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## Conclusions of the Needs Analysis

Based on the UN Convention on the Rights of Children which regulates the participation rights on an international level (German National Committee for UNICEF 2001), children's rights in Germany are specified by the German Constitution, the Civil Code and the Child and Youth Welfare Act (Hansen et al. 2011 S.47ff). Additionally, regulations for day-care centres, municipal statutes and education plans of the federal states enshrine consultation and participation requirements of children and parents. The results of the needs assessment make it clear, however, that – even if the legal requirements for participation processes in educational institutions are clear and participation has been agreed to represent an objective of a modern education – the Kita under review has not (yet) fully implemented this agenda. The results of the interviews with parents and professionals corroborate the criticism expressed by Schweitzer (2010) that education plans are too abstract in design and of little help in practice to bring down the concept of participation from the heights of academia down to the level where the actual education of children takes place (Schweitzer 2010 41). The still predominant critical attitude and a lack of a structurally embedded culture of participation at the participating Kita demonstrate the need of developing concepts that are ready to be implemented and that can control participation processes.

In respect of the children's and young people's right of participation, the National Action Plan says that children must have the possibility "... of making their interests known as well as their desires, hopes, fears and problems wherever their concerns are involved. Therefore (...) the National Action Plan proposes instruments for the effective participation of children and adolescents. The development of quality standards for participation and the embedding of children's rights and participation rights in education plans, training and study regulations and in specific professional development courses for professional educators should be emphasized." (BMFSFJ (nd), 5) The German Signals project has been designed to develop and implement a curriculum that can be integrated into existing training and professional development modules and that will allow the establishment of a "culture of participation" in children's day care centres.