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**Children Establishing Their Capabilities: Preliminary Results of the Survey During
the First Children's World Congress on Child Labour**

by

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Abstract

The idea of this research project is to let the children establish their priorities developing a bottom-up strategy for understanding children's well-being. The subjects of this research are the children participating to the "Children's World Congress on Child Labour" that was held in Florence (Italy) between the 10th and the 13th of May 2004 organised by the Global March Against Child Labour and other associations. Children are called to express their opinion on the most relevant issues related to their childhood and adolescence and they are asked to identify a list of relevant capabilities.

The main aims of this paper are two. The first is to present a theoretical background on children capabilities. The second is to identify a list of relevant capabilities according to the results of an *ad hoc* survey and the qualitative information collected during a focus group discussion. In last section of the paper the research results are discussed on the base of their potential effect on present research on issues concerning children.

This paper is a result of the research project "Listen the Children Establishing their Priorities: Developing Bottom Up Strategies for Understanding Children's Well Being and Childhood and Its Impact on the Research on Child labour", a co-operation between the Children's World Congress on Child Labour (CWCCCL) organisers (specially the Global March Against Child Labour and Mani Tese) and the PhD Course in Politics and Economics of Developing Countries of the University of Florence. The research is carried out by a group of research of the University of Florence composed by development economists, statisticians, demographers, anthropologists and psychologists.

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1 Background

The United Nation (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (UN, CRC, 1989)¹ and the UN document *A world fit for children* (UN, 2002) pose a new ethical attitude towards children where children are no longer recipients of services or beneficiaries of protective measures, rather they are subjects of rights and participant in actions affecting them². It is relevant to note that in this conceptual framework recognising "children's rights means acknowledging human rights as a question of entitlement and of a consummate responsibility to ensure their effective enjoyment" (Santos-Pais M. 1999 p. 6).

We argue that children³ are subjects of capabilities and we think that the capability approach⁴ can be very useful as a framework of thought and as a normative tool, in analysing children well-being and poverty and in individuating social policies for children human development. We also affirm that the capabilities can partially change according to the age of the human beings (see also Lloyd-Sherlock, 2002).

However, up to now only a couple of studies deals with children capabilities. Therefore the reason of this research project has its roots in the importance to legitimate the theoretical foundation of child as subject of capabilities and to determine a list of relevant capabilities for children. Furthermore, another incentive to this kind of research was the fact that few studies have been carried out asking directly to the subjects of capabilities which are their capabilities and how relevant these are for them as a group of human beings.

The international event of first "Children's World Congress on Child Labour" (CWCCCL) -that was held in Florence (Italy) between the 10th and the 13th of May 2004- was considered by the authors an important occasion to verify the theoretical hypothesis. Indeed, the Children World Congress -organised by the Global March Against Child Labour and other roots associations- represents one of the major expression of the commitment of civil society in collaborating for the effective protection of all children against work exploitation. It was the first ever international conference where children are the main speakers, decision-makers and beneficiaries⁵. Around 200 children -mainly between the age group 14-17 years- representing different regions, countries and organisations, coming from different cultures and backgrounds assembled in Florence to interact, share their experiences, dreams and aspirations and participate in different activities leading to the formation of Action Plans⁶.

The participants are chosen to represent their countries by children themselves. They have elected these children through consultation processes at the national and local levels (for further details see the appendix at the end of the paper). Most of these children delegates are former child labourers, given a new life through education and vocation training by rehabilitation centres or by the local civic organisations. Some children are still working to sustain their education fee⁷. Some children

¹ The foundation of almost all analyses on children issues are the UN CRC and the two ILO conventions on the Minimum Age (ILO, n°. 138, 1973) and on the Worst Forms of Child Labour (ILO, n°. 182, 1999)

² The CRC states the child's right to express his or her opinion freely and to have that opinion taken into account in any matter affecting the child.

³ Age -measured in number of completed years at last birthday (ILO, 2001)- is the parameter that international instruments generally use to define a child: "A child means every human being below the age of eighteen years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier" (art. 1 of the UN CRC).

⁴ www.capabilityapproach.org

⁵ Often children in particular are vulnerable to claims being made on and over them, which they have comparatively little scope to influence or dispute (White S. C. 2002, 1095-96).

⁶ www.globalmarch.org

⁷ For those not aware of the important division among the definition of child labour and child work please see ILO (2003).

have been selected by organisations such as Trade Unions and Child Rights Organisations to represent them at the Congress.

In order to let the children establish their priorities and to understand more about their capabilities we planned with the organisers (the Global March Against Child Labour and Mani Tese) an *ad hoc* survey, a focus group discussion and some study of cases.

In this study, children delegates are called to identify a list of relevant capabilities for children, to express their thought (as a sort 'World Congress') on the most important issues related to childhood and adolescence, on a world fit for children. The idea is to let the children establish their priorities, developing a bottom-up strategy for understanding childhood and children's well-being. In other words we are interested in what children are effectively able to do and to be, that is, on their capabilities.

The research group as well as the conference organisers firmly believe that the children delegates participating to the congress -as ex-child labourers and activists- can understand better than adults children's wishes on how child life should be. In principle, "there is no problem with the idea that (outsider) adults should be able to determine the best interest of (insider) children. In practice, however, there are often difficulties in the assumptions of superior understanding on the part of self-styled benefactors" (White S. C. 2002, 1101).

In the next section we present the main characteristics of the human capability approach with reference to children and we report a list of relevant children capabilities selected by Biggeri (2004). In section 3 we present the methodology used in the study outlining the main features of the instruments used. In section 4 the preliminary results of the study are reported. In the last section of the paper, we discuss the main findings of this study in terms of research perspectives.

2 The capability approach and a list of relevant capabilities for children

The human capabilities approach, developed by Amartya Sen and other authors during the last two decades, has provided the intellectual foundation for a different approach to human development and for including participation, human well-being and freedom as central features of development combining ethics with economics. This approach influenced and is influencing the thinking of development economists and has produced an important impact in UNDP research (Human Development Report, HDR) and programming.

We assert that the human capability approach -as an opportunity based theory and as a general normative framework for the evaluation of individual and social well-being- could provide an accurate theoretical underpinning to measure child well-being. In embracing this approach for children, we affirm that the child is a subject of specific capabilities. This means that "children should not simply be regarded as scale model of adults" (White S. C. 2002, 1095-96).

The capabilities are people's potential functionings. Functionings are beings and doings. "The difference between a functioning and a capability is similar to the difference between an achievement and the freedom to achieve something, or between an outcome and an opportunity. All capabilities together correspond to the overall freedom to lead the life that a person has reason to value (Robeyns I. 2003a, p. 63)." Human development is regarded as 'an expansion of capabilities' or of 'positive freedoms' (Sen 1999) and human beings are the ends of economic activity rather than its means. Indeed, although household or individual resources or commodities are important for generating children functionings (as achievements) and capabilities (as freedom to achieve, Sen 1995), they are only the means (or instruments). The ability to convert resources and commodities into capabilities and functionings depends on *conversion factors* (Robeyns, 2003b)⁸.

Explicitly, what matters for children's well-being are the children's functionings and capabilities⁹. Through the capability approach we are interested on what children are effectively able to do and to be¹⁰.

The capability approach recognises that human well-being is multidimensional and that the relevant capabilities are complementary and should advance at the same time. It also addresses positively the fact of human diversity¹¹ since the capability space leaves room for diversity even if a list of relevant capabilities is selected, allowing a lot of space in each country for the way in which this will be implemented.¹²

⁸ The '*internal*' factors such as personal characteristics (e.g. physical conditions, sex, skills, talents, intelligence) which convert the characteristics of the resources (or commodities) into individual functionings. The conversion is also related to '*external*' factors as social characteristics (e.g. public policies, institutions, legal rules, traditions, social norms, discriminating practices, gender roles, societal hierarchies, power relations, public goods) and/or environmental characteristics (e.g. infrastructure, country public infrastructure, climate).

⁹ Here we are not recalling the Sen notion of agency since we think, as Nussbaum, that "all the important distinctions can be captured as aspects of the capability/functioning distinction" (Nussbaum 2000).

¹⁰ "A functioning is an achievement, whereas a capability is the ability to achieve. Functionings are, in a sense, more directly related to living conditions, since they are different aspects of living conditions. Capabilities, in contrast, are notions of freedom, in the positive sense: what real opportunities you have regarding the life you may lead" (Sen 1987, p. 36). Indeed, well-being achievements can be measured in functionings, whereas well-being freedom is reflected by a person's capability set.

¹¹ "The primary thrust of recent social science attention has been to stress the diversity of childhoods across cultural context, space and time, with an attempt to develop a more child-centred forms of analysis". (White S. C. 2002, 1095-96).

¹² The capability approach needs a plural informational base, including information concerning freedom, rights and distributive justice.

At least five important issues/aspects related to children capabilities can be pointed out (Biggeri 2004).

Firstly, in the case of a child, the ability to convert resources into capabilities and functionings depends also on parents/guardian decisions. This implies that the child conversion factors are subjected to further "constraints". It also implies that a child is subject to different capabilities than adults and it may suggest that these capabilities can vary accordingly to the age.

A second relevant aspect to be examined is connected to the relation among different capabilities and different functionings. The impossibility for a child to achieve a functioning may constrain another capability of the child.

The third aspect concerns the life cycle and the importance of age in defining the relevant capabilities. An analysis of the capabilities during the life cycle at different ages could help us to reveal impediments to a "decent life" (Lloyd-Sherlock, 2002) and may be relevant to capture the gender dimension. Childhood foundations is complex and composed by different sensitive periods thus timing antipoverty interventions are required (Yaqub, 2002).

The fourth observation concerns the intergenerational transfer of capabilities. Child's capabilities are affected by the intergenerational transfer of capabilities and functionings and achieved functionings of their parents as an outcome of a cumulative path-dependent process that can involve different generations of human beings. This reflects the absence of available choices, and underlines Sen's notion of "development as freedom" (Mehrotra and Biggeri 2002a). In this sense we also argue that the child can be at the same time the centre of an intergenerational transfer of capabilities and -as future parent- a vehicle of change. The children from this point of view are the key resources for a better future. Indeed, " ... capabilities that adults enjoy are deeply conditional on their experience as children' (Sen, 1999a).

The last issue concerns the role of children in the construction of future conversion factors. They can change her/his conversion factors and people, through participation, can modify external conversion factors. The 'speaking-out' surveys conducted by Unicef (and the congress organised by the UN, UNICEF, 2002) underline that children are aware of their rights, while the first Children World Congress on Child Labour organised by the Global March Against Child Labour emphasises that children are subject of capabilities.

A list of relevant children's capabilities

According to Nussbaum and Robeyns the proper way to operationalise the human capability approach is to define a list of central capabilities. Indeed, an important step forward -to narrowing down the capability approach from a framework to a theory (Robeyns, 2003b) is the selection of a list of fundamental capabilities.

In this section we present the list of relevant children capabilities proposed by Biggeri (2004)¹³.

The method used by Biggeri is the one based on four steps suggested by Robeyns (2003a). In the first step, Biggeri selects relevant capabilities for evaluating children well-being proposing a list.

¹³ To our knowledge no other list of central (relevant) capabilities for children in the literature. The two exceptions are the papers presented at the conference on the capabilities approach in Pavia by myself (Biggeri M., 2003) and by Di Tommaso M. (2003). Di Tommaso uses of Nussbaum list of central capabilities and she selects 7 out of 10 capabilities by considering children as subjects of capabilities.

This list has its roots in previous work on central capabilities -Nussbaum¹⁴ (2000, 2003) and Robeyns (2003a)¹⁵ - and on literature on children issues mainly by UNICEF and UNESCO.

Second, he justifies the selection of each capability using previous works and using some of the 41 articles of the UN CRC. For a legitimacy purpose, it is rather important to recall the fact that the CRC is, at present, ratified by 191 States. However, "Here, there was no social movement preceding the granting of rights, indeed there was no participation by children at all in the formulation of the CRC" (Lewis, 1998).

This list captures the specificity of children and the generality among children as a group (no age and gender is taken into consideration). The capabilities on the list include all elements and no dimension that is relevant for the analysis -in our case children well-being- has been left out.

For the theoretical framework he identifies the following list of children central capabilities:

1. **Life and physical health:** being able to born, being able to be physically healthy and enjoy a life of normal length
2. **Love and care:** Being able to love and being loved by those who care for us and being able to be protected *
3. **Mental well-being:** being able to be mentally healthy
4. **Bodily integrity and safety:** being able to be protected from violence of any sort
5. **Social relations:** being able to be part of social networks and to give and receive social support *
6. **Participation:** to participate in and have a fair share of influence and being able to receive objective information *
7. **Education:** being able to be educated
8. **Freedom from economic and non-economic exploitation:** being able to be protected from economic and non-economic exploitation *

¹⁴ Nussbaum presented the following list central Human capabilities (Nussbaum, 2003, p. 41-42):

1. Life
2. Body Health
3. Body Integrity
4. Sense, Imagination and Thought
5. Emotions
6. Practical Reasons
7. Affiliation
8. Other species
9. Play
10. Control Over One's Environment.

¹⁵ Robeyns presented the following list regarding gender issues (Robeyns I. 2003):

1. Life and physical health: being able to be physically healthy and enjoy a life of normal length
2. Mental well-being: being able to be mentally healthy
3. Bodily Integrity and safety: being able to be protected from violence of any sort
4. Social relations: being able to be part of social networks and to give and receive social support
5. Political empowerment: being able to participate in and have a fair share of influence on political decision-making
6. Education and knowledge: being able to be educated and to use and produce knowledge
7. Domestic work and nonmarket care: being able to raise children and to take care of others
8. Paid work and other projects: being able to work in the labour market or to undertake projects, including artistic ones
9. Shelter and environment: being able to be sheltered and to live in a safe and pleasant environment
10. Mobility: being able to be mobile
11. Leisure activities: being able to engage in leisure activities
12. Time-autonomy: being able to exercise autonomy in allocating one's time
13. Respect: being able to be respected and treated with dignity
14. Religion: being able to choose to live or not to live according to a religion.

9. **Shelter and environment:** being able to be sheltered and to live in a safe and pleasant environment
10. **Leisure activities:** being able to engage in leisure activities and undertake projects
11. **Respect:** being able to be respected and treated with dignity
12. **Religion and identity:** being able to choose to live or not according to a religion and identity *
13. **Time-autonomy:** being able to exercise autonomy in allocating one's time *
14. **Mobility:** being able to be mobile *

Note that the sign * means "in accordance with the age and maturity of the child".

As mentioned in the previous section, it is important to note that some capabilities can be more relevant as age increases and thus in accordance with the age of the child [whether the child is in her early childhood (from 0-5 years old), to her childhood (6-11) or in her adolescence (12-17)]. For instance, the full list of capabilities may be enjoyed only by the older category of children, while it is possible that different ages may give different importance to the above mentioned list of capabilities.

However, Biggeri (2004) motivates the choice of each capabilities relating them to previous works on central human capabilities and then establishing a link between children capabilities and the articles of the UN CRC.

As already asserted in the background section with this study we want to move a step forward and give full legitimacy by asking directly to the children to express their opinion and to identify their capabilities.

3 Methodology

Phases of the research

In September 2003 -after an informal agreement between the CWCCCL organisers and the PhD Course in Politics and Economics of Developing Countries of the University of Florence- the research planning started.

Since September several meetings among the members of the group of research -composed by development economists, statisticians, demographers, anthropologists and psychologists- and four general meetings with the partners of this research project took place¹⁶.

As reported in the time frame of the research plan (Figure 1), a first general meeting with GMACL and Mani Tese was held in Florence the 7th October 2004 with an agreement on the research plan. The second general meeting occurred in Florence in December 2003. Third general meeting with CWCCCL organisers occurred in Florence at the end of March 2004. Since, both quantitative an *ad hoc* survey and qualitative FGD methods were used research in the research the fourth general meeting was held at the beginning of May before the congress for the final agreement on the questionnaire and for the agreement on Focus Group Discussion with children delegates from South Asian Countries. The qualitative methods, focus group discussion (FGD), case studies and in-deep interviews were used, parallel to the quantitative survey.

The survey

The *ad hoc* survey is based on a core questionnaire designed by the research group. During the above mentioned period more than ten meetings took place just for preparing the questionnaire.

The questionnaire is divided into five different sections: i.) Introductory Section: Country, Data on age, sex, ii.) Education Section: years of school, formal/informal education etc. iii.) Work Section: information about the reasons, the period and the type of nature of work, etc. iv.) Capabilities Section (the core of the questionnaire) v.) General and Policy Section.

The questionnaire is composed by a total of 20 items some of which are further divided into sub-questions for a total of 60 questions. As stated at the beginning of the questionnaire all the information collected in the survey are strictly confidential and are used for statistical purposes only. For the full questionnaire see the forthcoming report (Biggeri et al. forthcoming). A brief manual on research purpose and on how to conduct the interviews was prepared as well.

The questionnaire was conceived to maintain the full attention and participation of the children and thus to be submitted in 25 to 45 minutes maximum (if the child has to answer to all the section i.e. including work section). In order to reduce the length of the questionnaire the part on children capabilities according to age was eliminated and this issue left to the FGD. We decided that a capability is relevant if at least one children as identified it (Q12) and if it has considered by a large majority (as 3/4) as important or very important (Q14).

A full census of the population was conducted.

Ex-ante we were aware of a possible risk with children's participation. "In public meetings children may treated as window dressing, tokens of child participation; they may be treated as though they are representative of their peers when they are not; adolescents may be considered to speak for young children when they are in fact closer to adulthood." (UNICEF 2002, p. 56) Furthermore,

¹⁶ This project is a co-operation between the Children's World Congress on Child Labour (CWCCCL) organisers (specially the Global March Against Child Labour and Mani Tese) and the PhD Course in Politics and Economics of Developing Countries of the University of Florence.

considering the age of the participants since the beginning we also were aware that the children between 5 to 10 years old were non represented physically and that young children 10 to 13 years old were underrepresented. This is another reason why we left out the age issue from the questionnaire while it was considered in the FGDs.

The questionnaire as well as the validity of the manual were tested. The pilot tests -which revealed to be fundamental- were conducted at the end of April both in Italy and in Nepal and they gave very important feed back. The final questionnaire was translated into five languages (English, Italian, Portugal, Spanish, French) at the beginning of May.

Then, we prepared a day workshop for training the interviewers. Ten PhD students of the course in Policy and Economics of Developing Countries of the University of Florence were trained i) on the capability approach, ii) on how to conduct interviews (including exercises of cross-simulation) and iii) on the methods to conduct interviews to children. We distributed to them the brief manual and other materials as well as a letter (to certify the current research), a booklet (as gift for the children) and a certificate of participation for the children.

The interviews were scheduled between the 9th and the 13 of May 2004 according to the conference timing (in co-ordination with organisers). Each interviewer had to interview around ten children. In order to facilitate the direct dialog with the children (or the interpreter/accompanying person if needed) the children where divided among the interviewers according to the languages spoken. Interviews were conducted directly with the children and with the help of interpreters only if needed.

The major difficulties occurred at the time of interviewing children since the research group did not want to disturb the conference and the several meetings where the children were actively involved. We agreed with all of them and the accompanying person the place and the time of the interview but in more than half of the cases the interview time was rescheduled in order to reduce at minimum the interference with the children participation to the conference meetings.

The data collected were then entered in electronic format and then elaborated.

The FGD and case studies

Only a FGD was held with children delegates coming from South Asian countries. The discussions focused on capabilities of children, on the age dimension of the capabilities analysed through the questionnaire and on definitions of children activities (child work and child labour, children non-economic activities).

There was no need for the preparation of the FGD since the children were fully in the subject. The FGD was indeed at the end of the congress (13th of May) after three days of intense activities.

Ten case studies were carried out through in-depth interviews so as to capture sensitive issues - such as, among others, age, gender and child labour issues. Case studies included male and female children.

In-deep interviews were conducted with the CWCCCL organisers for the understanding their definitions of children activities (child work and child labour, children non-economic activities).

4. Preliminary Results

In this section we present the preliminary results of the research. We concentrate the attention on the core of questionnaire the capabilities section and on the relationship between age and capabilities in the FGD.

4.1 Survey Preliminary Results

As already mentioned all the children delegates were interviewed¹⁷. The main characteristics of the children delegates are reported in table 1. As already mentioned the younger child were more than one third of all the delegates. Female delegates were 59 percent while the male delegates 41 percent. The share of delegates coming from developing countries was a bit more than that of developed countries.

Table 1 Main characteristics of the population surveyed (percent)

Age	11-14	34.6
	15-17	65.4
	Total	100.0
Sex	female	58.7
	male	41.3
	Total	100.0
Country	Developed	47.1
	Developing	52.9
	Total	100.0
Worked	No	43.3
	Yes	56.7
	Total	100.0

Source: our elaboration on survey results

The core section on capabilities is composed by four main questions.

The first question of the section is an open question and it fundamental since children are asked to indicate Q12: "What are the most important opportunities a child should have during his/her life?"¹⁸.

The child, at this point of the interview, is not aware of capability as concept and about the theoretical list of children capabilities. This question allows thus to identify which capabilities are relevant without interference or suggestion. If the child mentions a new capability it is recorded if he/she mentions one of the list it is marked (in the case difficult interpretation the interviewer wrote down it).

¹⁷ 104 out of 105 children delegates were interviewed. Indeed, we were not able to find a children delegate from Brazil Trade Unions since we presume he left the conference with the accompanying person before the end. The children fully involved (including the children delegates) were around 200. Originally more delegates had to be involved as stated by the children themselves in the final declaration. "Although our Congress has been successful, we are missing some of our important delegates. These children were already selected to participate in the Congress. But, these children did not get visas necessary to come to Italy because the Italian government thought them as a security risk. These children who were not allowed to attend, felt very discriminated. We all missed their ideas at the Congress, because these children are from the regions where child labour is most common. At the next Congress, we would like to see them participate because their voice is their vision and the world must hear it." (from children final declaration, May 2004, www.globalmarch.org).

¹⁸ The note for the interviewer stated: Do not read out, multiple answers, add capabilities not present in the list of 14 at the end of it.

The results are reported in table 2. All the capabilities of the list were effectively chosen by at least one children. This is a very important result in order to legitimate it. Five new capabilities were added by the interviewers according to children delegates thought but all of them could be re-conducted to the list of 14¹⁹. Some capabilities were more frequently recalled than others i.e. Education, Love and care, Leisure activities and Life and physical health.

Table 2 Results of core question on identified capabilities (percent)

RELEVANT CAPABILITIES	Q12
	Identified
1) Life and physical health	26.9
2) Love and care	67.3
3) Mental well-being	3.8
4) Bodily integrity and safety (eg. healthy food)	15.4
5) Social relations	7.7
6) Participation / information	12.5
7) Education	88.5
8) Freedom from economic and non-economic exploitation	9.6
9) Shelter and environment	12.5
10) Leisure activities and undertake projects	30.8
11) Respect	11.5
12) Religion and identity	2.9
13) Time autonomy	9.6
14) Mobility	2.9

Source: our elaboration on survey results

In order to enable children to separate as much as they could from their life experience we inserted the question Q13: "How important/unimportant has been this opportunity in your life." Indeed, the child had to concentrate on his/her own experience. This question was conceived as functional to the following central question regarding children as a group. The interviewer had to read each the Q13 for one capability and then for the same capability asking the central question Q14: "In your opinion how important/unimportant is this opportunity for children during their life." One of four possible close answers had to be chosen (excluding the no answer) unimportant, little importance, important and very important.

We decided before the survey that a capability is relevant if at least one children as identified it (Q12) and if it has considered by a large majority (as 3/4) as important or very important. As reported in table 3 all the capabilities were not only identified but all of them were considered important or very important by a large majority of the children's delegates.

Furthermore, the results obtained by dividing the delegates into categories -as specified in table 1 i.e. by sex (male-female), by type of country of origin (developed-developing) and by being working status- validate the list of relevant capabilities presented. The children in each sub-category identified all the fourteen capabilities and for more than 3/4 of the answers these were important or very important (Biggeri et al forthcoming).

The last question of the section Q15: "Among the aspects we discussed could you tell me which are the three most important opportunities a child should have during his/her life?" is important to understand the most relevant capability without pretending to classify them. Among them the first mentioned are again Education, Love and care, Life and physical health Leisure and activities (table 3). Mobility is never mentioned among one of the three most important.

¹⁹ For instance, national identity was decided to be inserted in Religion and cultural identity.

Table 3 Results of core question on capabilities (percent)

RELEVANT CAPABILITIES	Question	Q14 Important or very important	Q15 Indicate three most relevant
1) Life and physical health	To be able to enjoy good health	97.1	35.8
2) Love and care	To be able to be loved and cared by your parents and/or tutors, brothers and friends	97.1	54.1
3) Mental well-being	To be able to feel happy	97.1	10.1
4) Bodily integrity and safety (eg. healthy food)	To be able keep body integrity	93.3	6.2
5) Social relations	To be able to participate in the activities of your family or neighbourhood	92.3	4.1
6) Participation / information	To be able to express your personal opinions and ideas and be listened	98.1	19.3
7) Education	To be able to attend school and non-formal courses	98.1	74.8
8) Freedom from economic and non-economic exploitation	To be able to be free from any form of exploitation	99.0	23.4
9) Shelter and environment	To be able to live in a comfortable/safe home and clean environment	95.2	14.1
10) Leisure activities and undertake projects	To be able to play	98.1	25.0
11) Respect	To be able to receive respect and consideration from anybody	95.2	12.4
12) Religion and identity	To be able to attend religious celebrations and cultural festivals	81.7	3.2
13) Time autonomy	To be able to have enough time to do what you really like	95.2	10.4
14) Mobility	To be able to move freely and visit relatives or friends	88.5	0.0

Source: our elaboration on survey results

4.2 Focus Group Discussion

The FGD was conducted the fourth day the 13th of May in the early afternoon²⁰.

The children were all ex-child labourers and they did not need any introduction to the subject. They had discussion in their countries and during the three full days of the congress then all of them were interviewed so we presume they comprehend or know quite well the issue.

The FGD was structured into two parts strongly related each other. The first part was on the age and capabilities while the second on the definition of children activities as positive or negative for the child well-being.

Eight children were invited to participate. They were coming from South Asian countries (Nepal 3, Pakistan 2 and India 3). All the children (one aged 13 years old, one 14, two 15 and four 16) were quite mature and they could understand each other and all understood at least some English (four accompanying persons assisted to the FGD as well, but not as participant). The group was composed by six boys and two girls.

They discussed each capability according to the age categories suggested. The children discussed and reached a common position and attributed the capability according to the age of the child. The result of the FGD complement quite well the results of the survey. The younger was the age category less capabilities were given to the child. Table 4 reports the schematic results of the discussion. The results underline that the relevance of capabilities for children is general but for some capabilities they varies according to age. In particular two capabilities are not relevant at all between 0 and 5 years old Time autonomy and Mobility. Mobility becomes relevant or central (very relevant) only after the age of 14.

Table 4 FGD on age and capabilities

RELEVANT CAPABILITIES	AGE GROUP			
	0-5	6-10	11-14	15-17
1) Life and physical health	+++	++++	++++	++++
2) Love and care	++++	++++	++++	+++/-
3) Mental well-being	++++	++++	++++	++++
4) Bodily integrity and safety (eg. healthy food)	++++	++++	++++	+++/-
5) Social relations	++++	++++	++++	++++
6) Participation / information	++(*)	+++	+++/-	+++/-
7) Education	++(*)	+++/-	+++/-	+++/-
8) Freedom from economic and non-economic exploitation	++++	++++	++++	++++
9) Shelter and environment	++++	++++	++++	++++
10) Leisure activities and undertake projects	++++	++++	++++	+++
11) Respect	+++	+++	++++	++++
12) Religion and identity	++	+++	++++	++++
13) Time autonomy	--	+++	++++	++++
14) Mobility	--	+	++	++++

No relevance --, little relevance -

Relevant ++, very relevant +++/ and ++++

(*) for children aged 4 and 5

Source: our elaboration on FGD results

²⁰ Only a FGD was carried out. Initially two FGDs were planned. There was no time for both so the FGD on gender issues was not carried out since a workshop was held during the congress.

6 Conclusions

The main finding of the research are that the child as human being is subject of capabilities some of which are specific. The research also identifies a list of relevant capabilities and through the FGD analyse the different capabilities according to the age of the child. Therefore, this research is a base for further analysis.

The capability approach *per se* is a powerful tool for the understanding of children well-being in terms of capabilities since we are forced to think about the complexities that characterise child life. We think that the human capability approach -as an opportunity based theory and as a general normative framework for the evaluation of individual and social well-being- can provide an accurate theoretical underpinning to measure child well-being and complement children rights conceptual framework linking it with economics. Indeed, we believe that the human capability approach could become the theoretical base for the measurement of child well-being (at micro and macro level e.g developing a HDI for children), the definition and measurement of child poverty, the definition concerning children activities (e.g. child labour, children's non-economic activities) and for the design of social policies for children human development.

For instance, it challenges the definitions of child labour and child work and it calls attention of policy makers on the relevance of the non-economic activities and their effect on children capabilities. Indeed, the actual definitions (UN, UNICEF, WB, ILO) and categories used in the literature lack of theoretical foundation and therefore contain some problems in terms of coherence and they have some shortcomings for the analysis of children's work (especially from a gender perspective) and of children's well-being. The most relevant debate on the definition and classification of child work concerns the household chores performed by children and if and until which level (in terms of hours) they could be compared to children's work. Indeed, in most of the literature on child work/labour, household chores are not considered economic activities. This implies that children that perform household chores, even if at an intense level, are not accounted in child work statistics (economic and non-economic activities). Thus, for instance, by definition there is a 'gender bias' in the analysis of child work²¹, since more boys than girls are economically active, but girls are more engaged in household chores (Biggeri et al, forthcoming).

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²¹ "The estimates show that there are no significant gender differences in the global incidence of children at work. In both the 5-9 and 10-14 year age brackets, boys and girls are equally likely to be engaged in economic activity. Only as boys and girls grow older do we observe a widening gap, with more boys working than girls" ILO (2002).

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Appendix

The First Children's World Congress on Child Labour and the selection of participants²²

The first Children's World Congress on Child Labour was held in Florence, Italy on 10-13 May 2004. Organised by the Global March Against Child Labour and other associations, the event brought together 200 children to participate in the first ever international conference where children are the main speakers, decision-makers and beneficiaries. The children, who are mainly former child labourers, met and discussed the issues they face in life and expressed their experience of child labour and their solutions to this complex problem that still affects more than 246 million children world wide (ILO, 2003). Children coming from different cultures and backgrounds assembled to interact, share their experiences, dreams and aspirations and participate in different activities leading to the formation of Action Plans. They came face-to-face with the world leaders and some of the heads of the UN agencies to challenge and question their performances. The organisers were and are confident that children, "more than anyone else, are concerned with the present situation. They have first-hand knowledge of the suffering that is brought by child labour. For that reason the children themselves must be the ones who analyse the situation from their own perspective, propose solutions, and, in their own language, tell the world how to build a more equal and humane world for them and future generations." www.globalmarch.org.

Programme of the first Children's World Congress on Child Labour

May 10-13 2004, Florence, Italy.

Around 200 children representing nearly 50 countries gathered for the first ever Children's World Congress on Child Labour in Florence, Italy to share their views and to demand a child labour free world.

Day 1: Monday May 10th (Interviews)

Inaugural session

Panel discussion

Thematic workshops of children

The children agreed upon several common issues and problems and expressed their views on them.

Day 2: Tuesday May 11th (Interviews)

The regional workshop and round-table of hope sessions

Round-table discussion of adults

Day 3: Wednesday May 12th (Interviews)

The draft declaration was finally presented to all the child delegates to have their consensus.

Accountability session

Closing Ceremony

Day 4: Thursday May 13th (Interviews and FGD)

The final day of the Congress saw thousands of children and adults gathering in the centre of the city of Florence.

Selection Criteria and Selection Process

Children from all continents participated in activities to discuss and bring together ideas of actions to end child labour. Yearlong activities have been on in different countries, preparing for the selection of children. They selected their own representatives to Florence. These representatives brought National Action Plans at the event. These plans were created by the children participating in the various national activities supported by Global March partners, national and regional co-ordinators together with the Trade Unions, teachers' organisations and child rights' groups. Therefore, most of these children are advocates of child rights in their local communities and have gained a wealth of experience and leadership skills in their role as crusaders against exploitation of children.

Selection Process and Suggested Criteria for Child Participants

The participants will be selected with an equal balance of girls and boys between the ages of 10 and 17 years old. They will be chosen by a fair and democratic selection process where children themselves will select their own representatives at a series of national and regional consultations. These young representatives will present the views, concerns and problems of their country or region.

The number of children chosen from each country will be mainly according to the number of child labourers in each country.

²² www.globalmarch.org web-site.

Common Criteria for All Participants

Candidates should be between the ages of 10 to 17 years.

Candidates should be personally motivated for the cause of ending child labour and promoting universal, quality education.

First priority should be given to candidates who have demonstrated their commitment and concern through their own actions against child labour and for education.

Candidates should be fully aware of the rights of the child.

Candidates should be willing and able to speak publically about the issue of child labour and education.

Candidates should be willing to freely and openly share their ideas and opinions.

Candidates should be interested and willing to listen to and learn from other children.

Candidates should understand the importance of faithfully representing the views and interests of the children they represent.

Candidates will be selected to represent both sexes equally, and will be drawn from all races, religions and geographic regions. There will be no discrimination of any kind based on a child's race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or any other status.

Candidates must have the authorisation and support of their families, guardians and tutors for their participation in the World Congress and the preparatory events.

I - Additional Criteria for Nationally Selected Representatives

Candidates must have participated in their local or national children's consultation.

Candidates must have been selected by their peers in a fair and democratic process.

Candidates must try to be familiar with and represent the other child labourers of their country.

II - Additional Criteria for Regionally Selected Representatives

Candidates must have participated in their regional children's consultation.

Candidates must have been selected by their peers in a fair and democratic process.

Candidates must try to be familiar with and represent the other child labourers of their region.

III - Additional Criteria for Organisational Representatives

The organisations represented at the World Congress must have clearly demonstrated and expressed their commitment to ending child labour and promoting universal, quality education.

Candidates must be selected through a transparent process within their organisation.

Candidates must be fully aware of the activities, priorities and structure of their organisation.

Candidates must have a mandate from the Board of their organisation to bring back the declaration and action plan developed at the World Congress for careful consideration and discussion within the organisation.

IV - Additional Criteria for Internationally Selected Participants

Candidates must have distinguished themselves through outstanding efforts against child labour and for education.

V - Additional Criteria for Children Representing Different Groups of Child Labourers

Insofar as possible, candidates must have been selected by their peers in a fair and democratic process.

Candidates must be familiar with and accountable to other child labourers from the group they represent.