

## A City Fit for Children: Mapping and Analysis of Child Friendly Cities Initiatives

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### Abstract:

*Over the two last decades, a number of States have implemented Child Friendly Cities (CFC) initiatives, designed to promote both children's rights and children's well-being at sub-national level. However, limited research is available with respect to the global distribution of CFC initiatives, and the extent to which initiatives cover and effectively implement the nine constitutive elements of the Child Friendly Cities framework. In this paper we address these issues by (1) mapping all registered CFC initiatives around the world to reflect their global distribution, (2) analyze whether these initiatives cover the nine constitutive elements of the Child Friendly Cities framework and (3) provide a meta-analysis of challenges and good practices on the basis of a sample of the registered initiatives. We conclude that the global distribution of CFC initiatives is uneven and that most CFC initiatives do not fully implement the CFC framework; they cherry-pick amongst elements, rather than cover the elements comprehensively. Our research also shows that, despite the existence of some good practices, there are recurrent challenges and limitations in respect of CFC initiatives that undermine their effectiveness in practice. To tackle these shortcomings, we encourage States and cities to genuinely embrace the concept of Child Friendly Cities and its implications.*

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# 1 Introduction

In the early 1990's, the idea of child friendly cities was conceived of when UNICEF's Mayors as Defenders of Children Programme sought to involve municipal authorities and local governments in the implementation of policies and programs to actualize children's rights (Riggio, 2002; UNICEF, 2014). Subsequently, , the 1996 Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) launched the official Child Friendly Cities (CFC) initiative with the aim to make cities worldwide more livable for children. Today, the CFC framework is widely adopted, with more than 40 countries around the world employing it to guide CFC initiatives (UNICEF, 2014). Examples of some such initiatives include city-wide child-friendly ordinances in Japan and Italy, child impact assessments in Vietnam and children's participation councils in Albania (UNICEF, 2014).

CFC initiatives refer to systems of governance that aim to simultaneously address the needs of children and fulfill children's rights in a comprehensive manner. They should not be confused with the much narrower –though extensively researched– concept in urban design and environment, equally referred to as ‘child friendly cities’, that seeks to design cities with the needs of children in mind (either or not with their involvement) (e.g. Gleeson & Sipe, 2006; Woolcock, Gleeson & Randolph, 2010; Whitzman, Worthington & Mizrachi, 2010; Malone, 2013; Biggs & Carr, 2015). The CFC focus on cities is instead motivated by the global decentralization trend and growing importance of cities and towns within national political and economic systems.

The CFC framework is premised upon the idea that the well-being of children is an indicator of good governance and a healthy habitat. In addition, the CFC concept acknowledges that children are not incompetent. Rather, children are active agents capable of influencing decisions about their city (UNICEF, 2009). Four guiding principles derived from the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) underpin the CFC framework of governance: Non-discrimination (Article 2 CRC), the Best Interest of the Child (Article 3), the Rights to Life and Maximum Development (Article 6), and Respect for Children's Views (Article 12). Premised upon these principles, the framework allows for interventions that promote the full range of children's rights (UNICEF, 2004).

Importantly, creating a child-friendly city does not only benefit children, but equally focuses on the well-being of the wider community, cities and future generations (Nour, 2013). A number of studies suggest that investing in children yields high economic returns generally, including reduced poverty, lower economic and social inequality, and lower mortality (UNICEF, 2000; Rees, Chai & Anthony, 2012; UNICEF, 2012). In addition, some of the rights with which child-friendly cities are directly associated form part of a wider set of

human rights, such as environmental rights, that benefit the wider society. Spending public resources for the sake of children does therefore not simply constitute consumption, but presents an investment for the benefit of society and its future development. In this sense, the CFC concept is not solely related to children, but is also important as a strategy to achieve sustainable economic development.

Over the last few years, a number of CFC case studies and assessment reports of individual and country-wide CFC initiatives have been published (e.g. Corsi, 2002; Guerra, 2002; Racelis & Aguirre, 2002; Bridgman, 2004; Clements, 2005; UNICEF, 2006; Kinoshita, 2007; Cushing, 2016). Journals such as *Environment & Urbanization* (2002), and *Children, Youth & Environments* (2015) have consolidated assessments of individual or country-wide CFC case studies around the world into a special issue. However, these studies do not compare across each other. More generally, despite the large number of assessments that focus on specific case studies, there is a limited number of comparative studies. Yet, given the universal nature of the CFC framework, comparative studies are better suited than specific case studies to explore the geographical distribution of CFC initiatives, the existence of regional biases, and good practices and common, thematic challenges. In this respect they provide an important source of information for those in charge of CFC initiatives.

Not only are comparative studies scarce, existing studies contain a number of limitations including a lack of rigorous impact assessment as most research is descriptive and does not evaluate the effectiveness of CFC initiatives. Studies rarely use an analytical framework that refers to what we know as the CFC's nine 'building blocks', or formally recognized elements of the CFC framework (see further below), which means that it is unknown whether CFC initiatives cover these blocks/elements, despite their near-universal recognition as the foundations for a child-friendly city. In addition, there are few big picture analyses that map the global distribution and program trends of CFC initiatives. The research scope of previous studies is generally small, which means that the existence of regional biases in implementation remain unknown. Finally, very few comparative studies have, to the authors' knowledge, been conducted over the last decade, which has left a serious research gap over a period of time during which many CFC initiatives have been established.

This paper aims to address these limitations by assessing the effectiveness of CFC initiatives in a number of ways. It estimates the distribution of CFC initiatives around the world, analyzes whether they cover the nine 'building blocks' and identifies thematic patterns, good practices and recurring, thematic challenges common across initiatives on the basis of a selected sample. The nine building blocks are used as an analytical framework to assess how extensively selected initiatives cover the basic foundations of CFC initiatives encapsulated in

these blocks. To minimize subjectivity, this paper uses the checklists in the official CFC document, "Building Child Friendly Cities: A Framework for Action" (2004) as a guideline to assess the initiatives using the building blocks. In addition, although there are numerous initiatives that reflect the CFC concept, for the purposes of this paper, case studies of CFC initiatives have been derived from the official website of the CFC Secretariat which lists over 100 case studies that are officially recognized as a CFC initiative. Irrespective of this limitation, this paper has a significantly wider scope than other studies, which include 10 to 50 initiatives at most, thus allowing for an assessment of geographical distribution.

As such, this paper offers an original big-picture analysis that can help countries, cities and communities to improve their current and future CFC initiatives, and bring to the fore the potential impact the CFC initiative can have. With our findings, different stakeholders can identify the existence of regional disparities in the implementation of the CFC concept, and thematic areas that need to be addressed for well-rounded implementation.

The rest of the paper is structured as follows. Section 2 comprises a literature review that further explains the limitations in the current literature and key concepts used throughout this paper. Section 3 describes the methodology for the mapping of CFC initiatives, tables related to prevalence of CFC initiatives, "Good Practices" and coverage of building blocks, and the selection criteria for the sample used in our meta-analysis of good practices and challenges. Section 4, the analysis of results, comprises three parts: (1) Mapping, (2) coverage of building blocks and (3) challenges and good practices. The first part visualizes the geographic distribution of CFC initiatives by the number of initiatives and the starting year. The second part analyzes the coverage of building blocks globally (analysis attached as Annex 1). In the third part we provide a meta-analysis of challenges and good practices on the basis of a sample of nine CFC initiatives (analysis attached as Annex 2). In addition, a further few examples of good practices are included in Section 4.3.3. Section 5 offers a conclusion that highlights the need for CFC initiatives to become more widely spread on a global level and to implement the CFC framework more comprehensively.

## **2 Literature Review and Key Concepts**

### **2.1 Literature Review**

There is not yet a large amount of literature on Child-Friendly Cities in the broader sense of the word (i.e. not limited to urban design as discussed in the introduction above). Moreover, there are number of *lacunae* in the existing literature, principally the scarcity of internationally comparative analytical studies, and the lack of assessments using the official

CFC framework or those that provide a big picture mapping global distribution and program trends of CFC initiatives. In addition, there have, to the authors' knowledge, not been any updates of internationally comparative analytical studies of CFC Initiatives over the last decade.

The existing literature for the most part provides an overview of what the CFC framework entails, and the type of CFC initiatives that exist around the world, or even just within a certain country, state or city (e.g. Riggio & Kilbane, 2002; Wilks, 2010; Giusti, Hart & Iltus, 2012; Nour, 2013). Analyses of good practices and thematic challenges common across CFC initiatives worldwide are in short supply. For example, Riggio and Kilbane (2000) and Riggio (2002) describe the establishment of the CFC, the features constituting a child-friendly city and examples of a number of CFC initiatives from around the world to illustrate the wide range of initiatives that exist. Although Riggio (2002) further categorizes these initiatives by type (e.g. initiatives that have participatory child friendly budgets), this categorization is mainly descriptive and not evaluative. However, without an analysis of how effective CFC initiatives are, and what recurring challenges are commonly shared, the quality of CFC initiatives is not easily improved and the CFC framework cannot live up to its full potential. Sheridan Bartlett's (2005) is one of the very few comparative studies that assesses good practices and common, thematic challenges of CFC initiatives around the world (see for national assessments: Bridgman, 2004; Racelis & Aguirre, 2005; Nordström, 2010; Cushing, 2016). Bartlett's review (2005) finds that projects pay little attention to awareness and inclusion of children, to methods to sustain the continuity of the initiative, and lack monitoring mechanisms or child impact assessments.

Existing evaluative studies by authors like Bartlett's (2005) do nonetheless not use the nine CFC 'building blocks', or elements, as an analytical framework. These nine building blocks have been identified by the CFC Secretariat as the fundamental components of child-friendly cities. Along with political commitment, these blocks, which are further discussed on p. 7 and include *inter alia* a City-Wide Children's Rights Strategy, comprise the necessary structures and activities to implement the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child within a local governance setting (UNICEF Innocenti Research Center, 2004). They ensure sensitive, authentic implementation and representation of children's rights and needs. However, current evaluative studies do not use this universally accepted framework to assess whether CFC initiatives cover the necessary foundations to be child-friendly. Writers instead tend to use their own framework, whether inspired by UN documentation or not (see: Racelis & Aguirre, 2002; Bridgman, 2004; Bartlett 2005; Nordström 2010). For example, in her assessment, Bartlett (2005) identifies component parts she thinks are essential for a child-friendly city, but which are currently missing or undervalued. Bartlett separates her review into 10 categories,

analyzing over 30 examples of CFC Initiatives spread over these different categories and identifying good practices and problems in carrying out the category's component (Bartlett, 2005). However, the nine building blocks cannot be found in any part of Bartlett's evaluative framework (or literature review) and she does not engage with the question of why she departs from the essential framework laid down by the CFC Secretariat. Yet, without assessing good practices and challenges from the point of view of the CFC building blocks, we do not know whether the CFC Initiative as initially envisaged is successful and whether States are willing to embrace the concept in a comprehensive manner. Moreover, although alternative frameworks have been very carefully chosen, they discourage comparison and may divert attention from fundamental (often strategic) elements of Child-Friendly Cities, thus watering down the concept and allowing States to evade their responsibilities.

Further, the scope of existing studies is insufficient to identify the geographic distribution of CFC initiatives. Currently available comparative studies merely refer to 10 to 40 case studies, when there are hundreds of CFC initiatives around the world, some of which are officially recognized on the official website of the CFC Secretariat. It is impossible to detect from existing studies any potential regional bias which would jeopardize the universal nature that the CFC framework aspires. Bias could also potentially increase regional inequality in an array of other matters, including poverty-reduction, if more developed regions become more child-friendly while less developed regions remain the same. Mapping of CFC initiatives and identifying regional disparities can encourage more comprehensive situational analyses on the factors that impede implementation of the framework in relevant areas. With the help of such analyses, adequate support, resources and guidance can then be devised.

Finally, all accessible comparative studies on CFC Initiatives worldwide were published over a decade ago. As many new CFC initiatives have been established since then, an updated analysis that equally addresses the abovementioned limitations, reveals how widely distributed the CFC framework has become, and examines whether thematic challenges from the past are still recurring, appears timely.

This paper will address the above limitations by mapping the 104 initiatives listed on the CFC website to identify thematic trends and regional biases. We further use the nine building blocks to assess initiatives for their fulfilment of fundamental CFC requirements, good practices and limitations. Before doing so the next section will explain some key concepts and provide definitions of the nine CFC building blocks.

## 2.2 Key Concepts

In its paper "Building Child Friendly Cities: A Framework for Action", the UNICEF Innocenti Research Center identified nine building blocks that are central to the process of incorporating the CFC framework and thus for cities and communities to become child-friendly (UNICEF Innocenti Research Center, 2004). As each building block represents a general idea of what it represents among a diverse array of issues, we can determine whether a specific CFC initiative addresses a certain issue, as well as produce a standardized comparison with other initiatives regarding the issues that they address. The definitions of the nine building blocks as per UNICEF are included in the table below (Table 1).

**Table 1. CFC Building Blocks and their Definitions**

<b>Building Block Name</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Children's Participation	<b>Promoting children's active involvement in issues that affect them; listening to their views and taking them into consideration in decision-making processes</b>
A Child Friendly Legal Framework	<b>Ensuring legislation, regulatory frameworks and procedures which consistently promote and protect the rights of all children</b>
A City-wide Children's Right Strategy	<b>Developing a detailed, comprehensive strategy or agenda for building a Child Friendly City, based on the Convention</b>
A Children's Rights Unit or Coordinating Mechanism	<b>Developing permanent structures in local government to ensure priority consideration of children's perspective</b>
Child Impact Assessment and Evaluation	<b>Ensuring that there is a systematic process to assess the impact of law, policy and practice on children – in advance, during and after implementation</b>
A Children's Budget	<b>Ensuring adequate resource commitment and budget analysis for children</b>
A Regular State of the City's Children Report	<b>Ensuring sufficient monitoring and data collection on the state of children and their rights</b>

Making Children's Rights Known	<b>Ensuring awareness of children's rights among adults and children</b>
Independent Advocacy for Children	<b>Supporting non-governmental organizations and developing independent human rights institutions – children's ombudspersons or commissioners for children – to promote children's rights</b>

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Source: UNICEF Innocenti Research Center (2004)

As the nine building blocks, or steps towards becoming a child-friendly city or community (CFC Secretariat, 2009), constitute a whole, all nine components should be incorporated by cities and communities (Nour, 2013). Different countries may be at different stages of implementation, however by assessing the building blocks which are incorporated, we can understand whether States are adapting the CFC framework to existing local conditions as they see fit, or whether they are transforming existing conditions to embrace the CFC concept. This matter will be explored in the analysis through mapping and analyzing which building blocks are popularly adopted in CFC initiatives around the world, as opposed to those which are neglected.

The nine CFC components are furthermore linked by the requirement of child participation, which is a cross-cutting element that should be incorporated in each block (CFC Secretariat, 2009). Child participation involves recognizing the capacity of children to express their views and to influence decisions that affect their lives and the community they live in (Hart, UNICEF & International Child Development Centre, 1992; CFC Secretariat, 2009). CFC Initiatives should thus commit to the higher levels of child participation as set out in Hart's ladder of participation, included in Table 2 below.

**Table 2. Hart's Ladder of Participation**

<b>Categories</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Manipulation	<b>Children are misguided on the processes, have no understanding of the issues they are told to promote and do not understand the actions of adults</b>
Decoration	<b>Children have no idea what is going on or a say in the organization (similar to manipulation), but at least adults do not claim the cause is inspired by children.</b>

Tokenism	<b>Instances when children are said to be given a voice and sit on a panel, but cannot choose the subject or style of communication and have little opportunity to formulate their own opinion.</b>
Assigned but informed	<b>Children understand intentions of the project, know who made the decisions concerning their involvement and why, have a meaningful rather than decorative role, and volunteer for the project after its object is made clear to them</b>
Consulted and informed	<b>Children work as consultants to adults, who design and run projects. They understand the process and their opinions are treated seriously by adults</b>
Adult Initiated, Shared Decisions with Children	<b>Projects initiated by adults, but the decision-making is shared with all persons affected, including children, the elderly and people often excluded because of special needs or disability</b>
Child Initiated and Directed	<b>Children conceive of and carry out their own projects</b>
Child Initiated, Shared Decisions with Adults	<b>Children involve adults in projects which they have designed and manage themselves</b>

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Source: Hart, R. A., UNICEF, & International Child Development Centre (1992)

The first three concepts on Hart's ladder of participation (manipulation, decoration and tokenism) are classified as non-participation, whilst the latter six are classified as participation. Under the CFC Framework, children should be given maximum opportunities for participation to their greatest ability. Whether that is generally the case will be further discussed in section 4, following the explanation of our methodology in the next section.

## **3 Methodology**

### **3.1 Methodology for Mapping**

In section 4.1, we conduct a mapping analysis of Child Friendly Cities initiatives around the world on the basis of information contained in the CFC Secretariat's Child Friendly Cities repository. The purpose of this exercise is to measure how long the concept of CFC has been present and how actively the concept has been advanced in different regions. For the mapping exercise, we sourced 104 initiatives from the official website of the CFC Secretariat, listed under the sections "CFC Initiatives in Brief", "Good Practices" and "Building Blocks" (i.e. all officially registered initiatives). The mapping by no means presents an exhaustive overview. However, by mapping all registered initiatives for the first time and by cross-analyzing them, we intend to get a glimpse of the bigger picture of otherwise rarely connected projects.

For regional comparison, the number of CFC initiatives and the average starting year of such initiatives were counted and calculated by the country of operation. These countries were subsequently categorized into one of eight regions (arranged by alphabetical order) per official classification by UNICEF: Central and Eastern Europe, East Asia and the Pacific, Eastern and Southern Africa, Industrialized Countries, Latin America and the Caribbean, Middle East and North Africa, South Asia, and West and Central Africa. Though initially considered, the average number of years of operation was not calculated due to insufficient data on end points of listed initiatives.

Separately from the mapping exercise, we also counted the number of "Good Practices" projects and analyzed their geographical distribution to see where such projects concentrate. Our mapping and Good Practices distributions are based on world regions as identified by UNICEF. The issue with that is that some of these regions contain over 30 countries, whilst the smallest region merely comprises eight. This leads to a distorted picture of distribution, as 34 countries (Industrialized countries) would in the natural course of things produce more initiatives than eight (South Asia). Therefore we equally calculated the average number of initiatives and good practices (including as a percentage of the total initiatives) per country by dividing the number of initiatives in the region by number of countries.

### **3.1 Methodology for Analysis of Building Blocks**

In section 4.2 we evaluate whether the listed Child-Friendly Cities initiatives cover the nine building blocks developed by the CFC Secretariat. While a number of projects have been analyzed on the basis of the relevant building blocks, many of the projects listed on the CFC website lack such identification. Therefore, we analyzed documentation related to these

projects and assigned a binary score (yes/no) to fulfillment of the different building blocks. Whilst this significantly increased the number of projects in our global measurement (as compared to projects for which data on fulfilment of building blocks previously existed), some degree of subjectivity was necessarily introduced at this stage due to the absence of a quantitative framework to identify the building blocks in each project. However, during the evaluation process, we referred to the definition of each building block provided by the CFC Secretariat, as listed in the previous section, as well as the checklists in "Building Child Friendly Cities: A Framework for Action" (UNICEF Innocenti Research Center, 2004) to ensure rigor and consistency.

### **3.2 Methodology for Analysis of Nine “Good Practices” Projects**

The second part of this paper’s analysis is concerned with good practices and limitations (section 4.3). To conduct this part of the analysis, we selected nine of the 104 CFC initiatives to provide more detailed examples of good practices and limitations. Three considerations were used to identify suitable case studies: old practices, good documentation, and diversifying types of initiatives.

First, we identified the oldest continuing initiatives in the region since the establishment of the CFC framework in 1996. We did so because it takes time for the effects of CFC initiatives to materialize and become established. Furthermore, old initiatives also provide a clearer idea of the challenges that remain over time, as reflected in the assessments used in this meta-analysis. Amongst the oldest initiatives, we prioritized those with good, accessible documentation. The number of available assessments, in particular those reflecting strengths and limitations, is limited. Moreover, the quality of documentation varies by region, as does the type of documentation (assessments or merely descriptions of the initiative). Yet assessing initiatives without sufficient documentation would defeat the purpose of our meta-analysis. Therefore, were the oldest initiative did not have sufficient documentation, we moved onto the next oldest, choosing the oldest initiative with sufficient documentation. Our final consideration, which is independent of the previous two, was accounting for a diversified range of case studies. This is because a more well-rounded meta-analysis can be provided when surveying common good practices and challenges across different types of initiatives. With this consideration in mind, we specifically chose to include initiatives covering a children’s budget (Brazil), Ombudsman element (Japan) and comprehensive situational analysis and child impact assessments (Vietnam).

For the purposes of this paper, we identified one initiative from each of the eight regional classifications on the CFC website and an extra case study from the ‘Industrialized Countries’

region which featured a very extensive list (Table 3). Assessments from UNICEF, secondary papers from authors working on CFC projects and government reports on the case studies were collected, aggregated and described in the meta-analysis. Using the nine building blocks as an analytical framework, in section 4.3 we identify which of the building blocks the selected CFC Initiatives generally fulfil, and subsequently provide examples of good practices and limitations, if any. Again, the official document, "Building Child Friendly Cities: A Framework for Action" (UNICEF Innocenti Research Center, 2004), which has a description and checklist of components that should be fulfilled in each building block, was used as a guideline when evaluating the implementation of the nine building blocks for each initiative.

**Table 3. List of Initiatives used in case studies**

<b>Region</b>	<b>Country case studies</b>	<b>Initiative</b>
Americans and the Caribbean	Brazil	Children's Participatory Budget Council in Barra Mansa
Middle East and North Africa	Jordan (Amman)	The Greater Amman Municipality
West and Central Africa	Nigeria	Child Friendly Cities Initiative (CFCI) in Port Harcourt
Eastern and Southern Africa	South Africa (Johannesburg)	Metropolitan Program of Action for Children
South Asia	Bangladesh	Basic Education for the Hard to Reach Urban Children (BEHTRUC) program
East Asia and the Pacific	Vietnam	Dien Bien Socio-Economic Development Plan
Industrialized regions (1)	Italy	Sustainable Cities for Girls and Boys
Industrialized regions (2)	Japan	The Kawasaki City Ordinance on the Rights of the Child Kawasaki City Council
Central and Eastern Europe CIS and Baltic States	Ukraine	Advocacy, Information and Social Policy program

Source: CFC Secretariat (n.d.)

There are several limitations to this paper. The varying degree of existing and accessible documentation on the discussed CFC initiatives, including the quality of rigorous impact assessments in these reports, restricts the delivery of a fully balanced assessment of the case studies. Furthermore, this paper contains an element of subjectivity as a result of the authors' interpretation regarding the coverage of the building blocks. Finally, as our source of data is

the CFC website, the list of CFC initiatives in particularly the mapping analysis is not exhaustive. These limitations should be taken into account in future analyses.

In the following section, we commence by mapping the official CFC Initiatives, before moving on to the meta-analysis of our nine case studies.

## **4 Results and Analysis**

### **4.1 Mapping**

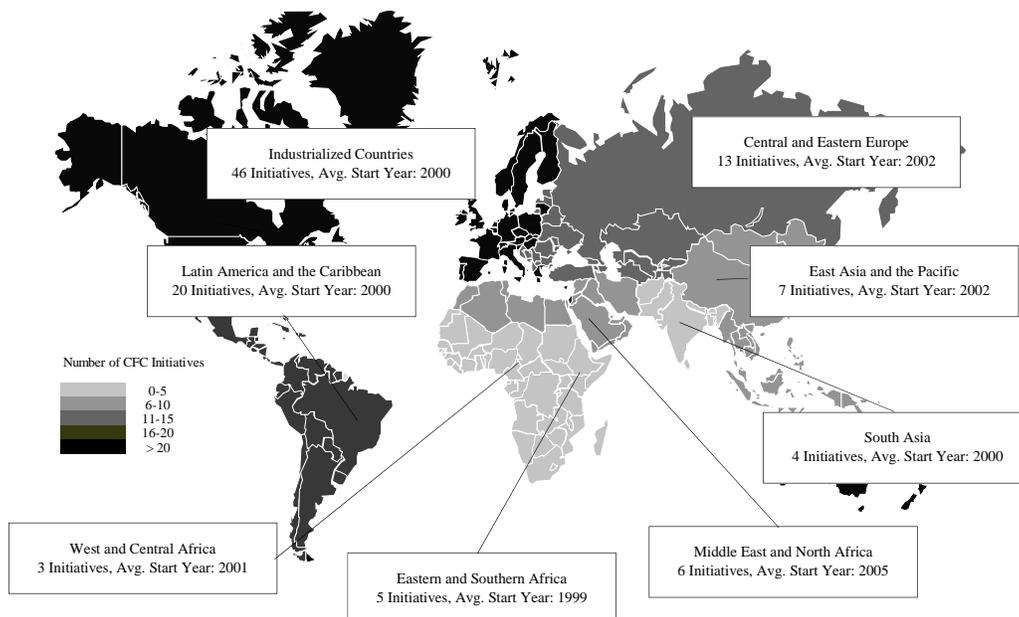
As noted above, the mapping of CFC initiatives based on number of projects and starting year includes 104 initiatives listed on the CFC website, covering the eight regions identified by UNICEF. The results of this mapping exercise can be found in Figure 1 below. The figure shows that Industrialized Countries dominate the list, with 44% of counted initiatives operating in the region. Following is Latin America and the Caribbean, where 19% of the counted initiatives originate. Central and Eastern Europe is equally host to a large number of projects, representing 13% of counted initiatives. On the other hand relatively small numbers of CFC Initiatives were counted in East Asia and the Pacific (7%), Middle East and North Africa (6%), Eastern and Southern Africa (5%), South Asia (4%), and West and Central Africa (3%).

Looking merely at the number of initiatives per region nonetheless offers a somewhat distorted picture of reality due to the vast disparity of number of countries included in each region (e.g. South Asia merely counts eight States, whereas Latin America and the Caribbean have 36). Therefore, in Table 4 we equally present an overview of the average number of CFC Initiatives per country in the different regions. As can be observed from the table, Industrialized Countries continue to be significantly ahead of other regions with an average of 1.35 initiatives per country. Yet a different picture arises with regard to the other regions. Two groups of regions arise: those who on average have around 0.57 initiatives per country (Central and Eastern Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, and South Asia) and those who on average have around 0.28 initiatives per country (Middle East and Northern Africa, Eastern and Southern Africa, and East Asia and the Pacific). Only West and Central Africa make for a very distant last runner up with an average of 0.13 initiatives per country. Whilst we hesitate to speculate on the cause for the discrepancy, which may be related to a number of social, political and economic factors, our data seems to indicate a correlation between economic development and the number of CFC initiatives. This may reflect the policy and fiscal spaces for child policies and structure and capacity of human rights-based governance.

Since early adoption of the CFC Framework may impact on the number of projects we also decided to calculate the average starting year of initiatives, yet found no great differences in this respect. Many of the initiatives started operation around 2000. Industrialized Countries, and Latin America and the Caribbean, the two regions with the overall largest number of initiatives, have an average initiative founding year of 2000. Similarly, the rest of the world regions have an average founding year of 2000 to 2002, except the Middle East and Northern Africa region for which the average starting year is 2005. Any sign of an early adopter amongst the world regions is lacking, although it should be noted that the official website of the CFC Secretariat was launched in 2004 and a large part of data collection was done around that time, potentially overlooking some older initiatives, despite inclusion of e.g. initiatives founded in 1974 and 1988 in the list.

We can thus likely ignore the time-dependent effects in regional comparison. The small difference in average starting year stands in stark contrast with the large difference in the number of counted initiatives between the different regions. This implies that the difference in number of founded CFC initiatives is not explained by early adoption, but by the relatively faster speed at which the concept has been adopted in Industrialized Countries, and to a lesser extent Central and Eastern Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean.

Figure 1. Mapping of CFC Initiatives around the World



Source: CFC Secretariat (n.d.)

**Table 4. Average Number Initiatives and Good Practices per Country**

Regions (Alphabetically)	CFC Initiatives		CFC Good Practices		
	Total per Region	Average per Country	Total per Region	Average per Country	Percentage of Total Initiatives
<b>Central and Eastern Europe</b>	13	0.65	0	0	0
<b>East Asia and the Pacific</b>	7	0.26	3	0.11	43%
<b>Eastern and Southern Africa</b>	5	0.28	2	0.09	40%
<b>Industrialized Countries</b>	46	1.35	11	0.32	24%
<b>Latin America and the Caribbean</b>	20	0.56	7	0.19	35%
<b>Middle East and Northern Africa</b>	6	0.30	1	0.05	17%
<b>South Asia</b>	4	0.50	3	0.38	75%
<b>West and Central Africa</b>	3	0.13	2	0.08	67%

Source: CFC Secretariat (n.d.)

The greater eagerness of industrialized regions to embrace the CFC Framework is not only reflected in terms of quantity, but equally appears to be so in terms of quality. The CFC website lists a total of 29 initiatives that present “Good Practices”, covering both low- and high-income countries. Among them, 11 initiatives come from Industrialized Countries and 7 from Latin America and the Caribbean, forming the majority of initiatives. East Asia and the Pacific and South Asia each provide 3 “Good Practices” initiatives, while West and Central Africa, as well as Eastern and Southern Africa each produce 2 “Good Practices”. The Middle East and Northern Africa region contributes 1 initiative. No listed “Good Practices” initiatives come from Central and Eastern Europe. Thus, the list of “Good Practices” projects further highlights that the activity of CFC initiatives is heavily tilted towards Industrialized Countries with Latin America and the Caribbean as a second major player.

However, looking at the average number of “Good Practices” Initiatives per country and the percentage of CFC Initiatives that constitute “Good Practices” (Table 4), a more diversified

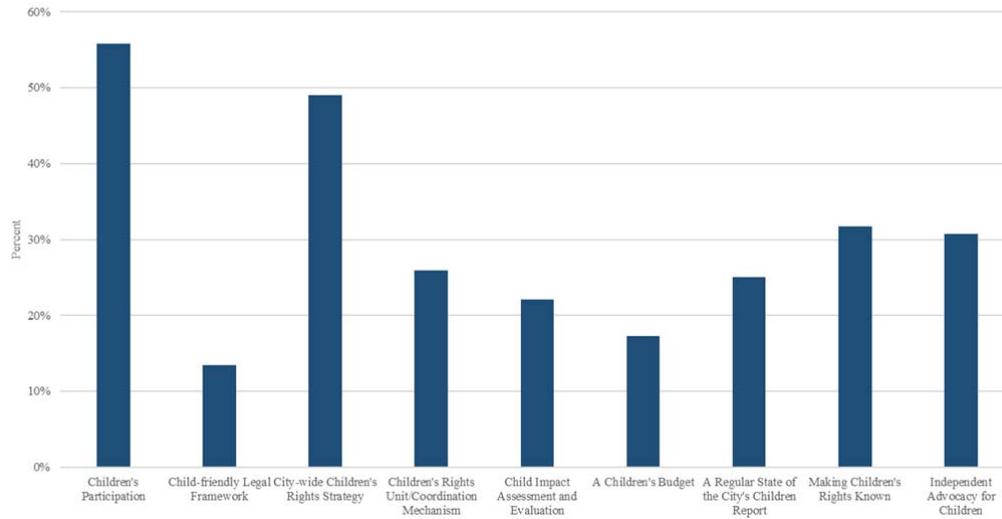
picture emerges. Whilst Industrialized Countries may have the highest total number of “Good Practices”, in terms of numbers per country they take second place after South Asia and they score third lowest in terms of percentage of total CFC Initiatives classified as “Good Practices”. Rather, regions containing a high number of developing countries have the highest percentages of their CFC Initiatives recognized as “Good Practices” (although they do not necessarily have a high number of average “Good Practices” per country). A probable explanation for this phenomenon, other than reasons to do with the relatively low number of CFC Initiatives in these regions, is that CFC Initiatives in developing regions are often set up with the help of International Organizations (IOs) who work with strategies and protocols and are vigilant in respect of holistic implementation of the CFC Framework. This is often not the case for developed countries, which rely on their own resources. This can mean that CFC Initiatives in industrialized nations are fitted into an existing framework, rather than being allowed to challenge pre-conceived ideas about children’s place in cities and communities. That being said, there is no information on *how* initiatives are moved from the general to the “Good Practices” list (e.g. selection, proposition by the country involved etc.), making it difficult to provide definitive statements on “Good Practices”.

What is apparent from the above mapping and other data is that the embrace of Child-Friendly Cities is far from a global phenomenon. Many children do not have access to CFC initiatives, particularly children who live in developing countries. This is particularly problematic as such countries could benefit from the added advantages that have been identified as by-products of Child-Friendly initiatives (see the introduction; UNICEF, 2000; Lansdown, 2011; Rees, Chai & Anthony, 2012; UNICEF, 2012). At the same time, whilst those in industrialized countries benefit from a higher number of CFC initiatives, these initiatives are (relatively) less likely to be recognized as good practices, which could point to a non-holistic implementation of CFC initiatives in that region. Whether initiatives on the whole embrace a comprehensive CFC approach is further examined in the next section.

## **4.2 Coverage of Building Blocks**

Although the above overview of the existence of CFC Initiatives and listing of “Good Practices” is important, and reflective of the distribution of CFC Initiatives, it does not provide a broad overview of the extent to which proclaimed Child-Friendly Cities in fact cover the requirements of the nine building blocks. Therefore, as a second step, we analyzed and calculated fulfillment of the building blocks by all 104 initiatives, aggregating the numbers to produce Figure 2 below.

Figure 2. Building Blocks Represented in CFC Initiatives



Source: CFC Secretariat (n.a.)

The figure shows that a significant percentage of initiatives include “Children’s Participation” (present in 56% of total) and a “City-wide Children’s Right Strategy” (present in 49% of total). Significant attention is thus paid to drafting strategies or policies to build child-friendly cities while encouraging the participation of children in the process. However, as we will further explain in the next section, participation as an aspect of CFC initiatives does not necessarily guarantee significant and effective inclusion of children in the process. The quality and level of such participation can vary considerably between projects. Much less prevalent than policies and participation are building blocks concerned with advocacy and awareness raising (present in slightly over 30% of the initiatives), followed by those referring to assessment, monitoring, reporting and coordination mechanisms: just over 20% of all CFC Initiatives include structures allowing for reflection on actual practice. Problematic about this is that the initiatives thus rather seem to focus on words promising action, rather than evaluations of the materialization and effectiveness of proposed action. Even fewer initiatives, less than 20%, adopt “A Children’s Budget” or a “Child-friendly Legal Framework” in their operations. This implies that there is a lack of sufficient, sustainable and accountable budget analysis for many of the initiatives, which places CFC Initiatives, and the children who work with them, in a precarious position. Moreover, initiatives tend to tackle the CFC concept under the existing legal environment, rather than aim to challenge the legal environment in order to produce child-friendly regulatory frameworks and procedures. Overall, the percentages demonstrating adherence to the different CFC building block are relatively low, an indication that States can cherry-pick amongst the different CFC building blocks when implementing CFC Initiatives, instead of adopt a comprehensive approach to implementing

the CFC Framework. These matters are further discussed in the next section which looks at them more in-depth through an analysis of selected case studies.

### **4.3 Analysis of Limitations and Good Practices**

Having provided a more general quantitative overview of CFC Initiatives in the previous section, in this section we seek to offer a more in-depth analysis of limitations in the implementation of the nine building blocks, and good practices overcoming such limitations. In doing so, we focus on a narrower sample of nine CFC initiatives as explained in the methodology section.

The initiatives included are:

- (1) The Children's Participatory Budget Council in Barra Mansa, Brazil, which provides locally elected children with a budget to finance projects they consider will improve the city from a children's point of view.
- (2) The Greater Amman Municipality, Jordan, which seeks to establish a holistic strategy to improve children's lives in the city, and includes children municipal councils.
- (3) The Child Friendly Cities Initiative (CFCI) in Port Harcourt, Nigeria, which seeks to improve the lives of poor urban children through institutional capacity building, including links between communities, leading towards awareness and implementation of the CRC.
- (4) The Metropolitan Program of Action for Children, South Africa, which set up a Child Friendly Cities office, the manager of which has the responsibility to reach out to children and ask for their advice on improvements to make the city more child-friendly.
- (5) The Basic Education for the Hard to Reach Urban Children (BEHTRUC) program, Bangladesh, which is a collaborative project (between government and NGOs) aiming to provide urban working children with two years of non-formal education.
- (6) The Dien Bien Socio-Economic Development Plan, Vietnam, which seeks to mainstream children's rights across all departments at national level and includes both capacity building in government, and child-friendly projects run by local committees.
- (7) The Kawasaki City Ordinance on the Rights of the Child Kawasaki City Council, Japan, which is a municipal law incorporating major provisions of the CRC, including the right to meaningful participation and to be safe in various contexts.

(8) The Sustainable Cities for Girls and Boys, Italy, which is a legally embedded plan of action under which children work together with professionals, and are consulted via children’s councils, on initiatives to make cities more child-friendly.

(9) The Advocacy, Information and Social Policy program, Ukraine, which works with a Child-Friendly City governance model consisting of indicators that cities must fulfill to achieve child-friendly status. The program equally includes a database to facilitate documentation.

For each of the above initiatives, we have examined both whether they cover the nine building blocks (results in Table 4 below) and whether they demonstrate specific limitations and good practices in the fulfillment of the building blocks (relevant parts of the analysis per initiative in Annex 2). The results of the latter are discussed in subsections 4.2.1 and 4.2.2.

**Table 5. Coverage of Building Blocks for Each CFC Initiative**

		Building Block Name								
		Children's Participation	A Child Friendly Legal Framework	A City-wide Children's Right Strategy	A Children's Rights Unit or Coordinating Mechanism	Child Impact Assessment and Evaluation	A Children's Budget	A Regular State of the City's Children Report	Making Children's Rights Known	Independent Advocacy for Children
<b>CFC Initiatives</b>	Children's Participatory Budget Council in Barra Mansa, <b>Brazil</b>									
	The Greater Amman Municipality, <b>Jordan</b>									
	Child Friendly Cities Initiative (CFCI) in Port Harcourt, <b>Nigeria</b>									
	Metropolitan Program of Action for Children, <b>South Africa</b>									
	Basic Education for the Hard to Reach Urban Children (BEHTRUC) program, <b>Bangladesh</b>									

Dien Bien Socio-Economic Development Plan, <b>Vietnam</b>									
The Kawasaki City Ordinance on the Rights of the Child Kawasaki City Council, <b>Japan</b>									
Sustainable Cities for Girls and Boys, <b>Italy</b>									
Advocacy, Information and Social Policy program, <b>Ukraine</b>									

Source: CFC Secretariat (n.d.)

Between the initiatives included in our sample, "Children's Participation" is the most commonly fulfilled building block, followed by "A Children's Rights Unit or Coordinating Mechanism". Conversely, few of the above initiatives have actual mechanisms for impact assessment, monitoring and regular reporting, which is in line with findings in the previous section. It also appears that initiatives in less developed countries such as Nigeria, South Africa and Bangladesh fulfil fewer building blocks than those in more developed nations, yet this may be subject to varying availability and quality of literature on these initiatives. Irrespectively, 'fulfillment' of the building blocks on the basis of the *existence* of strategies and mechanisms does not, however, guarantee *effective implementation*. As we will outline below, although CFC Initiatives may formally cover certain building blocks, they often face challenges and impose limitations in respect of genuine implementation.

#### 4.2.1 Limitations and Challenges

Although on paper the CFC Initiatives in our sample cover a number of building blocks, it has yet to be explored whether these blocks are effectively put in practice to truly reflect an authentic implementation of children's rights in practice. In this section, we use available assessments to identify limitations of CFC Initiatives in fulfilling and implementing the different building blocks, where applicable. Due to their intertwined nature, the "City-Wide Rights Strategy" and "Children's Rights Unit/Coordination Mechanism", and "Child Impact Assessment and Evaluation" and "A Regular State of the City's Children Report" are discussed together.

## "Children's Participation"

The building block related to participation recognizes the importance of informing, involving, and seeking serious consultation from children on decisions that affect them. It emphasizes that children are to be respected as "partners, individual human beings, rights-holders, and equal, active citizens" (UNICEF Innocenti Research Center, 2004). However, one common problem encountered in respect of CFC Initiatives is insufficient understanding of children's participation. Facilitators often do not know how to empower children and as a result, participation tends to manifest itself in the non-participatory forms of 'participation': manipulation, decoration or tokenism. Children's views may, for example, be consulted but not implemented, or there may be low levels of children's participation generally, as well as exclusion of marginalized groups.

In Italy's Sustainable Cities for Girls and Boys program for example, there were cases where facilitators acted more as educators, and children claimed they did not listen to their proposals (Baraldi, 2005). Promoters allegedly did not believe in the capacity of children to effectively participate, feeling that they were too young and unable to carry out their proposals (Corsi, 2002). Children were therefore excluded from certain decisions and as a consequence they developed skepticism towards adults, insinuating that some adults would use CFC Initiatives to carry out previously planned projects (Corsi, 2002; Baraldi, 2005).

Some of the barriers to more authentic participation are that adults who interact with children in these programs are simply not familiar with children's participation and what it means, and subsequently do not know how to facilitate participation effectively (Kinoshita, 2007). This problem occurred with respect to the children's culture centers, which the Kawasaki government in Japan is aiming to have in every junior high school district. The government has been trying to involve children in the centers' management committees. However, attempts to promote children's participation in local governance often ended up as tokenism, manipulation and/or decoration as adults involved simply did not know how to facilitate children's participation (Kinoshita, 2007).

In addition to difficulties related to the implementation of participation itself, most initiatives take little action to include marginalized groups in CFC Initiatives. Children in participatory processes are often those who are in school, and, in some cases, those who perform well in class. Hence, children who are displaced or unable to attend school are neglected in the process. In addition, cultural norms may prevent equal participation by certain groups in society. This creates an unequal distribution of benefits from the CFC program. For example, in the Greater Amman Municipality, there are cases in which there is differential treatment between genders in school, and children's views are not listened to nor considered in the city

council (Mahara, 2010). In the case of Barra Mansa, only children who are in school can participate in the budgetary council, which means that the voices of children who are marginalized, displaced and unable to attend school are forgotten. In Kawasaki, only those who perform well in class are able to participate in local governance (Kinoshita, 2007), and the same is true for Italy where children comment that teachers choose "the best ones" (Corsi, 2002).

Yet even when the voices of marginalized children are (sometimes) heard, that does not always mean that they are listened to. In the initiative in Johannesburg, where children from disadvantaged communities were asked for their views on how to improve their neighborhoods, some children claimed that the CFC manager, who was responsible for collating these views, had never made an effort to speak with them. The manager did not know how to interact with them, which led to a feeling of distance and a diminished sense of responsibility, and accountability (Clements, 2005). On some occasions children from marginalized groups *were* included in the communication. However, many changes only seemed to be materializing in more established areas, whilst even the basic survival needs of these marginalized children remained unaddressed (Clements, 2005). This goes contrary to the spirit of the CFC framework, which emphasizes the importance of having open, genuine and ongoing communication and cooperation across all parties involved, rather than using some parties for decoration and photo opportunities only.

#### “A Child-Friendly Legal Framework”

The building block related to a child-friendly legal framework requires a review of existing legislation to bring it in line with both CFC and CRC requirements, the adoption of laws that clearly set out the rights children have, and the possibility for children to seek legal remedies. Yet with CFC Initiatives generally being adopted as a matter of policy (executive branch) instead of being legally embedded, legislation is often not touched upon, and those in charge of initiatives navigate their way through the existing legal system rather than seek to change the *status quo*. Where legislation is adopted within the context of a CFC Initiative, there is little sign of thorough review, or coordination with other laws, except regarding the matter of budget. The most common challenge is nonetheless that CFC-related laws often say very little about the substantive rights of children and do not grant children remedies.

For example, existing legislation was not thoroughly revised when Italy adopted the Sustainable Cities for Girls and Boys program. The legislature simply adopted a new law (Lege 285/1997) with broad objectives and a global plan for action. The law is addressed to local government, rather than children, and as a result neither gives children very specific rights, nor a remedy when cities fail to live up to the law's objectives. However, even where a

child-friendly legal framework has been created in accordance with CFC requirements (in our sample only the Kawasaki Children's Rights Ordinance), the gap between law in the books and law in action often remains (see Kinoshita, 2007).

#### "City-wide Children's Strategy" and "Children's Rights Unit/Coordination Mechanism"

These two building blocks emphasize the need for a feasible plan for action and strong partnerships across different levels of government and departments. Coordination is important as different authorities and sectors have a direct and/or indirect impact on matters regarding children, and children's interests can easily get lost between government departments (UNICEF Innocenti Research Center, 2004). Planning and coordination needs to be a vertical (involving different levels of governance) and horizontal (involving relevant stakeholders per level) exercise with the involvement of State and non-State actors, including children and NGO's representing them. Some very real challenges emerged in this regard from our research. Many CFC Initiatives suffer from poor coordination, hampering their efforts. At the same time, however, those officially in charge may be reluctant to follow-up on advice obtained from other authorities. There equally tends to be a mismatch between targets and actual capacity, including institutional capacity, so that plans of action may simply not be feasible. A real concern is further the politicization of CFC Initiatives, which affects their quality and continuity. Finally, key players such as NGOs may not be included in the CFC Initiative, despite their potential for constituting a stable driving force.

One example relating to challenges in coordination is provided by the case of Dien Bien (Vietnam). Its CFC Initiative comprises a socio-economic development plan under Vietnam's Provincial Child-Friendly Cities program, which aims to develop sub-national capacity to realize the rights of children and women via policy-level decision making. As part of the initiative, monitoring and auditing mechanisms were created across five departments, with new tools and methods developed to further improve the social performance of plans and policies from the perspective of children's rights. However, it appeared that templates for plan monitoring and evaluation were different across and within departments, indicating a complete lack of coordination on this particular issue and hampering further efforts to coordinate due to gaps in information. (UNICEF & Vietnam Ministry of Planning and Investment, 2014).

As the same Initiative shows, poor coordination can also lead to problems with implementation. When the capacities of departments are not fully understood, targets may be set too high when compared with implementation capacity. Hence, in Dien Bien, the ratio of school enrolment, for example, is lower than the target due to lack of coordination between the municipal government which sets the target and the education sector, which does not have

the capacity to reach it (UNICEF & Vietnam Ministry of Planning and Investment, 2014). This issue is equally exemplified by the case of Bangladesh's BEHTRUC program, which delivers education to urban working children. Under that initiative a lack of coordination and resources led to an unrealistic burden on staff (Rahman et al., 2010), most strikingly by placing one person in Dhaka in charge of monitoring 3,700 learning centers (Cameron, 2000).

The link between successful initiatives, coordination and capacity is equally evidenced in the case of Port Harcourt, Nigeria. In response to the prevalence of informal settlements and accompanying hazardous conditions for children, the initiative in Port Harcourt was established based on the principles of the CFC framework (CFC Secretariat, 2003). It particularly strived to establish a strong partnership between the government and communities, so as to improve the lives of children. However, there was limited success in establishing partnerships, which affected local governance planning (CFC Secretariat, 2003; UNICEF Nigeria, 2013). The cause of this, it seemed, was a serious lack of institutional capacity and good governance, particularly in the absence of respect for basic principles of democracy, combined with a poor infrastructure for good governance (Gilbert & Allen, 2014; see also UNICEF Nigeria, 2013).

At the same time, where efforts are coordinated, a reluctance to follow up on recommendations of bodies not directly in charge of CFC Initiatives can undermine the Initiatives' effectiveness. After the city of Kawasaki, Japan, developed its own child rights ordinance and made changes to the legal system to guarantee children's rights, for example, a governmental committee on the rights of the child evaluated the city's policies regarding children. The committee subsequently gave recommendations to the Kawasaki city government, but the latter omitted to make any changes to its policies (Kinoshita, 2007).

Politicization of CFC programs is another major problem facing CFC Initiatives. The initiatives often end up relying heavily upon the commitment of individual mayors, which affects both quality and continuity. CFC programs quickly become part of political agendas, and are made optional rather than imperative, resulting in a lack of leadership in their regard. In South Africa, for example, the City Council of Johannesburg and the Mayor's Office developed a project in 2000 to ask children from low-income neighborhoods about their views and recommendations regarding their daily living conditions. However, the continuity of this initiative was subject to the changing priorities of mayors, both *per se* and in case of mayoral change, especially where the new mayor was from a different political party (Clements, 2005). Despite intermittent governmental interests, many community members and community organizations on the other hand were excited about the programs (Clements,

2005). However, these important stakeholders remained outside the communication network and could not enforce leadership.

In light of the above problems, community members should be at the forefront of mobilizing CFC support and providing a stable factor in projects, even where these have been implemented via local legislation. They can help to avoid politicization of CFC Initiatives by refusing to compromise the politically-neutral nature these initiatives should have. The Children's Participatory Budget Council (CPBC) in Barra Mansa, for example, would greatly benefit from a stable non-political force. Despite the CPBC having received significant municipal attention, and being established via the municipal law, the law is not comprehensive enough to guarantee its continuity (Guerra, 2002). In practice, the sustainability of the CPBC is to a great extent subject to the commitment of mayors, as the council falls under the direct responsibility of the mayor (Guerra, 2002). As a result, the connection between the administration and local communities can be affected by the mayor's fluctuating commitment, which in turn impacts on possibilities for children's rights awareness-raising and fostering a change in people's mindsets (Barceló, 2005).

#### "Child Impact Assessment and Evaluation" and "A Regular State of the City's Children Report"

The building blocks on assessment and reporting require cities to conduct impact assessments prior to, during and after implementing action that affects children, including CFC Initiatives. They also require cities to have data available on children generally and in respect of CFC initiatives in particular. Yet in many cases the effectiveness of CFC Initiatives is hampered by a shortage of data, an absence of impact assessments prior to implementation, a subsequent failure to follow-up and final lack of a holistic and comprehensive evaluation of the initiatives. These issues are deeply intertwined with the matter of data collection and reporting, as well as coordination (discussed above). A particular problem is the omission by cities to take CFC Initiatives through to the stage of accountability. Cities often fail to offer transparency on how initiatives have been implemented, and what impact they have had on children's lives. Apart from this reluctance to hold oneself to account, the reasons why CFC Initiatives score low on assessment and reporting appear primarily linked to poor data collection due to a shortage of specialized staff, absence of data regarding indicators of marginalization such as gender, poor coordination between departments and stakeholders involved, and the absence of indicators to monitor whether the stated goals of different initiatives have been reached.

For example, under the Greater Amman Municipality's child-friendly city-wide strategy, data collection on the different programs included is very difficult as there is no specialized staff to collect data (Mahara, 2010). In the case of Dien Bien's Provincial Child-Friendly Program (as

also mentioned above) the templates used for data collection and evaluation are different across and within departments, making data consolidation extremely difficult. A lack of comprehensive surveys further hampers the creation of sound databases that can be used for assessment, evaluation and follow up. In addition, although the situational analyses of annual plans across different departments have data on children's age, residential registration and disabilities, they lack information regarding gender and ethnicity which could indicate marginalization. Lastly, many indicators of success (or failure) of the initiative are not reflected in the data collection or evaluation. For example, although improved access to sanitation services constituted a priority concern under the initiative, data obtained in this regard only relates to schools and households, rather than number of children benefitting from the programme (UNICEF & Vietnam Ministry of Planning and Investment, 2014).

Problems in respect of assessment and reporting have also been highlighted in respect of Barra Mansa's child participatory budget council (CPBC), which is lacking monitoring mechanisms regarding the development of children involved in the CPBC (Guerra, 2002). As Guerra argues, where the CFC Initiatives do not themselves have the in-house expertise to conduct effective evaluations, they should contract systematic external consultations to monitor impact and enhance children's experience (Guerra, 2002).

The issue of indicators, in turn, is prominently present in Bangladesh' Basic Education for the Hard to Reach Urban Children (BEHTRUC) program, which provides education to urban working children. The initiative does not have a results-based framework that could aid data collection or evaluation. In particular, there are no indicators to monitor the performance and quality of the learning centers where the children are being taught (Basgall et al., 2014). Even though cities can rely on the general assessment tool with indicators devised by UNICEF and Childwatch International (Hart, Wridt and Giusti, 2011), where there are no specific indicators for a certain CFC Initiative, it is extremely difficult to offer a genuine evaluation of that Initiative and be able to report on the potential improvement of the "State of the City's Children".

#### "A Children's Budget"

The budget building block requires a budgetary process that is transparent to all citizens and involves consultation of children, as well as a framework to evaluate the impact expenditures have on children. The budget should equally reflect that children, including the disadvantaged, are getting a fair, "maximum" possible share of resources able to ensure their rights and interests. However, insufficient budget as well as a lack of budgetary transparency are precisely some of the common problems encountered by CFC Initiatives. Insufficient budget prevents mainstreaming of CFC programs throughout the cities; it can undermine the

coherency of CFC projects both in terms of city-wide implementation and comprehensive implementation of the CFC Initiative *per se*. Lack of budgetary transparency, especially to children, leaves stakeholders confused on how much budget they have, how to effectively use it and how much things cost. Therefore, negotiation and communication between children and facilitators is essential, as is an understanding by all involved stakeholders of applicable laws and the bureaucratic organization of relevant authorities, which may hamper timely funding or implementation itself.

The issue of insufficient money to fully complete projects is exemplified by the cases of Amman and Dien Bien. The Greater Amman Municipality, an express city-wide strategy, includes several projects concerned with providing safe spaces and promoting awareness of children's rights. Under the strategy, traffic safety has been identified by the municipal government as a particular concern for children. However, the allocated budget for traffic safety is insufficient for widespread implementation of safety measures throughout the city. As a result, the local government has decided to forego city-wide implementation, with the consequence that certain areas of the urban environment are still child-unfriendly (Mahara, 2010; Halaseh, 2015). Instead of limiting the area, some CFC Initiatives simply implement their programs less comprehensively when faced with budgetary restrictions. This is the case for Dien Bien which CFC Initiative aims to mainstream children's rights and provide child-related services. Due to a lower allocated budget than envisaged, and subsequent insufficient financial resources, some child-focused targets, such as Child Injury Prevention and a respiratory infections campaign have gone unfulfilled (UNICEF & Vietnam Ministry of Planning and Investment, 2014).

Budgetary restrictions, however, do not only affect programs themselves; very often there is too little, or no budget available for evaluation and reporting. Hence, in Italy, as part of an evaluation exercise of the Sustainable Cities for Girls and Boys Initiative, questionnaires were distributed to collect data on the implementation of policies for children, organizational models and quality of the urban environment. However, due to lack of financial support, only a few questionnaires were returned, and as a result only a few projects related to children could be reported on (Pallucchi, 2010).

Lack of budgetary transparency is another problem. It creates uncertainty amongst children about what projects are feasible, and frustration when projects are delayed or not implemented as a consequence of ultimately insufficient resources. In some cases, children are not informed on what budget is given to them, and are deprived of knowledge on how much things costs. In Italy's Sustainable Cities for Girls and Boys Initiative, for example, there are children's councils, which develop proposals and work with professionals such as

architects, engineers and town planners to improve their city according to children's needs. In Fano for instance, the children's council developed a Pedestrians' Charter to address mobility problems in the city (Corsi, 2002). However, the children involved were uncertain about the feasibility of their proposals. As one child interviewee wondered: "perhaps we are asking too much" (Corsi, 2002). Meanwhile, in Dien Bien, there is no child or guardian consultation on the effectiveness of public spending. In addition, there is no priority for children, or an allocated budget, in the budget estimation. Although 22% of the province's budget estimation is dedicated to 'socio-cultural sectors', there is no indication of how much of that percentage is dedicated to children's objectives, which fall under the socio-cultural heading (UNICEF & Vietnam Ministry of Planning and Investment, 2014). Yet even where a specific budget is allocated, that does not always mean that the money is actually available. Hence, the Children's Budget in Barra Mansa is never available in full due to debts of previous administrations which take priority (Barceló, 2005).

The importance of financial transparency is particularly important when there are multiple stakeholders involved in a CFC Initiative. This is exemplified by Bangladesh's Basic Education for the Hard to Reach Urban Children (BEHTRUC) program, which provides two years of non-formal education to urban, hard-to-reach working children in six regions. The CFC Initiative greatly suffered from problems of financial transparency due to capacity issues. The NGOs involved in providing education did not have adequate financial documentation and there was a lack of transparency and financial accountability. This led to long delays in project implementation, particularly in regard of skills-based training post-graduation. As a result, graduates could not practice what they had learnt attending the BEHTRUC program and had to return to their previous hazardous jobs (Cameron, 2000; CFC Secretariat, 2003; Basgall et al., 2014).

#### "Making Children's Rights Known"

Under the CFC Framework, cities must commit to making children's rights widely known. This requirement implies prior capacity building amongst the authorities involved. In particular, training should be provided to all individuals, including political authorities who work for and with children "to promote awareness of, understanding and respect for children's human rights" (UNICEF Innocenti Research Center, 2004). Most CFC Initiatives will have some sort of rights awareness campaign, even if only through posters or formal education, although the message does not always reach important parties such as private employers. There is nonetheless an absence of capacity-building amongst many CFC Initiatives, which also ultimately hinders efforts to effectively engage and benefit children. Similar to the first building block, policy makers and coordinators often do not understand what it means for

programs to be "in the best interest of the child" according to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, they have a limited view of children's rights, which means that some rights do not receive attention, and the perspective they take on rights is often not one of entitlement, but charity. Lack of definition and understanding subsequently leads to uncertainty in evaluation methods, implementation of all parts of the CFC framework and development of a long-term strategy. It also means that it becomes very difficult to effectively sensitize the general public.

For example, department officers of Dien Bien's Provincial Child-Friendly Program generally lack full understanding of the concept of Child-Friendly Cities, and the process of child-rights-focused analysis. Plans developed by departments such as finance and planning, and agricultural and rural development include little child-focused analysis and/or child-related targets. Lack of definition and guidance further meant that in the child-rights-focused analyses that were conducted some rights were simply not included (UNICEF and Vietnam Ministry of Planning and Investment, 2014).

Also, in the Greater Amman Municipality a majority of staff and policymakers lacks training on children's rights, and are especially in need of such training in order to enhance their ability to effectively facilitate children's participation (Mahara, 2010). Insufficient capacity could be attributed to the fact that there was no clear plan under the CFC Initiative to train officials on children's rights and increase their awareness of such rights (Mahara, 2010).

Lack of children's rights knowledge and training can also lead to miscommunicated goals of the CFC Initiative, especially where it is a country-wide initiative. In Bangladesh's BEHTRUC program, which provides education to urban working children, for example, there was inadequate training for teachers and supervisors, and it was difficult for them to retain students without social mobilization efforts to increase awareness of children's rights in communities (Cameron, 2001), or amongst employers (Basgall et al., 2014). Further, teachers had low qualifications, which led to formal rather than participatory or differential learning methods being used (the latter would allow the highly mobile students to easily adapt to new learning environments when they would move) (Basgall et al, 2014; Rahman et al., 2010). With inadequate training for teachers and supervisors, it was, moreover, easy for teachers to convey misleading messages that children should work and learn, rather than emphasize the right to learn (Cameron, 2000).

#### Independent Advocacy for Children

The building block regarding advocacy requires a city to allow independent parties, most often NGOs but also ombudsmen and other stakeholders, to monitor its actions and to advocate for children's rights. The block equally encourages the important and effective

partnerships between NGOs and the city government in building a child-friendly city, as long as such partnerships are equal and NGOs are not dominated by government. NGOs can thus partake in monitoring, promoting and protecting children's rights, and in particular alliances of NGOs can facilitate "the fullest possible implementation of the Convention" (UNICEF Innocenti Research Center, 2004). However, where city governments allow for independent advocacy, this is not normally in the form of an independent children's rights institution (only in Kawasaki is an ombudsman available, but there is no available data on the office's effectiveness). Another challenge is that city governments are often wary of independent advocacy by NGOs and instead choose to include NGOs to some extent in CFC Initiatives so that they have to promote children's rights within a set framework that is devised by the city government, inevitably leading to compromise.

The above-mentioned problems are particularly the case for Bangladesh's BEHTRUC program. During the program's first phase, the initiative involved a partnership with 151 partner NGOs who would run learning centers for working urban children. These NGOs were selected by those in the government, which led to favoritism and cronyism without much space for independent or critical voices (Cameron, 2000; Basgall et al., 2014). By the end of the first phase, there were too many NGOs involved, and the quality of learning centers varied greatly (Cameron, 2000; CFC Secretariat, 2003; Rahman et al, 2010; Basgall et al., 2014). During the program's second phase, UNICEF reduced the number of NGOs, enhancing credibility, although there were still capacity issues, especially in terms of financial transparency and accountability as mentioned in previous sections. Inadequate capacity in turn prevented the creation of a strategic oversight plan for advocacy and campaign efforts to increase awareness of children's rights. Stakeholders were as a consequence not sensitized to children's rights, and no plan for community mobilization came into existence (Cameron, 2000; Basgall et al., 2014).

As the above assessment demonstrates, many CFC Initiatives that cover aspects of certain building blocks face important challenges and limitations in the effective implementation of the relevant blocks. These limitations may sometimes be particular per block, but there are equally common cross-cutting challenges in effectively fulfilling the nine building blocks. These cross-cutting challenges can be categorized into four themes: Budgeting and Sustainability, Monitoring Mechanisms and Coordination, Capacity Building and Empowerment, and Participation. Whilst our assessment is based on a sample of selected cases, we hypothesize that these challenges are also commonly faced by other initiatives not included in our sample. Apart from limitations, however, our case-studies also reflected some good practices, either based on the specific building blocks, or the cross-cutting themes. These will be discussed in the next section.

## **4.2.2 Good Practices**

CFC initiatives should preferably cover as many building blocks as possible, especially if they are to be recognized as good practices. Yet even where they do not (for example because of temporary infeasibility), it is important that initiatives strike a balance between (political) will, effectiveness and sustainability. Eagerness to adopt, and involve children in an ambitious participatory plan without being able to implement it will soon temper enthusiasm. Conversely, longstanding and embedded tokenism does little to make cities more child-friendly. Good practices recognize this and make efforts to combine multiple aspects –and multiple building blocks- of the CFC Framework, and learn from both past mistakes and successes.

### ***4.2.2.1 Good practices in our sample***

#### Overall Good Practice

Amongst our case studies, one CFC Initiative in particular stood out in regard of good practices, at least as reported on. This is Ukraine's Advocacy, Information and Social Policy Program for its ability to learn from the past and set up a comprehensive Initiative covering multiple building blocks comprising coordination between different stakeholders and a database to gather a wide range of data, including on marginalized populations.

The Ukrainian government had previously established a number of national initiatives to benefit children. However, insufficient budgetary allocations and uncoordinated practices affected the number of projects implemented (UNICEF, 2010; UNICEF Ukraine (n.d.)). Aware of these shortcomings, the government established the Advocacy, Information and Social Policy program in 2006. This initiative allowed the government and civil society to work together to establish monitoring systems for children's rights, develop a Child Friendly City governance model to improve the quality of services provided, introduce children to participation processes at the local level, and protect vulnerable children and families (UNICEF Ukraine). Under the program, cities were motivated to achieve the status of "Child-Friendly City" by meeting specifically established monitoring indicators. These indicators included mechanisms for children's participation, child-friendly planning, budgetary allocation, and protection of children particularly belonging to vulnerable, disadvantaged groups (UNICEF Ukraine (n.d.)). A database called DevInfo was equally developed as a method to facilitate documentation, mapping and identification of disadvantaged populations. The initiative also provides for public hearings under the National Program "Children of Ukraine" where children and youth are invited to share their views with relevant state bodies who later deliver these views to the government and general public (UNICEF Ukraine (n.d.)).

In addition, four Child Advisory Groups have been established to advise the government on issues relating to youth and children. The comprehensive program further places emphasis on mass media as a tool to increase awareness of child rights and the importance of protecting children, with children encouraged to become active agents in these advocacy campaigns. Finally, a handbook called "The Media and Children's Rights Handbook" about ethical media reporting has been produced for both Ukrainian journalists and NGOs to promote children's rights. However, whether these initiatives have been, or continue to be materialized given political developments in Ukraine remains unknown.

#### Awareness-Raising and Training

A particular aspect of good practice is awareness-raising amongst, and training of both policy and frontline workers. Mainstreaming the building blocks can only be successful if those working on matters that might affect children recognize the importance of (the underlying thoughts and principles of) the CFC Framework. Amongst the case studies in our sample, this was recognized by Italy (albeit not always implemented to perfection). As part of its country-wide CFC Initiative, the Ministry of Environment established a "Guide to Sustainable Cities for Girls and Boys" to provide guidance to local authorities on how to mainstream children's rights (Baraldi, 2005). The Sustainable Cities policy comprises three parts, including 'Retraining of municipal staff', which exhorts cities aiming to become child-friendly to train child-aware employees who take the interests and participation of children to heart (the other two parts relate to placing CFCs at the center of attention for local government and to processes of participatory urban planning). Cities committed to improving services for children, and to fulfilling their rights are granted recognition as a "Sustainable City for Girls and Boys" by the Ministry of the Environment, with the best performing cities eligible for an annual award conferred by a commission of representatives from different departments and sectors (Baraldi, 2005).

#### Budgeting for Children's Participation

Good practices genuinely include children and follow-up on their suggestions. Yet for that to be feasible, they should also ensure that resources are committed to CFC Initiatives. Without a designated budget and other material resources CFC Initiatives encounter great difficulty implementing any of the other building blocks. Barra Mansa's children's participatory budget council (CPBC) provides a good example in this respect of combining children's participation with actual, earmarked resources for child-initiated projects. The initiative had a very successful consultation process when setting up its council, engaging the participation of, amongst others, local, private, NGO, and government stakeholders (Guerra, 2002). The main

actors setting up these councils were local children aged 9 to 15 and parents. They subsequently encouraged others to also participate and share their skills. The budgeting process is relatively transparent as the government has dedicated a small percentage of its budget (approximately USD 125,000) to the council, the elected children of which being allowed to decide on the public works the budget should be allocated to (Guerra, 2002). Elected children also have "citizenship visits" and visit diverse neighborhoods to assess the different problems at distinct geographical levels, allowing them to decide which issues should be prioritized (Guerra, 2002). The relative budgetary transparency allows children in Barra Mansa to initiate projects, such as the renovation of health clinics, without running the risk of proposing entirely unfeasible initiatives that would lead to inaction.

### Capacity-building and Continuity

Aside from good practices based on a or several building blocks, it is also worth mentioning good practices in other aspects that cut across a number of building blocks, such as capacity building and continuity, which are both essential for effective CFC Initiatives. An example of the former (capacity building) is the CFC Initiative in Port Harcourt, Nigeria. There, volunteer specialists of the UN Volunteers program trained the staff of government agencies on the CFC concept (CFC Secretariat, 2003; UN Volunteers, 2003), while UNICEF provided capacity-building training related to skills on how to e.g. improve water supply, sanitation techniques etc., and gave workshops on, for example, immunization and breastfeeding. Adolescents also took part in meetings and training sessions, which were aimed at capacity building for the *entire* community (CFC Secretariat, 2003). An example of the latter (continuity) is the long-term view taken by the Basic Education for the Hard to Reach Urban Children (BEHTRUC) program in Bangladesh. Its continuity is expressed in two distinct ways. On the one hand in terms of continuity for young people after they leave the programme, The BEHTRUC program offers two years of non-formal education equivalent of grade III to urban, hard-to-reach working children to improve their situation after graduation, some children or young people found themselves returning to their initial position. Through a piloted apprenticeship project established by an NGO named BRAC, graduated children can now further their learning and receive skill-based training for six months, which offers them a better chance of finding non-hazardous employment (Basgall et al, 2014). In terms of continuity of the BEHTRUC program itself, the CFC Initiative has been merged with other national initiatives to ensure its sustainability. There is equally the intention to incorporate it in the national education plan (Rahman et al., 2010).

Good practices make an effort to genuinely fulfill the nine building blocks of the CFC Framework. They combine vision with strategic plans and actual practice, and provide

children and other relevant stakeholders with real participation (in some cases they are entirely participant-led and established bottom-up). In addition to the building blocks, good practices pay attention to sustainability, coordination and capacity building, seeking to empower, rather than offer charity to children. In the above examples, sometimes only a few aspects of good practice were covered. We did not specifically select our cases on the basis of whether or not they exemplified good practice (neither did we do so on the basis of limitations). This is why in the next section we would like to offer some descriptions of child friendly initiatives not included in our sample that exemplify good practices around the world.

#### ***4.2.2.2 Good Practices around the World***

In addition to the case studies in our sample, this section looks at three child-friendly initiatives that provide a good overview of adult- and child-led initiatives which allowed children to challenge the *status quo* and overcome adultism to create child-friendly places.

The French children's parliament, which has been running since 1994, provides a good example of an initiative that includes many of the aspects which should inform CFC strategies (empowerment, participation, sustainability, effectiveness and capacity building) and covers almost all of the building blocks (Éduscol, 2015; Parlement des enfants, 2016). The goal of the children's parliament is twofold: to give children first-hand experience of the democratic process, and to listen to their voices and allow them to participate and be involved in matters that concern them (Bonfils and Gouttenoire, 2014; MENE, 2016). The parliament is now embedded in a statutory educational framework (the 'Common Core of Knowledge, Skills and Culture' that all children must obtain), which explicitly stipulates that all children must be prepared for active citizenship and be given the skills to exercise their rights, including those under the CRC (MENE 2015; MENE 2016). To participate in the parliament, classes with children aged 9-11 and their teachers apply to the parliament's organization, which selects 577 participating classes. The children in these classes receive information on law-making, and with their teacher as facilitator they draft a legislative proposal on a topic of their own choosing related to a given theme ('climate change' in 2016). The children research their topic, acquaint themselves with the many aspects of governance, consult with relevant people, have 'democratic debates' in which different opinions are heard and considered, and finally draft their bill. A jury which includes law-makers selects four proposals, which were previously debated in Paris by 577 representatives from the participating classes, but are currently published online and debated in the participating classes. All classes bring out a vote on their favored proposal, it now being common practice that the proposal with most votes is introduced to the French legislator by the representative of the school's constituency (Bonfils and Gouttenoire, 2014). –And with success: five 'laws' from the children's parliament

concerned with family relations, orphans, children's rights, child abuse and environmental protection have become actual laws in France!<sup>1</sup>

What is important about the children's parliament is that it explicitly seeks to empower children by explaining the democratic legislative process to them, providing them with the skills they need for active civic participation and letting them experience that they too can make rules. Moreover, the parliament provides a sustained manner in which children can participate in matters that affect them, with adults providing what children's rights literature calls 'scaffolding' (a framework and support where needed) (Libscomb et al, 2004; Buss, 2009). The practice of the parliament shows that children's rights do not make adults superfluous, quite the opposite. Adults are involved and it is with their help –and through their open attitude and willingness to take children's concerns seriously- that the parliament has been able to reach the level of effectiveness it has (though this also clearly signals adults' position as gate-keepers). Yet the children's parliament does not only present a chance for children, it is equally empowering for the adults involved. Politicians, and even teachers (see Jerome et al, 2015), in France receive relatively little training in children's rights. The children's parliament therefore offers a unique opportunity for capacity building amongst teachers and officials. Practice, moreover, shows that adults are willing to take the lessons to heart: in following of the national children's parliaments, municipalities in France are equally beginning to engage children via local initiatives (Dubault, 2016).

The empowerment process in the French example is largely adult-led, though not necessarily the worse for it. However, with the right measure of support, empowerment can equally come from within. This is shown in an example from the United States where children constituted the driving force behind a municipal ban on polystyrene (the plastic normally used for take-out cups and boxes, often known as Styrofoam) (Peterson, 2014). Initially, a group of children from Takoma Park objected to the use of polystyrene trays at their elementary school (De Vise, 2009). The children, aged 8-12, had become aware that polystyrene is highly pollutant,

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<sup>1</sup> Loi n° 96-1238 du 30 décembre 1996 relative au maintien des liens entre frères et sœurs [contact between siblings]; loi n° 98-381 du 14 mai 1998 permettant à l'enfant orphelin de participer au conseil de famille [right of orphans to attend their social work meetings]; loi n° 99-478 du 9 juin 1999 visant à inciter au respect des droits de l'enfant dans le monde, notamment lors de l'achat des fournitures scolaires [requirement of respect for children's rights, especially when buying furniture for schools]; loi n° 2000-197 du 6 mars 2000 visant à renforcer le rôle de l'école dans la prévention et la détection des faits de mauvais traitements à enfants [school's role in the prevention and detection of child abuse]; and loi n° 2006-11 du 5 janvier 2006 d'orientation agricole [directions in agriculture – prohibition on non-biodegradable plastic bags].

and lobbied with their school for the use of reusable trays, having raised money to buy a dishwasher. A rejection from the school (citing costs) triggered the formation of the 'Young Activists Club', supported by two parent volunteers and backed by many others, including the parent-teacher association and eventually local politicians (De vise, 2009; MacEachern, 2010). The children researched the harmful effects of polystyrene, educated others whilst making their cause known and reached out to local politicians for support and to provide them with policy recommendations (Peterson, 2014; Young Activists Club (n.d.)). Eventually, the children's school agreed to replace the plastic trays with reusable ones. What is more, however, the community proceeded to involve the children in a legislate project that eventually lead to local legislation banning the use of polystyrene for catering purposes in Takoma Park, despite objections on financial grounds (Peterson, 2014; Upadhyay and Platt, 2014). What this example shows is not only that with the right measure of support children can empower themselves, obtaining the knowledge, skills and standing to fight for their right to health, but equally that these children may themselves be the ones generating community capacity. In the Takoma Park case, the children reached out to educators and politicians, offering them both the knowledge and confidence to take action on a cause directly affecting children and their rights. Through the children's action the cause gained traction within their community and, especially after liaisons established with the mayor and city councilors, became something that adults felt empowered they could legitimately strive for alongside the children.

Genuinely listening to children and taking their arguments seriously, even where adults can only think of objections to them, must be one of the hallmarks of a child-friendly city. What this means is exemplified by the good practice example of Iida city, in Japan's Nagano prefecture. In 1947, the town center burned down and junior high students were involved in the renovation process under the slogan of "beautiful city", which the government had developed. The students suggested creating an apple promenade, which would be a 30 meter-wide road with apple trees. The idea was initially rejected, as people were afraid that the apples would be stolen. However, the children responded that "the slogan 'beautiful city' of the revival project [should] mean a city in which residents have the beautiful mind not to steal apples on a public street" (Kinoshita, 2007) to which the mayor then concurred, and the idea of the apple promenade was realized. The apple promenade has been taken care of by the students, and with the cooperation of local residents, retailers, building professionals and junior high students, the promenade was renovated as a pedestrian promenade in 1999 (Kinoshita, 2007).

## 6 Conclusion

In this paper, using data from the official website of the CFC Secretariat in addition to existing documentation on Child-Friendly Cities Initiatives, we have mapped the global distribution of CFC initiatives and the extent to which they have implemented the nine building blocks. A meta-analysis of nine case studies of CFC Initiatives around the world further served to unveil and elaborate on thematic challenges and good practices in respect of the initiatives. Several conclusions can be drawn from this research.

First, on the basis of the available data, we conclude that the activity of CFC initiatives is heavily concentrated in industrialized countries, which represent more than half of the counted initiatives. Other regions have significantly less initiatives, albeit sometimes of better quality, which we hypothesize is the result of their establishment and running in cooperation with IOs. The difference between industrialized and other regions is found to be independent of potential accumulation from early adoption, as many of the counted initiatives were founded around the same time. Our findings on the prevalence of CFC Initiatives stand in contrast with the fact that only 10% of world's children live in developed regions while the other 90% live in less and least developed parts, where CFC initiatives are sparse despite a stronger presence of International Organizations that promote them (UNFPA, 2015). The underrepresentation of CFC projects in developing regions is a critical issue since children in these regions are more likely to suffer from economic and social disadvantage, whereas child-friendly initiatives can improve their situation and that of their communities. For instance, only around 7% of CFC initiatives are present in Sub-Saharan Africa (West and Central Africa plus Eastern and Southern Africa). At the same time, children in Sub-Saharan Africa are ten times more likely than children in high-income countries to die before the age of five (UNICEF, 2016). Our findings thus highlight a clear imbalance in CFC activities between developed and developing regions, and underline the extent to which the majority of the world's vulnerable children are left out from current CFC initiatives. In order to close the gap in CFC initiatives, further investigation is necessary to scrutinize the barriers that prevent initiatives from thriving in developing regions, as well as aid the formulation of possible solutions to overcome these barriers.

Second, our findings indicate that most officially recognized CFC Initiatives are not actually fulfilling the nine building blocks that form the foundation of child-friendly cities. The majority of initiatives include some form of child participation and have a CFC strategy – a plan for action. Yet very few are willing to commit specific resources to ensure that words can be turned into action, and even less are prepared to enhance children's status under the law by offering a CFC compatible legal framework. Neither do cities appear keen to provide

for assessment and monitoring measures in relation to their practices. This suggests that whilst cities are eager to organize CFC Initiatives, there is a reluctance to genuinely embrace the concept of CFCs and to fully accept its implications, especially insofar these might challenge a *status quo* in which adults hold power. However, CFC Initiatives that are made to operate within an existing framework – where that framework is not truly child-friendly – easily end up as forms of tokenism, rather than driving forces for change. It is in that regard particularly problematic that the international community appears to acquiescence to this practice by readily providing the label of ‘CFC Initiative’ to projects that do not take a holistic approach to child-friendliness. Greater efforts can and should be made by cities, communities and States to demonstrate true commitment to the idea and spirit of Child-Friendly Cities.

Third, whilst we have been able to identify some good practices based on the nine building blocks and cross-cutting themes such as sustainability and capacity-building, challenges in these areas still remain. Moreover, many of the identified challenges, in particular politicization of initiatives, lack of high-quality data(-systems) and issues related to capacity-building, seem to present recurrent challenges as they also featured prominently in Bartlett’s 2005 research. Particular areas of concern include limited understanding of children’s rights, exclusion of marginalized groups, politicization of programs and uncertain program continuity, soft policy approaches as opposed to legal embedding, lack of data collection and information systems, poor budgetary transparency and accountability, lack of internal and external coordination, containment of NGOs in the initiative preventing independent advocacy, and limited capacity building generally and especially in relation to children’s participation. Due to lack of belief in the capacity of children to influence decision-making, children’s participation is often tokenistic. Moreover, many initiatives evidence the myopic view that CFC programs should focus only on the child sector, rather than be mainstreamed across all the city’s areas of competence. Good practices, on the other hand, recognize that children’s rights are cross-sectoral and are linked to many different aspects of governance, sectors, and legislation, including for example labor laws and environmental laws. Good practices show a belief in the capacity of children and develop comprehensive strategies to fully engage children’s participation in influencing significant decisions. Through the right support and empowerment of children, children can even guide the capacity-building process within their communities. Good practices equally indicate that the implementation of the Convention on the Children of Rights and the CFC Framework should not only take place through single projects, but equally require comprehensive institutional and behavioral reform. Such reform is difficult when a combination of challenges related to budgeting, effectiveness, participation and capacity building are present, limiting the potential of the CFC framework.

It is therefore imperative that further research engages with ways to address the challenges that CFC Initiatives face, so that Child-Friendly Cities can live up to their full potential.

With the number of CFC Initiatives growing, this research reflects on the distribution of initiatives world-wide, and the level of commitment to a comprehensive CFC approach that these initiatives show. We found that the dispersion of initiatives is not as equal as it should be, and that many CFC Initiatives face barriers to true child-friendliness. This brings us to our final conclusion; that there is still a lot of room for improvement and a great task ahead to make cities world-wide genuinely child-friendly. We should make this world and its cities ‘fit for children’ and not the other way around.

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## 8 Annex

### Annex 1. List of Child-friendly Initiatives from Official Website

No	Country	Region	City	Project Name	Founding Year	Children's Participation	Child-friendly Legal Framework	City-wide Children's Rights Strategy	Children's Rights Unit/Coordination Mechanism	Child Impact Assessment and Evaluation	A Children's Budget	A Regular State of the City's Children Report	Making Children's Rights Known	Independent Advocacy for Children	Note
1	Albania	CE	Tirana	Gardens of Mother and Children	2004	○	○	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	*
2	Albania	CE	Nation-wide	Albanian Youth Parliament Project (Now Albanian Youth Council)	2000	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	*
3	Argentina	LAC	Buenos Aires	Ciudad Amiga de los Ninos	2001	●	○	●	○	●	○	○	●	●	*
4	Argentina	LAC	Rosario	Ciudad de los Ninos	1996	●	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	*
5	<b>Argentina</b>	<b>LAC</b>	<b>Boca Baraccas</b>	<b>Our Neighborhood is Like That</b>	<b>1997</b>	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	*
6	Australia	IC	Hobsons Bay	A Four-Year Children's Plan	2009	●	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	*
7	Australia	IC	Nation-wide	Commission for Children and Young people and Child Guardian	2000	○	●	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	
8	Australia	IC	Nation-wide	Children's Services Outdoor Play Design Brief	2007	○	○	○	○	●	○	●	○	○	*

9	Bangladesh	SA	Nation-wide	Basic Education for Hard to Reach Urban Children	1996	○	○	○	○	○	●	○	○	●	*	
10	Belgium	IC	Nation-wide	Flemish network of Child Friendly Cities	2002	●	○	○	○	○	○	●	○	○	*	
11	Bhutan	SA	Nation-wide	Child friendly initiatives in Bhutan	2006	●	○	●	○	○	○	○	●	●	*	
12	Bolivia	LAC	El Alto	Emergency Plan to Combat Poverty	2003	●	○	●	○	○	●	○	○	○	*	
13	Bolivia	LAC	Nation-wide	Ombudsman for Children and Youth	1998	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	●	
14	Brazil	LAC	Nation-wide	Child-friendly Mayor Program	1997	●	○	●	○	●	●	●	●	○		
15	Brazil	LAC	Nation-wide	UNICEF-Municipal Seal of Approval	1998	●	○	●	○	●	○	●	●	○		
16	Brazil	LAC	Barra Mansa	Children's participation in the governance and municipal budget of Barra Mansa	1998	●	○	○	●	○	●	○	○	○		
17	Canada	IC	Vancouver	West Vancouver Civic Youth Strategy	2002	○	○	●	●	○	○	○	○	○		
18	Canada	IC	Vancouver	The Society for Children of Youth of British Columbia (SCY)	1974	○	○	●	○	●	○	○	○	●	○	
19	Canada	IC	Nation-wide	Child and Youth Friendly Cities	2006	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	●	○	*
20	Colombia	LAC	Nation-wide	Local Development Program	1996	○	○	●	○	○	○	○	●	○	○	
21	Colombia	LAC	Santander de Guilichao	Social Management Programme	1998	○	○	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	●	
22	Costa Rica	LAC	Nation-wide	Cantones Amigos de la Infancia	2008	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	●	○	●	*
23	Croatia	CE	Nation-wide	Towns and Districts Friends of Children, Croatia	1999	○	○	●	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	
24	Dominican Republic	LAC	Nation-wide	Child Friendly Municipalities Initiative	1997	●	○	●	○	○	●	○	○	○	●	*
25	Ecuador	LAC	Nation-wide	Participatory management and budget allocation for equity	2001	○	○	○	○	○	○	●	○	○	○	

26	Ecuador	LAC	Nation-wide	La Ciudad que Queremos (The City We Want)	n.a.	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	*
27	Ecuador	LAC	Nation-wide	Sistema de informacion local - SIL	n.a.	○	○	○	○	●	○	●	○	○		
28	Estonia	CE	Nation-wide	Child Friendly Cities Movement	2004	●	○	○	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	*
29	<b>France</b>	<b>IC</b>	<b>Nation-wide</b>	<b>Ville Amie des Enfants</b>	<b>2002</b>	○	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	○		
30	France	IC	Nation-wide	Association Nationale des Conseils d'Enfants et de Jeunes	1991	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○		
31	Georgia	CE	Tbilisi	The Children and Youth Parliament of Georgia	2001	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○		
32	<b>Germany</b>	<b>IC</b>	<b>Essen</b>	<b>Essen - City for Children</b>	<b>1988</b>	○	○	○	○	○	●	○	●	○		
33	<b>Germany</b>	<b>IC</b>	<b>Munich</b>	<b>Munich, City for Children</b>	<b>1999</b>	○	○	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	●	
34	Honduras	LAC	Nation-wide	Pacto por la Infancia	n.a.	○	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	*
35	Hungary	IC	Nation-wide	Child-friendly settlement	2008	○	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	●	○	*
36	<b>India</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>Calcutta</b>	<b>Shikshalaya Prkalpa</b>	<b>1999</b>	○	○	○	○	●	○	●	○	●	*	
37	<b>India</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>Bangalore</b>	<b>Tales from Truth Town</b>	<b>1997</b>	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	*
38	Indonesia	EAP	Nation-wide	Child Friendly Cities Initiative	2007	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	●	●	○	*
39	<b>Iran</b>	<b>MENA</b>	<b>Bam</b>	<b>Building Bam as Child-friendly City</b>	<b>2004</b>	●	○	○	○	●	○	○	○	●	○	*
40	Ireland	IC	Nation-wide	Sugradh. Celebrating the right of child to play	2007	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	*
41	<b>Ireland</b>	<b>IC</b>	<b>Nation-wide</b>	<b>National Children's Strategy</b>	<b>2002</b>	●	●	●	●	○	○	●	●	●		
42	Israel	IC	Ashdod	Ashdod - A UNICEF and Child Friendly City	1999	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	●	*
43	<b>Italy</b>	<b>IC</b>	<b>Nation-wide</b>	<b>Citta sostenibili delle Bambine e dei Bambini (Sustainable Cities for Girls and Boys)</b>	<b>1996</b>	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	●	○	
44	<b>Italy</b>	<b>IC</b>	<b>Nation-wide</b>	<b>La citta dei bambini (Children's City)</b>	<b>1991</b>	●	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	

45	Italy	IC	Nation-wide	Citta' Amiche Infanzia e Adolescenza	2000	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
46	Italy	IC	Nation-wide	Sindaci diffensori dei bambini	1990	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
47	Japan	IC	Kawasaki	Kawasaki City Ordinance on the Rights of the Child	2001	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
48	Jordan	MENA	Amman	Executive Agency for a Child Friendly City	2004	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
49	Kenya	ESA	Nairobi	Participatory Water and Sanitation Project	1996	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
50	<b>Lebanon</b>	<b>MENA</b>	<b>Saida</b>	<b>Growing up in Saida</b>	<b>1999</b>	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
51	Macedonia	CE	Nation-wide	National Child Rights Commission and the Ombudsperson for Children	2000	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
52	Macedonia	CE	Nation-wide	Mayor's Association	2002	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
53	Malaysia	EAP	Nation-wide	Malaysian Child friendly Cities Initiative	1997	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
54	Mauritania	WSA	Brakna	Promoting Quality Education Together with Communities	2008	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
55	<b>Mauritania</b>	<b>WSA</b>	<b>Nouakchott</b>	<b>Water Supply in Poor Urban Townships</b>	<b>1996</b>	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
56	Morocco	MENA	Nation-wide	Child and Youth Friendly Communes	2009	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
57	Netherlands	IC	Nation-wide	Child-friendly Cities Initiative	2004	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
58	<b>Netherlands</b>	<b>IC</b>	<b>Tilburg</b>	<b>Growing up in Tilburg</b>	<b>1999</b>	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
59	New Zealand	IC	Porirua City	Porirua City Youth Development Strategy	2006	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
60	New Zealand	IC	Nation-wide	New Zealand Agenda for Children	2002	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
61	<b>New Zealand</b>	<b>IC</b>	<b>Christchurch</b>	<b>Christchurch City Council</b>	<b>1992</b>	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
62	<b>Nigeria</b>	<b>WSA</b>	<b>Port Harcourt</b>	<b>Child Friendly City Initiative Project</b>	<b>2000</b>	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
63	Norway	IC	Nation-wide	Children's Landscape Norway	2009	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o

64	Norway	IC	Porsgrunn	Porsgrunn Model - A children's participation project	1992	●	○	●	●	○	○	○	○	●	●	*
65	Palestine	MENA	Nation-wide	Child-friendly Cities Initiative	2002	●	○	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	*
66	<b>Papua New Guinea</b>	<b>EAP</b>	<b>Hanubada Village</b>	<b>Growing up in PNG</b>	<b>1999</b>	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	*
67	Peru	LAC	Cusco	Asociacion de Municipalidades Amigas de la Infancia	2007	○	○	○	●	○	○	○	○	●	○	*
68	Peru	LAC	Nation-wide	Plan Nacional de Accion por la Infancia	2002	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	●	○	*
69	Peru	LAC	Lima	Rights of the Child and Adolescent in a context of social exclusion	2001	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	●	*
70	<b>Philippines</b>	<b>EAP</b>	<b>Nation-wide</b>	<b>Child Friendly Movement Policies</b>	<b>2004</b>	○	●	●	○	●	○	●	●	○	○	
71	Philippines	EAP	Nation-wide	A Legacy to the Filipino Children of the 21st Century	2000	○	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	
72	Philippines	EAP	Tuguegarao City	Most Child-friendly Component City Hall of Fame	2000	○	○	○	○	○	○	●	○	○	○	
73	Russia	CE	Grozny	Child Friendly Spaces	2001	●	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	*
74	Russia	CE	Nation-wide	Child Friendly City Initiative	2007	○	○	●	●	○	●	●	●	○	○	*
75	Russia	CE	Nation-wide	Children in need of Special Protection Programme	2001	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	●	●	●	*
76	Russia	CE	Nation-wide	Social Mobilization for Child Rights (SMRC)	2001	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	
77	South Africa	ESA	Johannesburg	Child Friendly Cities Initiative	2000	●	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	*
78	<b>South Africa</b>	<b>ESA</b>	<b>Johannesburg</b>	<b>Metropolitan Program of Action for Children</b>	<b>1997</b>	●	○	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	*
79	<b>Spain</b>	<b>IC</b>	<b>Nation-wide</b>	<b>Ciudades Amigas de la Infancia</b>	<b>2002</b>	●	○	●	○	●	○	●	●	○	○	
80	Spain	IC	Cordoba	Child's Participation in Municipal Budgeting	2001	○	○	○	○	○	○	●	○	○	○	
81	Sudan	ESA	Nation-wide	Child Friendly Community Initiative	2002	●	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	*

82	Sweden	IC	Nation-wide	City of Children	1997	●	○	●	○	○	●	○	○	●	*	
83	Sweden	IC	Lund	Naturskolan (Nature School)	2002	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	●	●	*
84	Switzerland	IC	Nation-wide	Giving Children a Voice	2002	○	○	○	○	●	○	○	○	○		
85	Switzerland	IC	Nation-wide	Child Friendly Municipality Initiative	2004	●	○	●	○	●	●	●	○	○	*	
86	Syria	MENA	Aleppo	Strategy for Child Friendly Aleppo	2009	●	○	○	●	●	○	○	○	○	*	
87	Ukraine	CE	Nation-wide	Advocacy, Information and Social Policy Program	2006	●	○	●	●	●	○	○	●	○	*	
88	Ukraine	CE	Nation-wide	Young People's Health and Development Programme	2002	●	○	●	●	○	●	●	●	●		
89	United Kingdom	IC	London	Mayor's Children and Young People Strategy	2000	●	○	●	●	○	○	○	○	○		
90	United Kingdom	IC	London	Office of Children's Rights Commissioner for London	n.a.	○	●	○	●	○	○	●	○	○		
91	United Kingdom	IC	Nation-wide	Playlink	2002	○	○	○	○	●	○	●	○	○		
92	United Kingdom	IC	Nation-wide	Participatory Budget Unit	2007	●	○	○	○	○	●	○	○	○	*	
93	United Kingdom	IC	Nation-wide	Child Friendly Communities Programme	2009	●	○	●	●	○	○	○	●	●	*	
94	<b>United Kingdom</b>	<b>IC</b>	<b>London</b>	<b>Children's Parliament</b>	<b>2000</b>	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○		
95	United Kingdom	IC	London	Partnership for Young London	2010	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○		
96	United Kingdom	IC	Nation-wide	The Big Listen	2002	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	●	○	
97	United Kingdom	IC	Derry	Derry Children's Commission	1999	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	●	
98	United States	IC	Chicago	Imagine Chicago	1992	●	○	●	○	○	○	●	○	○		
99	United States	IC	Boston	Boston Schoolyard Initiative	1995	●	○	●	●	○	●	○	○	○	*	

100	United States	IC	Denver	Denver's City Youth Friendly City Initiative (CYFC)	2006	●	○	●	●	○	●	○	○	●	*
101	United States	IC	Nation-wide	Child-friendly Cities Initiative - US Fund for UNICEF	2008	●	○	○	●	●	○	○	○	●	*
102	<b>Venezuela</b>	<b>LAC</b>	<b>Caracas</b>	<b>Growing up in Caracas</b>	<b>2001</b>	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	*
103	Vietnam	EAP	Nation-wide	Provincial Child-friendly Programme	2006	○	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	○	*
104	<b>Zimbabwe</b>	<b>ESA</b>	<b>Harare</b>	<b>Sanitation and Child Rights</b>	<b>1998</b>	○	○	●	○	●	○	●	○	○	*

Source: CFC Secretariat

### Regional Classification

Central and Eastern Europe  
 East Asia and the Pacific  
 Eastern and Southern Africa  
 Industrialized Countries  
 Latin America and the Caribbean

CE  
 EAP  
 ESA  
 IC  
 LAC

Middle East and North Africa      MENA  
 South Asia      SA  
 West and Central Africa      WSA

### Note

n.a. not available  
 \* relevant building blocks are evaluated by authors  
 ● addresses the issue      ○ does not address the issue  
 Bolded initiatives are “Good Practices” projects as classified by CFC Secretariat.

## Annex 2. Details of Case-Studies for Meta-Analysis

### **BRAZIL: Children's Participatory Budget Council (CPBC) in Barra Mansa**

Project Area	Barra Mansa, Brazil
Starting Year	1998
Responsible Bodies	United Nations Urban Management Program for Latin America and the Caribbean (UMP-LAC)
Other Stakeholders	COPEVI (a Mexican NGO), Econmen (a local NGO), Brazilian Institute of Municipal Administration (IBAM), children and community members
Description	Gives 18 girls and 18 boys aged 9 to 15, elected by more than 6,000 children into CPBC, opportunities to represent their peers, allocate resources and develop community projects.

#### **Relevant CFC Building Blocks**

##### Children's Participation

The initiative held a successful consultation process in setting up CPBC by liaising with local, private and government stakeholders. Local children also took an active role in setting up councils, promoting participating, sharing skills and coordinating training programs with the help of Encomen (for implementation), UMP-LAC (for coordination), IBAM and COPEVI (for advisory services).

##### A Children's Rights Unit or Coordinating Mechanism

CPBC is an elected body established for the coordination of the child-friendly initiatives in Barra Mansa. It falls directly under the responsibility of the mayor's office. The main aim of CPBC is to support initiatives that address children's needs with guaranteed funding by municipal budget.

##### A Children's Budget

The initiative is backed by a transparent budgeting process, with approximately USD 125,000 set aside for elected children, allowing for efficient review of projects. The budget has been used for a variety of activities, such as "citizenship visits" to learn about different social problems in different neighborhoods and renovation efforts at local clinics to provide modern dental services.

#### **Challenges**

Project activity is mostly vulnerable to mayoral changes as the mayor assumes direct responsibility. Children struggle with commitment due to a lack of available time for school and studies, while those without schooling are excluded from participation from the start. Other problems include lack of representation by girls as well as an absence of monitoring mechanisms for the development of children.

Source: Barceló (2005), Guerra (2002)

## **JORDAN: The Greater Amman Municipality**

Project Area	Amman, Jordan
Starting Year	2004
Responsible Bodies	the Greater Amman Municipality (GAM) and UNICEF
Other Stakeholders	children, engineers, teachers and other professionals
Description	Establishment of an Executive Agency for CFC and children municipal councils (CMCs). Development of a policy document for a holistic strategy to improve children's life.

### **Relevant CFC Building Blocks**

#### Children's Participation

The policy document "Policy and Priorities for Children" was developed through a participatory consultation approach, involving 700 children, adolescents and representatives from private and public stakeholders. A number of projects, such as a multi-purpose park in southern Amman, were developed upon the recommendation of CMCs, whose members are elected by more than 29,000 children.

#### A Child-friendly Legal Framework

The executive Agency actively participated in advocacy efforts for children. One example is where the agency successfully lobbied against the law that would have excluded non-Jordanian children from participating in municipal council elections.

#### A City-wide Children Rights Strategy

The policy document details a holistic approach to improve children's life, including the fields of health, safety, culture, informal education and child-built environments, applicable to the whole of the GAM.

#### A Children's Budget

A yearly budget is set aside for child-friendly policies and plans, covering projects recommended by CMCs, including parks, child-built environment and disability-friendly facilities.

### **Challenges**

Children's views are not always taken seriously in the city council. Many staff members of the Greater Amman Municipality lack training on children's rights. Poor communication exists between the municipality and non-governmental organizations. Data collection is also considered to be an issue.

Source: Halaseh (2015), Mahara (2010)

## **NIGERIA: Child Friendly Cities Initiative in Port Harcourt**

Project Area	Port Harcourt, Nigeria
Starting Year	1999

Responsible Bodies	UNICEF, Local Government Authority of Port Harcourt (PHALGA)
Other Stakeholders	Local communities
Description	Training of government agency staff on the CFC concept; Provision of workshops on a number of issues; establishment of a number of child-friendly construction projects.

### **Relevant CFC Building Blocks**

#### Children's Participation

The CFC program encouraged active participation of children and adolescent in meetings and training sessions. Based on children's input, the program additionally spent money on a number of projects that fit well with CFC concept. An example is where volunteer specialists, trained under the program, constructed a new staircase for the Enugu Waterfront Community with the aim of preventing the elderly and children from injury while crossing the water.

#### **Challenges**

There was limited success in establishing strong relationships between UNICEF and PHALGA, affecting local governance and planning. There was also lack of institutional capacity and good governance, in the absence of basic democratic principles and poor infrastructure for good governance. Moreover, despite participation by children and adolescents mentioned as part of the program's actions, there is so far no evaluation regarding the type of children the program involved.

Source: CFC Secretariat (2003), Gilbert and Allen (2014), UNICEF Nigeria (2013), UN Volunteers Program (2003)

### **SOUTH AFRICA: Metropolitan Program of Action for Children in Johannesburg**

Project Area	Johannesburg, South Africa
Starting Year	2000
Responsible Bodies	City Council of Johannesburg, Mayor's Office of Johannesburg, Manager of Child-friendly Cities
Other Stakeholders	Children, community members and organizations
Description	Collection of children's views and recommendations on improvements regarding their daily life conditions.

### **Relevant CFC Building Blocks**

#### Children's Participation

Children aged 10-14 from the low-income neighborhoods of Riverlea, Malvern-Kensington, Jourbert Park and Pimville were asked about their views and recommendations regarding improvement of their daily living conditions, such as safety and traffic. The manager of the Child-friendly Cities office in Johannesburg coordinated these participation efforts.

#### A Child's Rights Unit or Coordinating Mechanism

Created as part of the Metropolitan Program, the manager of Child-friendly Cities is the responsible authority for coordinating policies targeted to improve child-friendliness in Johannesburg. One of the requirements of the

position is to communicate with children in order to learn about their concerns and report the information to government and other authorities for policy formation.

**Challenges**

There is a lack of continuity of CFC projects due to the changing priorities of mayors, especially when there is a mayoral change and/or where the new mayor is from a different political party. As a result, CFC programs easily become part of mayors’ political agenda, and are made optional rather than imperative. Community members are also not clear on who is responsible for operating CFC programs. A former manager of Child-friendly Cities was unclear about his role and pointed to the government and communities to play a key role in the ownership of the projects.

Further, after children’s views and recommendations were collected, findings were not reported to the mayoral office by the manager of Child-friendly Cities. Moreover, in spite of inclusion of children from marginal groups, their basic needs remained unaddressed. There was also poor communication between the manager of Child-friendly Cities and the children, resulting in tokenism as children’s overall participation level.

Source: Clements (2005)

**BANGLADESH: Basic Education for the Hard-to-Reach Urban Children (BEHTRUC) Program**

Project Area	Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna, Rajshahi, Barisal and Sylhet
Starting Year	1997
Responsible Bodies	Directorate of Non-formal Education (DNFE)
Other Stakeholders	Government of Bangladesh, Department for International Development (DFID), UNICEF, ILO, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), NGOs
Description	Provides two years of non-formal education equivalent of grade II to urban working children.

**Relevant CFC Building Blocks**

Independent Advocacy for Children

The project was implemented by the Bureau of Non-formal Education (BNFE), and involved a collaboration with several NGOs who were selected to run the learning centers for children.

**Challenges**

Many NGOs involved in the project were not well-versed in issues such as education and child labor, and neither were the teachers who took part in the initiatives. In addition, attendance was irregular due to the high mobility of the students. There was also an unrealistic burden on UNICEF and BNFE staff, resulting in a lack of strategic oversight plans for advocacy and campaign efforts to increase awareness of children’s rights. Employers were not sensitized to children’s rights, and there was no promotion plan for community mobilization. Finally, there is no results-based framework or indicators to monitor the performance and quality of the learning centers.

Source: Basgall et al. (2014), Cameron (2000), CFC Secretariat (2003), Rahman et al. (2010)

## **VIETNAM: Dien Bien Socio-Economic Development Plan**

Project Area	Dien Bien, Vietnam
Starting Year	2014
Responsible Bodies	UNICEF; Government of Vietnam (including provincial governments); UNDP; UNFPA
Other Stakeholders	UNICEF, children, community members
Description	Socio-Economic Development Plan developed under Vietnam's Provincial Child-Friendly Programs (PCFP) initiative which aims to mainstream the rights of children and women in its policies and activities.

### **Relevant CFC Building Blocks**

#### A Child Friendly Legal Framework

Under the Provincial Child Friendly Program (PCFP), sub-national (i.e. provincial) governments mainstream children's rights in their Socio-Economic Plan, ensuring that the rights of women and children are fulfilled and protected.

#### A City-wide Children's Rights Strategy

The purpose of the Socio-Economic Plan is to incorporate children's rights across all departments at sub-national level. These rights are based on the four principles of the CRC: rights to life/survival; rights of protection; rights to development and right of participation. The five-year Socio-Economic Plan is assessed and audited in each department based on how well plans mainstream rights in their policies and activities.

#### A Children Rights Unit or Coordinating Mechanism

UNICEF works closely with sub-national governments on their Socio-Economic Plan. The PCFP consists of two components. First, the capacity building and knowledge management component, which is led by the Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI) in collaboration with the Ministry of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA). The second comprises provincial child-friendly projects led by the Provincial Peoples Committees (PPC), consisting of representatives from different governmental departments. There was also cooperation across five departments in implementation of monitoring tools.

#### A Children's Budget

Child-focused programs must be designed with sufficient budget for implementation to be smooth and effective. Children's rights and child-focused targets must be given high priority in financial budgeting.

#### Child Impact Assessment and Evaluation

A child-rights based social audit allows for assessment of the extent to which child rights principles will be and are incorporated at departments at sub-national level.

#### A Regular State of City's Children Report

The mandatory situational analysis of annual plans across different departments has data on children's age, residential registration and disabilities, but a lack of information regarding gender and ethnicity. The template allows for consistent and regular monitoring of the impact on children by the city's initiatives and policies.

### **Challenges**

Department officers lack full understanding of the concept of the CFC, and process of child-rights-focused analysis. The templates for plan monitoring and evaluation are different across and within departments, which makes data consolidation difficult. The lack of comprehensive surveys makes it difficult to create sound databases that can be used for evaluation and follow-up. Coordination efforts between departments were also

relatively poor.

Source: UNICEF and Vietnam Ministry of Planning and Investment (2014); Shanks, Dao & Duong (2011)

### **JAPAN: The Kawasaki City Ordinance on the Rights of the Child, Kawasaki City Council**

Project Area	Kawasaki City Japan
Starting Year	2000
Responsible Bodies	Ombudsperson System for Human Rights, Kawasaki City Council
Other Stakeholders	Children, local organizations, local citizens, academics and public servants
Description	Effectuating a city ordinance securing the rights of children and improve their daily life from existing conditions.

#### **Relevant CFC Building Blocks**

##### Children's Participation

A key aspect of the initiative is the creation of Dream Park, a multi-purpose youth center managed by children and youth, which contains facilities such as a kitchen, music rooms and sports facilities, as well as a free school for children who once dropped out. The Kawasaki government equally aimed to have children's culture centers in every junior high school district, trying to involve children in their management committees.

##### A Child-friendly Legal Framework

The Kawasaki City Ordinance on the Rights of the Child encourages children's participation and ensures children's rights. A government committee in Kawasaki on the rights of the child evaluated the city's policies concerning children and gave recommendations to the city government.

##### Independent Advocacy for Children

The Ombudsperson for Human Rights provides consultation and addresses complaints regarding violations of children's rights and compliance with the ordinance.

#### **Challenges**

Attempts to promote children's participation in local government often ended up as tokenism, manipulation and/or decoration. Only well-performing students from schools were able to participate, leaving out other children. Dream Park, Kawasaki's symbolic project, is situated far away from many children, limiting their access. In addition, the government did not include children and youth in evaluating the city's policies and instead involved professionals who work with children.

Source: Asahi (2016), Kawasaki City (2016), Kinoshita (2007)

### **ITALY: Sustainable Cities for Boys and Girls**

Project Area	Multiple cities (National level)
Starting Year	1996
Responsible Bodies	Ministry of Environment
Other Stakeholders	Italian National Committee for UNICEF, Rome City Council, local authorities

Description

A policy defining Child Friendly Cities and their cultural, political and legislative boundaries, combined with encouragement for local authorities to develop relevant policies and programs.

### **Relevant CFC Building Blocks**

#### Children's Participation

Children work with professionals in the planning of physical spaces to create a safe environment and children's municipal councils were established for children to be part of decision-making processes more generally. Children are also involved in participatory planning of social and cultural interventions.

#### A Child-friendly Legal Framework

Italy formally adopted the principles of the CRC in their Plan of Action for Children and Adolescents (1997) to create new policies for children, and to aid cities to become more child-friendly. At the same time, the Ministry for the Environment promoted a new culture of governance under the project Sustainable Cities for Girls and Boys. The government established parameters for child-friendly sustainability, and also created networks for municipal and city governments to share information, experiences and best practices with each other.

#### A Children's Rights Unit or Coordinating Mechanism

Italy has a communication network across different departments and sectors thanks to existing internal working groups within municipal councils.

#### A City-wide Children Rights Strategy

The Ministry of the Environment published a guide for cities on how to become a Sustainable City of Girls and Boys. This can be generalized into three features: high priority of the CFC in local governments; capacity building of municipal staff; and engaging in the process of participatory urban planning. The mayor becomes the defender of children's rights. Cities are granted recognition as a "Sustainable City for Girls and Boys" by the Ministry of the Environment if they are committed to improving services for children, and fulfilling their rights. Cities are motivated by an award that ranks the best performing Child Friendly City.

#### Making Children's Rights Known

Capacity building and training courses for politicians, municipal technical staff, teachers, educators, parents and the local community are promoted by the National Research Council. The purpose is to raise awareness on the meaning of CFC initiatives to encourage children's autonomy and active participation.

### **Challenges**

Facilitators acted more as educators, and children claimed they did not listen to their proposals. Promoters allegedly did not believe in the capacity of children, feeling that they were too young and unable to carry out their proposals. Children were also uncertain as to the feasibility of their proposals - one child interviewee wondered, "perhaps we are asking too much". Negotiation and open communication between children and facilitators is needed. Laws and bureaucratic organization also prevent effective implementation of projects, which is important for different stakeholders in the process to understand. Due to lack of financial support for evaluation, only a few distributed questionnaires on implementation of policies were returned and consequently only few projects relevant to the CFC were reported on.

Source: Corsi (2002), Pallucchi (2010), Baraldi (2005)

## **UKRAINE: Advocacy, Information and Social Policy Program**

Project Area	Multiple Cities (National Level)
Starting Year	2006
Responsible Bodies	UNICEF Ukraine
Other Stakeholders	Government, civil society, children and young people
Description	Development of child-friendly policies; establishment of a monitoring system for children's rights; promotion of rights awareness among youth.

### **Relevant CFC Building Blocks**

#### Children's Participation

There are public hearings under the National Program "Children of Ukraine". Children and youth are invited to share their views with relevant state bodies. Views are later delivered to the government and general public. Four Child Advisory Groups were also established to advise the government on issues relating to youth and children.

#### A City-wide Children's Rights Strategy

A Child-Friendly City governance model was established and cities were motivated to achieve the status of "Child-Friendly City". Under the program, monitoring indicators were also established, including mechanisms for children's participation, child-friendly planning, budgetary allocation and protection of children particularly belonging to vulnerable, disadvantaged groups.

#### Child Impact Assessment and Evaluation

As mentioned above, monitoring indicators for mechanisms of children's participation, child-friendly planning, budgetary allocation and protection of children particularly belonging to vulnerable, disadvantaged groups, were established. Under the program, a database called DevInfo was developed as a method to facilitate documentation, mapping and identification of disadvantaged populations.

#### Making Children's Rights Known

The program places emphasis on mass media as a tool to increase awareness of child rights and the importance of protecting children, as well as for children to become active agents in advocacy campaigns. A handbook called "The Media and Children's Rights Handbook" about ethical media reporting was produced for Ukrainian journalists and NGOs to promote children's rights.

### **Challenges**

The CFC initiative is in fact a response to challenges experienced during an earlier attempt to set up a CFC initiative in Ukraine (which failed). No information is available on the challenges that the current initiative faces.

Source: CFC Secretariat (2003), UNICEF Ukraine (n.d.), UNICEF (2010)