

# Children's Voices on Safeguards

## Why Children's Consultations?



As part of its years long review of the Safeguard Policies, the World Bank has engaged in two lengthy consultation periods where it has solicited the views of a variety of stakeholders regarding their recommendations for improving the safeguards. However, despite a growing understanding that the voices of children and youth provide critical contributions to sustainable development, the World Bank did not solicit the views of children and youth in any of their consultations.

To ensure that these important voices are included in the review process, the Bank Information Center carried out two rounds of consultations with more than 300 children from World Bank borrowing countries in all regions where the Bank operates. Consultations targeted children and adolescents ranging in age from 9 to 17 and incorporated children with disabilities, indigenous children, and children impacted by World Bank projects. The consultations resulted in serious and well considered recommendations from the children, including ways in which the World Bank safeguards could be revised to improve project outcomes for children and adolescents, as well as their families and communities.

## Children's Consultations Round 1

The first round of children's consultations took place during the summer of 2013 in Peru, Yemen, India, Uganda, Cambodia, and the Philippines and solicited general recommendations from the children for the safeguards. Each consultation was preceded by an educational workshop on the World Bank, human rights, and the World Bank safeguards designed to allow the participants to meaningfully contribute to the consultations. Children were also provided with four case studies of projects with negative impacts to provide a point of reference on which they could propose policy changes. Some of the key recommendations voiced in the consultations included:



- The environmental assessment policy should look not only at environmental impacts but at all of the impacts on people, separating out the impacts on adults and children;
- Violations of human rights, including the rights of children and persons with disabilities, should be prohibited;
- The resettlement policy should include requirements to protect the interests of children, particularly measures to ensure that access to education is not interrupted;

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- The World Bank should focus on renewable sources of energy such as wind, solar, and biogas, and should make protection of land, forests, and water a high priority;
- The World Bank should set policies to protect the working child;
- The World Bank should improve monitoring of project implementation and ensure government compliance with the rules and plans for the project; and
- The World Bank should consult with children before engaging in projects that will impact them and should consider their input seriously.

## Children's Consultations Round 2



The second round of consultations took place during the spring of 2015 in Peru, India, Uganda, Senegal, Albania, and Indonesia and solicited input regarding how the draft safeguard policies released by the Bank could be improved upon. This round of consultations also began with an educational workshop on the World Bank, the role of the safeguards, and the proposed new Environmental and Social Framework. Children were

invited, in particular, to provide recommendations on how social assessments could best identify, prevent, and mitigate potential negative impacts of World Bank projects on children and how the World Bank could effectively consult children on projects that may impact their lives. Recommendations included:

- The safeguards draft never mentions that the Bank must respect human rights. Rights should be included explicitly;
- Incorporate the rights of girls, boys, and adolescents, as well as the rights of workers and indigenous peoples in the report;
- Impact assessments must be disaggregated by age and one's role or responsibility in the community, including children, parents, students, etc.;
- Those carrying out assessments should consult with experts in all relevant fields;
- The Borrower must include children in the process of project planning and project evaluation;
- The Bank should share information with children and youth prior to project approval as well as during project implementation through both face to face meetings and online surveys;



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- Before a project is presented to the Board, the Bank should make sure Borrowers take into consideration children's views on the problems and issues they face;
- The Bank should partner with schools and education ministries to consult children;
- Before 18 years, no child can work in any factory or industries;
- Invest more money in education projects than in industrial projects and give priority to the safety of the girl child and for their education;
- Invest in no-fee education to assist families unable to afford school fees;
- In the case of displacement, consult the community on the time period and proposed location for resettlement and make sure that the resettlement site has education, health care, livelihood support, playground areas, trees/good environment and a national disaster management system;
- Every project that displaces families or individuals should prioritize children's rights and their participation in the decision making; and
- Avoid pollution, ensure access to clean water, and protect the natural habitat and marine ecology.



## Children Must be Consulted

The consultations clearly demonstrated the capacity of children and adolescents to engage in conversations about how World Bank policies and projects can impact their lives, and the lives of other children around the world, and should serve as a model for the World Bank to engage with these important stakeholders in all of its consultative processes.

