Participation of Children in Spatial Development
Case Study: Stockholm Metropolitan Area

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1. Introduction

Participation of children in urban and regional planning processes? The idea sounds like a utopia to a lot of planners. ‘Too young’, ‘not enough knowledge or skills to understand the complexity of planning’, are typical reactions. Twenty years ago the United Nation Convention on the Right of the Child came into force. It assures children the right to express their views freely in all matters affecting them. The convention was an impulse for the first projects with children’s participation in urban planning, for instance in neighborhood planning, playground development, or school root planning. Unique methods have been developed since then and committed planners and pedagogues are trying to spread the idea and the awareness level of the concept of children’s participation in spatial development.

The shaping of the participation conditions and methods determines which stakeholders will be able to take part or feel addressed. Which groups of society are included or excluded in a participation process through the choice of instruments and methods? Citizens that are able to express their needs are more likely to have their requirements included. On the other hand, children belong to a group that needs to be activated. Methods must fit the specific group dealt with. Traditional methods of participation within planning, such as giving the public time to examine the detailed plan or bigger discussion meetings, are not child friendly. That leads to an exclusion of children so that their opinion and requests are not integrated in the planning process. But it is only possible through the participation of children to get to know their needs on and views about space. Spatial planners have the possibility to understand the divergent cognitions on space of the different age groups.

What makes a certain place interesting, scary or dangerous for children? The conditions of a city have a direct influence on the way that children grow up. Considering children’s play from a historical context demonstrates the difference. Children used to play outside on the street everywhere in the city. Around the 1960s there was a shift to the “inside”; nowadays, apartment or houses or places created especially for children, such as spare time activity centers, playgrounds or sport facilities, are the most important places for children for the growing up next to school and daycare. The root of these changes goes back to the increase of the automobiles on the street and the separation of housing and working in the new developed housing areas. The street as a place of socialization for children is losing its importance in this context. However, public space is still a place where children spend part of their time every day. Urban planning can directly influence the life of adolescents
through planning measurements. Their participation is an essential requirement for the creation of child friendly space.

There are a lot of positive examples of projects or municipalities that involve children in urban planning. However, the participation of children in urban planning is still not routine in most countries and municipalities. This conflicts with a basic democratic understanding and is against the United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child that was ratified by Sweden in 1990. Sweden and in particular the Stockholm municipality area will be the focus of the case study. It serves as an example in pursuing the question on how participation rights of children are structurally embraced in urban planning.
2. Motive, Research Question and Aim

In 2010 the United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child celebrated its 20st Birthday. According to article 12 of the convention the opinions of children need to be considered. However, in planning practice participation of children is still not a common practice. It seems to be still a rather new topic for a lot of professionals. The Swedish Housing Department (Boverket) together with the Traffic Department (Trafikverket) is currently carrying out a Pilot Project on Children´s Participation with the goal to develop methods and promote children´s participation. The project report with the results will be given to the government in order to spread the practice to other municipalities. One sees that if a project is called “Pilot Project” then the practice of children´s participation must be still rather small in Sweden. That is surprising since Sweden is known as a very child-friendly and democratic country. The Stockholm Municipality Area is Sweden’s largest and most rapidly growing urban area with many urban development projects ongoing and in the near future (Stadsbyggnadskontoret 2010: 8). Therefore, the area was chosen for the case study as representing Swedish innovative urban planning. “How are participation rights of children in spatial planning implemented in the Stockholm Metropolitan Area?” is the leading research question. The goal is to get information about the status quo of how participation rights of children are structurally embraced in urban planning in the area and possibly representing the philosophy of children´s participation within recent Swedish urban planning. It is the aim of the thesis to give examples for participation practices done with children in Sweden, and to investigate strength, weaknesses, opportunities and threats within child participation in spatial planning in the municipalities in order to encourage rights of children in the Stockholm Metropolitan Area. The thesis may therefore also be seen as a document to encourage child participation in spatial planning.
3. Structure and Methodology

The topic of this thesis is the participation of children in spatial planning processes and the case study of Sweden in particular the Stockholm Metropolitan Area. In order to process this topic, the thesis will be structured in two parts. Part A will be the theoretical groundwork for the participation of children in spatial planning processes in general and part B will be examples of the practical approach in Sweden and analysis of the case study of the Stockholm Metropolitan Area. The final discussion will combine the theoretical groundwork of part A with the practical examples. The aim of the discussion is to debate how the participation of children in planning can be encouraged in the Stockholm Metropolitan Area.

The paper starts with chapter 4 Citizen Participation in urban planning processes which gives an introduction to the overall context in which the participation of children is located in the Planning Theory discussion. Chapter 5 Children in the urban environment will outline the importance of urban planning for the growing–up of children from a historic perspective and analyze the current conditions outlining the places in the city where children spend their time and how they reach those places. It closes with an insight about the discussion of the child-friendly city.

Chapter 6 Participation of children will outline the main theoretical background including the policy conditions and the different forms and degrees of children’s participation. The chapter finishes with an analysis of benefits for children’s participation which is also the end of Part A – Children in the urban environment and the participation of children.

Part B includes chapter 7 Integration of children’s perspective in spatial development in Sweden which gives an overview about the Swedish regulation for planning and the rights of children to participate and outlines current examples of the participation of children in urban planning that take place in the Pilot Project from the Swedish Traffic and the Swedish Housing Department to the topic of children’s participation.

Chapter 8 Implementation of Children’s rights in the Stockholm municipality area reflects the results and analysis of the survey that was carried out in context of this paper.

The work closes with chapter 9 Discussion which will concentrate on the question of how children’s participation can be encouraged and focus on the strengths, weaknesses opportunities and threats of children’s participation in the Stockholm municipality area for the institutionalization of their rights.
3. Structure and Methodology

Methodological Approach and Data Collection process

To obtain the theoretical groundwork (part A) literature from science as well as from practice will be analyzed. In this section, publications in English, Swedish as well as German will be considered. Some parts will be enriched with expert opinions from Germany, which I explored in previous research on the topic of children’s participation.

Part B analyzes the practical approach of children’s participation in Sweden. The practical examples of children’s participation in Sweden were researched through internet research. The case study of the Stockholm Metropolitan Area will be analyzed on the basis of semi-structured interviews conducted according to a manual and a questionnaire that was developed for the survey.

For the survey all 26 municipalities were addressed by e-mail with a short introduction about me and the reason for the survey. In the first contact round in the end of November 2010, the municipalities were asked for an interview or the appropriate contact person to answer question via e-mail. The e-mails were sent to a responsible person or the mail distributor of the urban planning departments of each municipality. In the middle of December 2010 and in the beginning of January 2011, a second and third e-mail reminder including the questionnaire was sent to the municipalities where no feedback had been reached. For the municipalities where no direct contact person was reached the
municipality service centers were contacted via telephone to obtain information about contact possibilities or the contact person was tried to reach by telephone. In total, all municipalities that did not deny to take part were contacted up to three times via mail as well as by telephone.

Two interviews were carried out with the representatives from the Urban Planning Department of the municipalities Stockholm and Haninge. The interviews were conducted according to a manual. The other participating municipalities filled out the questionnaire and sent them via e-mail.
Part A - Children in the urban environment and their participation in spatial planning
4. Citizen Participation in urban planning processes

The following chapter will give an introduction in citizen participation in planning processes in general. The term is nowadays a common word in the planning theory and also in the planning practice. But what does participation exactly mean? And in which planning theoretical framework is citizen participation located? The answering of those questions will be the main focus of the following chapter as well as a small insight in the planning theoretical discussion about participation involving planning approaches.

Participation – what does it mean and involve?

According to the Cambridge Dictionary Online the term is defined as “when you take part or become involved in something” (Cambridge University Press 2011) Citizen participation is commonly understood as a codetermination of citizens on political processes and administrative decisions (Wickrath 1992: 10). Citizen participation is the participation of citizens on political decisions. The intensity stretches from participation at elections, to public decisions up to participation in concrete planning processes (Wickrath 1992: 10).

Nowadays, citizen participation is a common praxis in urban planning in a widespread European perspective. To ensure this praxis juridical relevant clauses have been included into the planning and building laws of countries such as in Germany or Sweden. Through formal participation such as public displays of detailed plans or informal participation such as citizen centered consultations, citizens have today the opportunity to include their thoughts about ideas, concerns, requests in planning.

A change in planning approaches – communicative and collaborative planning

Urban regions face a variety of challenges. The function of urban regions as catalyst for economical, technical and cultural development, as pole of different life styles and cultures leads to a competition of stakeholders who compete about space. Planning plays a powerful role in this context. Planning theory and practice have been rethought in the past adapting to the diversity of our society. Traditional planning approaches used to be hierarchical, they promoted top-down approaches in which citizens and stakeholders had no possibilities to have their individual requests included in the planning. New ways of planning are participated nowadays in many regions whose focus lays on the participation of stakeholders: Communicative and Collaborative Planning.
Healey (1992: 154 f) summarizes the main elements of a communicative rational approach in planning in ten points. “(1) Planning is an interactive and interpretative process. (2) Planning is undertaken among diverse and fluid discourse communities. (3) The methods require respectful interpersonal and intercultural discussion. (4) Focuses rest on the “arenas of struggle” (Healey 1993: 84) where public discussion occurs and where problems, strategies, tactics, and values are identified, discussed, evaluated, and where conflicts are mediated. (5) There are multifarious claims for different forms and types of policy development. (6) A reflective capacity is developed that enables participants to evaluate and reevaluate. (7) Strategic discourses are opened up to include all interested parties which, in turn, generate new planning discourses. (8) Participants in the discourse gain knowledge of other participants in addition to learning new relations, values, and understandings. (9) Participants are able to collaborate to change the existing conditions. (10) Participants are encouraged to find ways of practically achieving their planning desires, not simply to agree and list their objectives.” (ibidem)

Communicative planning involves different methodological practices. The reviewing of issues (survey), sorting through findings (analysis), evaluation, developing new strategies and ideas and monitoring are the main activities of this approach according to Healey (1996: 251 f.). Healey (1996) claims further detailed the aspects that should be considered in the communicative planning approach. According to her an arena for discussion is important for example to give the opportunity for strategic review. The scope and style of the discussion according to the language needs to be considered carefully. Further the facilitator of the process needs to be aware of values and facts and diverging point of views. (ibidem: 252) “The challenge for an inclusionary approach to strategic spatial planning is to experiment with and test out strategic ideas in initially tentative ways, to open out a preferred discourse to emerge, and crowd out the alternatives.” (ibidem: 250) And as a last point “agreement and critique” which stands for the developing of an explicit approach to conflict resolution at the start and opportunities for challenging the position of the consensus as well as redeeming the challenges. (ibidem: 252)

The main critiques towards this approach are going back to the sociologist Habermas whose theories are the base of communicative rationality and which communicative planning flows from. A basic assumption of communicative rationality is that consensus can be reached. (Tewdr-Jones and Allmendinger, 1998: 1979) Tewdr-Jones and Allmendinger (1998) question whether “consensus is possible or even desirable in a world of increasing difference.” (ibidem: 1977) Further there is a “growing dissatisfaction with the unfilled promises of communicative planning (...) that those who pursue it as a theoretical exercise seek to speak on behalf of others who do not hold similar
views” (ibidem). This reflects the problem of values that are not shared by the planners and politicians (ibidem).

Tewdr-Jones and Allmendinger (1998) outline that “participatory democracy, upon which communicative planning depends, is by no means problem free or a value held by everyone. Even proponents of participatory democracy feel that it has its limits given the emphasis on or preference for local rather than national concerns. (Pateman, 1970; in ibidem: 1978)

Despite those critiques the fundamental change of communicative and collaborative planning approaches is the involvement of citizens in the planning process and the acknowledgement of different interests in planning. Watson (2003) argues that the planner needs an inside view into the problems of the specific case. “The reality of fundamentally different worldviews is still often treated as superficial in planning theory (...) “and “(...) planning decisions should be reached through collaborative processes involving all stakeholders, and conforming to particular rules which ensure that participation is fair, equal and empowering.”(Watson 2003) Watson argues that collaboration can increase the knowledge of the inhabitants. Our society consists of different groups and these needs need to be identified for the process. If the planner realizes that and does not assume that every citizen is equal, a consensus can be reached in the collaboration process. (ibidem) She argues that the planner in his professional role is “continuing to make assumptions about the values, beliefs, or rationalities of those for (or with) whom they plan, which frequently do not hold.” (ibidem)

Innes and Booher (2003) argue that the collaborative planning process is the one that satisfies multiple interests because it is the only one that deals with diversity and interdependence and is inclusionary in order to find interdependences among the stakeholders. Critiques of the collaborative approach in planning are presented for instance by Connelly and Richardson (2003) who see the attempt of inclusion as an obstacle for collaborative processes. They call for exclusion being important for consensus building processes. Connelly and Richardson (2003) promote the more practical consensus instead of the ideal theoretical consensus which is inclusionary. The consensus building process is more than just a participative method – it is participation and partnership together, the boundaries blurring. (Connelly and Richardson 2003) Connelly and Richardson (2003) outline Selman (1998) that against the normative distinction between “bottom-up” and “top-down” approaches the new ideal is the middle “where state and citizen make decisions together.” In practice this appears as a breakthrough of the distinction between public participation on the one hand and partnership of state groupings on the other hand. (ibidem)

The power of the planner lays in the exclusion. The exclusion of people, issues and outcomes is reached by the design of the process. Connelly and Richardson (2003) argue that inclusion is
illusionary and only practicable in theory and that exclusion leads to a realistic and accepted consensus. (ibidem)

The power of the planner through exclusion and inclusion is essential in the discussion about children’s participation in planning processes. Such as every other citizen they have the right\(^1\) to make notice of their requests to the planning. But children identify a group that does not feel addressed through participation methods shaped for grown-ups in an adult atmosphere. It lays therefore in the power of the planning to identify this group as one stakeholder for its planning and design processes with methods which address children. This asks without doubt for a variety of skills. According to Forester (1999) a planner needs skills as a negotiator, as a facilitator, as a designer and needs also good mediation skills. Forester refers Hoch (1994) who “asks us to refocus our vision and look at planners in a relatively new way – as designers, managers, and even leaders of public deliberation.” (Forester 1999: 91)

The following chapter will focus on the relationship between children and the urban environment. It shows the relationship between the development of the city and society on the childhood. There will be an identification of the living space and mobility of children from industrialization until today to show the importance of planning on the growing up of children and to underline the importance of identifying children as a group with differing requests on planning. The chapter will close with an overview about the diversity and the manifold questions and criteria that need to be considered in the context of child friendly urban and neighborhood design.

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\(^1\) Stating countries in which participation of citizens is formalized in the planning and building law
5. Children in the urban environment

How do children grow up in a city? At which places are we running across children in the city and how do they reach those places? Answering these questions is essential, in order to involve children in decision making processes and in order to understand their comments and statements. For the creation of child-friendly urban space the participation of children is a fundamental component. Children are the experts for their age group and only by involving them in planning processes can actual needs be analyzed. Nowadays, the participation culture of children in cities worldwide ranges from the ignoring of rights of children to manifold projects up to cities or municipalities which have created instruments in order to ensure/institutionalize rights of children in planning process. Before analyzing participation of children in planning processes the relation between the growing up of children and the urban environment will be discussed in the following chapter.

5.1 Growing up in the city (European city perspective)

The significance of the space outside of the apartment/home, both public and private has a unique importance for children. On playgrounds, streets or city squares important experiences outside the family boundaries are made. They are places of socialization. To clarify the role of the city for the growing up of children, the changes of space in childhood conditions since industrialization are presented in the following section. In this context, especially the changes in the places of children for growing up will be discussed. Urban planning can directly influence the conditions for playing and the mobility of children in public space. Child-friendly urban planning serves as a key, in order to improve the conditions for the growing up of children.

The city perspective (as opposed to the rural perspective) is chosen due to the research area, the Stockholm Metropolitan Area.

5.2 Living space and mobility of children in the historical development

Childhood historians reflect on the space where children find a place in the society, the role which a society assigns children. The separation of places specialized for children, such as day-cares, schools, children’s spare time activity centers or playgrounds, is simultaneously an indicator for a historically increasing separation from other generations in the society (Zeiher/Zeiher 1994: 17).

In the following childhood forms are discussed in the historical context. It is to be noted that developments were not exactly the same in all European cities such as today. Nevertheless, the
following analysis clarifies the changes in childhood of children and the relation to the urban environment.

**Childhood in the times of Industrialization and urbanization around 1870-1920s**

With the increasing industrialization and urbanization of European cities, the childhood type of the ‘street childhood’\(^2\) evolved. Overcrowded apartments lead children out of doors to the streets of their neighborhood, as well as around city squares or the backyards or corridors of the apartment buildings. In these places, the life of children and their socialization took place. Streets and squares of the neighborhoods were the important places for children’s development of this era. The large amount of children in dense neighborhoods resulted in a decreasing social control and therefore allowed the development of a relatively individual socio-cultural environment of children’s groups of the neighborhoods (Zinnecker 2001: 37). The childhood type, though, was very dependent on the class of the child. Children from upper-class families were experiencing a mainly indoor childhood already around 1800. The ‘domestication’\(^3\) of childhood in middle-class families became institutionalized after 1900 with mixed forms of ‘domestication’ and ‘street childhood’, whereas the domestication of children from working class families was not noticeable until the mid 20\(^{th}\) century.

**Childhood in the times of reconstruction until the end of the 1950s**

During the Second World War many European cities suffered immense destruction. Buildings, neighborhoods and streets were destroyed. Apartments were overcrowded due to the lack of apartments. There were almost no specially assigned children’s spaces in the city or apartments. There were schools but almost no play schools / day cares, and children hardly ever had their own room in an apartment or a playground in their neighborhood. Children played outside. In some cases, places that had lost the necessity for adults such as bomb damaged buildings, were converted by children for their needs. Streets had very few cars and were used as wonderful playing areas for the children. With increasing traffic in the middle of the 1950s, play areas became more limited and more dangerous. Space inside was still very limited. Social housing, which increased in the 1950s, did not usually have a specific room for children. In contrast, in the single family homes in the suburbs specific children rooms were often included. Although the opportunities to play outside were decreasing in the 1950s, the growing up outside was as multifaceted such as in the era of industrialization (Zinnecker 2001: 40). The places of this generation are mostly home and the street,

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\(^2\) Street childhood describes a growing up and socialization mainly outdoors in public or half-public space.

\(^3\) Domestication describes a childhood type of children that spend their childhood mainly at private homes or in institutions indoors.
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and for older children also the school. The street has still a significant function as socializing place. Apart from these places there were almost no specialized places for children because the focus of the building sector and of politicians was primarily the housing sector (Zeiher/Zeiher 1994:18).

**Childhood in the 1960s and 1970s**

In this era an increasing specialization and the division of functions in places in housing areas is noticeable. Furthermore there was an increasing significance of the automobile and going along with that a widening of streets and a reduction of sidewalks. The inner city was increasingly dominated by commerce and services while in the suburbs new housing areas were developed. Since the 1960s, families with children moved increasingly to high-rise apartment settlements or into single family homes, both at the edges of the city. These neighborhoods were characterized to mostly by the function of housing; outside were mostly, flower gardens with limited playing opportunities. The significance of the automobile had increased the dangers for children for playing in the public space (Zeiher/Zeiher: 1994: 20). This push away from children from the public space lead to the loss of the public space as a socialization and learning place for children. Life and socialization was moved to specialized places for children, ‘children’s places’. In the case of housing those places were individual children’s rooms and playgrounds; in the public sector, they were day-cares, spare-time activity centers and commercially oriented spare time activities for children (Zinnecker 2001: 40). For most families in the cities the ideal of parenting became the pedagogic supervised and individualized child. The territorial relation to the outside was decreased, which created in its place a dependence on opportunities of commercial or pedagogic offers (Zinnecker 2001: 41).

**Childhood since the 1970s until today**

Already in the mid 1970s critics were increasing in public on the specialization of the urban space. From the 1980s the awareness of the problem of children in the society became greater. Politicians, urban planners and parents focused on opportunities for children in their neighborhoods and to decentralize functions. Today there are three main thesis in childhood research: Domestication – sportification – islandisation (Verinselung). They reflect the historical changes in the growing up of children.

According to the thesis of domestication children spend most of their time indoors in the private space and less in the public space (Zinnecker/Behnken 1987, according to Ahrend 2001:38).

Because of the limited possibilities in the public space children follow their desire to be active up in sport clubs. This sportification as a trend in childhood that is especially noticeable among boys (Deutsches Jugendinstitut 1992: 56).
Children are increasingly growing up in a living space that is put together out of many islands in the urban space. Instead of a connected living space conformable with their physical and psychological abilities such as it was normal for children until the 1970s (see above). Parents or other adults take the children to their islands, consisting of day-care, schools, playgrounds, homes of friends, sport practice (Zeiher/Zeiher 1994: 27).

‘Domestication’ and ‘Islandisation’ have lead to a decreasing significance of the public space as the place for socialization in childhood. The accessibility of the space of children has changed and thereby the connection of space becomes harder to understand because the surrounding area is no longer accessed by movements.

The holistic space becomes insignificant and is not known by children any longer. At the same time, the space of action of children is dependent on age, gender and type of playing influenced by barriers
and origins of danger such as the street. Hence the space of action is often reduced to safe ‘islands’ (Apel / Bruegemann 2006: 73).

### 5.3 Children’s places in the city

Despite the fact of ‘domestication’ and the reduction to special places exclusively for children, children are still ‘on their way’ in the city. Places where they spend their time can be differentiated according to the type of use in places for playing and places of activity. Places of playing are all places where children go with the intention of playing in the afternoon without their parents. These are next to the infrastructural special places for children like playgrounds and sports fields, also free spaces that offer playing options. Places of activity are space of routine activity such as meeting friends or going shopping. Additionally there are venues that are places for playing and activity and can be considered as the intersection of both places such as shopping centers (Krause 2002: 13). Places for playing of children are diverse. There are locations that children intentionally go to and that often serve as meeting points with other children for further ventures as well as venues that become places for playing by passing by. The carrying out of ways is usually used by children as a game. The way home from school becomes playing time and pedestrian walks become spaces of playing (Krause 2002: 13).

![Diagram of children's living spaces](image)

This behavior of playing while walking stands in contrast to the behavior of adults that go on a way usually with a clear defined reason and without loop ways.
Children grow up all across the city and often consider places as especially interesting that are not exclusively designed for them. Places where you can meet other people, where interesting things can be watched, where material is laying around to create things, places where something extraordinary happens. Parks, recreational areas, busy squares, the road space, as well as playgrounds, sport areas and schoolyards, belong to the most common places in the city that children address in the public space (Krause 2002: 15). Also important is the public space and the private space of gardens and backyards (the world outside their homes). Finally, there are mainly three more places where children spend their every-day life:

In the private sector of the family. In which most of the children spend a high amount of their time.

In organizations and institutions such as day-cares, schools and pedagogic supervised courses.

In using media, which have become an own socialization instance like books, radio, television, computer and internet.

Each of these places is important for the development and life quality of children. As long as the balance among these places is in control there is no need for concern (Krause/Schönmann 1999: 7).

Urban planning has no influence on the last listed places. It is mostly in the realm of the public space that urban planning has a direct influence on the life quality of children. With purposeful planning that can be improved. Children are not small adults. They have their own needs of their neighborhood. Pedestrian areas in which children can play or areas that give place for creative games are examples for that.

In the following, aspects of child-friendly planning are discussed.

5.4 Child friendliness in urban planning
The changes in growing up in the last one hundred years show that the city and urban planning have a big influence on the conditions of playing outside and the mobility opportunities for children.
Especially traffic planning and the automobile have a huge impact on the possibilities for playing outdoors and for the restrictions on their individual mobility because of barriers such as streets.

Children are not small adults; their needs and abilities on the public space differ from that of adults. Those differences can represent a risk for children, especially when it relates to traffic. According to Ahrend (2002) traffic planning must consider that children up to approximately ten years have a smaller body height than adults which reduces their line of sight, a shorter step length, a longer time of reaction, a lower ability of concentration, problems localizing noises, problems with the right-left orientation and with the estimation of distances and speed (Ahrend 2002: 20f.). In order to protect the population group of children and to create a child-friendly urban form, it is necessary to have traffic planning and urban planning that is aware of those differences in abilities and that integrates them in their work.

The following table presents an overview of the diversity and the manifold questions and criteria that need to be considered in the context of child-friendly urban design and neighborhood design. It is an extract from the test criteria catalogue that was developed from the German Ministry of Women, Youth and Health of the county (Bundesland) North Rhine-Westphalia.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Object of planning: detailed plan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Topic: Health and Security</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Are there play and movement areas assigned for the development of motor functions?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Are ecological niches planned for the experience with nature and for playing in nature as a condition of a holistic mental development?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Are spaces planned for the meeting of different age groups and cliques as a condition for social development and to protect isolation and separation of children?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Are safe traffic spaces and road independent cycling and pedestrian ways planned?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Are possibilities for traffic calming and for the prevention of through traffic planned?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic: usage property</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| - Location of the playgrounds in relation to housing → visibility → Eye contact of playgrounds for

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4 Next to children feature also other population groups restrictions of abilities in the context of movement and sensory perception such as many elderly people.
5. Children in the urban environment

- Is it possible for children to reach important institutions individually?
- Can children access work experience in their neighborhood?
- Does the distribution of public space allow the usage of playing and staying there for children?
- Are the important social institutions for children included: Day-Cares → schools → spare-time centers → sport facilities or are there conditions for creating those?
- Are shops for the daily needs existing or are the conditions for creating them given?

**Topic: allow convertibility**

- Are there spaces assigned suitable for any kind of utilization?
- Are there recreational areas available suitable for any kind of utilization?
- Is the urban design concept satisfying for the development of a child-friendly arrangement?

**Topic: create adventure worlds**

- Existence of different types of areas for children / differentiated possibilities
- Nature playing space as adventure playground
- Areas without defined utilization
- Is there experience with work?
- Are smaller niches available?
- Are areas for animals included?
- Are water areas included?

**Topic: exercise participation**

- Is the current usage of the planned area captured by children and are the results included in future planning?
- Early participation → contact to children’s institutions in the area
Consideration of the special needs of children and parents during the consultations with residences

(Ministerium für Frauen, Jugend und Gesundheit des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen 2000: 58 f.)

Participation is one component of a child-friendly urban planning. It is considered as one key factor for understanding the needs of children with regard to their environment. Projects with children that rate the neighborhoods clarify the real usage of the environment for children. For instance as a first named example of children’s participation it is possible to identify dangerous spots or areas of fear in the neighborhood through participation projects with the affected target groups.
6. Participation of children in spatial planning

The topic of this paper is the participation of children. While the first two chapters clarified the main context in which participation of children is located – on the one side the discussion about participation in general and on the other side the growing up in an urban environment – the following chapter will give an overview about legal conditions of the participation of children and existing forms of children’s participation in the municipality. The chapter will close with a summary of benefits that arise from the participation of children.

6.1 Policy conditions for the participation of children

The request for participation of children in planning has its roots in the basic principles of democracy. Children are a part of our society with their own needs. According to a democratic understanding of children as members of our society, children have the right to have their needs and requests included in the spatial environment. However, from the participation of adults we know how important it is that participation rights are legally written down in order to demand participation rights in practice.

Precise legal fundamentals that protect the right of children to participate in community urban planning decisions are assured in the United Nations Convention on the Right of the Child. The Convention on the Right of the Child is “an international treaty that recognizes the human rights of children, defined as persons up to the age of 18 years” (UNICEF 2012). Being signed by 192 countries it is the most widely signed treaty among the United Nation rights treaties. Only the United States of America and Somalia have not signed the convention. “The Convention establishes an international law that States Parties must ensure that all children—without discrimination in any form—benefit from special protection measures and assistance; have access to services such as education and health care; can develop their personalities, abilities and talents to the fullest potential; grow up in an environment of happiness, love and understanding; and are informed about and participate in, achieving their rights in an accessible and active manner” (UNICEF 2012). The last named issue is the one of interest for the demanding of children’s participation in urban planning and will be outlined in the following:

*Article 12: (1) States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.*
(2) For this purpose, the child shall in particular be provided the opportunity to be heard in any judicial and administrative proceedings affecting the child, either directly, or through a representative or an appropriate body, in a manner consistent with the procedural rules of national law.


The convention clearly assures participation rights to children. It was opened for ratification in 1989 and came into force on September 2nd 1990 (UNICEF 2012). By ratifying this convention the countries committed to the creation of a national environment in which these rights of children are warranted. Hence, whenever children are not involved in planning decisions that affect their interests the country\(^5\) is breaking international law.

**Agenda 21:** One outcome of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 1992 is an action plan of the UN on sustainable development. The Agenda 21 outlines in chapter 25 the role of children for a sustainable development and their importance for the realization of a sustainable development. According to the document, children's involvement is not only valued, but is central in the decision making processes of environmental and development areas.

*Chapter 25 - children and youth in sustainable development:*

(25.1) Youth comprise nearly 30 per cent of the world’s population. The involvement of today’s youth in environment and development decision-making and in the implementation of programmes is critical to the long-term success of Agenda 21.

(25.2) It is imperative that youth from all parts of the world participate actively in all relevant levels of decision-making processes because it affects their lives today and has implications for their futures. In addition to their intellectual contribution and their ability to mobilize support, they bring unique perspectives that need to be taken into account.”

The Agenda 21 defines further clear objectives and activities for governments to promote the involvement of children in the municipality:

\(^5\)Except the United States of America and Somalia who have not ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child.
(25.4) Each country should, in consultation with its youth communities, establish a process to promote dialogue between the youth community and Government at all levels and to establish mechanisms that permit youth access to information and provide them with the opportunity to present their perspectives on government decisions, including the implementation of Agenda 21.

(25.9) Establish procedures allowing for consultation and possible participation of youth of both genders, by 1993, in decision-making processes with regard to the environment, involving youth at the local, national and regional levels;

(United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs 1992: Chapter 25).

6.2 Forms and degrees of children’s participation in the municipality

In this chapter different forms and degrees of participation will be discussed. Examples for the individual forms of participation vary worldwide. However, in general the concepts are consistent within the scope of democratic countries. Children can be involved on different levels, in different ways and to different scopes of responsibility in the municipality. This reflects directly the different forms of democracy such as direct or indirect democracy. Forms of representation, such as children’s parliaments, are comparable in their structure to the adult version. Open forms of assemblies, such as children’s sessions or children’s forums, are forms that are open to every child that would like to participate or say something. Project-assigned participation forms are product- and result oriented. The topic is clearly limited to the needs of the children. This method aims to completion in an arranged and manageable time period. Punctual participation describes methods such as politician’s consultation hours. Everyday participation is practiced in the family, in pedagogic institutions or in the municipality in every-day dialogues or talking rounds (Stange 2004: Kap. 2.3).

![Figure 6: Forms of children’s participation in the municipality (own illustration)](image-url)
6. Participation of children in spatial planning

6.2.1 Forms of children’s participation in public space

In the following, project-assigned, representative, as well as open forms of participation of children will be described in detail. They represent the main forms in the participation practice with children in the context of public space (Frädrich 2004)

Project-assigned participation

Project-assigned participation methods such as those described above are limited in time for planning and realization. Typical examples for which this participation form is used would be the planning and construction of playgrounds. In project-assigned participations only the concrete topic is discussed. This is different from for example representative forms such as children’s parliaments in which abstract themes (such as problems of children in the municipality) would be discussed. There is a variety of methods established - for example painting, model building, pointing out bad and nice areas with pictures and stickers, walks in the neighborhood - which allow children to express their ideas, hopes and needs for the planning under guidance of adults. In many projects they are also involved in the construction part of the project (Brunsemann et al 2001: 86ff.).

In an ideal case the participation projects are divided in four or five phases. The project time, the financial resources, available staff and the venue need to be considered for the performance of each phase. The first phase, also known as the ‘Sensitizing or entry phase’, informs the participating children about the project. In the second step a method will be chosen such as modeling or painting. The method needs to match the age group and the varying skills of children. This phase is the main focus in which requests and critiques are expressed. The main goal of the methods is to develop ideas and strengthen the creativity of the participants. In the third phase the expressed ideas and imaginations are defined and concrete plans are developed. The next phase would be the realization, the actual construction. In the case of playgrounds a fifth step is added, the use and appropriation of the playground. This structure of project assigned participation is usually described as the ‘participation spiral’ referring to the recurring participation of the children in all phases: information, the method, making the plan, realization, use and appropriation (Stange 1996: 18).
6. Participation of children in spatial planning

This is the theoretical structure of a participation project. Problems usually occur in the financing as well as in the organization of those events. Participation projects require greater organizational efforts and are often more expensive than ‘normal’ planning projects. Planners and pedagogues usually work together closely in order to achieve the high amount of assistance in the preparation as well as post processing. These framework requirements need to be fulfilled for a participation project (Frädrich 2004).

Problems of participation projects often occur in the bureaucratic processes in municipalities which can be very lengthy. If there are no results after a participation of children or if those results follow up after months or years, this is very hard for the children to understand and this can be quite discouraging. The complexity of the bureaucracy of municipalities can be incomprehensible for children, as it is for many adults. Therefore it is especially important to choose a proper method in order to include children in more abstract topics, and that the children are not too young and are therefore more capable of understanding those complex processes. It is important to note that even in the case of more abstract topics such as child-friendly criteria for cities, successful experiences have been made (Frädrich 2004).

Representative forms

Another common participation form in which children are active are representative forms like children and youth parliaments or children representatives. They are similar to adult versions of municipality parliaments. Those representative forms are a continuous way for children to participate in the municipality. They give children the opportunity to experience the work of democratic institutions and to represent their age groups’ interests in the municipality. Rules, modalities,
organization, financing and the decision-making process vary among municipalities and their parliaments. There are children and youth parliaments in Germany, for example, that were initiated by adults as well as ones that were founded because of the assertiveness of children and youth. The members of the parliament are usually nominated representatives from the schools and clubs in the municipality. Or there are direct open elections for the parliament in cooperation with those institutions (Frädrich 2004).

The representative form of participation is best suitable for older children approximately from age twelve. In many parliaments the minimum age in order to be elected is twelve or fourteen, while the upper age limit is usually eighteen. In most of the parliaments all interested children can take part but do not have votes in decision processes in the parliament. Meetings are held with the whole group of the parliament as well as in smaller groups depending on the topic to be discussed (Frädrich 2004, in: Website Das Familienhandbuch des Staatsinstituts fuer Fruehpädagogik). The methods used in the smaller groups are constantly developing and are comparable with those used in project-assigned forms of participation (Brunseemann et al. 2001: 121).

The main task of representative forms of participation is to discuss and develop proposals for playgrounds, pedestrian way systems, environmental issues and issues concerning spare time activity options. It is possible to ensure that children have the chance to realize their ideas and wishes in the community. For this to occur, though, it is necessary that adults support the parliament in order to ensure that petitions or applications are given consideration (Frädrich 2004).

In addition, a person that creates and ensures political support is needed for administration and pedagogy in order for children and youth parliaments to function well. If there is nobody working in these positions, the existence of such parliaments and their success cannot be ensured (Brunseemann et al. 2001: 33).

Representative forms are criticized to be only a pretended participation, a pretended codetermination. It has been suggested that children may give suggestions and write petitions but they have no influence on the final decision. Also the support of adults has to be analyzed critically. Support is essential, especially when children are younger, but it is important that adults are not dominant or influencing. According to Frädrich (2004) a problem is also the inclusion of children with linguistic problems. In those cases methods need to be developed which depend not as much on language as parliament discussions. The methods used in representative form need to match the age group. Frädrich (2004) argues from experience that it seems that representative forms are better suitable for older children approximately 14+, and they also appear to be more attractive to boys than girls.
The advantages of representative forms of participation lay in their constant institutional involvement. Thereby long-term work is possible that, in the environment of political decisions, is very important. Children can see what happens with their petitions and applications. If they realize that their issues are not being paid enough attention to, they can try to increase the attention with public relation work and to call for their rights with the help of adults. With the adoption of representative forms of participation in a municipality, politicians can maintain constant contact and know who to consult with children’s issues (Frädrich 2004). That facilitates the cooperation and is one component to ensure participation. For most municipalities, the participation of children is something new. Often municipalities are not lacking the willingness but the knowledge of how children can be involved and activated for participation. Representative forms are also understandable for adults because they are similar to participation methods they use themselves. Therefore, representative forms can be seen as a good starting point from which to initiate participation of children in municipalities. Once representative forms are a constant, other participation forms will often develop in the municipalities.

**Open forms of participation**

In open forms of participation every child that would like to join can participate, there are no elected children such as in representative forms. Everybody is called to state their requests to the given topic. The events do not underlie any formal regimentation. Children’s conferences, round table conferences or children’s forums are examples of that kind of form of participation. There are open forms of participation which operate on a regular basis as well as singular to recent topics.

Alongside children there are usually parents or adult experts from politics or administration who play a more passive role in these events. Their role is to listen to the children. The events are directed by an adult moderator. Contents can be topics with a concrete reference to a certain area such as playground planning or rearrangements of playgrounds or reconstructions of neighborhoods or parks as well as more abstract topics such as child friendly criteria in the environment. Children may state their requests and also work with the support of adults on realization or implementation solutions. Methods are adjusted to the age groups. It is often necessary to divide the children up according to their age (Brunseemann et al. 2001: 118f.).

According to Frädrich (2004) advantages of open forms of participation are that they are less regimented than the representative ones. More and diverse children are participating, if there are events on a regular basis. The participating children can state their arguments out of their own concern. The contact between children and politicians can lead to a better mutual understanding and appreciation (Frädrich 2004).
Disadvantages of open forms are that the organization costs are high and that the events have a low commitment. Following through with the results of the events can only be ensured if the circumstances are discussed in advance to the event between politicians, administration and the organizers of the event. If there are non-governmental organizations hosting events, powers of implementation may be very limited.

As with the parliament forms, open forms require the support of adults in the role of moderators. Their task is to communicate between children and the participating adults. The open forms also require expressing requests verbally which leads to the risk that adults take advantage of their linguistic superiority. Without a moderator who is aware of this problem the chance that children can express adequately what they really want to say could be compromised. The methods used in the events should be attractive for a broad age range and for boys as well as girls in order to ensure that the participants can participate properly. It is the task of the moderator to be aware of the children’s needs and adjust the moderation and methods to the individuality of the given group.

6.2.2 Degrees of children’s participation

Next to the division in participation forms there is also the possibility to divide participation projects by the degree of responsibility that children are given. One needs to be aware that for each participation project an individual degree and intensity of participation is most reasonable and that not only the degree of responsibility is a criteria of its success (Schröder 1995: 18). Whether children are participating in a planning project depends usually on the motivation of the adults. As in ‘normal’ public participation one never expects to reach everybody but one needs to activate one specific group. The choice of the right method depending on the age group and skills of the children is crucial for the motivation of the children and the future outcome of the project. In participation projects there are essential differences and nuances in the responsibility grade of children within the decision process (Schröder 1995: 18). Hart (1992) divides participation projects with children in eight steps reaching from total heteronomy by adults to autonomy of children. The ladder of citizen participation was first established by Arnstein (1969). It reaches from manipulation to a total citizen control and overlaps mostly the ladder presented in the following. Hence, Arnstein’s ladder of citizen participation is the fundament for the ladder of degrees of children’s participation first presented by Hart in 1992.

The above describes the degree steps of the ladder of child participation:
Manipulation: Children do not understand the content, working method and results. They are doing what they are told by adults. The acting of the children is therefore manipulated. That is for instance the case when children are used in public demonstrations shouting out slogan which they do not understand.

Decoration: Children are used on events as decorations. They do not understand the content or use. That is for instance the case when politicians are photographed accompanied by children.

Tokenism: For instance children take part in a conference in which they have no counting vote. Their vote is only tokenistic. Childrens’ parliaments are often an example for that as well as specific childrens’ participation projects where the results are not included or discussed for the planning process.

Assigned, but informed: The project is prepared by adults but it is designed for the focus group according with its methods. The children know what their work is about, who initiated it and which aim the project is following. The children have a meaningful role for which they are respected. That is for instance the case when a group of children is organized to do community work.
Consulted and informed: The project is still initiated, designed and carried out by adults but the children understand completely what they are doing and are in consent with it. Their opinions and input is taken seriously. That is for instance the case when children are consulted regarding their opinion on a certain topic.

Adult-initiated, shared decisions with children: The initial idea for the project comes from adults but children are involved in the planning and implementation phases. Their opinions and views are considered and they take part in the decision making process. The planning of a playground with the participation of children is an example of this degree of participation.

Child-initiated and directed: The initial idea for a project comes from the children themselves and they decide how it is implemented. Adults support the project with information, ideas or counseling but do not take over. The relationship to the adults can be described as partnership. A school radio or newspaper can be an example of this degree step.

Child-initiated, shared decisions with adults: All ideas come for the project come from children. It is initiated and carried out by the children. They may seek advice, discussion and support by adults at their own discretion. The relationship to the adults can as well be described as partnership. An example can be when children identify a problem, come up with a project idea to solve the problem and convince adults to run the project. (Steinitz 2009: 2f.)

6.3 The benefits from children’s participation

Children’s participation is not a recent emergence. Since the 1990s successful children’s participation projects in urban planning have been arranged reflecting. The question why children are included in participation can be answered easily: children have the right to participate, they want to participate and they have the needed skills to do so. The central arguments and justifications for a sustainable and effective participation of children can be divided in systematic as well as functional explanatory statements.

Systematic justifications concentrate on the judicial conditions of the participation of children. The most fundamental and expansive legitimation for participation rights of children lies in the human and citizen rights. Children share the same basic rights with all other humans. Therefore they should be included in all questions and issues concerning them in the political community that affect them (Olk/Roth 2007: 40). The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child activated in almost all European countries a participation movement and created specific international human rights for the population group of children (Olk/Roth 2007: 41. As described in chapter 3.1 it is the central argument for the systematic justification concentrating on judicial conditions.
Next to the democratic justifications there are more systematic argumentations why children need to be included in participation. The stepwise development of decision making competences through participation projects is an important issue from a pedagogic point of view. When children experience participation at a young age they achieve many years of contact with democratic processes. That prepares them for the role of a politically mature and responsible citizen. (Fitzpatrick et al 2000:497 in Dönitz 2006: 57). The environment of school and housing is important and can prepare for this role. When children experience undemocratic circumstances in this environment, it is harder for them as adults to understand democratic decisions and it will feel uncommon to them. If children are accustomed to participate, they are more likely involved in democratic processes as adults (Bendig 2006). This argumentation aims at the preparation of children for the future as responsible and active citizen (Olk/Roth 2007:a:45)

The ideology of this education stands of course in contrast to the point of view that taking responsibility and making decisions is ruining an easygoing childhood (Olk/Rotha 2007:45). However, this argumentation of destroying a jaunty childhood if children take over responsibility stands in direct conflict to the respect for children and their abilities and the possibilities of expressing themselves freely such as demanded in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child November 20th 1989: Article 12). Children’s rights representatives are fighting against this ideology that children are for example not involved in participation with the argumentation of asking too much of them (Olk/Rotha 2007:43).

Children are skilled from a very young age and they can therefore from a very young age support their social environment as well as the society with productive contributions. Recent childhood research underlines that children are not only in need of being taught and receive education. Their uncomplicated and easygoing access to new knowledge and conditions makes them privileged stakeholders in the accomplishment of new societal challenges and the development of innovative solutions (Olk/Rothb 2007: 56).

Next to these systematic justifications are a variety of functional reasons from the manifold interest perspectives from politics, society or media existing (Olk/Rothb 2007: 48). The most important reasons for participation of children from an urban planning perspective are the following arguments:

- Increase of the efficiency of planning
- Implementation of international concepts and agreements
- Location factor child friendliness
6. Participation of children in spatial planning

- Strengthening of identification
- Promotion of integration
- (Re-)activation of adults

Increase of the efficiency of planning

In planning theory, participation of the aggrieved party is seen as an important tool to increase the efficiency of development proposals. One intention is that the planning matches the real, individual needs of the future users better. Children are experts on their own needs and can improve the quality of the planning (Olk/Roth 2007: 86). One important motive is to get information about the divergent cognition of space. How do children understand and access that space? Which expectations and needs do they have on this specific area and what type of experience do they allow its users? These are only very few of the questions that allow a planner to get an insight in the children’s needs. As mentioned earlier children are experts for their own age group. It is often hard for an adult to put oneself in children’s shoes. Participation of children allows receiving information about needs and expectations of children on their environment. Plans can thereby be better adjusted to the needs of the future users (Driskell 2002: 35).

Implementation of international concepts and agreements

Through the participation of children in a municipality politicians and planners are acting on a local level according to the United Nations Rights of the Child. The goals involving participation included in the Agenda 21 as well as the Habitat Agenda are also followed when doing participation projects. Thereby children are involved in efforts to reach a sustainable urban development (Driskell 2002: 35).

Location factor child friendliness

Child friendliness serves as a soft location factor in the competition of municipalities for the settling of families as well as industry and work places. Participation of children is used as a central concept to create family and child friendly conditions (Olk/Roth 2007: 72). Participation works against a forgetting of child friendly criteria. Especially in traffic planning development plans get implemented without including the consequences for school and spare time activity paths of children. This
‘forgetting’ about children in traffic planning is one reason for an increasing ‘escort mobility’ of children in the urban space and an increased number of families moving to the suburbs.

**Demographic change and inter-generation fairness**

Especially for municipalities that have to deal with demographic changes - a loss of inhabitants and an increasing number of elderly people - family and child friendly infrastructures are gaining importance to give impulsion to have (more) children. Child friendly conditions are seen as one factor for increasing birth rates in municipalities (Olk/Roth\(^5\) 2007: 66). At the same time there is an increasing inter-generation understanding through the participation of children. Social-psychological research shows that young people gain life quality from living together with elderly people and so do elderly people from living together with young people (Krappmann/Lepenies 1997, in Olk/Roth 2007\(^b\): 70). Through the participation of children, older generations learn from the younger generation because superior knowledge and authority is no longer naturally given and the relationship among the generations may be balanced out again (Olk/Roth\(^5\) 2007: 70). The interaction of children with other members of the society in planning and construction projects helps building trust and understanding among the generations (Driskell 2002: 35). As much as children learn by doing participation projects that there are relevant to their interests, through the process they may also come to appreciate that others’ needs and expectations need to be considered and possibly included. The understanding that there are other groups in society with divergent needs can be developed through participation projects (Bendig 2006: n.p.). Hence, active participation of children is a chance for an increasing inter-generation understanding and fairness!

**Strengthening of identification**

The identification with a space on whose planning and shaping one was involved is strengthened through participation. Children are proud of their achievements and identify with the outcomes of their projects. That leads to a more careful handling of the given space and declining vandalism and damage. Therefore participation is active prevention (Driskell 2002: 35; Bendig 2006: n.p.)!

**Promotion of integration**

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\(^5\)Due to increasing risks in traffic space parents a lot of parents escort their children or drive them by car to school or other activities which represses the development of independence.
The motive of participation as one instrument for the integration and partaking in the society should not be left unattended. An active inclusion of members of minority groups such as disabled children or children with a migration background can strengthen their competences and lead to an increasing societal attention and acceptance (Olk/Rothb 2007: 91).

(Re-)activation of adults

The participation methods used in children projects often also suit adults and are seen as more interesting and easier to understand in comparison to long discussions. In participation projects with adults a certain basic knowledge of politics and administrational understanding is assumed. In projects with children every single step will be explained understandably. Parents may also develop a stronger commitment when their children participate. They are inspired by the ideas of their children and get in contact with municipality officials in order ensure the realization. A children’s participation project can activate the whole local community and can thereby counteract against parents’ own political apathy (Bendig 2006: n.p.).

Reasons for the participation of children are – as described above - manifold. Child friendliness can only grow through the active participation of the young experts. Part A has given an insight into the planning theoretical discussion of citizen participation in general before showing the influence of the urban environment on the growing up of children. The historical development has shown that the significance of public places and the street for the socialization of children has changed in the last century. The increasing importance of the automobile and new residential areas have pushed children more and more to private spaces such as apartments and to space exclusively created for children such as playgrounds. To cover the distances between places in a child’s life, parents or other adults increasingly accompany their children. Hence, the accessibility of the space of children has changed and thereby the connection of space becomes harder to understand because the surrounding area is no longer accessed by movements. The creating of child friendly space is a diverse topic. Especially traffic planning and the automobile have a huge impact on the possibilities for playing outdoors and for the restrictions on their individual mobility because of barriers such as streets. But it is not only that children can access places safely that is relevant for child friendliness in planning. Issues such as creating adventurous playing areas, meeting space for different age groups or access to work experience are just some examples for the manifold issues that need to be considered when creating child friendly space. One key factor is of course also the participation of children. Legal conditions are given. The United Nations Convention on the Right of the Child outlined in Article 12 clearly states that children need to be involved in all matters affecting them.
The convention was signed by 192 countries and reflects one international treaty that outlines the importance of the participation of children. Children can be involved on different levels, in different ways and to different scopes of responsibility in the municipality. This reflects directly the different forms of democracy such as direct or indirect democracy. The form and degree is no indicator though for the success of a project which is dependent on the topic and the skills of the group of children participating. Part B will in the following take a closer look at children’s participation in spatial development in Sweden.
Part B - Case study: Implementation of children’s rights in spatial planning in the Stockholm Metropolitan Area
7. Integration of children’s perspectives in spatial development in Sweden

The paper has so far discussed participation of children on a very theoretical and abstract level. In the first part the focus was on the scale of the international discussion and the theory that stands behind the participation of children in urban planning. The Swedish regulations that concern children’s participation rights in the community are the introduction into part B of this Thesis paper. A reflection back to how the international rights of children and guidelines are adapted in Sweden will be included. Hereupon follows a chapter about the ongoing pilot project “children and youth in community planning (Barn och unga i samhällsplaneringen)” a cooperation of the Swedish Housing Department (Boverket) and Traffic Department (Trafikverket). The ongoing projects represent a variety of scopes children are able to participate in physical planning. The following chapter 8 will then analyze the survey about children’s participation in the Stockholm Metropolitan Area.

7.1 Swedish regulations for child participation

Perhaps the most important message of this chapter is that there is no regulation in the Swedish constitution which aims to ensure just children influence in the municipality planning. The basic regulations for the freedom of speech and the right to express your own opinion are applying to all citizens independently from age. The same applies to the charter of fundamental rights of the European Union which is transposed into Swedish national law (Boverket 2000: 35).

However, the right to vote have only citizens that have turned 18 latest on the day of the election as well as it is only possible to vote for politicians that are 18 years of age. That applies for all elections of Swedish parliament, the county, the municipality council and the EU parliament (ibidem).

The UN Convention on the Right of the Child as the most important international policy for child participation was ratified by Sweden in 1990 without any restriction. So far it is no Swedish law. Hence, the convention has not the same status as other Swedish laws. Sweden has chosen a transformation method which includes the changing of Swedish laws including the content of the convention. Concerns are that the children’s rights are not guaranteed by this method and UNICEF Sweden demands an incorporation of the convention to Swedish law. "UNICEF Sverige anser att den metoden inte är tillräcklig för att garantera barn deras rättigheter. I stället kräver vi att transformeringsmetoden kombineras med en inkorporering som gör barnkonventionen till lag. Vi
anser att en kombination av båda metoderna skulle bättre främja barns rättigheter i stort” (UNICEF Sverige 2012).

In the following the main regulations concerning physical planning in Sweden are addressed outlining the room for participation of citizens. However, if children are participating within the process, it depends on the outlining of the participation process and the leading project management. The laws show though that the needed juridical background for children’s participation in planning also exists on the national level. The main obstacle is to identify the group of children as one important stakeholder in the planning process.

Legislation concerning physical planning

The Swedish Planning and Building Law (plan- och bygglagen - PBL) contains the regulations about the planning of land and water as well as about buildings. It aims to promote a municipality development with equal and good social living conditions for the people in the community of today and for future generations. The master plans (översiktsplan) as well as detailed plans (detaljplan) are the base for the usually called physical planning as well as the area regulations (områdebestämmelse) that are used for areas that are nearby the space covered by a detailed plan. These terms regulate for instance the fundamental use of the land or water areas or spare time facilities. How can children influence the outcome of plans? The establishment/planning process of a detailed plan as well as for the surrounding regulations is relatively precise in the PBL. The process is operated in different stages: program stage, consultation stage, exhibition stage and the adoption stage. Citizens are asked to participate in the planning processes and express their concerns and requests. There is no special term for the part of children in the planning process. However, everything that is regulated in the PBL for citizens’ participation applies to children, too (Boverket 2000:38).

Miljöbalken MB – contains the regulations about environmental considerations. Everybody who is concerned about an activity or takes out an activity that has or may have environmental impacts is affected by the articles of Miljöbalken. That applies to everything from big factories to temporary measures that have an impact on the environment. If any project is predicted to have environmental impacts an environmental impact assessment (miljökonsekvensbeskrivning, MKB) needs to be carried which identifies and describes the predicted effects on humans, animals, water climate, culture, landscape etc.

According to the regulations of Miljöbalken, stakeholders need to be involved in the process as early as possible. One Stakeholder can be in many cases the group of children if they get identified as one
by the planners shaping the process. There are many situations where children can be assumed to be included in the groups of especially affected citizens (ibidem: 38 f.).

The building of a public road is executed under the regulations of the Väglagen – the road law. In the planning process the Vägverket (Traffic Department) in accordance to Miljöbalken involves the affected counties, municipalities and nonprofit organizations in the field of environment conservancy. In this context children’s associations can also be seen as affected nonprofit organizations that need to be included (ibidem: 39).

That there are many examples for the participation of children in physical planning processes in Sweden will be shown in the following chapter. In each of these examples children were identified as an important stakeholder and the participation process was designed to address them individually.

7.2 Current examples of participation projects with children in Sweden

This chapter will concretize the topic of children’s participation by outlining varied ongoing projects with children in order to illustrate where children can participate.

Pilot Project participation of Children

Currently the Swedish Traffic Department (Trafikverket) together with the Swedish Housing Department (Boverket) are carrying out a pilot project to promote the influence of children in the municipality within physical planning. As result they are expecting new methods and routines within the field of planning of train stations, housing and traffic sites.

In total six municipalities were chosen for this pilot study:

- Borlänge
- Göteborg
- Hällefors (in cooperation with Lindesberg, Ljusnarsberg, Nora)
- Trelleborg
- Örebro
- Östersund.

The municipalities are responsible for initiating the projects and for the cooperation with schools and day cares in order to give children the possibility to participate and express their own ideas and thoughts. The role of the Traffic Department (Trafikverket) and Housing Department (Boverket) lies
within the overall project management. It is their task to coordinate the projects, educate the municipality project management and to give financial as well as consultative support with knowledge and experience. The results will be given in form of a report to the government in the fall of 2012 (Boverket 2011).

The aim is to make the access to children’s participation in physical planning easier by spreading knowledge and promoting the topic and methods. All municipalities have chosen individual projects where children get a lot of space during the project time (Trafikverket 2011a).

The individual projects will be described in the following:

Municipality Borlänge

Scope: Detailed planning of the neighborhood area “Jakopsgården”

The project “Jakopsgården” is a long-term development and transformation project including an analysis of the traffic structure, pedestrian and biking lanes, recreational areas, buildings and meeting places. It is carried out by the municipal housing company “AB Stora Tunabyggen”. Since about 40 percent of the area’s inhabitants are children and youth under the age of 19. It is the aim to get them actively involved in the planning process (Trafikverket 2011a).

The municipality Borlänge has chosen to cooperate with two school classes from “Nygårdsskolan” as well as with a teacher from the middle/high-school “Maserskolan”. The two fourth grade school classes are working on questions about the way to and from school and where children play. The teacher from “Maserskolan” is working with the grades seven until nine on question about the focus on where youngsters meet and move around in the neighborhood. The methods that were chosen are inter alia the dialogue with citizens, walking tours with children, model building, theater playing and a children’s impact analysis (ibidem).
Municipality Hällefors (in cooperation with Lindesberg, Ljusnarsberg, Nora)

Scope: School roots security improvement

The aim of this project is to analyze together with children from the Hällefors community their school roots and the places that they visit before and after school. Further it is a goal to identify methods that can be used within traffic planning in order to use them continuously.

The municipality of Hällefors is working on this project in cooperation with Bergslagens environmental – and housing department. The scope of children participating in this projects reaches from first until ninth grade students so methods need to be age appropriate. The methods that are used include dialogues in the classrooms, communication via WebPages, social forums and IT tools such as GIS (Trafikverket 2011).

Municipality Göteborg

Scope: Network of children in physical planning

The municipality of Göteborg is growing every year with about 2000 new apartments, most of them located in central areas. The project aims to get a dialogue with children about developments in order to get for instance useable templates for children’s impact statements. Creating tools and approved methods for the involvement of children in early stage planning processes is another aim. The children participate in varied projects within the different city areas. Their participation is connected to actual physical planning projects. The achievement of knowledge of tools or methods within children’s participation are continuous tested in the concrete projects. The goal is to spread children’s participation to urban planning projects that are not yet designated to it (Trafikverket 2011).

Municipality Trelleborg

Scope: design of a train station combined with a travelling center

The municipality Trelleborg is involving children in the concrete designing of the new train station and travelling center. It is a project where a lot of different opinions exist since it will have a big influence on the city center. The project aims to involve children from first grade to 12th grade to design an attractive and secure environment (Trafikverket 2011). Everyone is working on the
question how the way to and from school and to other important institutions in the neighborhood should be designed in order to be functional for children. The working focus, the questions the children are dealing with differs though depending on the age. For the older children questions about the bus system as well as places where they can meet their friends to “hang out” are of greater importance (Trafikverket 2011).

For the youngest participants around age five to six the process of involvement started with the task to create a book in which they documented during their summer break what they enjoy doing in their neighborhood. Where do they live and which ways do they use to get to places. The book is used as working material for the ongoing workshops. In one of those workshops the ferry station was visited and questions about how it works were answered. Back at school the children reflected which stores they had passed and why they might be located there. One task for them was then to work on the question how a station needs to look like, so that they are able to have orientation. “Imagine you have to pick up your grandmother from the train station by yourself, how do signs need to look like and where do they need to be placed for you to understand them?” (Trafikverket 2011)

The children are reached through the local schools, spare-time activity centers, the youth council of the municipality in form of workshops, seminars and study visits. For older children and young adults age 16-24 a webpage is used to involve them in the planning process (Trafikverket 2011).

In June 2012 the results from the projects will be presented by the children in a big exhibition in the central station (Trafikverket 2011).

Municipality Örebro

Scope: Planning for a new travelling center

The municipality Örebro has also chosen to involve children on the planning of a new travelling center. The focus in the participation is on older children. The children are in grades 9-12 in high school and come from classes with a focus on IT, designing, environment or entrepreneurship (Trafikverket 2011). The first group of children that had the chance to express their thoughts were student interns that were working with the project. The explanation of the structure and responsibilities within the municipality and within physical planning as well as a detailed education about the UN rights of the child were a focus to start the participation project with. One aim is to develop and get experience with methods involving children in planning processes. The object of planning is a travelling center from 1860 that devides the city into two parts which is problematic for the city and increases commuting. New solutions are of great interest. The students have started brainstorming for ideas and have documented interesting environments. So far a focus of the
children is on the development of bus shelters and trash cans use of IT technology. The students want to have contact with the authorities. They are triggered by the fact that the assignment is connected to the reality. Therefore it is important that the authorities are open for the influence of children (Trafikverket 2011g).

**Municipality Östersund**

**Scope: Detailed Plan of the neighborhood “Torvalla”**

The participation project in Östersund deals with the planning process for a detailed plan in the city district “Torvalla”. The planning area is located within a popular and highly frequented nature area. Parts of the area are planned for building development. The aim of the project is to save the important parts and aspects of the setting together with children. The adjacent schools and preschools will be involved with different activities in order to analyze where children play and what their ideas on a neighborhood are. Children of different ages are involved in the project and different methods are used such as painting, photomontage, drawing on air-photos or building small houses (Trafikverket 2011h)

The participation of the pre-school children was introduced by a walk through the forest. A mascot, the moose “Trampe”, became the central figure of the participation. “Trampe lives in the forest. How does he want to have it there?” With the help of maps and air-photos the work was preceded. 13 children were invited to present their ideas to architects and cartographers in the city hall.

![Figure 10: Pre-School students participating in Östersund](Trafikverket, 2011)

The access to participation and to brainstorm ideas for the area for the older children was approached through an historical perspective. “How did it look like here one hundred years ago and why was that so?” The participation process concentrated on the model building method. The models were presented to the public including the officials and politicians. The media was also involved which supported the attention the project got. The final aim is to create a detailed plan with
which the children are satisfied. The project is at the moment planning an evaluation day for the participation results (Trafikverket, 2011).

Summary/reflection

All municipalities focus in their participation project on different aspects within physical planning. The overall aim of the pilot project of promoting and developing methods for children’s participation is followed in all municipalities. Depending on the scope of planning the target groups are chosen. It is important that the children can rely to the topic. The more abstract a topic gets, the older should the involved children be. The group of children involved in the Örebro municipality for instance is limited to older children from around age of 14. That can be explained by the scope of the planning project. The project deals with a quite abstract topic. Ideas for improving an existing train station, developing ideas to connect two parts of the city with each other. The municipality of Trelleborg is also dealing with a similar topic but chose to involve children of a wider age range. Therefore they needed to choose very concrete questions the young children were able to rely to such as “Imagine you pick up your grandmother by yourself from the train station.” Reflecting those two projects to the ladder of participation of children one can put them on different steps. While the children in Örbero are reaching for the authorities by themselves and are initiating own projects the participation project in Trelleborg is totally guided and arranged by adults. That is no index for the quality or success of a participation project with children. I want to outline here, that for each project the degree of participation needs to be considered carefully. The higher the step does not mean the better the project is. The outcome is what matters and it can be better to decrease the independence of children if realizing that it would ask too much of them. When involving very small children the degree cannot be as high and adult support is needed as when working with youngsters. But as the examples show, that does not mean that it is not possible to reach good results with very playful methods. As described in part A it is only one aspect to classify projects and no statement about success.

The Intention of this chapter was to make participation of children more demonstrative. The projects showed the participation of children within detailed planning of neighborhoods (Borlänge and Östersund) and train stations/travelling centers (Örebro and Trelleborg) as well as within school root improvement (Hällefors) and a conceptual development of participation of children connected to concrete planning (Göteborg). But how does the situation look like in the Stockholm Metropolitan Area as the fastest growing region within Sweden? Are rights of children in planning integrated? The following chapter is the analysis of the survey that was carried out in context of this thesis paper.

In the following section the results of the survey will be presented. For the survey all 26 municipalities located in the Stockholm Metropolitan Area were requested to participate.

The intention of the survey is to show the status quo of the planning philosophy including children in the Stockholm Metropolitan Area. The results of this survey will be the foundation for the discussion about the development of the implementation of children’s rights in planning in Stockholm that will be presented in the following chapter. The structure of the questionnaire for the survey will be presented first before analyzing the results of the survey.

8.1 Structure of the questionnaire
The questions are structured as open questions. However, minor questions can mostly be answered by yes and no. The survey was designed to be filled out in a short period of time, approximately 15 minutes, to ensure that a lot of municipalities are able to participate, even with a limited amount of time. The aim of the survey is not to analyze qualitatively participation projects in the individual municipalities. Its aim is it to analyze the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of children’s rights in planning in each municipality to achieve an overview, a status quo of what is existing and how advanced the practice is.

It is divided into three topics: participation in general – child-friendly planning – participation of children.

Participation in general aims to find out about the overall attitude in the municipality to the topic of participation to see if there is participation, besides the formal legal obligations. Participation of children depends on the willingness to involve the public on an informal basis next to the juridical bindings in the planning and building law (plan- och bygglagen). This refers directly to planning theoretical attempts of communicative and collaborative planning as discussed in chapter 4 citizen participation in urban planning processes. It is the power of the planner to which extend he or she chooses to let the planning process be inclusionary or to exclude people.
Child-Friendly Planning is a topic to investigate whether the group of children is identified as a group in the municipality with special needs and if they are paying attention in the planning practice of the municipality. Child friendly planning is very manifold. Different aspects in traffic and urban planning need to be considered in order to create space that children can use securely and which they enjoy (see chapter 5.4 child friendliness in urban planning) As one key element of child-friendly planning the participation of children is listed, asking the experts for their age group to express their opinion. Watson (2003) argues that the planner in his professional role is “continuing to make assumptions about the values, beliefs, or rationalities of those for (or with) whom they plan, which frequently do not hold”. That leads to the final topic of the questionnaire. Participation of children asks about the experiences with participation and possible problems and opportunities with it to see on which development step the participation practice in the municipality is. In the case of no experience, it tries to identify the reasons for an exclusion of that group.

8.2 Analysis of the Survey

In the following section the results of the survey process regarding the implementation of children’s rights in the Stockholm Metropolitan Area, which took place from November 2010 to January 2011, will be presented. The analysis refers to the research question: How are participation rights of children implemented in the Stockholm Metropolitan Area? The analysis will be structured in three parts:

I. Analysis of each municipality

The results of the interview or the questionnaire will be analyzed in this part for each municipality.

II. Analysis by the survey topics: participation in general – child-friendly planning – participation of children

The main outcomes of all municipalities will be outlined in this part.

III. Survey Process

In this part the survey process will be analyzed, outlining challenges and opportunities.

In total nine of the 26 addressed municipalities participated. Three municipalities denied taking part in the survey. Reasons for the denial were personal shortage, or there was nobody who felt able to answer the questions. Note that the following analysis reflects only the statements of a limited amount of municipalities. The graph shows the municipalities whose answers are analyzed in the following:
8.2.1 Analysis by municipality

1. Municipality Stockholm

Citizen participation is a changing process in Stockholm. Planners are more interested in doing broader public dialogues, especially in the bigger projects. In smaller projects it is limited to the formal regulation. Elgström (12-07-2010) outlines that the budget is the main reason for the design of the participation process. Further Elgström does see space for developing the participation practice in the municipality. “So there is always this. If we don´t speak to the public early on, there is always a reaction, and even if we do it the people that did not participate or didn´t know about it will react, especially if we build in their backyard. […]Well, I think we are not good at it with the public participation but you can express your views if you want to. I mean it is not impossible to do it, it is just sometimes a bit difficult to do it […]There are changes coming. I think, we try to not use the standard methods, more informal methods such as meetings” (Elgström 12-07-2010).

Child-friendliness and the critical discussion of the children´s perspective in planning are an important topic in the planning practice of the municipality. “Kultur I ögonhöjd – för, med och av barn och unga” is a strategy plan for 2009-2012 for children´s culture in Stockholm which was
decided in 2009 of the city council. A special focus lays on the active participation of children in the municipality on having an influence and access to culture. The addressed companies and institutions are for the scale of spatial planning the district planning boards (stadsdelbyggnadsnämnden), property boards (fastighetsnämnden), traffic boards (trafiknämnden) as well as housing and school building companies (bostads- och skolbyggnadsbolg) (Stockholm Stad 2009: 7). The document is directly linked to the demands of the United Nations Convention on the Right of the Child. Next, this document, which is a general strategy for society planning, gives the urban planning department a more or less working paper, which analyses the child perspective for the different planning scales. It works as a guideline for professionals to create child-friendly plans. It shows possibilities for methods that can be used and lists reference projects done. Whenever a plan includes an area that is defined as “child intensive” space according to the paper, the planner needs to consider children and should follow the methods and steps suggested in the guideline. The existence and use of these two papers shows that children are given special attention within the planning process. They are identified as a group with needs differing to those of adults. The working paper, the guidelines of the urban planning department are a first step to institutionalize rights of children in urban planning in the municipality. It makes the practice independent from one individual planner and serves as a general guideline for all planners in Stockholm. Participation projects have been carried out in the past. They can be classified as project-assigned forms of child participation. They are mostly carried out by consultants that have experience in the field of child participation. The planner gets the report with the main outcomes of the project. Problems that have been faced are the lack of a budget for child participation as well as the acceptance of it among planners. Among politicians child-friendliness is of great importance. There have been projects that were given back to the planners, because they did not outline in their report the consideration of children’s issues. In conclusion, child-friendliness and the participation of children is of great importance in the municipality. The needed guidelines are as outlined existing. Child participation is supposed to be used on a regular basis in the municipality. In the case of clearly identified children’s places, such as playgrounds and schools, this is applicable. But children are not regularly considered when it comes to space that cannot exclusively be allocated with them, such as a city square (Elgström 12-07-2010).

2. Municipalitiv Norrtälje

Norrtälje outlines the importance of informal participation and the benefits that one reaches by having communicative planning. Mainly participation is carried out in the municipality through informing the public about ongoing planning: Newspaper ads, information on their websites, or information that can be collected in the city hall. Communication is carried out via telephone and writing contact. The focus lays on formal methods on participation. It is outlined that it is important
to have contact with people. “Informal participation has a role. Connections with the right people are beneficial” (Nitsch 01-05-2011). Norrtälje does not have its own criteria they are using for child-friendly planning or a specific document they are using. They relegate to general documents and the importance of considering the effects that has a plan on children. Due to the lack of activating participation of citizens in general, there have not been any projects with children in the municipality. Reasons for missing participation of children are the lack of knowledge of how to do it, resources and difficulties with efficiency in the planning process (time issues). Also the influence of children is not powerful enough compared to the interest of stakeholders such as economy and industry in the municipality. The overall attitude towards participation of children is positive, especially in the field of playground, park and “any other place that has an effect on their [children] daily life” (Nitsch 01-05-2011). The municipality is open for suggestion on how to approach the topic (ibidem).

3. Municipality Nacka

Citizen participation is carried out according to the law (PBL) with exhibitions and consultations. The consultation process goes beyond the formal regulations. Information is sent to stakeholders and citizens, and exhibitions are carried out for example in libraries. Additionally there is for all detailed planning processes an open house where citizens can state their opinions, ideas, and critiques directly.

There is no guideline for child friendly planning that is followed in the planning process.” Det finns inga rutiner/riktlinjer för att ordna särskilt barn-vänliga områden” (Jonasson 12-17-2010). Children’s interests are thought about, as are the interests of every other group. They have no special status in the planning process for the municipality, and it is expected that they give their opinions such as adults to the planning process. “Barn har ingen särställning i planprocessen utan kan precis som alla medborgare skicka in synpunkter på ett planförslag, det förekommer” (Jonasson 12-17-2010).

However, there is recently an initiative to engage children in their teens in the influence in the new general plan in Nacka.

There have not been any projects with children in the municipality. Reasons for the lack of a specific participation of children are time and resources. The focus of planning in Nacka lays on the improvement of infrastructure. It is outlined that for each planning, the municipality has a high quality demand, and that for each project, different planning experts are working on the topic so that there is rarely ever a poor result. Further, it is pointed out that this does not mean that there is no room for improvement of the planning process and for the influence of children’s perspectives. “I Nacka har vi ganska höga kvalitetskrav och många sakområdesexperter representerade i projektten,
så jag tror sällan det blir dålig kvalitet. Det betyder dock inte att vi kan bli bättre och lära oss av barns perspektiv” (Jonasson 12-17-2010).

4. Municipality Huddinge

Huddinge tries to inform and listen to the inhabitants through different media. Their vision of participation shows that it is an important part of their planning work, and they are trying to include inhabitants and respect the right of different opinions and views. “Furthermore Huddinge has a vision of PARTICIPATION (DELAKTIGHET) which means the right to be informed, the right to give different points of view and the responsibility to accept and respect other opinions” (Andersson 01-04-2011).

A checklist for child-friendly planning was developed in the planning department in Huddinge. The developed checklist reflects directly demands of the UN Rights of the Child. The group is taken seriously, and planning is analyzed on the effects on that group in the community. The checklist also includes the section that children get the opportunity to express their thoughts. “Har barns och ungdomar fått möjlighet att uttrycka sin mening?” (Andersson 01-04-2011).

Having this checklist it is not surprising that the municipality has broad experience with participation projects with children in different planning fields. “Planning of new schools, kindergartens, traffic safety planning around schools, planning and implementation of activity parks and focus-groups (incl. youngsters) in the comprehensive planning (Flemingsberg)” (Andersson 01-04-2011). It shows that the checklist is in use. The projects can be classified as project-assigned forms of participation.

Problems occur in the realization of participation. Specifically addressing children is stated as a problem. There are no specially skilled moderators involved in the projects. There is also no evaluation tool used to analyze a proceeded project. Further the municipality is not involved in any kind of exchange about the participation of children (Andersson 01-04-2011). A threat is that participation is named to not have a good reputation in the municipality. This could be directly linked to the missing transparency of the quality of the participation project. Huddinge is describing their work in the field of participation with children to be on an experimental basis with an aim to expand to a regular basis, which reflects their operational methods in the municipality to include the UN Rights of the Child (Andersson 01-04-2011).

5. Municipality Haninge

Haninge is very critical with their citizen participation practice. The practice is followed according to the law. But they outline that the law is only saying that you have to inform citizens and have to give
them opportunity to express their thoughts. That is not enough for the municipality. Therefore they are working right now on a strategy to develop new informal channels for the participation of citizens. They want to have a more dialogue oriented practice. “There is so much to do in that area. And I think it is not even half used, I would say” (Schriever-Abeln 24.01.2011) The initiation for the rethinking of the citizen participation practice were projects with children in a workshop designed process. That was the first time informal practice in the municipality was used. The municipality has no special guidelines for child-friendly planning, but the involvement of children in general has a long history in the municipality. Haninge had the first youth council in Sweden, formed in 1997, which was a direct implementation of the UN Rights of the Child. So far the communication between the planning department and the youth council has not been used so much. “When it comes to planning and plans, I think to involve children is not that easy. You can´t just send the plans and all the documents to them. And say. Ok now you have to review that. It is not working. You need to work with them because it is usually very complex. So even if you would send all the plans to the youth council, I am not sure if they would be able to read all of them” (Schriever-Abeln 24.01.2011). A youth council is a representative form of child participation while the projects of the urban planning department would be classified as project-assigned participation (see chapter 6.2.1 forms of child participation). The statement of Schriever-Abeln describes the difficulties with child participation and at the same time it expresses the awareness them, the need for own methods. It shows further that there is a willingness to have “real participation” and not a participation practice that one would classify as tokenism (see chapter 6.2.2 Degrees of children’s participation). The projects that have been carried out were on the level of a development plan, strategies for an area, a detailed plan for a school yard, as well as a bicycle plan.

Since these were the first projects for the municipality, the way of approaching them was difficult in the beginning. Research and a study visit to meet experienced professionals in the field of children’s
participation were carried out. Further, it was in the beginning difficult to find teachers that felt they could fit in the projects into their curriculum. The support and reactions from the politicians have been very good from the beginning. They really want children to participate in Haninge. It is included in the overall goals of the municipalities. In conclusion, although participation of children in the planning sector is new in Haninge the commitment and the seriousness is given. The projects were evaluated for improvement for the next time. They are working on a program to improve informal channels for participation of citizens, and they want to create a key book for participation, which would allow everybody that wants to participate with children easy access to the topic (Schriever-Abeln 24.01.2011). That is the first step to institutionalize a practice – creating a handbook/instructions for everybody to use it, making the practice independently from a person.

6. Municipality Ekerö

Participation in general is actively sought by talking to affected parties early in the planning processes. Informal planning is carried out. There is a willingness to address people for participation in the context of calling on someone. “We try to meet people informal and as early in the process as possible” (Oscarsson 01-04-2011).

Child-friendly issues in planning are considered and are stated clearly as part of their comprehensive planning. Especially, considering children in traffic planning and the importance of meeting areas for children to counteract isolation are used. “It is important to children as far as possible can take themselves to the school through traffic safe pedestrian and bicycle paths. [...] Children and youth need, like adults, places to meet. This can occur spontaneously outdoors in natural venues, the sports facilities, stables, etc. but there is also a need for organized leisure in different parts of the municipality” (Oscarsson 01-04-2011). The awareness of children as a group with own needs is given. The outlining of children in traffic but also the importance of the neighborhood for children to meet refers directly back to part A of this thesis. Chapter 5 “children in the urban environment” analyzes the role of the urban environment on the child.

The municipality Ekerö has no experience with the participation of children. There have not been any projects. But the awareness that participation of children in planning exists is given. They seem to be open to child participation and are trying to involve children in consultation processes. The responsibility for their attendance is given to the parents though. “Yes, we try to get the parents to involve their children in the consultation process; we don’t know yet how it will turn out” (Oscarsson 01-04-2011).

7. Municipality Upplands-Bro
The municipality is satisfied with their planning practice. Informal methods of participation are used. There are no guidelines existing for child-friendly planning, but the consequences of planning for children are discussed. “General guidelines and in every decision we analyze consequences from a child's point of view” (Grind 12-02-2010). There has been one project in the municipality where children were involved, but in general the participation of children does not play a role in the municipality. The awareness that participation of children in urban planning exists and is practiced is given. The reason stated for not including children in the planning process in the municipality is the lack of knowledge how to communicate a planning project with children. “We are not used in communicating an urban planning project with children” (Grind 12-02-2010). The municipality quotes to be limited open to the participation of children. There is willingness for certain projects but not in general, but so far there are no concrete plans for doing it in a specific project in the future (Grind 12-02-2010).

8. Municipality Upplands Väsby

Participation of citizens is carried out through online discussion forums with interested citizens. There are no guidelines for child-friendly planning in Upplands Väsby. They refer back to general Swedish regulations. “Planning in Sweden should always describe consequences of planning for children and discuss ways of improving the situation for children in the built environment” (Fredrik 12-22-2010) Children can participate as well in the charrette meetings which older students do according to the Fredrik (12-22-2010). There have not been any specific projects, but children have been asked about topics in the municipality such as their opinion on building new schools, favourite and less favourite spots, secure and insecure areas in the municipality. The municipality is focusing on their charrette meetings for the participation of citizens. There are no special methods used for children. They can participate in the charrette meetings like other citizens. “I think that our forums for discussion are continuously improving, and thus generating more and more interest among the citizens, children among them” (Fredrik 12-22-2010).

Charrette meetings belong not to the typical forms of child participation (representative, project-assigned, open forms see chapter 6.2.1 ) especially when carried out together with adults. They require high skills in expressing oneself verbally which excludes a high amount of children, especially younger children.

9. Municipality Vaxholm

Citizen participation is carried out with formal and informal methods. Citizens make active use of their right to participate and are communicating their concerns about ongoing planning. There are no
guidelines for child-friendly planning in the municipality. There has been a small attempt towards participation of children in the municipality. Recently, a sports arena was planned close to a school where the student council was addressed directly and thereby engaged to participate. But in general the municipality has no participation practices for children. It is stated that the reasons for the lack are a combination of a small organization, time, and resources. They also list the topic needs staff that is committed to it. “Since we have a small organization and we don’t have a specific organization for these kinds of projects it is difficult to find the time and resources. It is also necessary with engaged staff that are interested in these types of projects” (Dunker 01-10-2011).

In general it is stated that most of the staff agrees the topic of children in planning is important. They hope to include children in the planning process of their new comprehensive planning (Dunker 01-10-2011).

8.2.2 Analysis by the survey topics: participation in general – child-friendly planning – participation of children

Topic participation in general

Participation of stakeholders and the public is a required step within the planning process in Sweden. Citizens must not only be informed but also given the opportunity to express their opinion. All municipalities are open-minded to the idea of early developmental participation of inhabitants, and they also possess more than the standard formal forms of communication to inform their citizens. This also includes participation in the form of telephone contact, online forums, meetings and consultations. There are no municipality’s referring to continuous dialogue oriented methods such as workshops with citizens. No municipality names a practice where they initiate citizens (besides children) to participate. One municipality, (Haninge) outlines a continuous dialogue practice as their goal and is currently developing a guideline how to approach different participation forms.

Child-friendly planning

The approach of child-friendly planning differs a lot among the municipalities. One municipality, (Huddinge) has developed a checklist that they follow to ensure child-friendliness in their planning. One municipality, (Stockholm) has guidelines that are supposed to be followed for specific areas. A third municipality, (Ekerö) states general conditions that need to be considered. The other six municipalities have no special guidelines or checklists other than considering children such as every other group in their planning. That leads to the risk of forgetting about children and their diverse use and needs in the urban environment compared to adults. The awareness of children as a citizen group with own needs is the starting point for creating child-friendly space.
Participation of children

Two municipalities (Upplands Bro, Vaxholm) have had their first initial attempts to include children in their planning, but there is no real experience in their work with children. Children’s participation is no practice in their planning process. Three municipalities (Norrköping, Nacka, Ekerö,) state no experience regarding the involvement of children in spatial planning. Children’s participation has no practice in their planning work agenda.

Reasons listed for the lack of children’s participation or problems with it:

- No time to include it in the planning process (4 times listed)
- Resources: lacking budget and/or personnel shortage (3 times listed)
- No knowledge about how to do it (2 times listed)
- Influence of children is not powerful enough to the demands of economy and industry
- Indirect named: The assumption that children cannot contribute useful ideas to the planning process than educated planners

All of the municipalities are aware of the group of children, as a group with needs differing to the one of adults. All municipalities state that they are open for participation with children.

In one municipality (Upplands-Väsby), older children are regularly participating in charrette meetings together with adults, and have been asked to provide their opinions to general questions in the municipality. But there are not any particular type of children’s participation projects. The lack of children’s rights to participate, to express their opinion on urban development concerning their matters, reflects the concerns of UNICEF Sweden with the juridical status of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (see chapter 7.1 Swedish regulations for child participation). Although Sweden has committed to follow the convention the praxis shows that the articles are not continuous followed. Upgrading the convention to Swedish law would support the rights of children. “Trots att Sverige har förbundit sig att följa barnkonventionen finns det idag brister i både vår lagstiftning och praxis. Om barnkonventionen gäldde som lag skulle fler svenska lagar och bestämmelser som rör barn tas på större allvar och gälla alla barn i Sverige” (UNICEF Sweden 2012).

Three municipalities (Stockholm, Huddinge, Haninge,) have had more than one participation project with children. This practice is a part of their planning work. The experiences in their work differ.

7 method of organizing thoughts from experts and the users into a structured medium
Stockholm has had a long history in their work with children and there are guidelines for all planners in the municipality existing how to proceed when having a “child-intensive space” in their plan. This is a step towards institutionalizing rights of children in the municipality, to make the practice independent from one individual planner by creating guidelines for all planners in a municipality how to include children in the planning process. However, it is still up to the planner to which extends he or she follows those guidelines in Stockholm. Huddinge is struggling with the general acceptance of participation in their municipality reflecting the discussion of planning theory and the inclusion and exclusion of stakeholders as discussed in chapter 4 citizen participation urban planning processes. But there have been various projects with children and also the created guidelines for considering children underline the importance that is given to children in the municipality. Haninge has just recently started including children in urban planning and the outcome of the projects has been very positive. They have documented their work to spread it to other interested municipalities (Borup et al w.y.). Further, the projects have been an initiator to rethink the general citizen participation practice in the municipality. That is one side effect of benefits from children’s participation as described in chapter 6.3 benefits from children’s participation the reactivation of adults. Haninge wants to create an easy-to-use handbook for all planners that want to work with the topic to have a first guideline how it is possible to proceed.

Problems listed when planning or implementing childhood involvement include:

- Lack of knowledge about how to initiate it
- Resources: budget
- Addressing of children: For example, finding schools that are willing to participate in order to activate/ grant access for children (2 times named)
- Indirect named: The assumption that children cannot contribute useful ideas to the planning process rather than educated planners
- A general lack of acceptance of participation within the municipality

Further the approach of children’s participation differs among the municipalities. One municipality (Stockholm) is mostly hiring experienced consultants to carry out projects with children when the need for it is analyzed. In the other two municipalities (Huddinge, Haninge), planners themselves have been carrying out the projects.

8.2.3 Survey process

Many of the 26 municipalities did not participate in the survey. Of the 26 municipalities, 17 of them did not fill out the survey. Only three of those 17 municipalities actually denied taking part. The others did not answer at all. Why do professionals not answer? Different explanations can be named that could have been a reason for the non-participation in the survey:

- Time issues
- Denial to take part in student surveys in general
- Survey not available in the mother tongue (although it was also available to fill out in Swedish)
- The wrong addresses of people within each municipality, and a lack of knowledge of the person addressed whom would have the ability to properly answer the questions of the survey
- Complete lack of knowledge about the topic of children’s participation within planning

These could be some of the reasons why the municipalities did not participate. Though the last two reasons already provide an insight to the following discussion in the next chapter. The topic of children’s participation still seems to be new for a lot of planners. It is possible that some of the municipalities that did not participate simply have not heard about the existence of it, and refusing to answer can be an easier way rather than admitting that one does not have children’s participation in their planning practice.

8.2.4 Intermediate Result

The research question throughout the thesis has been, how participation rights of children in spatial planning are implemented in the Stockholm Metropolitan Area. The amount of municipalities which do not practice child participation in their spatial planning process is dominating in the Stockholm Metropolitan Area. Especially when integrating the number of municipalities that did not take part in the survey and following the hypothesis that a part of them might not have heard about the topic.

Also the fact that the Swedish Housing Department and Traffic Department are doing a Pilot Project to promote child participation in planning as described in chapter 7.2. Current examples of participation projects with children in Sweden shows that the topic is on an experimental basis in Sweden and only carried out by view municipalities. That leads to the result, that children’s rights in participation are very little implemented in the Stockholm Metropolitan Area. That is conform with the concerns of UNICEF Sweden that in practice the UN Convention of the Child are not always
followed equally for all children (see chapter 7.1 Swedish regulations for child participation). However, there are also municipalities in the Stockholm Metropolitan Area that have had more than one project with children. The practice is part of their planning work. There are guidelines existing how to proceed when realizing that children could be impacted by the planning (Stockholm). There were also guidelines developed for creating child friendly space including that children have to express their opinion (Huddinge). There is also documented work of participation projects with children in Haninge published to inform other professionals. The attempts of how they carry out child participation are different. While in Stockholm mostly experienced consultants are hired to give a report to the planner, do the planners in Huddinge and Haninge carry out the projects themselves.

The most named reasons for a lack of child participation in the municipalities are time, budget and knowledge about how to do it. Also the municipalities that have had participation of children name financial problems and the lack of knowledge how to do it next to the problem of addressing children for the projects.

Following up, the goal of the discussion is to find strategies and key elements for encouraging children’s participation in spatial planning in the Stockholm Metropolitan Area.

9. Discussion

The analysis has shown that 3 of the 9 municipalities that participated in the survey have carried out projects especially designed for children. The other municipalities do not carry children’s participation out in their planning practice. Seventeen municipalities did not participate leaving their practice towards the participation of children in spatial development open. The following section will discuss the results of the thesis so far, outlining strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in form of a SWOT-Analysis. In the next step key factors for encouraging children’s participation in planning in the Stockholm region will be highlighted. They refer directly back to the reasons listed for a lack of or problems with child participation in planning and the prior outlined SWOT-Analysis. The outlined strategies as well as the key factors provide for the aim of the thesis to encourage rights of children in the research area.

(Internal origin) Strengths of the implementation of children’s rights in planning in the Stockholm Metropolitan Area

- There are municipalities that have experience with children’s participation projects in planning.
• There are documents in the Stockholm Metropolitan Area about child participation / strategies published

• Different municipalities use different ways of approaching the topic of child participation creating an experience pool for different administration needs

• All municipalities state that they are open for participation with children in planning.

(Internal origin) Weaknesses of the implementation of children’s rights in planning in the Stockholm Metropolitan Area

• There are municipalities stating no experience regarding the involvement of children in spatial planning. Children’s participation has no practice in their planning work agenda.

• There are no resources in the planning process assigned for child participation.

• No practice of workshop oriented participation with citizens in planning

• There are municipalities that have no guidelines or checklists for child-friendly planning.

(External origin) Opportunities of the implementation of children’s rights in planning in the Stockholm Metropolitan Area

• There are professionals who are enthusiastic about child participation in planning.

• Various specific methods for child participation exist and the regulatory framework is given.

• A network of professionals exists in Sweden who are specialized in child participation in the building environment.

• The Swedish Traffic Department (Traffikverket) and the Swedish Housing Department (Boverket) are currently carrying out a pilot project to promote the influence of children in the municipality within physical planning.

(External origin) Threats of the implementation of children’s rights in planning in the Stockholm Metropolitan Area

• There are professionals who assume that children cannot contribute useful ideas to the planning process rather than educated planners.

• Child participation is a time consuming practice.
• Child participation requires money and resources.

• Planners need skills to carry out the praxis which are usually not included in their planning education.

Strength-Opportunities-Combination:

It is a strength for the implementation of children’s rights in planning in the Stockholm Metropolitan Area that there are municipalities that have had experience with children’s participation projects. There are also documents in the Stockholm Metropolitan Area about child participation such as published strategies. All municipalities state that they are open for participation with children in planning as well and the different municipalities carrying out child participation use different ways of approaching the topic creating an experience pool for different administration needs.

Opportunities are that there are professionals who are enthusiastic about child participation in planning in the research area. Further there is the Swedish Traffic Department (Traffikverket) and the Swedish Housing Department (Boverket) that are currently carrying out a pilot project to promote the influence of children in the municipality within physical planning.

How can one use the strengths of the implementation of the practice? Haninge has documented their projects with children in a booklet. Publications like that help interested planners to get an idea of how participation of children might look. It helps to orient a planner who is approaching the practice for the first time and in general to get inspiration and increase knowledge about the topic. The spatial planners in Haninge visited experienced architects in the field of child participation in planning in Malmö and Copenhagen to get information, recommendations and guidelines about what is possible to do with children and what needs to be thought about. Thereby the closeness of the municipalities in the Stockholm Metropolitan Area can be seen as a strength, too. Short distances for exchange and study visits and similar inhabitant structures and problems means that the municipalities can serve as role models for one another. What is needed are more publications about children in planning and an awareness of children as citizens with their own needs and opinions. The final report of the pilot project of the Swedish Housing and the Swedish Traffic Department will create national guidelines. This is the starting point for creating child-friendly space and the implementation of a planning practice with children.

In the three municipalities surveyed where the involvement of children belongs to their planning practice, the approach differs. In Stockholm consultants are hired to do the projects. Haninge and
Huddinge rely on their own resources, planners who acquired the needed skills through independent research and study visits. The enthusiastic planners are existing which can spread the practice to other municipalities. Further, it is a strength that all municipalities state that they are open for child participation in planning even if they also have concerns. Negative responses would indicate that the planners are not open to listen at all to the topic. However, a constriction of the statements of the municipalities is that it would reflect a very undemocratic thinking if a general rejection of child participation is stated. So the strength of being really open for the practice might be just in some municipalities given. However, for those municipalities applies that there are examples in the neighbor municipalities that carry out the practice, that like to inform about it and that have published material about how to do it.

A participation project with children can often be an initiator for rethinking the citizen participation practice in a municipality in general. The interviewed planners in Haninge stated that the project with children lead to the formation of a project group to develop new channels for citizen participation. A citizen participation philosophy that uses innovative methods and supports continuous dialogue methods will most likely also be very open to include children in participation processes.

Strength-Opportunities-Strategies: (1) Experienced municipalities and enthusiastic planners spread their examples and knowledge about participation of children in planning to inexperienced municipalities

(2) Municipalities carrying out the practice publish their working examples to increase the visibility of child participation in planning and to create illustrative material for other interested municipalities.

**Strength-Threats Combination:**

Threats for the implementation of children’s rights in planning in the Stockholm Metropolitan Area are the common prejudice that professionals assume that children cannot contribute useful ideas to the planning process rather than skilled planners. Prejudices about child participation in general can be reduced by showing successful examples. The municipalities that work with child participation can contribute with their publications and seminars to abolish those prejudices. A further threat for the working practice is that child participation is time consuming. A well-structured child participation project needs time in advance to be planned and carried out. The publications about child participation offer advice about how to integrate it in the planning process. Successful examples function as well in this case for the appreciation of the investment of time in this field. If planners are aware of the importance of the urban environment on the growing up of children and have successful practice as examples in their professional environment, the willingness to invest resources
for child participation in planning will increase. So the budgeting of child participation depends on the acceptance of the topic. If it is seen as necessary and useful, it will be included.

The knowledge of how to include children in spatial planning process is usually not a part of the university level planning education. Although there have been changes in planning theory discussions and the topic of communicative planning is nowadays included in most curriculums, there is usually a lack of the practical skills. Especially planners that received their education when planning theory was still a clear top-down approach will lack skills on how to include children with innovative methods. Planners have to learn from practice examples and should not to be afraid of trying new practices. Not only the publications, but also personal contacts with the municipalities that are carrying out child participation help to begin participation programs. The fact that there are different ways of treating the topic of the involvement of children can support municipalities in the implementation of children’s rights in planning. Perhaps it is a good start for a municipality where planners have no skills and neither time nor willingness to work out the needed skills themselves to hire an experienced consultant who carries out the child participation or who supports the planners in the project.

Strength-Threats Strategies: (1) Increasing the acceptance of child participation in planning to raise the willingness to invest resources.

(2) Hiring experienced consultants to initiate child participation in planning

**Weaknesses – Opportunity Combination**

There are municipalities stating no experience regarding the involvement of children in spatial planning. Children’s participation has no practice in their planning work agenda. But there is on the other hand the regulatory framework for carrying out child participation. Methods for successful projects exist. Furthermore there are planning professionals who are enthusiastic about the topic of the involvement of children in the building environment in the Stockholm Metropolitan Area. Some of them are communicating via an e-mail network about current happenings within the field in Sweden. To increase acceptance, make the topic more public and known and also improve the quality, the Swedish Traffic Department (Trafikverket) and the Swedish Housing Department (Boverket) are currently carrying out a pilot project to promote the influence of children in the municipality within physical planning. That also shows that national departments want to include the practice in the planning work in Sweden. Having these opportunities in mind the weakness of no
resources in the planning process assigned for child participation will be alleviated once the acceptance increases through the named opportunities.

Weakness-Oppportunity Strategies: (1) Supporting the exchange of enthusiastic and experienced professionals to increase the quality of methods and projects to activate municipalities to approach child participation in planning.

(2) Using international guidelines and national pilot projects to increase the acceptance and willingness to spend resources for child participation in planning.

**Weaknesses-Threats Combination**

Where are the threats of the implementation of children’s rights in planning in the Stockholm Metropolitan Area? There are municipalities stating no experience regarding the involvement of children in spatial planning. Children’s participation has no practice in their planning work agenda. And there are also no resources in the planning process assigned for child participation. These threats combined with prejudices that children cannot contribute useful ideas to the planning process rather than educated planners as well as that child participation is time consuming, costs money and resources and that planners need skills to carry out the praxis which are usually not included in their planning education is a big threat for the implementation of children’s rights in planning in the Stockholm Metropolitan Area. It would be easier to forget about the practice and hold on to old patterns. To approach this threat it is important that municipalities and professionals working with the topic of child participation in planning further promote their practice by trying to continuously optimize their projects and methods. It is a practice that needs enthusiastic professionals to get started in a municipality. They have to work on alleviating prejudices, make their work visible and include children’s participation into the best case guidelines, documents and instruments, so that the practice not only depends on them but achieves an ongoing practice independent of a person. In some cases this will be a single combat. International regulations such as the *UN Convention of the Rights of the Child* and national programs like the pilot project of Swedish Traffic Department (Traffikverket) and the Swedish Housing Department (Boverket) on child influence in spatial planning are supporting planners on their way to implementing children’s rights in planning and are needed as legitimation for integrating the practice in their municipalities.

**Weakness-Threats Strategy:** (1) Decreasing the power of criticism and lethargy towards changes in planning practice through enthusiastic professionals of child participation in planning and legitimation through international and national guidance.
Key Factors for encouraging children’s participation in planning in the Stockholm Metropolitan Area

Combining the strategies of the SWOT analysis and referring back to the results of the analysis of the survey, the main key factors for encouraging the implementation of children’s rights in planning will be outlined in the following:

- **Key factor: Making child participation in planning more visible.**

  Only by increasing the visibility of child participation in planning the acceptance and appreciation for the topic will grow. Therefore it is important that municipalities carrying out the practice document and publish their work, organize exhibitions and give presentations about their projects.

- **Key factor: Creating guidelines and easy-to-use handbooks with methods for child participation**

  Especially when approaching the practice for the first time it can be hard to identify which methods could be most efficient for the target group and the aim of the project. Handbooks decrease the fear of beginning and carrying out child participation. Publications help to increase the scientific exchange and significance of child participation in spatial planning.

- **Key Factor: Making child participation independent from a planning professional in a municipality**

  Planning professionals enthusiastic about child participation are the ones carrying out and promoting the topic in their municipalities. It can often be a single combat against prejudices of colleagues and the fear to try out something one has no knowledge about. It is important that the practice in a municipality does not only depend on one single person. To assure the participation of children in planning guidelines and instruments are needed to create an obligation for it for all planners in a municipality. In the city district “Mitte” in Berlin /Germany, enthusiastic planners and pedagogues have created a working agreement between the planning and the youth department to ensure that all upcoming urban development projects are discussed to decide together where child participation is necessary. Thereby, the decision whether to include children falls no longer to the responsibility of one or a project group of planners but is a decision of two departments. The instrument has created a child participation practice on a regular basis in the district (Oestreich 2010).

- **Key Factor: Discussion of child participation and methods in planning education**

  The topic of inclusion and exclusion and the power of the planner in an urban development process is usually part of the planning theory curriculum in planning education. In this context is also
important to show alternatives and methods to include marginal groups in the participation practice. It is of importance for the implementation of children’s rights in the planning process that planners become educated about the topic and accept it as a normal practice. Qualifications for planners that are working or want to work with children need to be offered to improve the quality and spread the practice.

- **Key Factor: Exchange of professionals dealing with child participation in planning**

A further step for improving the quality and spreading the topic is that there are networks where professionals have room for discussion and exchange of experience. It may help planners that want to start the practice in their municipality to find support from other professionals.

- **Key Factor: National guidelines and support for municipalities carrying out child participation**

National guidelines or programs help to implement the practice of child participation in municipalities. It is important that the influence of children in the urban development is articulated by national departments to signal that the practice is nationally promoted. It serves as legitimization and help to carry out the practice in the municipality.
10. Conclusion

In this day and age, citizen participation is a common praxis in urban planning from a widespread European perspective. Such as every other citizen children have the right\(^8\) to contribute their requests to the planning. But children are a group that does not feel addressed through these participation methods designed for grown-ups in an adult atmosphere. It is the power of the planner to include or exclude children. The urban environment has an impact on the growing up of children. In the past, children would spend most of their time outside in the public space on streets, city squares and backyards. This was until approximately the 1960s when life and socialization were moved to specialized places for children, ‘children’s places’. Children are increasingly growing up in a living space that is put together out of many islands / pieces in the urban space – playground, school, daycare, spare-time activity centers, shopping malls, friend’s apartments - instead of a connected living space conformable with their physical and psychological abilities. Urban planning can directly influence the conditions for playing and the mobility of children in public space. Child-friendly urban planning serves as a key in order to improve the conditions for the growing up of children. One necessary element is the inclusion of children within the discussion about child friendly planning. In 1990, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child came into force, declaring that state parties shall assure the child to express his or her own view. Different forms of participation have evolved since then. For urban planning participation, it is classified in project-assigned, representative and open forms. Also the degree to which the projects can be classified is according to the intensity of participation level of children, reaching from manipulation as non-participation to assigned but informed as the first step of real participation until the step of child-initiated, shared decisions with adults. One must note that every project depends on the aim (f.ex. focus of the study), the target group (the children), and other general conditions (f. ex. budget, time) and therefore for every project a different degree and format of participation is the most suitable and successful resolution. For urban planning child participation yields various benefits. The planner can reach an increase of the efficiency of planning, an implementation of international concepts and agreements, the location factor child friendliness can be important, it strengthens the identification with space, promotes integration and can even lead to a (re-)activation of adults for participation in the municipality. In Sweden there is currently an ongoing pilot project to promote children’s participation in urban planning within municipalities. There is no regulation in the Swedish constitution that aims to ensure that only children are influential in the municipality planning process.

\(^8\) Stating countries in which participation of citizens is formalized in the planning and building law
It has been the aim of this thesis to find out how participation rights of children in spatial planning are implemented in the Stockholm Metropolitan Area. Therefore, a survey was developed and all 26 municipalities lying in the area were addressed. Nine municipalities took part in the survey.

Answering the research question really shortly, the result is that participation rights of children in spatial planning are very little implemented in the Stockholm region. Hence, the UN Convention of the Child concerning child participation is not followed all municipalities. That is surprising in the sense that democratic thinking and child-friendly general conditions are of high importance in Sweden. Only three municipalities answered that child participation is part of their planning practice. Stockholm, Huddinge, and Haninge have had more than one participation project with children. The inclusion of children is a part of their planning work. The projects are carried out by the planners of the municipalities or hired consultants. Different documents, guidelines for child-friendliness, documented projects with children in urban planning as well as guidelines how and when children should be included in the planning process exist in the research area. The guidelines are indicators that the participation of children is aimed to be on a regular basis. However, it lays in the power of the planner how child issues are implemented in the planning process. There is no policy binding existing in the municipalities nor in Swedish law. The most named reasons for a lack of child participation in the municipalities are time, budget and knowledge about how to do it. To promote children’s participation in the Stockholm Metropolitan Area strategies were developed through a SWOT Analysis.

These strategies lead to the development of key factors for the promotion of children’s participation in urban planning in the research area. These strategies and key factors give credit to the aim of the thesis to serve as a document for the promotion of child participation in spatial planning in the Stockholm Metropolitan Area.

The promotion of child participation in spatial planning needs enthusiastic professionals who receive back up through legislation and financial support to spread the ideology and rights of children to the planning profession. Children depend on adults who activate them for spatial planning projects. Although the implementation of children´s rights in planning in the Stockholm Metropolitan Area is not spread to all municipalities the analysis has shown that those enthusiastic planning professionals working with children’s participation in their planning processes exist in the region. They create a lot of potential for the spread of the planning practice in the future. The future will also show how the results of the Pilot Project of the Swedish Housing and the Swedish Traffic Department will bring changes to the planning processes in the municipalities. One can hope that more planners will include children in their projects, using the benefits of child participation and provide for the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and a democratic society.
Outlook participation of children in spatial development

Participation of children is a best practice example that boundaries in the group of people who are able to participate basically do not exist. No educational level is necessary if the planner is open to choose the right method which allows that everybody can express their ideas. That way planners can reach the goal to design space that matches the needs of the future users. What can planners learn from the example of participation of children? The various methods that are used for children function for other population groups as well. In a lot of cases these methods are more creative and interactive than standard methods used in the participation with adults. These “original” adult methods usually attract only a specific target group because they base on a certain intellectual level and educational skills. Thus, the outcome is that certain groups get excluded automatically due to the chosen method. Especially in planning cases where the educational level of the population is lower participation of inhabitants is often excluded with the argumentation that the people are simply not able to contribute to the planning work. Lacking reading, writing, argumentation skills are listed for the exclusion. I state that this argument is simply wrong. Even day care children can already participate using for example the method of building models of their ideas with different materials. Such as children population groups that are not used to participate need to be encouraged to call for their rights on the one hand and on the other hand planners need to be open for participation.

I state that to convince planners that participation is an important issue in planning can still be a hard task in practice, even harder it appears with children and other minority groups. Planners need to be brave enough to give other people power in the planning process in order to achieve an equal opportunity planning result.
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Appendix

1. Municipality: Stockholm

Personal Interview with Ludvig Elgström

December 7\textsuperscript{th}, 2010

Description of position: Ludvig Elgström works as a comprehensive planner for the Stockholm municipality. His focus is on manifold things but one is social questions in a broad general sense with the child perspective as one general question he (tends) to focus on. Summarized: Social aspects in comprehensive planning. His main work right now is dealing with applying the strategy plan “Kultur I ögonhöjd – för med och av barn och unga” which is a strategy for the whole Stockholm and all its different parts from schools up to physical planning and traffic planning. This the main strategy document concerning children in Stockholm. The document includes guidelines and definitions about what children’s culture and children’s needs in public spaces are and they work on applying this.

How do you analyze children’s needs?

Before that document there was “barnperspektivet i planeringen” a document that was done before I came here. It’s a document about how to apply the children’s perspective in physical planning. It is many quite similar in the broad sense. Both take its foundation from the UN child convention.

Was there a participation done to analyze their needs in the city?

I don’t know if there was a participation done for the documents. But as the yellow document the “kultur I ögonhöjd” it is basically the same thing as the “barnperspektivet i planerigen” just in a more general perspective. What we are trying to do at the moment is to make the document more popular, a more acknowledged question in the planning and give it more attention in the general sense.

Presentation of “barnperpektivet i planeringen”:

Basically it shows different orders of how to deal with planning for children and how to acknowledge children’s rights and children’s needs in the public space and in planning. So there are different definition of the areas where special attention needs to be taken. We call those places child intensive place. For instance a place next to a school, play areas, places where you know that there are a lot of
children even if it is not meant to be a place for children. If you have one of these in your plan you have to take special attention to children in your plan.

**How do ensure that planners are doing it?**

That is up to them if they are doing it.

The rest of the document is basically how you do mapping with children.

**Is there anything about participation in this paper?**

Sure, it is. It says here: It is important to inform children and youth and catch their ideas about the proposition. So that is basically the kind of vague formulation. If you plan for a new school, you will most likely do this...if you plan for a playground you will do this. It’s always about money. We get paid to doing this. I mean we take a fee from the constructor and they pay for the whole planning process so the whole thing goes back to the construction agency.

**So there is no budget for doing a children’s participation?**

No, not here. We say we need this and this. And then it is a negotiation with the construction agency about what to pay about what is necessary.

In the “Kultur I ögonhöjd” there is more attention to actually talking to children.

**How would you describe in general the participation practice of citizens in Stockholm? Especially in the perspective of the informal participation.**

Well, it’s a process that is changing. Until recently it has been quite static. It has not been many changes in the public dialogue. But recently we have seen more interest among the planners to do a broader public dialogue using different methods, mostly in the bigger projects. Not so much in the small projects –well mostly because it takes budget.

**Do you feel that there is a rejection from the public of projects if there is no participation done?**

Well, there is always. The public almost always tends to react quite heavily to new planning for construction. So there is always this, if we don’t speak to the public early on, there is always a reaction and even if we do it the people that did not participate or didn’t know about it will react, especially if we build in their backyard. I think it is common and takes place everywhere. Well, I think we are not good at with the public participation but you can express your views if you want to. I mean it is not impossible to do it, it is just sometimes a bit difficult to do it.
Would you say that in the planning practice you activate people to participate?

It depends on the projects. If it is a bigger project with the programs, we tend to include people more than in the smaller projects because it is easier to gather the views of the population and include it in the program. And in a detailed plan it is just one aspect of many and they are quite difficult to put together. And how do you deal with public views when they are the opposite of what the politicians said. It is always a struggle. There are changes coming, I think, we try not to use the standard methods, more informal methods such as meetings. Those meetings where the officials stand at one side of the room and the rest is listening or shouting at them.

Which guidelines are existing to create child-friendly space?

See the above mentioned. “Kultur I ögonhöjd” and “barnperspektivet I planeringen”.

Would you say that they play a big role in the planning process?

Sometimes but not always. The politicians know about them. So the politicians that feel they have an obligation to keep child-friendly areas seem to always remember this. It can become a problem. There was quite recently a project where we didn’t really give attention to child-friendly planning from the beginning verbally in the document. And the politicians reacted to that and actually gave it back to us. Nothing really changed in the project. But there is quite a knowledge among the politicians about the documents. I don’t know among the planners. Well, they know about it. They use it when they have to. I mean it is not a difficult process to actually do it. But it is something new. Most people haven’t done it or not that much so it is an insecure point with the dialogue.

I can also say we have another planning material not in a paper form. It is a sociotop map. A mapping if expressed values of different parks. Well, what we did in 2006 or 2004 we interviewed a lot of parks people to express their values with the park. Like is it play-friendly or you could go swimming there, you could go picnicking there. There were about 30 different values. What we did then. If you had a certain kind of area that was similar to another area the values were added to that are as well. This is just for green areas in Stockholm.

But this is not from the children’s perspective?

No, it is from a grown-up perspective on children. Well, I think that there are some child interviews included but it is just a small part. This is an internal instrument that they work with in Stockholm. But it is available as pdf for the public. “Sociotop kartan”.

Participation projects with children that have been done. Is there a list?
No, there is no list but there have been projects done. For example, we have a program for a quite large area in the South of Stockholm municipality where we have dialogue with different youth clubs. Because it is a quite large area and we focused on older children, we came to the conclusion that the area is not focused on smaller children because they did not use the transportation system. What we did was. We had four interviews at local youth clubs. It was about which spaces and functions the youth used to move between the areas and what things they like and did not like. That is one example. We had one project about 8 years ago that had a project with a child-friendly focus.

We had an intern quite recently that did those interviews as planning material. We had a certain method with interviews looking at different school yards where we had done development project close to school-yards sometimes on the school yards. We wanted to see how the development affected the children in accessibility, to play. Is there any connection between the amount of space and how they use it. That is another example. It is not connected to any specific planning.

*Could you say something about the main problems that you are facing when doing participation projects with children.*

Well, I think it varies. I usually don’t do them myself. I usually just coordinate. Money is always a problem. You don’t find this as a prioritized thing. Social questions in general within physical planning are not over budgeted. So of course that is a problem. But it is perhaps that – well I don’t want to say too much – but there is some sense of thinking “well I know what I am doing, I am a planner, I know”. You always find that but it varies a lot between different planners. So it depends.

*It is interesting; you find the same problem in Germany among planners. Maybe it is something about the education planners receive.*

Well, if you have done 5 years of studying you suppose that you know what you are doing.

*And you think children can’t add anything to that.*

Exactly, but sometimes you can. I mean you know sort of what is needed. But sometimes... Well, it really depends a lot. You can’t take anything for granted. So you have to include everything.

*You mentioned that you are coordinating the projects. Who is actually the moderator of the projects?*

It depends. Most common it is a consultant like a pedagogue. In the traffic planning though there are two people actually working with the child perspective full time. They are traffic pedagogues. One of them is quite often included in these projects. She actually is the one that goes to schools. But in
smaller projects it usually is a consultant. I don’t know about their backgrounds but if they have experience with it.

*Do the future planners take part in the participation project? So that they listen to the final results?*

Yes of course. I don’t know if they actually take part in the process. It depends on the planner. They don’t have to. But they get the final report.

*Is there a tool existing for evaluating those participation projects?*

No.

*Do you know about networks about exchanging the experience with participation projects with children?*

There is one mainly for scientist and researchers, but there are also a lot of planners. Maria Norström from SU University is coordinating it. The email sais bub in the end. It is basically a mailing list about what is going on, seminars and stuff. It is not the name of it. They meet regularly in the network. It is a Swedish network. The last meeting was outside of Malmö at the landscaping school.

*Is there any tool/method existing that ensures children’s rights in planning?*

Only guidelines and the sociotop map. There are some checklists in “barnperpektivet I planeringen” but everything is up to the planner.

*How would you describe the overall opinion of participation of children in your municipality? From the planners that you work with.*

I couldn’t say really. I mean it is really different between individuals. Some are really enthusiastic. Some don’t really care. In general I would say quite positive. Some are really enthusiastic about child perspective and including people in general. We are quite a lot of people here, about 50 planners, so I can’t really say.

*Would you say that children’s participation is on an experimental base, on a way more to a regular practice for certain fields of planning, or is it already on a regular base for certain fields of planning?*

It is supposed to be on a regular base, you’re supposed to include it in the early evaluation of a project. But the actual use is perhaps questionable.

*But I mean the real participation, that children take part in a planning project.*
If it is about schools, and larger playgrounds I think it is regularly used. So it is somewhere in the middle between on the way and on a regular base. The problem I think lays in the definition about what is child-intense. If you have a playground or a school yard it is per definition child-intense. But all the other spaces that are sort of in between (child-intensive or not) they are not analyzed as much as they should be I suppose including participation. But I don’t have any data on it. It is just a feeling.

2. Municipality: Norrtälje

Questionnaire filled out by: Kristina Nitsch (Planarkitekt)

Received: 01-05-2011

Participation in general:

How would you describe the participation practice of citizens in general in your municipality? Plays informal participation a role in your municipality?

Citizens get information about ongoing plans through newspaper ads, the website (www.norrtalje.se) and it’s possible to go to the municipality building (in the reception area) and see and get maps and documents of the plans that are current. People tend to write and phone us if they aren’t pleased with what the plan suggests.

Informal participation has a role. Connections with the right people are beneficial.

Child Friendly Planning:

Are there any kinds of guidelines existing for planning in your municipality for creating child-friendly space? Do they play a role in your planning practice?

There are several guidelines but they are general guidelines, none specific for our municipality. In all planning documents you should consider what effect the plan has for the children. For example: If it is a space planned for children there are other aspects such as how to travel safely to and from that space/building to be considered.

Participation in children:

Have there been any participation projects in urban planning with children in your municipality?

Not that I know of.
Which reasons are there in your municipality that children are not included in urban planning projects that concern their issues?

I don’t think there is a specific reason apart from that the planning process has to be efficient and that time consuming activities has been rationalized in general. I think that it is a question of knowing how to do it, having resources for it and having the time to include this in the planning process. I would think that there are plans that children couldn’t really say anything because the economic and political interests are to strong. Like industrial areas or commercial areas.

Do you think that participation of children will play a role in the future work of your municipality, in which field possibly? Were there any thoughts about working with children’s participation?

I would hope that children can take part in the planning of playgrounds, parks and any other plan that has an effect on their daily lives. I’m open for suggestions of how to go about it.

3. Nacka

Survey filled out by: Angela Jonasson (Biträdande planchef)

Received: 12-17-2010

Participation in general:


Child Friendly Planning:

Det finns inga rutiner/riktlinjer för att ordna särskilt barn-vänliga områden. Däremot behandlas i allmänhet frågor om skolor, förskolor, säkra skolvägar, lek och idrottsplatser och områden för natur och rekreation m.m. i planprocessen om det finns ett behov.


Participation of children:

Som det fungerar nu har vi svårt att hinna med alla projekt, vi har flera på väntelista, t.ex. ett projekt som innebär byggande av ny förskola. Där skulle barna kunna delta, men det blir en avvägning mellan snabbhet och delaktighet. Vi arbetar med ett 20-tal gamla sommarstugeområden som fortfarande saknar kommunalt Vatten och avlopp samt fungerande vägar. Det finns fortfarande mycket att göra när det gäller infrastrukturen i Nacka som ligger först på listan.

I Nacka har vi ganska höga kvalitetskrav och många sakområdesexperter representerade i projekten, så jag tror sällan det blir dålig kvalitet. Det betyder dock inte att vi kan bli bättre och lära oss av barns perspektiv.

**Huddinge**

Survey filled out by: Åke Andersson (Head of the planning office)

Received: 01-04-2011

The following comments concerns mainly detailed development planes (detaljplaner).

Participation in general:

*How would you describe the participation practice of citizens in general in your municipality? Plays informal participation a role in your municipality?*

The legislation about planning and building (PB Act) includes a thorough participation of property owners and tenants who are concerned of the planning project. We have written material on our website and we send the material or abstract to the people concerned. We have public meetings and small exhibitions at a.o. libraries. Different groups or societies gives the possibility to react on the drafts.

We also have more or less [have] informal participation via telephone, e-mails or personal meeting with property owners.

Furthermore Huddinge has a vision of PARTICIPATION (DELAKTIGHET) which means the right to be informed, the right to give different points of view and the responsibility to accept and respect other opinions.
Child Friendly Planning:

*Are there any kinds of guidelines existing for planning in your municipality for creating child-friendly space? Do they play a role in your planning practice?*

Our board has made decision about a checklist as a tool to live up to UN:s children convention in the physical planning. Five questions will be made.

Innebär beslutet att barns och ungdomars bästa sätts i främsta rummet? (The priority of the children’s best)

Innebär beslutet att barns och ungdomars sociala, ekonomiska och kulturella rättigheter beaktas? (Is the childrens rights taken under consideration?)

Innebär beslutet att barns och ungdomars rätt till hälsa och god utveckling beaktas? (Is the childrens rights about helth and good developement taken under concideration?)

Har barns och ungdomar fått möjlighet att uttrycka sin mening? (Have the children been given the opportunity to express themselves?)

Har särskilda hänsyn tagits till fysiskt och psykiskt funktionshindrade barns och ungdomars behov? (Care of children with low physical/psychological abilities)

Participation in children:

*Have there been any participation projects in urban planning with children in your municipality?*

Planning of new schools, kindergartens, traffic safety planning around schools, planning and implementation of activity parks and focus-groups (incl. youngsters) in the comprehensive planning (Flemingsberg)

*Which are/were the main problems you are/were facing when planning and doing the participation projects?*

Few channels except via school or kindergarten administration.

*Are the moderators doing the projects especially educated to do projects with children? Are the future planners involved in the participation project?*

No.

*Is a tool for evaluating participation projects existing?*
A little.

Are there any kind of networks for exchange of experience in your municipality and/or with other professionals that are working in the field of children’s participation in urban planning?

No.

Is there any kind of tool/method/law existing that ensures children the right of participation in certain fields of urban planning in your municipality (f.e. in playground planning)?

No.

How would you describe the overall opinion about children’s participation in your municipality?

Could be much better.

Would you say that children’s participation is on an experimental basis, on the way to a regular basis for certain fields of planning or on a regular basis in the urban planning practice in your municipality?

More of experimental basis with the aim to regular basis.

**Municipality: Haninge**

**Personal Interview with Karin Österdahl and Mattias Schriever-Abeln**

January 24th, 2011

Description of position: My name Is Mathias and I work here as a planning architect. And I (Karin Österdahl) work with traffic, part time in the traffic department and part time in the planning department. I am a traffic planner.

*How would you describe in general the participation practice of citizens in Haninge?*

Schriever-Abeln: We have a plan process and we have to let the citizens participate in those processes. That is basically what we do and that is what the law tells us to do. But the law is not saying us how to do it. The only thing that says us is that we have to send out all the material to them, to let them have a look, to let them make comments.

*And how big is the role of informal planning?*

Schriever-Abeln: Not so much I would say. I think before we started this project (with children) there was not much. This was like the engine project. To let informal planning going.
Österdahl: At least in the planning department. There were already participation projects with
children for playgrounds and school yards on the building level. It was more. Ok we have some
money to develop this playground let’s do a children’s participation. But not in the early stage when
it is about developing land.

Schriever-Abeln: I think that the informal part is not that big. Usually we work we do what we have to
do. What the law has to do. Usually not more. But I also like to say that right now there is an ongoing
work about how to develop the informal channels of communicating with citizens and the children’s
work is one part and me and my colleagues are working on a plan how to develop the
communication with citizens. There is so much to do in that area. And I think it is not even half used, I
would say.

Österdahl: More dialogues. Our goal is it to have something altogether in work-shops or so. But that
is our goal. We are not there yet. But we have tried something like that with youngsters.

Child-friendly planning: Are there any kinds of guidelines existing for the planning your municipality?
For creating child-friendly space. Something like a check-list?

No, there is no checklist.

How big do you see the role of children in the planning practice that they are considered?

Schriever-Abeln: I would say that the children’s participation is zero. In some plans they are maybe
send to the “ungdomsråd” the youth council but not in general. The youth council is youth from the
high school level. Haninge was actually the first municipality in Sweden to create a youth council.
They work with the same democratic standards. And I think they have been active for about 12 years.
Sören Bergrund started the youth council. They work together with 12 other youth councils in
Sweden. They make revisions every year.

Schriever-Abeln: When it comes to planning and plans. I think to involve children is not that easy. You
can’t just send the plan and all the documents to them. And say. Ok now you have to review that. It
is not working. You need to work with them because it is usually very complex. So even if you would
send all the plans to the youth council. I am not sure if they would be able to read all of them.

Can you list all the projects that were done?

Schriever-Abeln and Österdahl: It is all in “att ge barn och ungdomar en nickel till det offentiga
rummate” We have done three projects.

Which fields of planning were involved?
Schriever-Abeln and Österdahl: One was sort of a Master Plan / development plan for an area. Strategies for an area. And the other was for a detailed plan for a school yard. And the third was a bicycle plan for the whole municipality.

Which were the main problems that you were facing when you did the participation projects with children?

Schriever-Abeln: I think initially, when we wanted to do this Master Plan, and we wanted to work together with schools it was to get a good contact to schools. And get the schools interested in participating. When you talked to them, they were a bit skeptical. Like. They have so much to do already in school. Although we tried to sell this product as it is something for them to take part in the community. And also that it could be a part of their curriculum. And then we found a teacher who was very enthusiastic. After that everything was very easy. She organized everything. She had three classes and we got to work with them.

How old were the children?

Österdahl: 14, 15, 16

Any other problems?

Well, we didn’t know how to do it. There is nothing like a schoolbook to tell you how to do it. So it was a challenge. A real challenge.

How did you find methods, on the internet?

Yes we read a lot. And we did a study visit in Malmö and Copenhagen where we interviewed and talked to an architect that works a lot with children. He is sort of a front figure when it comes to participation of children and citizens in planning and architecture.

Were the moderators who did the projects especially educated?

Schriever-Abeln: Home studies. And also when we worked together with the school yard. The school had a very clear idea how to do it of how to involve the children. They wanted to have the whole school involved. So they had a democratic process throughout the school. The 5th graders that we worked with were the ones to implement the ideas of the whole school, that came from the preschool and up. The 5th graders made interviews with one person of every class. That was very important for the school because they were reading about democracy.
Then we had a meeting with the public. A presentation with the politicians. So the children came here and presented their models and thoughts. And then they talked to the people and showed their ideas. We also gave this opportunity to the other children of the projects. And the politicians and administration people came to the school. I think it made the politicians really aware of what they had done. And also it gave the children the opportunity to meet the politicians and ask them questions. I think they found it positive to be part of.

Is there a tool existing to evaluate the projects done?

Schriever-Abeln: I think in the work now with the communication plan this is one aspect we have to consider. If we do projects in the future how can we evaluate them. That will be part of our work. To measure it. But if we talk in a smaller perspective. We were going back to the schools and asked the children about what they thought about participating. What they thought that was good and what they did not like. What they thought about being part of it. And that gave us actually really great input. Because in one school they told us that they really enjoyed being part of it but they would rather work more concentrated. We came during a longer time period. We came like every other week to work with them. But they would rather work intensively for like two weeks. They thought that it was a bit too long. Just an example. It’s an evaluation.

Are there any networks for exchanging of experience? You said that you have contacts to Copenhagen but is there actually a network that you are involved in?

Österdahl: We have meetings in Haninge between the different departments parks and schools but no real external network. We said that we meet four times a year. But we had the seminar about the projects and there were a lot of people that came from different municipalities, especially Stockholm. That was a way to propagate.

Schriever-Abeln: What we do with this network is that we brief the others. And we give the others opportunity to come with input. Because a lot of us have different experience. When we worked with this project we got a lot of good input from the others.

Österdahl: Because the others work with children a whole more than we do. So they have experience. And they know if there is a need that something is happening. For example the tunnel where you came form at the commuter train station. That is actually a project were youth was participating with an artist to make the tunnel nicer.

Is there any tool, law, existing here in Haninge to ensure children’s participation? It is all real informal, up to you if you are doing it or not?
Österdahl: Yes, it is. But we are thinking about having it in the goal for the Haninge municipality that there should be a children’s participation. Because right now it really depends on us the participation. And that way others could do it and write it down that they followed the goal. And this goal we could break down to our work. And maybe say once a year we should have that kind of work with children. At least for one plan. But that is just my goal.

Schriever-Abeln: But I think that is something really important, referring back to that communication plan. You need to have a document of knowing how. If you don’t know so much about how to work with children. You need to have a key of how you can do it in the easiest and most affected way. So our work will be to build this key. And I think for most people. If you are not particularly interested in this topic but want to work with it. You don’t really have the time to search and go online of how to do it, find projects. If you have a person like that you have to have an easy key. An easy document. Like I have this plan. We have a school in the plan. We want to involve children. How can I do that in the best way?

How would you describe the overall opinion about children’s participation here in the municipality?

Schriever-Abeln: When we started we were kind of amazed how easy it was. How positive the reaction of politician was. They really wanted it. They were giving us from the beginning a green light to move forward with it. And of course they were really positive about the idea that we wanted to write a report and have a seminar to promote this question. In that sense it was very easy. There was no resistance.

Österdahl: It is not new for the municipality to work with children with the ungdomsråd and have a dialogue with children. Of course in this area it is new. In planning it is new.

On which guideline is it going back the participation of children in this municipality?

Österdahl: The UN guidelines. The convention of the child. And it is in the overall goal for Haninge municipality to be working with children. It is goal number 10.

Municipality: Ekerö

Survey filled out by: Emma Oscarsson (Planchef)

Received: 01-04-2011

Participation in general:

How would you describe the participation practice of citizens in general in your municipality?
Through consultation with affected parties, committees and other involved parties.

*Plays informal participation a role in your municipality?*

Yes, we try to meet people informal and as early in the process as possible.

*Child Friendly Planning:*

*Are there any kinds of guidelines existing for planning in your municipality for creating child-friendly space?*

The guidelines we have are in our comprehensive plan, translated approximately;

It is important to children as far as possible can take themselves to the school through traffic safe pedestrian and bicycle paths. Many children will still be driven by car. This also applies to preschool children. There must be a road environment around schools and kindergartens. An important issue is the availability of early childhood and school premises and the surrounding areas. Children and youth need, like adults, places to meet. This can occur spontaneously outdoors in natural venues, the sports facilities, stables, etc. but there is also a need for organized leisure in different parts of the municipality.

*Do they play a role in your planning practice?*

Yes.

*Participation of children:*

*Have there been any participation projects in urban planning with children in your municipality?*

No.

*Have you ever heard about projects where children were involved in urban planning projects?*

Yes, in Västervik and in Eslöv (I think it was).

*Which reasons are there in your municipality that children are not included in urban planning projects that concern their issues?*

Time and resources.

*Do you think that participation of children will play a role in the future work of your municipality, in which field possibly? Were there any thoughts about working with children’s participation?*
Yes, we try to get the parents to involve their children in the consultation process, we don’t know yet how it will turn out.

**Municipality: Upplands-Bro**

Survey filled out by: Emelie Grind (Plan- och exploateringschef)

Received: 12-02-2010

Position: head of department of planning and building (plan- och exploateringschef)

Participation in general:

*How would you describe the participation practice of citizens in general in your municipality?*

Good.

*Plays informal participation a role in your municipality?*

Yes.

**Child Friendly Planning:**

*Are there any kinds of guidelines existing for planning in your municipality or for the whole Stockholm area for creating child-friendly space?*

General guidelines and in every decision we analyse consequences from a child's point of view.

*Do they play a role in your planning practice?*

No, except for in one project where we had an activity involving children.

*As you wrote me there have not been any participation projects with children in your municipality.*

*Have you ever heard about projects where children were involved in urban planning projects?*

Yes.

*Which reasons are there in your municipality that children are not included in urban planning projects that concern their issues?*

We are not used in communicating an urban planning project with children.

*Do you think that participation of children will play a role in the future work of your municipality, in which field possibly?*

Yes, more within certain planning projects but not in general.

*Were there any thoughts about doing something like that?*

Not for the moment.

**Municipality: Upplands Väsby**

Survey filled out by: Drotte Fredrik (Planchef)
Received: 12-22-2010

Participation in general:

How would you describe the participation practice of citizens in general in your municipality?

Citizens in our municipality are given opportunities to participate through “Charette”-kind of forums, besides the forums that are prescribed by law within the planning process. Interest so far is farely low but increasing.

Plays informal participation a role in your municipality?

Participation as described above is presented to the politics and to the public through the internet. That way it can influence public opinion and the politics.

Child Friendly Planning:

Are there any kinds of guidelines existing for planning in your municipality or for the whole Stockholm area for creating child-friendly space?

Planning in Sweden should always describe consequences of planning for children and discuss ways of improving the situation for children in the built environment.

Do they play a role in your planning practice?

Older children – high school and above – do sometimes participate in the Charettes.

Participation in children:

Have there been any participation projects in urban planning with children in your municipality?

Yes, in ways described above

If yes… Please list the project(s) shortly, which field of planning they involved and if possible also the methods that have been used

No specific project. They have been involved to discuss larger issues, for instance favorite spots and areas, insecure spots and areas. Their views on feeling secure in the built environment; their views on building new schools; and so on.

If no… have you ever heard about projects where children were involved in urban planning projects?
Which reasons are there in your municipality that children are not included in urban planning projects that concern their issues?

Do you think that participation of children will play a role in the future work of your municipality, in which field possibly?

I think that our forums for discussion are continuously improving, and thus generating more and more interest among the citizens, children among them.

Were there any thoughts about doing children´s participation in projects?

**Municipality: Vaxholm**

**Survey filled out by: Kristina Dunker (planarkitekt)**

**Received: 01-10-2011**

Participation in general:

How would you describe the participation practice of citizens in general in your municipality?

We often get response from interested parties that are concerned in our on-going planning projects.

Plays informal participation a role in your municipality?

Yes.

Child Friendly Planning:

Are there any kinds of guidelines existing for planning in your municipality for creating child-friendly space?

No.

Do they play a role in your planning practice?

If we had they would play a role.

Participation in children:

Have there been any participation projects in urban planning with children in your municipality?

Both yes and no.

If yes... Please list the project(s) shortly, which field of planning they involved and if possible also the methods that have been used

We recently have finished planning for a new sports arena nearby a school area. We specifically wanted to listen to the children's opinion and therefore took contact with the principal and the student council.
Two persons from the office for urban planning are reference-persons for a school project called "future city" that is initiated by their teacher.

- **Which are/were the main problems you are/were facing when planning and doing the participation projects?**
  
  Since we have a small organization and we don’t have a specific organization for these kinds of projects it is difficult to find the time and resources. It is also necessary with engaged staff that are interested in these types of projects.

- **Are the moderators doing the projects especially educated to do projects with children? Are the future planners involved in the participation project?**
  
  See answer above.

- **Is a tool for evaluating participation projects existing?**
  
  No.

- **Are there any kind of networks for exchange of experience in your municipality and/or with other professionals that are working in the field of children’s participation in urban planning?**
  
  No.

- **Is there any kind of tool/method/law existing that ensures children the right of participation in certain fields of urban planning in your municipality (f.e. in playground planning)?**
  
  Not specific for Vaxholm.

- **How would you describe the overall opinion about children’s participation in your municipality?**
  
  Probably many agree that it would be positive if children’s participation in for example urban planning increases.

- **Would you say that children’s participation is on basis, on the way to a regular basis for certain fields of planning or on a regular basis in the urban planning practice in your municipality?**
  
  Unfortunately not.

If no… have you ever heard about projects where children were involved in urban planning projects?

Yes, for example projects were maps in arcgis is used as a tool for asking children about their opinion and everyday experience in a specific area.

- **Which reasons are there in your municipality that children are not included in urban planning projects that concern their issues?**
  
  A combination of small organization and lack of time and resources.

- **Do you think that participation of children will play a role in the future work of your municipality, in which field possibly? Were there any thoughts about working with children’s participation?**
  
  No.
Yes, it is an important part of Vaxholms planning for the future. Hopefully we can in some way involve children in the work with our new comprehensive plan.