

A Comparative Research on Child Participation in Urban Design

The aim of this study is to categorize theoretical approaches that differentiate the roles of participation of children in participation processes. Furthermore, it aims to create a model that enables children's participation in urban space production by discussing the degree, different meanings, and scope of participation provided by local government, academic, and civil initiatives targeting children's participation. In order to achieve these goals, thematic analysis method through an inductive approach was employed to reveal patterns across four cases involving child participation. The analysis of the multiple case study revealed that the notion of participation, the diversity of its tasks and definitions, has a complex and profound nature that cannot be provided from a single source. The task of raising children as adult citizens who care for their cities can only be the product of collective and systematic work. Although it is a positive development to see participatory design practices being implemented through qualified but individual initiatives, it has been found that in projects developed under the leadership of local governments, large-scale problem determinations and shallow solution proposals are developed. With the qualitative and concrete applications of individual initiatives reaching the inclusiveness level of local governments, it will be possible to reach numerous applicable and local solutions while ensuring true child participation. This study proposes a system consisting of four allies that need to work together: (i) local governments to regulate the limits of participation through determining the needs of the city, budget planning and delegation of authority; (ii) academics to design the framework of the problem by developing a vision with the support of examples from the world; (iv) non-governmental organizations to carry out the practice as employing the role as moderators.

Keywords: *Participatory design, child participation, urban design*

Introduction

Participating in decision making processes that affect people's lives is a natural right for individuals. Even the youngest citizens, children, should have this right. Urban space is a representation of such communal living and a stage where everyone has equal rights. Children's participation, especially in the production of urban spaces, is important, and different dimensions have been discussed in many academic studies. However, the scope and quality of implemented practices are also controversial. This study aims to create a model for children's participation in urban space production by discussing the nature, meaning, and scope of children's participation through local government, academic institutions, and civil initiative practices. By doing so, the controversies on children's participation in urban design can be improved.

It is important for the youngest members of society, children, to have a say in matters that concern them. The Children's Rights Council defines the concept of a

1 child as a rights-holder as "*the period of early childhood in which a child clings to*
2 *and depends on daily life.*" Likewise, Article 12(1) of the United Nations
3 Convention on the Rights of the Child states that "*States Parties shall assure to the*
4 *child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those*
5 *views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due*
6 *weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.*" While this article
7 alone carries significance, when viewed in conjunction with other related articles,
8 it is apparent that children in our cities are lacking many of the citizenship rights
9 they should possess. These articles can be listed as follows:

10
11 *Article 12: States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or*
12 *her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child,*
13 *the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and*
14 *maturity of the child.*

15 *Article 15: children and young people have the human right to freedom of*
16 *association.*

17 *Article 17: children and young people should be able to access information,*
18 *particularly from the media.*

19 *Article 29: a child or young person's education should help their mind, body and*
20 *talents be the best they can.*

21
22 However, as Hart (1992) stated, democratic participation cannot be taught as
23 a concept; trust and competence in participation can be learned through practice
24 over time. Children can gain experience in participatory practices through working
25 on family, school, and urban scales. While family and school scales vary in terms
26 of individual differences and opportunities, the city can be seen as a more
27 inclusive element. Therefore, urban space production through participatory
28 approach becomes a strategic tool in practicing children's participation at city
29 scale.

30 Children's participation needs to be carried out systematically rather than
31 through individual efforts. For this effort, it is necessary to analyze and evaluate
32 examples of children's participation implemented at various scales worldwide.
33 Based on this data, a systematic effort that is not dependent on a single person,
34 institution, or initiative but one that is composed of a combination of stakeholders
35 including academia, local government, social groups and private companies can be
36 proposed.

37 38 39 **Purpose of the Study**

40
41 In order to clearly delineate the objectives of this study, it is imperative to
42 forge linkages among multiple facets of participation. To make the aims of this
43 study apparent, it is essential to establish connections between several aspects of
44 participation. Firstly, there is the connection between participation and democracy,
45 which evolves into the term "participatory democracy" and its role in addressing
46 shallow views on democracy. Secondly, it is important to examine how child
47 participation fits into this terminology. Lastly, understanding the significance of

1 child participation in building resilient communities in the future provides a crucial
2 basis for comprehending the aims of this study. By exploring these aspects, this
3 research aims to shed light on the multifaceted nature of participation and its
4 implications for democratic ideals and community resilience.

5 6 *Participatory Democracy*

7
8 Many researchers in the field of design and planning, believe that the concept
9 of participation is related to democracy theories (Fagence, 1977). Democracy
10 emphasizes the importance of citizen participation in public decision-making
11 processes. However, democratic ideology promotes low-quality citizen engagement
12 by highlighting only one type of political participation: voting (Pranger, 1968:30).
13 In theory, democracy is interpreted as a selection procedure of government leaders
14 who would allow citizens to have a say in governance. However, in reality, a
15 majority of the population is powerless in influencing political decisions, policies,
16 and actions taken by governments. Thus, the concept of participatory democracy
17 emerged in the 1960s (Olsen, 1982). The roots of the participation concept are
18 based on Jean Jacques Rousseau and Robert Stuart Mill. Participatory processes
19 are re-defined as an ideal political system for upbringing responsible citizens.
20 According to Rousseau, participation is an educational effort that aims to teach
21 citizens to be informed, interested, and relevant to enable them to control their
22 lives and the society in which they live (Pateman, 1970).

23 The basic characteristics of participatory democracy can be summarized as
24 follows:

- 25
- 26 • Everyone should have the opportunity to fully participate in all collective
 - 27 decision-making processes that affect them as much as they wish.
 - 28 • Collective decision-making in participation should not be limited to voting,
 - 29 but should also include various activities that require different levels of
 - 30 sacrifice and participation.
 - 31 • Collective decision-making responsibilities should be widely distributed not
 - 32 only among officials and/or experts but also among all individuals who may
 - 33 be affected by these actions.
 - 34 • Participation in collective decision-making processes should not be limited
 - 35 to the political system but should be spread across all areas of social life,
 - 36 especially organizations.
- 37

38 In short, participatory democracy requires that social decisions be made in a
39 decentralized manner. This allows citizens to actively participate in the decision-
40 making process by acquiring different skills.

41 42 *Child Participation*

43
44 In past years, various strategies have been studied regarding the involvement
45 of children and young people in architecture and urban planning. On the other
46 hand, according to Emile Durkheim, children have been considered more "human-

1 *becomings*" than human (cited in Boyden & Ennew, 1997). Therefore, previous
2 research has shown that children are not equally considered with adults in research
3 and that there is not enough room for their opinions. In particular, questions about
4 children's activities, behaviors, and preferences are typically directed at adults,
5 such as parents or teachers, assuming that children cannot express their own views.
6 However, these methods have failed to adequately represent the needs and
7 concerns of children (Boyden & Ennew, 1997).

8 Until the 1970s, children were neglected as a social group in research and
9 social interventions. However, the United Nations' International Year of the Child
10 began to change this situation. As a result, aid organizations, welfare and rights
11 practitioners, and researchers around the world began to show more interest in
12 gaining more knowledge about children's lives and the best ways of working for
13 children. This helped to increase awareness for children.

14 Also, research studies focused on the participation of children and young
15 people in cities date back to the 1970s with the works initiated by Ward (1988)
16 and Moore (1983, 1990), who argued that cities were only designed for adults;
17 therefore, did not work well enough for children. As stated in Sarvari's (2018)
18 comprehensive literature review, children's participation in urban planning began
19 with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which came into
20 effect in 1990, and has been supported by various researchers such as Hart (1992),
21 Horelli (1997), Matthews et al. (2003), Alparone and Risotto (2001), Chawla
22 (2002), Berglund and Nordin (2007), and Percy-Smith (2010).

23 Since the beginning of the 2000s, the concept of child participation has
24 become a strategic issue in planning processes in many international contexts.
25 Research shows that involving children in design and planning processes
26 accelerates their active citizenship processes, supports democracy, and effectively
27 strengthens the protection of children's rights (Matthews, 2003; Thomas, 2007;
28 Tisdall et al., 2008, as cited in Sarvari, 2018).

29 These approaches also recognize that children have different needs based on
30 their age groups, cultural and social contexts, genders, and abilities. Therefore,
31 research with children takes into account their differences and unique perspectives
32 and provides safe and appropriate environments for their voices to be heard. This
33 helps children to gain more respect in society, have more opportunities for
34 participation and advocacy, and strive for a better future overall.

35 36 *Social Benefits of Participation*

37
38 Children's participation in urban space production helps them develop a sense
39 of belonging to the community and play an active role in urban life. This also
40 strengthens the connection between children and the city. Children's contribution
41 to urban spaces shows that urban planning and design are not solely the
42 responsibility of adults, but children can also contribute to shaping urban
43 environments. This helps children feel more included in their own lives and in the
44 community. Being part of a whole and a sense of belonging are integral parts of
45 human existence. A sense of community helps children learn to live with others
46 and recognize their identities and roles within society.

1 According to Sarason (1974), a perceptual sense of community is one of the
2 fundamental building blocks of self-definition and is at the conceptual center of
3 community psychology. Community feeling is the emergence of shared values,
4 emotional reactions, and interactions that bind members of a school community
5 together; it provides people with a sense of belonging to something larger than
6 their individual beings (Goodlad 1981; Haberman 1992; Sergiovanni 1994).
7 McMillan (1976) defines community feeling as a sense of belonging, a sense that
8 members are important to one another and to the group, and a shared
9 understanding that goals will be achieved by devoting oneself to them together.
10 McMillan (1996) emphasizes the concept of belonging in an individual's
11 relationship with society. Furman (1998), in line with McMillan's views, also
12 states that a community cannot exist without a sense of belonging, trust, and
13 loyalty, or its existence will be in jeopardy.

14

15

16 **Case Studies**

17

18 The primary objective of this study is to examine and analyze specific cases
19 from Turkey, chosen based on the types of stakeholders engaged in the
20 participatory process. Additionally, this research establishes a comparative
21 analysis by contrasting these Turkey based cases with a case study from the United
22 States, which is widely regarded as an exemplar due to its well-defined and
23 systematic structure of participatory practices. By conducting a comprehensive
24 analysis and evaluation of these cases, the study aims to generate valuable insights
25 and facilitate a nuanced understanding of the dynamics and outcomes of
26 participatory initiatives. The results, as depicted in the provided table, will be
27 derived from a thorough examination and scrutiny of the aforementioned cases.
28 The results will be obtained by thoroughly analyzing the cases mentioned above.

29

30 *Y-Plan*

31

32 Y-PLAN (Youth-Plan, Learn, Act Now) was developed in 2000 as a studio
33 course within the Department of City and Regional Planning at the University of
34 California, Berkeley, with the goal of integrating with the community. In 2004, the
35 Center for Cities + Schools (CC+S), an interdisciplinary research center, was
36 established to further Y-PLAN's initiatives. In addition to the Department of City
37 and Regional Planning, the Center includes the Graduate School of Education and
38 the College of Environmental Design.

39 Y-PLAN brings together various actors in the city, including academia, K-12
40 schools, urban planning professionals, and government officials, to rethink the
41 urban ecosystem. Over the past twenty years, Y-PLAN has applied a participatory
42 and locally-driven urban planning model with K-12 students. The aim is for
43 marginalized young users of the city to connect with professionals, learn about real
44 problems, and take action to plan for their city.

45 To make Y-PLAN events possible, six steps are required. The first is Project
46 Planning, in which professionals or government officials who are knowledgeable

1 about Y-PLAN propose project topics and work on a plan together with Y-PLAN.
2 The second step, Start Up, involves meeting with young people interested in the
3 project topic and sharing the project definition. The young community then
4 identifies the strengths and challenges of the topic and creates a plan. The third
5 step, Making Sense of The City, is when young people begin to work on
6 understanding the project area. This involves mapping, surveys, face-to-face
7 interviews, and creating a holistic story. The next step, Into Action, involves
8 brainstorming for inspiration and developing a vision for transformation after
9 understanding the topic and urban significance. Here, young people work together
10 in teams and learn from each other.

11 The fifth step, Going Public, involves preparing proposals, discussing and
12 presenting them to the public. The final step, Looking Forward and Back,
13 evaluates the success of the proposed solution. Additionally, a situation assessment
14 is conducted with the contractor, and ideas for long-term actions are developed.

15 The most significant feature of projects produced by Y-PLAN is that they are
16 carried out with the public, and the proposals developed by participants are likely
17 to be implemented. This often contributes to marginalized populations' sense of
18 belonging by including them in the decision-making process, which is often
19 overlooked.

20

21 *Play Has No Boundaries (Oyun Engel Tanımaz)*

22

23 The "Play Has No Boundaries" project is another example of using a "hands-
24 on environmental education" program designed for children as a method to
25 involve children in urban design (Arın, Özsoy, 2015). During the project, which
26 took place between October 1, 2013, and June 11, 2014, six disabled students
27 selected by the Nilüfer Municipality Disabled Services Unit Bizim Ev, 24 students
28 from different schools, and the Nilüfer City Council Children's Assembly designed
29 a children's park where disabled and non-disabled children could play together
30 after taking classes in architecture, urban planning, games, human rights, and
31 design [URL1]. In this project, which was carried out in cooperation with
32 academic stakeholders, the city council, professional associations, and the
33 municipality, children played an active role not only at the idea level but also in
34 other stages of the project. In particular, involving children, who are the primary
35 users of the space, in the design process was important for strengthening their
36 sense of ownership of the space.

37 The " Play Has No Boundaries" project was carried out in four main stages.
38 Firstly, the "Theoretical" stage, which involved an 11-week study, aimed to create
39 awareness of urbanism, urban living, and participation in urban design through
40 various education and workshops on different topics and contents. Experts in the
41 field were consulted for these workshops. Secondly, the "Basic Design" stage,
42 which lasted for three weeks, focused on space, scale, and basic design principles.
43 In the third stage, "Analysis and Preliminary Design," user and site analyses,
44 function diagrams, topographical models, and site plans were prepared. The fourth
45 stage, "Playground Design," progressed through a process similar to an
46 architectural design studio. Designs were developed based on weekly critiques,

1 and a joint working model was created to express the project. During the
2 implementation phase after the design, children were present on site and had the
3 opportunity to examine the progress of the project and the realization of the
4 designs. Undoubtedly, the continuity of child participation from the beginning to
5 the end of the project was one of the most important factors that made the project
6 stand out.

7
8 *Children Council*

9
10 In addition to these, "children's councils" established within municipalities are
11 also an example of child participation supported by local governments. These
12 councils are reported to aim for children to express their demands on issues that
13 concern them, to have a say in decision-making processes, and to provide active
14 participation. Through these councils, children are provided the opportunity to
15 organize, learn about their rights, prioritize their needs, and contribute to municipal
16 processes, including development planning and budgeting. Child councils, which
17 usually meet at regular intervals and carry out activities on various issues, are
18 formations where children gain awareness about urban life, develop their public
19 consciousness, and express their demands as individuals in a democratic
20 environment. It is not mandatory for municipalities to establish these councils, so
21 some municipalities may not have child councils.

22
23 *Istanbul Asks Children (Istanbul Çocuklara Soruyor)*

24
25 The Istanbul City Council considers children's participation in decisions about
26 themselves not as a privilege, but as a right, based on the Universal Declaration of
27 Children's Rights. With this in mind, a Children's Council has been established and
28 all children are considered natural members of this council. "Istanbul Asks
29 Children" project, developed by the Istanbul City Council for the Children's
30 Council, aims to reach children aged 6-14 through schools, NGOs, and children
31 and youth centers to gather their opinions and suggestions about Istanbul [URL2].
32 The project begins with the metaphor of "maintenance/inspection" of motor
33 vehicles, with children taking on the role of "maintenance experts" working at a
34 vehicle service center. These experts bring the city they live in to the service
35 center, identifying its positive and negative aspects and recording their views on a
36 special map prepared for the project. Children are also asked for their views on
37 how to improve the city. The workshop, which lasts for 120 minutes, follows the
38 steps outlined below:

- 39
40
- 41 1. Children become Istanbul Experts! The Istanbul City Council invites
42 children to examine Istanbul as "Maintenance Experts."
 - 43 2. Istanbul for Me... They reflect Istanbul through their own eyes, with all of
44 its associations, colors, sounds, and smells, taking a "picture" of it.
 - 45 3. Children Examine Istanbul/ Istanbul under the Magnifying Glass They
examine Istanbul, including its physical structure, districts, symbols,

1 processes, infrastructure, and systems, on a specially designed giant map
2 of Istanbul
3 4. Istanbul's Medals They award a "medal" to the positive, lovable, prideful,
4 and happiest aspects of Istanbul [URL3]. As part of the project, a
5 "Maintenance/Equipment Kit" has been prepared, which includes the
6 necessary documents and materials to be applied in schools by teachers,
7 NGO workers, or independent instructors in the same way [URL4]. The
8 implementation of the workshop has been left open to be carried out in
9 school environments, the premises of relevant institutions, or in
10 application sessions conducted by the project team at the Istanbul City
11 Council building, in order to reach as many children as possible.
12

13 By April 2022, data had been collected and an evaluation report had been
14 prepared as part of the project, which continued until that time. The long-term plan
15 is to implement decisions taken by the Istanbul City Council Children's Council
16 [URL5]. During the workshop, keywords that describe Istanbul from the
17 perspective of children were collected, and the perception of Istanbul by 6,601
18 children was documented through color, sound, and smell descriptions. The 15
19 most frequently expressed concepts were analyzed for each described element, and
20 examined according to age group distribution. Additionally, children were asked
21 to make drawings with regards to the problems they see with the city as well as the
22 solutions (Istanbul Kent Konseyi, 2022) (Figure 1).
23
24

1 **Figure 1.** Drawings depicting children's perception of the city (Istanbul Kent
2 *Konseyi, 2022)*



Her 10 evin arasında 1 ağaç değil, her 4 evde bir ağaç olmalı. - İdil, 8 yaş



Bir bina yapıldığında 20 ağaç dikilecek.

İnşaat yaparken neden ağaçlar kesiliyor?



Istanbul Çocuklara Soruyor



Parkları, evlerin, sokakların arasında hiç ağaç yok!

İstanbul'da çocuklara verilen yeşil alanın metrekaresi çok az.



İnsanlar çok ağaç diksın, az bina yapsın. - Doruk, 8 yaş



Doğum günlerimizde doğum günü hediyesi olarak belediye benim adıma 20 ağaç diksın.

İstanbul, kenarlarında ormanlar olan bir çöplük gibi..



Binaları yakın tohum ekin. - 8 yaş



Sahiller, oteller yerine yeşil alanlara bırakılmalı.

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1 **Method**

2
3 This research was designed as a descriptive multi-case study (Yin 2002;
4 Groat and Wang 2013) with the purpose of examining and describing multiple
5 occurrences, in which children's participation was carried out in urban space
6 production through participatory approach.

7 Since the purpose of this research article was first to analyze and evaluate
8 examples of children's participation initiatives implemented at various scales
9 worldwide, the research started with a systematic literature review that involves
10 multiple stakeholders, including academia, local government, social groups, and
11 private companies which share their methodologies employed to achieve
12 participatory objectives. Therefore, the research design for this study is based on a
13 comprehensive and systematic review of existing literature and documented
14 examples of children's participation initiatives. The methodology involves the
15 following steps:

- 16
17 1. Literature review: A thorough review of relevant academic literature,
18 reports, case studies, and policy documents related to children's
19 participation initiatives was conducted. This review helped provide a
20 comprehensive understanding of the current state of children's
21 participation in urban studies, identify key concepts, theories, and
22 frameworks, and highlight successful examples from different scales and
23 geographical locations.
- 24 2. Case selection: Based on the findings from the literature review, a
25 purposive sampling strategy was employed to select diverse and
26 representative cases of children's participation initiatives in Turkey. The
27 selection criteria considered variations in scale, stakeholder involvement,
28 and outcomes achieved.
- 29 3. Data collection: Data collection involved gathering information and data
30 on the selected cases. Multiple sources were utilized, including published
31 literature, official reports, project documentation. The data collected
32 focused on the objectives, methodologies, outcomes, and impacts of each
33 initiative, as well as the roles and contributions of different stakeholders
34 involved.
- 35 4. Data analysis: A systematic and comparative analysis was conducted to
36 identify common themes, patterns, and key findings across the selected
37 cases (see Table 1 for the common themes used). The analysis involved
38 categorizing the data, looking for recurring themes. It was aimed to
39 identify success factors, challenges, and lessons learned from the analyzed
40 initiatives.
- 41 5. Synthesis: Based on the analysis of the selected initiatives, a synthesis of
42 the findings was aimed to be developed. This synthesis' purpose was to
43 highlight the key insights, successful strategies, and recommendations for
44 implementing a systematic effort of children's participation that involves
45 multiple stakeholders.

1 For this effort, the methodology described above provides a systematic
 2 approach to analyze and evaluate examples of children's participation initiatives at
 3 various scales. It incorporates a comprehensive literature review, purposive case
 4 selection, data collection from multiple sources, comparative analysis, and
 5 synthesis of findings to propose a systematic effort involving diverse stakeholders.
 6 The methodology aims to contribute to the development of effective strategies and
 7 recommendations for promoting meaningful children's participation in decision-
 8 making processes.

11 Results

13 The Results section of this study presents the findings obtained through a
 14 comprehensive methodology designed to analyze and evaluate examples of
 15 children's participation initiatives implemented globally. The investigation of
 16 several child participation processes is summarized in the following table (Table
 17 1).

19 **Table1.** *Comparison of the Initiatives' Characteristics and Fundamentals*

| | Y-PLAN | Play Has No Boundaries | Istanbul Asks Children | Children Council |
|-------------------------|---|---|---|--|
| Organization | Y-PLAN (Youth-Plan, Learn, Act Now) | Nilüfer Municipality | Istanbul City Council | Municipalities |
| Parent Organization | Center for Cities + Schools (CC+S) | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| Affiliated Institutions | University of California, Berkeley | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| Primary Goal | Integrating with the community and rethinking the urban ecosystem | Involving children in urban design, creating a children's park where disabled and non-disabled children can play together | Gathering opinions and suggestions of children aged 6-14 about Istanbul | Allowing children to express their demands, have a say in decision-making processes, and contribute to municipal processes |

20

| | | | | |
|----------------------|---|---|--|---|
| Target Audience | Marginalized young users of the city | Disabled and non-disabled children | Children aged 6-14 | Children |
| Collaborators | Academia, K-12 schools, urban planning professionals, government officials | Academic stakeholders, city council, professional associations, municipality | Schools, NGOs, children and youth centers | Municipalities |
| Approach | Participatory and locally-driven urban planning | Participatory, Hands-on environmental education program | Gathering opinions through workshops and role-playing | Organizing children, learning about their rights, and contributing to municipal processes |
| Implementation Steps | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Project Planning 2. Start Up 3. Making Sense of The City 4. Into Action 5. Going Public 6. Looking Forward and Back | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Theoretical stage 2. Basic Design stage 3. Analysis and Preliminary Design stage 4. Playground Design stage | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Children become Istanbul Experts 2. Istanbul for Me... 3. Children Examine Istanbul/Istanbul under the Magnifying Glass 4. Istanbul's Medals | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Regular meetings, activities on various issues 2. awareness development about urban life, and expression of demands in a democratic environment |
| Key Feature | Projects carried out with the public, with participant proposals likely to be implemented. This promotes a sense of belonging for marginalized populations in decision-making processes | Active involvement of children in idea generation and throughout the project, strengthening their sense of ownership of the space | Gathering opinions and suggestions from children about Istanbul, considering it as their right to participate in decision-making processes | Allowing children to express their demands, have a say in decision-making processes, and contribute to municipal processes |
| Frequency | Frequent | One time | One time | Frequent |
| Involvement Mode | Active | Active | Passive | Representative |

1 Among them Y-Plan and Play Has No Boundaries are found to be most
2 comparable cases in that they both are supported by local governments and
3 academic stakeholders. They both successfully drive children into observation and
4 take action. In both cases, the projects completed are either realized or are
5 applicable. Most important of all, children are active participants of the process.

6 Y-plan goes one step further as the organization is initiated by the academia;
7 it is an ongoing research and the whole process is repeated on different occasions.
8 Here, we can say that sustainability of the organization provides consistency that is
9 necessary for proper upbringing of new generations. On the other hand, although
10 Play Has No Boundaries is a good example in which children find a chance to
11 pursue true participation, it has been a single attempt so we cannot generalize its
12 results and suggest that it has a progressive effect in upbringing of new generations
13 as responsible citizens.

14 The other two cases on the other hand, Istanbul Asks Children and Children
15 Councils, do not constitute academic support but are led by local governments.
16 These cases remain to be too general in content.

17 Istanbul Asks Children has paid immense attention to increase the number of
18 participating children. Therefore it has engaged with some educators and GNO's
19 that the project is conducted in large populations. However, the content is led by
20 the local government thus it has been too general. The questions are asked to
21 understand the perceptions of children; not to achieve immediate change. Here, the
22 children are also asked about solutions; however, the nature of the questions has
23 pushed children to suggest general solutions which are not applicable in most
24 cases.

25 Lastly, Children Councils established in some municipalities, appear to be
26 standing for form's sake in many cases. Although they argue that they will support
27 upbringing of responsible and participating youth, the events they hold are
28 restricted to celebration of special days and some festivals that almost use children
29 as decoration. Further more, the nature of these councils is based on
30 representation. Not all the children in a neighborhood have a say in this council.
31 Only a selected number of children are engaged in the process and rest of the
32 children are represented. Therefore, even if the councils served their purpose, they
33 can not affect the proper upbringing of the society but solely a group of children.

34 35 36 **Discussion**

37
38 The issue of participation, as can be understood from the variety of tasks it
39 encompasses, has a complexity and depth that cannot be provided from a single
40 center. The task of raising children as adult citizens who care for their cities can
41 only be achieved through collective and systematic work. Although it is a positive
42 development to see participatory design practices being implemented through
43 qualified but individual initiatives, we see that in projects developed under the
44 leadership of local governments, the identification of large-scale problems and the
45 development of superficial solution proposals are observed. It will be possible to
46 achieve numerous applicable and local solutions that reach the inclusiveness level

1 of local governments by adopting the qualitative and concrete applications of
2 individual initiatives, while truly ensuring children's participation.

3 Therefore, we can talk about a system consisting of at least 4 pillars, in which
4 local governments determine the limits of participation that can be achieved by
5 identifying the needs of the city, planning the budget and delegating authority; the
6 academia develops a vision by taking support from examples around the world and
7 designs the problem; civil society organizations assume the role of moderator; and
8 schools prepare children for participation practices that will take place in the
9 production of urban space with in-school applications in terms of thought and
10 behavior, and direct them to relevant organizations as incubation centers that
11 guarantee reaching every child.

12 Only in this way, by moving away from individual or generally applicable
13 large-scale applications, can a system be possible that reaches all children and
14 maintains continuous contact.

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