outsiders would never have been able to access. They were also a developmentally appropriate tool for young people, many of whom could not read or write.

When the child-researchers were asked to evaluate the impact of the project it was clear that being involved in a set of research workshops with other children who have similar life experiences can make a significant impact on children’s psycho-social well-being.

What is more, the material collected by the child-researchers gave an intimate and detailed picture of the life experience of child-carers, one that adult researchers would never have been able to collect. This material will now be used in policy advocacy around the needs of child-carers.

Children, Youth and research: the challenges

- **To move beyond consultation of children to help us understand their views on a topic**

There is a need for long term, sustained research that looks beyond asking children for descriptions of ‘our problems’ to more complex issues such as exploring with children what motivates their behaviour.

There is a need for research that looks at children’s agency rather than just their difficulties; what strategies do they use to overcome their difficulties and how did they come upon these survival strategies?

- **To find ways of involving children and youth in all aspects of the research**

“... much participatory research is still adult-led, adult-designed and conceived from an adult perspective. Children are party to the subculture of childhood which gives them a unique ‘insider’ perspective that is critical to our understanding of children’s worlds. Yet there is a paucity of research by children...⁵

- **To involve younger children in research**

Very little research work is done with children under 12 and even less work with children under six.

Children, Youth and research: the recommendations

- Focus on long-term sustained research that looks at children over time;
- Think carefully about how to involve children in the conception and design of the research;
- Long-term research is costly and time consuming and realistic budgets and time-frames need to be created;
- There is a need to draw on advice in planning and conducting participatory research. The expertise is increasingly accessible, including learning from within the region⁶;

In the last five years, several governments in the region have invited children and youth to participate in the development of national and regional policy. For example young people were involved in drawing up the SADC Six-Year Plan of Action for accelerating implementation for HIV and AIDS.

2

Children and Youth are already participating in Policy design



In South Africa young people were engaged through the Dikwankwetla project in commenting on the new South African Children’s Bill.

In Zimbabwe children have participated in writing Zimbabwe’s National Action Plan for Orphans and Vulnerable Children and Youth.

The RIATT-ESA conference “enabled the multiple perspectives of participating children to be heard. There was also a recognition amongst delegates of how the insights of the children shaped conference recommendations in ways that would not have been possible without their consultation.”⁷

Children’s voices in policy-making⁸

Early in the planning process of a regional conference on Children and AIDS, members of RIATT-ESA decided that “child participation is key for ensuring that national HIV and AIDS policies respond to children’s needs.” The conference represented an opportunity to pilot a participatory process and to evaluate the process.

Over several months prior to the event, two series of consultations with children aged 13 to 18 years affected by HIV and AIDS and with older care-givers were conducted in eight countries. Individuals were chosen to represent their peers in the three-day conference and the two-day preparatory workshop. Children were also trained in media skills to enable them to produce short films to be presented at the conference as a further means of representing the views of children from their countries.

The RIATT-ESA conference process also highlighted the very real challenges of involving children in policy making. Having been included in conference sessions to draft country-level priority actions, children and adults were told that these action plans would be taken back to the respective countries and shared with the broader Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) networks and/or mechanisms. But as with all policy processes this has taken time and to date there is no evidence that this follow-up has taken place in any of the participating countries.

Children and Youth participating in policy design: the challenges

- **To find ways to follow-through on children’s and young people’s participation in policy processes** so that the ‘participation’ of children is transformative rather than tokenistic in terms of influencing policy.
- **To facilitate a process that enables young people to influence strategic decision-making.** This often depends on the nature of relationships between children and adults involved.
- **For government bodies involved in such processes to examine the strategic intentions behind involving children.** Too often the intention is simply to ensure children are present rather than understand what children are saying and how this should influence policy.

Children and Youth participating in policy design: the recommendations

- **Work to create processes where relationships are built between adults and children** so that even ‘powerful’ adults are able to listen and hear what children are saying. Time needs to be given for children and adults to engage openly with each other. This means spending time on helping children feel at ease with the adults and helping adults to think about children differently.
- **Before involving children in such processes thought must be given to strategies for following through on their recommendations,** including reporting back to them on progress.

What is participation?

Because participation is now the benchmark by which processes and organisations are judged, models of participation are often endorsed or criticised according to whether they are ‘proper’ or ‘meaningful’.

Recent reflection on child participation in Africa by World Vision International (WVI) warns against the tendency to label a participatory approach to work with young people as either ‘tokenistic’ or ‘meaningful’⁹ (Young, 2008). WVI argues that these labels fail to account for the particular goals and context of a specific process, nor can they describe how it succeeded in meeting expectations or unforeseen outcomes.

WVI also argues that prescriptive notions of what is and is not ‘meaningful’ participation can deter organisations from pursuing a broad spectrum of initiatives towards fulfilling children’s rights. Attempting to achieve the effective participation of young people can be seen as too complicated and difficult, so is avoided.

At the other extreme, WVI’s report claims that organisations can risk affording models of so-called ‘meaningful participation’ and the ‘right techniques’ greater importance than the organisation’s own experiences, undermining the agency and wisdom of their staff, which in turn produces ignorance of project impacts.¹⁰ (Mosse, 2001:33).

WVI claims that these are some of the reasons for the gulfs between organisational commitment to young people’s participation and tangible evidence of participatory practice and beneficial outcomes.

3

Children and Youth are already participating in Programme design



Two broad approaches to young people’s participation in programme design are evident in the region.

One is consultative research akin to that described in the section on research above. The other the establishment and ongoing facilitation of children’s clubs through which young members identify needs, then design and deliver responses to these with some degree of support from adults.

*“Phila Impilo works with people in their own context and location – we take the programme to them. This is all about power relationships – if we did this in a conference venue, we would be ‘wielding the stick’. The concept we are trying to communicate is the handing over of power to children to have agency in their own lives.”*¹¹

Children influence health services¹²

The philosophy guiding Youth in Planning (YIP) in establishing the *Phila Impilo* (‘Life Life’) project in hospitals, clinics and NGO services in Kwa Zulu Natal, South Africa, was one of learning through practice in order to facilitate authentic change. The purpose of *Phila Impilo* was to support health service personnel to work directly with children and facilitate children’s participation in the design of health services.

The project employed a strategic combination of:

- child-centred research with patients aged 6-13 years with TB infections (and in some cases HIV),
- promotion sessions with staff of health facilities and NGO services, which covered children’s participatory rights in a health care arena and findings from consultations with young patients,

- roundtable discussions involving representatives from health services and experts in the field,
- developing written and audio-visual material to raise awareness.

Children participated directly in only one specific component of the project yet its overall design enabled their views to be heard and acted upon by those in charge of, or implementing, service delivery.

The YIP staff, who have much experience in designing and implementing participatory work with children, consider that the success of *Phila Impilo*’s model lies in the combination of useful information generated by and for health professions, and the ‘heart change’ resulting from the approach used to engage health professionals.

Phila Impilo, requires specific and sustained inputs from adults in order to support youth as effective agents of change in their community. And, while in some cases the roles played and valued by adults within traditional cultural frameworks had not changed, there are also some critical differences in emphasis. **Notably, facilitatory work with children requires adults to broker power rather than hold onto it**, and demands skills in negotiating for the best interests of children, including a legitimate platform for their views.

Children and Youth participating in programme design: the challenges

- To shift the perceptions adults within programmes hold of children.
- To encourage adults within programmes to broker power rather than hold onto it.

Children and Youth participating in programme design: the recommendations

- Programmes need to be structured in such a way that children work alongside adults in a community context rather than adults ‘delivering services’ to children.
- Capacity building for programme staff needs to involve a critical look at their perceptions of children and encourage them to share power in the running of the activities.

There is plentiful research documenting the ways young people engage in and positively influence familial and community affairs. Their effectiveness is often compromised by gender, age and other hierarchies, but young people can be highly motivated to act for change, whether to ensure their survival or to maximise life-chances.



Children and Youth are already participating in Programme implementation and service

4



A child-led and intergenerational project ¹³

In the northeast of Tanzania around the village of Nshamba in a resource-poor rural area is one of the most innovative approaches to children's participation in service delivery.

Here, a cluster of projects ¹⁴ works through child-led groups with orphans, children living with grandparents and children caring for sick adults. Apart from the innovative approaches to economic empowerment of children one of the characteristics of this cluster of projects is the emphasis on intergenerational contact.

The orphan project has three generations participating in the organisation, older past members who work as replicators of the project and the club members who in turn work with young children. The Tato Tanu groups, which are structured around children who live with grandparents, have a strong focus on intergenerational dialogue. One of the focuses of the psychosocial support work is improving communication between grandparents and children.

The income generation work with families where a child is caring for a sick adult is structured as a partnership between adults and children. *"Parents and children signed the loan agreement. We insisted with the parents that the children should be the implementing actors in order to be better prepared for the future . . . It is a delicate challenge to strengthen the children and to include the parents in this process due to the traditional relationships between adults and children where children are not supposed to have their own voices. We hope that the process we followed in the development of economic activities will bind parents and children together in a common objective ¹⁵.*

Children and Youth participating in programme implementation and service: the challenges

- To encourage intergenerational interaction within programmes
- To make sure programmes with children are sustained so that children become agents of change within the community over time.

- Regional examples include enquiry into the impact of social pensions on the livelihoods of older people and grandchildren in Tanzania ¹⁶ and initiatives to involve the whole family in prevention, treatment, care and support ¹⁷.
- Evidence suggests that finding ways to work inter-generationally in delivering programmes could be a more fruitful approach to fulfilling young people's rights to participation than efforts that have a solely 'participatory' goal and therefore struggle to attract and build relationships with adults.

Children and Youth participating in programme implementation and service: the recommendations

- A growing body of evidence from the region shows that young people's rights to participation in service delivery are most effective if integrated within broader development efforts including poverty reduction and responses to HIV and AIDS; those that fulfill children's rights to survival, protection and development, and hence entail engagement with community members and service providers of their parents' and grand-parents' generations.

Following a significant rise in the child advocacy movement globally and within the region, we are increasingly familiar with children vocalising issues of concern through a number of different channels. Some organisations have developed a specific advocacy arena for children, for example Plan International's Youth, Media and Development website.

5

Children and Youth are already participating in Advocacy



Several innovative initiatives in the region have intended to reach both a wider group of vulnerable or HIV and AIDS-affected young people and an older generation of carers and service providers. Two examples are a film in Zimbabwe made collaboratively with four orphan children and the radio project described below.

Other advocacy is targeted primarily at members of state and civil society institutions making decisions about resources. One of the key challenges is of ethics, and the need to make sure that children’s emotional well-being and confidentiality is protected in these processes.

“I have learnt that children are also people with minds that are the same as those of adults”¹⁸.

Advocacy through radio¹⁹

The Abaqophi bakwaZisize Abakhanyayo children’s radio project in Ingwavuma, South Africa was initiated by a group of researchers, service providers and teachers working in the area who were concerned that negative, popular understandings of children affected by HIV and AIDS appeared to be shaping funding, policy, interventions and even South African law.

Having grown from a single group of children who made their own simple radio-diaries the project now includes a number of groups of children, participating in weekly after-school sessions and holiday workshops, each at different levels of technical expertise, making programmes that range from personal radio diaries to commentaries, audio-profiles, and current affairs and documentary formats. They also present a regular slot on the local Maputaland Community Radio station (MCR), during which time

they air their pre-recorded programmes, facilitate related live discussions in studio and with listeners, and report on news collected from schools in the area.

The project has had multiple impacts on the children involved, not least of which has been an increase in literacy and communication skills. But also, significantly the reflection involved in creating radio programmes has facilitated emotional healing and created opportunities for communication between children and their carers.

Both the process of creation of the programmes and the things the children say have also influenced the way children are perceived in the community and beyond.

“In initiating the children’s radio project, the team intended to give children in Ingwavuma the opportunity to depict their lives for a broader audience. It was anticipated that the audio packages they produced would provide more nuanced representations of children’s experiences than those produced by many adult researchers and journalists and ... therefore contribute to improving public insight into the experiences of children growing up in the context of HIV and AIDS in South Africa.”²⁰

Children and Youth participating in advocacy: the challenges

- To make sure that children’s participation in advocacy goes beyond tokenism so that their authentic voices are heard.
- To allow children to advocate for themselves and at the same time taking into account ethical issues linked to public presentations and media that are often used for advocacy purposes.

Children and Youth participating in advocacy: the recommendations

- It is important to use processes that allow children and young people to share their lives and ideas in an authentic way. Many examples exist in the region of the power of media such as radio, film and photography in this regard.
- Identify and consider carefully the ethical issues related to protection of confidentiality and children’s benefit, when engaging in public advocacy that involves children.



“Despite the promises made, the reality is that meaningful participation of children in affairs of state, society, community and family is extremely rare.²¹”

The African Union, 2007

Moving towards greater child and youth participation

“There is an urgency to ‘get it right’ for children. This is partly because we are all aware of the very destructive effects of HIV and AIDS on individuals and social networks within this region. This has led to many organisations ‘doing participation’ without really thinking through why they are doing it and without finding the best way to do it. On the other hand others have been very cautious about engaging children.

We need to take time to think about why and how we are doing child participation before rushing ahead on the one hand and at the same time we need to be ‘brave’ enough to try it trusting that we will learn as we go along, particularly if we listen to the children and young people involved.²²”

(Bray, 2009: 6)

Proponents of young people’s participation in Africa must make a clear and understandable case for this enterprise and provide the appropriate support²³. Without these, practitioners will continue to struggle to harmonise their goals and practice with their daily experience, and little progress will be achieved.

Let’s talk about our different reasons for involving children

There are differences in opinion about the ultimate goals of child and youth participation but these remain unacknowledged, and often hinder efforts to plan and implement collectively. Opening discussion that acknowledges the very different purposes behind initiatives designed to be participatory can help address this problem.

We need to ask questions like these:

- Is the purpose behind the participation of children limited to fulfilling the rights of the particular individuals involved? Or do these individuals represent a larger constituency of those whose lives the initiative aims to improve?
- What are our broader development aims and how do we now view child/youth participation fitting into this agenda? Is it a means to an end or an end in itself? Very different approaches, and resources, are required depending on the answers to these questions.

Let’s change the way we ‘see’ children

We need to acknowledge that the inclusion of young people in ways set out within organisational and policy goals requires something quite fundamentally challenging. It requires a change in the way we as adults think about children and childhood - what some have called both a ‘head change’ and a ‘heart change’ - and thus a change in institutional culture. Donors and practitioners are increasingly aware of the missed opportunities that result from not making this change.





Let's acknowledge cultural norms

It is important that we face up to the challenge of reconciling the kind of attitudinal change described above with a sensitive respect for the conduct of social relationships in the region.

The full review report outlines a number of examples from the region that demonstrate how a balance can be struck in affirming children's rights and responsibilities in a manner consistent with cultural norms and the principles laid out in international and regional human rights law.

It is important to open internal debate on issues related to children's and youth rights, and local culture.

- Recognise that there is a conflict within a substantial number of practitioners that has not been given sufficient space within their respective organisations;
- Use local examples to demonstrate how the participation of children and youth can strengthen the familial and community values of importance in African society, as well as improving young people's well-being now and in the future;
- Clarify the fact that children's participation in any given process does not have to be an "all or nothing" transaction and that adults have a legitimate role to play in guiding and protecting children, as well as determining what is appropriate within a given context.

Let's stop separating child and youth and adult activities

The full review also highlighted the fact that the separation between organisations working in the children's and youth sector and older people's sector respectively hindered efforts to engage people from across the age

spectrum in dialogue, planning and joint implementation. This separation prevents practitioners from seeing how to involve children in youth activities and children and youth in cross-sectoral or inter-age group work that, by its very nature would fulfill their entitlement to participation.

We need to invest in building relationships between adults and children because it is a critical ingredient of effective 'participatory' initiatives with children and youth.

- Provide practitioners with practical skills and experience that will enable them to reconstruct their relationships with children within a more equitable framework;
- Prepare and support young people in ways consistent with the roles they will be expected to play in the process.

We need to identify and equip 'the adult side'.

- Identify with the positions of those on the other side of the equation who are not just employees or partners linked to a project. In other words the group of people who are the (usually older or adult) audience and/or reciprocal party in interaction with children and youth, for example the local council or the health ministry;
- Think carefully about the agendas and interests of this group, and hence why working with children will or will not appeal;
- Think about the approaches and resources needed to achieve the goals of this group, of young people, and of the facilitating organisations.

We need to explore and extend inter-generational work

- Consider existing initiatives that engage people of different age groups and the quality of relationships engendered therein;

- Identify the barriers and opportunities in deepening and extending such work in ways that fulfill young people's rights to be heard, to information and to a say in matters affecting them;
- Ask where organisational goals pertaining to rights and participation could be met through working across sectors, such as health and children's rights or with organisations that focus on a different age group.

Let's acknowledge multiple motives

Think about why individuals and organisations want to further child and youth participation.

- Does being seen to be 'doing the right thing' obscure developmental goals and prevent clarity around overall objectives?
- To what extent do human rights, economic efficiency or the long-term health of society influence motivation for enhanced participation? And if all three play a part, what are the advantages of making these explicit in programming?

Let's look at our own practices

Take a long hard look at working practices within the organisation and the nature of programming. There is a risk that we gloss over the complexities and mask qualities of processes that engage children and youth, thereby failing to spot what is being – or might be – achieved in terms of personal and social transformation within the particular context.

Acknowledge any gaps between ideals or rhetoric regarding engaging children and youth, and actual practice.

- Think about why organisational responses have been so inadequate, for example by doing a budgetary analysis to see what resources have been allocated to each age cohort (young children through to youth, in school and out-of-school) and where the gaps lie in terms of responses to HIV and AIDS. By identifying the barriers that have prevented more work thus far (e.g. high costs, challenging nature of the work) you can begin to address the gaps;
- At the same time, consider ways in which the organisation has been working with children and youth, and think carefully about what is happening in terms of relationships and empowerment of the various age groups involved. Are there are elements of programme design or activity that are in fact 'participatory' yet have never been labeled as such, and that could be built on?

Let's look outwards

Draw upon lessons learnt in the region regarding the translation of rights-based principles into programming at various levels.

Let's find funds for child and youth participation activities

The full review highlighted the fact that state and civil society service providers had inadequate knowledge about how to find and tap into state funds able to support child and youth participation.



About RIATT-ESA

www.riatt-esa.org

Footnotes

- 1 Ivan-Smith E. and Johnson V. (1998). The Way Forward. E. Ivan-Smith and V. Johnson (Eds.), *Stepping Forward: Children and young people's participation in the development process*. London: Intermediate Technology Publications. P299
- 2 Naker, D. (2007). From rhetoric to practice: Bridging the gap between what we believe and what we do. *Children, Youth and Environments*, 17(3), 146-158
- 3 The information here is taken from Case Study 1 written by Glynis Clacherty in the complete review: Bray, R. and Clacherty, G. (2009) *An analytical review of literature, thinking and practice towards child and youth participation in east and southern Africa*. RIATT: Johannesburg
- 4 Clacherty, G. (2009) *Participatory child-led research with children who are carers in Nakasongola District, Central Uganda: A case study*. Save the Children: Pretoria
- 5 Kellet, M (2005). Children as active researchers: A new research paradigm for the 21st century? NCRM Methods Review Papers: NCRM/003. London: ESRC National Centre for Research Methods. p4.
- 6 In 2006, the Tanzanian organisation 'Research on Poverty Alleviation (REPOA) produced a 4-page brief entitled 'Research with Children' with funding from UNICEF (Mwaipopo, 2006). The Brief contains guidelines on the rationale, ethical considerations, techniques and challenges to be considered when embarking on research with children, and is attuned to the Tanzanian social and cultural context. It was put together following a course hosted by REPOA on participatory research with children that included young people from the Temeke Municipal Children's Council
- 7 RIATT (Regional Inter Task Team on Children and AIDS in East and Southern Africa). (2008a). Internal review document, Getting it Right for Children. Short films and audio stories made by children from East and Southern Africa. DVD made at the conference held in Dar es Salaam, 27 Sept to 2 Oct, 2008
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- 11 De Wet, T., Kruger, J. and Black, V. (2009). *Phila Impilo! Live Life! Ways to healing, children as partners in health*. Report of the Roundtable 2 Discussion. Durban: Young Insights in Planning. p12
- 12 This project is described in more detail in: Bray, R. and Clacherty, G. (2009) *An analytical review of literature, thinking and practice towards child and youth participation in east and southern Africa*. RIATT: Johannesburg
- 13 The information here is taken from Case Study 5 written by Glynis Clacherty in the complete review: Bray, R. and Clacherty, G. (2009) *An analytical review of literature, thinking and practice towards child and youth participation in east and southern Africa*. RIATT: Johannesburg
- 14 The Humuliza Orphan Project, The Kwawazee Project and a REPSSI/Symphasis project
- 15 Internal mid-term report for REPSSI/Symphasis
- 16 Hoffman, S., Heslop, M., Clacherty, G., and Kessy, F. (2008). *Soap, Salt and Shoes for School: The impact of pensions on the lives of older people and grandchildren in the KwaWazee project in Tanzania's Kagera region*. Evaluation Summary. HelpAge International, SDC Swiss Agency for Development, REPSSI, World Vision International
- 17 Presentation by Lydia Mungherera, JLICA, at the 2008 RIATT conference
- 18 Case Study 2 in the full review written by Helen Meintjes of The Children's Institute, Cape Town. p120: Bray, R. and Clacherty, G. (2009) *An analytical review of literature, thinking and practice towards child and youth participation in east and southern Africa*. RIATT: Johannesburg
- 19 The information here is taken from Case Study 2 in the full review written by Helen Meintjes of The Children's Institute, Cape Town
- 20 Ibid p108: Bray, R. and Clacherty, G. (2009) *An analytical review of literature, thinking and practice towards child and youth participation in east and southern Africa*. RIATT: Johannesburg
- 21 African Union (2007) *Call for accelerated action on the implementation of the Plan of Action towards Africa Fit for Children (2008-2012)*, outcome document from the Second Pan-African Forum on Children: Mid-term review 29 October - 2 November 2007, Cairo Egypt, PANAF/FORUM/CHD/MIN/2(II)
- 22 Bray, R. and Clacherty, G. (2009) *An analytical review of literature, thinking and practice towards child and youth participation in east and southern Africa*. RIATT: Johannesburg
- 23 Naker, D. (2007). From rhetoric to practice: Bridging the gap between what we believe and what we do. *Children, Youth and Environments*, 17(3), 146-158

The Regional Inter-Agency Task Team on Children and AIDS in Eastern and Southern Africa (RIATT-ESA) is a response to the 2006 Global Partners Forum recommendation to establish regional task teams to accelerate commitments to meet 2001 UNGASS and MDGs (2006 Abuja Declaration) and regionalise the mandate and goals of the global IATT on Children and AIDS.

RIATT-ESA was formed in 2006 between regional political and economic bodies, civil society organisations, academia, donors and UN agencies in response to the crisis and calls for action. The RIATT-ESA links with the global level Inter Agency Task Team on children affected by AIDS (IATT).

RIATT-ESA works to ensure the UNGASS declaration of commitment to universal access for children to prevention, care, treatment and support in the context of HIV and AIDS by harnessing the power of a joint response. There are currently over 50 different partners from different sectors.

RIATT-ESA seeks to add value to existing and new regional initiatives through its comparative strengths.

RIATT-ESA does this by:

1. **Supporting collaboration and coordination** by convening key stakeholders in the region through partners meetings and a conference to contextualise commitments and identify regional issues;
2. **Supporting regional bodies address HIV and AIDS** by working actively with the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the East African Community (EAC) around Children and AIDS, for example acting as a conduit for partners to provide support to the SADC development of a minimum package of services for vulnerable children;
3. **Giving a stronger voice to children** by striving to involve children in various levels of its work, for example in its 2008 conference and through supporting SADC in its work to develop a child participation framework for the region;
4. **Keeping key messages on the agenda** by advocating regionally and globally on issues affecting children and their families and carers in Southern and Eastern Africa in the context of HIV and AIDS;
5. **Promoting learning and making information more easily accessible** by developing and supporting a regionally specific website on Children and AIDS and by identifying information and learning gaps and issues.



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Acronyms

EAC	East African Community
HIV and AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome and Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
IATT	Inter-Agency on Children and AIDS
MCP	Maputaland Community Radio Station
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OVC	Orphan and Vulnerable Child/Children
RIATT-ESA	Regional Inter-Agency Task Team on Children and AIDS - Eastern and Southern Africa
SADC	Southern African Development Community
TB	Tuberculosis
UNGASS	United Nations General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS
WVI	World Vision International
YIP	Youth in Planning

The ideas in this publication are based on: An analytical review of literature, thinking and practice towards child and youth participation in East and Southern Africa by Rachel Bray and Glynis Clacherty 2009.

The review can be obtained from www.riatt-esa.org