

Chapter 2

Transforming Children's Rights into Real Freedom: A Dialogue Between Children's Rights and the Capability Approach from a Life Cycle Perspective

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2.1 Introduction

Despite progresses, the long-standing material and immaterial deprivation of the children in many parts of the world has remained extraordinarily strong (UNICEF 2005; Trani et al. 2013). In particular, children are denied their rights including their right to participate to institutional changes.

In this paper we argue that a synergic dialogue between the Human Rights (HR) paradigm and the Human Development (HD) paradigm could be pivotal to rethink policies and actions.

In the last two decades the interchange between the HR and HD has increased substantially: a synthesis of this debate was found in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) most of which are indirectly connected to children issues. However, apart from this very important process aiming at settling a 'common vision of future goals and targets', much is still to be done from a theoretical, practical and empirical perspective. In the case of children this means to find synergies mainly between the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the Human Rights Approach (HRA) – which has been used by UNICEF as a theoretical and practical framework for analysis on children issues – and the capability approach (CA), which was developed by Amartya Sen (1985, 1999, 2009a) and Martha Nussbaum (2000, 2010) and other scholars (see for instance Comim et al. 2008; Deneulin and Shahani 2009), and provides the intellectual foundation for the HD paradigm of the UNDP.

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Therefore, the aim of this paper is twofold. On the one hand we explore the relationships and synergies between the CA and the HRA in the case of children. On the other hand we investigate if it is possible to analyse and to translate into practice this relationship using an equity, participatory and life cycle perspective.

The chapter is structured into five sections. In the second section, following Sen (2007) and Nussbaum (2006) we bridge the CA and the HRA, through the exploration of the main complementary relationships and synergies. Since both approaches are fully discussed in other chapters of this book, in this section we concentrate on links and synergies between the HRA and the CA. In the third section we focus on the role of participation and the life-cycle to combine and reinforce these two approaches. The analysis shows the potential positive synergies between rights and capabilities. In the fourth section we outline briefly some of the main policy implications of these findings. In the fifth section main conclusions are reported.

2.2 Bridging the CA and the HRA

In being both opportunity oriented the HRA and the CA can complement each other quite well from several perspectives.¹ In this section, we depart from identifying the strengths and weaknesses of each approach and how, by complementing and bridging each other, the main limits of both are overcome.

On the one hand the HRA is the main framework for national and international policies aimed at benefiting children. It is based on the 1989 UNCRC, some relevant ILO conventions, and on more recent other documents such as the Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD 2007) (with a supplementary document with reference to children), which has covered further areas of concerns. At the core of the HRA there are several principles and core articles. Two of them, Articles 5² and 12 of the UNCRC, are central for bridging the two approaches. In particular, Article 5 refers to children's "evolving capacity" for decision-making – a revolutionary concept in international law that has profoundly influenced the practice of organizations working in the field. The UNCRC Article 12 and the UN document, "A world fit for children" (UN 2002), already present a

¹ For proposals and discussions on how to complement the two approaches see, for instance, Sen (2004, 2005) and Nussbaum (2003). Attempts to link the CA and the HRA have been developed for adults by Nussbaum (1997), UNDP (2000), White (2002), OHCHR (2004), Alexander (2004) and Vizard and Burchardt (2007, 2011). For a tentative attempt to include participatory methods in the HRA, see Jonsson (2003). Recently, see the papers of Dixon and Nussbaum (2012) and Stoecklin and Bonvin (2014).

² Being able to influence decisions that affect an individual is one of the defining characteristics of human rights principles. When it comes to designing opportunities for them to participate, conditions need to be adjusted in accordance with a child's age and maturity (Article 5, UNCRC 1989).

new ethical attitude towards children in which children are no longer recipients of services or beneficiaries of protective measures, but subjects of rights and participants in actions affecting them. Thus, the right of children and young people to participate is a fundamental component of respecting them as holders of their own rights. Participation is one of the guiding principles of the UNCRC, yet it is arguably taken less seriously than the other key principles of universality, the best interests of the child, and survival and development (Karkara 2011).

On the other hand the main message of the CA is that social arrangements should aim to expand children's capabilities (opportunities and capacities) – their freedom to achieve valuable beings and doings.³ Following Aristotle, the capabilities of a person have been associated with human flourishing, which suggests they can be realized in many different ways (Nussbaum 2000, 2011). This reflection helps to depict the multidimensional nature of child development and their aspirations (Hart 2012). The emphasis on well-being's multidimensionality is a key factor of the CA with respect to the most standard approaches to poverty analysis and it is particular relevant for children (Biggeri and Mehrotra 2011; Trani et al. 2013). Indeed, during the childhood the salience of each critical domain evolves over time resulting in a complex process of capabilities expansion (that children and their parents have reason to value) and that is connected to other elements such as goods and services available and the individual and societal conversion factors (see later, for more details). Thus, the child's flourishing from a CA perspective is an intrinsically multidimensional phenomenon. Moreover, by extending the capability approach to children (Biggeri 2004; Biggeri et al. 2011a) we recognize that children are social actors endowed with agency and autonomy (according to their maturity) who are able to express in different ways their points of view and priorities. Sen's capability approach considers human well-being, participation and freedom to be central objectives of economic and social policies (Sen 1999). However, if the CA offers a framework for the evaluation of social arrangements more broadly based on opportunity freedom and values, on the other hand it has limited capacity to facilitate process freedom which is well captured by a HRA. The relevance of the HRA in terms of advocacy, awareness and reasons for action is fully acknowledged in the literature and by Sen (2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2009a) and Nussbaum (1997, 2000, 2003, 2006). Sen also emphasizes that the CA can help to promote human rights (Sen 2004, 2005). Indeed, even if basic capabilities and basic rights are interchangeable, the CA still provides a more comprehensive framework for analysing and interpreting child development and well-being, as it allows us to explore the consequences of promoting rights (Ballet et al. 2011).

Therefore, in order to build a solid bridge it is useful to recognize both positive aspects (many) and the limits that are few but relevant. In particular, the HRA presents some limitations in terms of a comprehensive tool for understanding

³ Capability is defined as "the various combinations of functionings (beings and doings) that the person can achieve. Capability is, thus, a set of vectors of functionings, reflecting the person's freedom to lead one type of life or another ... to choose from possible livings" (Sen 1992, p. 40).

children issues and for policy proposals, which can be fulfilled by the CA. Indeed, apart from few articles, most of the UNCRC articles see children as passive actors, and follow a paternalistic approach, which is typical of the classic human rights approach.⁴ In other words, one of the concerns of using the HR discourse is that it runs the risk of focusing solely on lobbying at the expense of practical solutions.

It may also lead to the inaccurate conceptualisation of impoverishment where there actually is none, simply because the international rights legislation does not reflect the socio-economic realities of children's lives, their relationships with other group members in their communities⁵

Furthermore, the prevalence of legalistic approaches to HR over libertarian (Freeman 1998), does not help the development of people's awareness of themselves as active social agents. In other words, the HR approach risks neglecting the importance of building active social citizens through participatory approaches. This also applies to children participation: its importance is well stated in the Article 12 of the UN CRC (1989) which defends the rights of the child to freedom of association and to peaceful assembly. However, when HR are evoked participatory processes play a residual role.

The CA is an opportunity based framework (similarly to the HRA) but at the same time is also an agency oriented approach. Therefore, the CA is able to take into account values and aspirations of children and their communities in a bottom-up manner. According to Biggeri et al. (Biggeri et al. 2011a, b), this allows for more flexibility and adaptation to different personal capacities (talent, skills and personal characteristics) and different cultural and societal contexts (Biggeri and Ferrannini 2014).

It is widely acknowledged that there is a potential tension between the intrinsic nature of the local communities and the implementation of human rights. HR can be not flexible enough to capture local contexts. Furthermore, when HR are perceived by the communities as the product of top-down political commitment, their fulfilment can be opposed by local norms which are at least apparently in conflict with them.

On the other side of the bridge, the HR can offer a long-term perspective on specific rights and duties and on the allocation of these duties. Following this direction, human rights can be seen as meta capabilities, and they can be seen as an expression of values and "local" human rights: this is the cornerstone. In other words the capability approach can extend the human rights agenda towards notions of secure rights and towards the "localisation" of international rights.

The CA positively addresses human and social diversity capturing the multidimensional and dynamic nature of child development. In particular, the dynamic nature of child development is depicted by the process of *evolving*

⁴ In practice, no child has participated in drafting the Convention (Lewis 1998; Feeny and Boyden 2004) and, more generally, the rights international conventions follow a top-down fashion (Harris-Short 2003; Lewis 1998), without roots at local level. Baraldi (2009), for instance, underlines that amongst over 40 articles, only one concerns participation, while all others are about the control of children.

⁵ Feeny and Boyden 2004, p. 18.

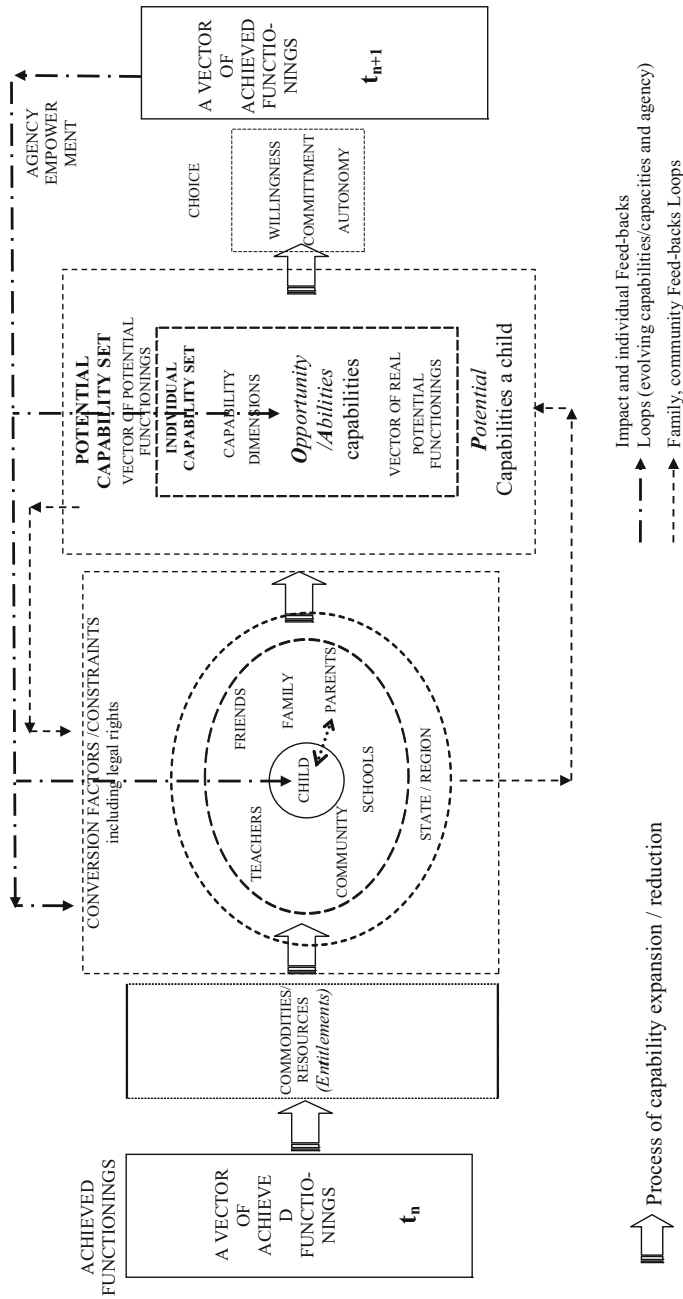


Fig. 2.1 Capability approach framework and the evolving capabilities (Source: Adapted from Trani et al. (2011b, p. 150), Trani et al. (2011a, p. 252), Ballet et al. (2011, p. 24), and Biggeri and Santi (2012, p. 378))

capabilities (Ballet et al. 2011), which incorporates the opportunity concept, the capacity concept (the evolving capacities concept in Art 5. UNCRC; see also Lansdown 2005) and the agency concept that evolve over time.

The evolving capabilities process, illustrated in Fig. 2.1, starts with the initial achieved functionings of a child at time t . The child is at the centre of the an ecology developmental process (Bronfenbrenner 1998), interacting with other agents (peers, teachers, family and community members) and drawing on and using entitlements (the availability of which is mediated through the families, schools, communities and regional/national entities). In the right end of the diagram (Fig. 2.1) the choice results in a functioning vector from the available capability set, which will determine the achieved functionings in the following time period ($t + 1$).

The dynamic core of the evolving capabilities process is expressed by the feedback loops that re-shape the potential capability set of the child and enhance or reduce agency and interact with conversion factors. The process of resources conversion into children's capabilities and functionings is significantly affected by how different institutions (including education, health services), norms and cultural characteristics interact with personal and household characteristics. In particular, legal rights – which should reflect human rights wisdom and opportunity in actual legislation – highlight entitlements. In the West bank city of Hebron, for instance, where roughly 800 Jewish settlers live surrounded by over 120,000 Palestinians, the visual anthropologist Hester Hertog shows how children's opportunities are denied by social norms and how the children themselves play an active role in discriminating and perpetuating the violence. Also Palestinian children of Hebron have difficulties in moving out and among Palestinian territories. This, in turns, limits children and adults social and geographical mobility.

It is important to notice that the child's capabilities are embedded in the community and affected by the capability set and achieved functionings (as also by their means, i.e. assets, disposable income) of their parents, as an outcome of a cumulative path-dependent process that can involve different generations of human beings. A life cycle perspective helps in understanding better different age barriers to the enjoyment of capabilities. Therefore, converting capabilities into functionings depends also on parents', guardians' and teachers' decisions, implying that the child's conversion factors are subject to further possible constraints. On the one hand parents/caregivers and teachers need to respect children's desires and freedoms but on the other hand they have to assist children to expand or acquire their capacity and further capabilities, even though this may need to be done against children's willingness and desire. This, for instance, "can become relevant to an education capability where parents and tutors can be inspired by different motivations and they can be either autonomy supportive (e.g. giving an internal frame of reference, providing meaningful rationale, allowing choices, encouraging self-perspective) or just controlling (e.g. pressure to behave in specific ways). ... Therefore, the degree of autonomy is relevant in the process of choice" (Biggeri 2007).

The interaction between different capabilities and achieved functionings is a key element with important feedback-loops. Education and health are not only basic

capabilities with an intrinsic values but they are also instrumental for other capabilities.

Sen's approach emphasizes the importance of self-determination, especially when he distinguishes between well-being freedom and the process freedom or agency freedom (e.g. Sen 1985, 1992, 2009b). In the case of children Sen admits that this point could be questionable:

If rights are interpreted in terms of freedoms that the right-holders should have, their usefulness must depend on how those freedoms are exercised. But can children take their own decisions? If the application of human rights to children must involve the children themselves taking well-considered decisions on the exercise of those freedoms then we would seem to be on the threshold of a manifest contradiction. Can children really take these decisions?⁶

However, this issue evaporates if connected to the concepts of agency and evolving capabilities (Ballet et al. 2011) and evolving capacities of the child, as stipulated in Art. 5. of UNCRC. According to Lansdown (2001):

There is no lower age limit imposed on the exercise of the right to participate. It extends, therefore, to any child who has a view on a matter of concern to them⁷

Fostering participation since childhood helps the formation of capable agents (Bonvin and Galster 2010) but it needs also to create spaces of dialogue for decision making and for institutional change.

At the same time Sen clearly points out that the CA alone can be in shortfall (Sen 2005), since it is not sufficient to secure neither the opportunity freedom nor the process freedom, which have to be guaranteed by a HRA and legal framework. Sen (2007) argues that the field of human rights plays a crucial role in shaping one's well-being by the adoption of "freedom" as a normative tool. Indeed, many different forms of freedoms, such as freedom from hunger, from escapable morbidity or from premature mortality, can consolidate the obligations that society has towards children. The human rights language reminds us that children have justified and urgent claims to certain types of treatment, wherever they may live. "Human rights generate reasons for action for agents who are in a position to help in the safeguarding or promoting of the underlying freedoms" (Sen 2007).

The diagram reported in Fig. 2.2 shows the centrality of HRA in capabilities expansion as real freedoms and vice versa. Indeed, the acquisition of capabilities which in turns strengthens children's agency enhances the capacity of children to see their rights fulfilled.

The CA can distinguish between three types of capabilities (see Figs. 2.1 and 2.2) – the capacity/ability concept (A-capabilities) and the opportunity concept (O-capabilities) that together remind the standard concept of capabilities as achievable functionings and, finally, the potential concept (P-capabilities) valued capabilities but not achievable at the moment but potentially achievable in the future

⁶ Sen 2007, p. 9.

⁷ Lansdown 2001, p. 2.

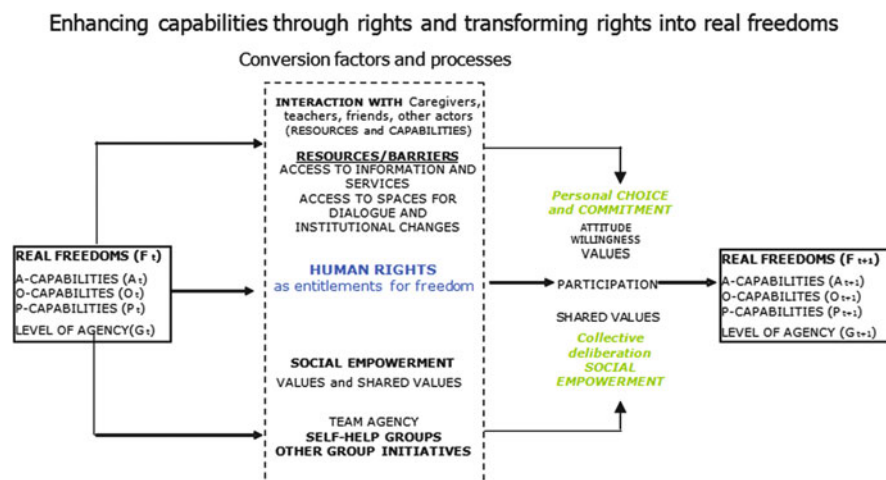


Fig. 2.2 Children's evolving capabilities and human rights at dialogue (Source: Adapted from Biggeri et al. (2011a, b))

(see also Gasper 2002, 2007; Bellanca et al. 2011). Another important concept to disentangle the evolving capabilities is that of agency (Ballet et al. 2011). This distinction is important to capture the dynamic dialogue between human rights and the evolving capabilities concept. It helps also to get a better perspective for complementary policy implications. The capability set, here reported as O-capabilities, is the overall set of achievable functionings, given the available conversion factors for instance social norms and the A-capabilities. For instance, in Pakistan in Swat (a Taleban area) a healthy girl (A-capability) has almost no chance to go to school against her willingness and to be educated and to develop her participation and agency. The school is in theory available but the social norms and fear of Taleban forbid her to be enrolled and attend the class (as well as to female teachers to teach). The girl is deprived of the O-capability to be educated i.e. it was not in her achievable functionings or capability set. However, this capability was in her Potential capability set (P-capabilities) i.e. those capabilities not reachable but considered by the girl (such as such as Malala Yousafzai and by part of the community) of high value. The community has to bring actions and policies to allow these children to get and to do (opportunity to be educated) what they have reason to value. In other words she was denied of her right to be educated.

In this context a two prong strategy needs to be accomplished. The first, and most obvious, is that the HR framework needs to be enforced in the area where the girl lives, while the second needed prong consists in an endogenous change within the society to re-elaborate social norms that do not allow the girl to flourish. These social and individual empowerment processes need time as well as an increased participation in decision making processes, and they need to be accompanied by access to information and spaces and tools for dialogue. All these changes would delineate and make explicit how in the "new" context the girl can receive her

Table 2.1 CRC articles and CRPD vs. capabilities domains

Children's capabilities domains	CRC articles direct	CRC articles indirect	CRPD articles directly correlated	CRPD indirectly correlated
Life and physical health	6, 23, 24, 25, 27, 29	(17), (19), (33), (37), (39)	10, 15, 16, 17, 22, 25, 28, 30	Preamble (1), (9), (12), (24), (26)
Love and care	7, 9, 18, 20, 21, 26, 27	(3), (10), (22)	8, 10, 22, 23	Preamble (x), 23
Mental well-being	23, 25, 27, 29, 37	(17), (19), (33), (39)	15, 16, 17, 25, 30	(9), (12), (24), (26)
Bodily integrity and safety	19, 25, 26, 37	(23), (24), (39)	11, 14, 15, 16, 17, 25, 28, 30	(9), (12) (24), (26)
Social relations	15, 27, 29	(12)	30	(19)
Participation	12, 13, 15, 17, 23, 29	(40)	3, 19, 29, 30	Preamble (o), (7), (9), (21), (24), (27)
Education	13, 24, 28	(32)	24, 27	(8), (9), (30)
Freedom from economic and non-economic exploitation	19, 32, 34, 36	(33), (35)	16, 27	(12)
Shelter and environment	24(c), 27(3), 29(c)		11	(25, (17)
Leisure activities	31	(40)	30	
Respect	16, 19, 23, 30, 39(2)	(2)	3	
Religion and identity	8, 14, 29, 30, 31	(2), (7), (37)	30	(22)
Time-autonomy		(31), (37)	3, 19 20	(26), (27), (18)
Mobility		(31), (37)	18, 19, 20	(30)
Mobility (as accessibility)			3, 9, 19	(4), (20), (21), (25), (27), (28), (29), (30)

Source: Our elaboration on Biggeri and Mehrotra (2011) and Biggeri (2004) (Apart from Article 27 the following rights are relevant: right to survival (Article 6); right to health care (Article 24); right to enjoyment of full and decent life for children with disabilities (Article 23); right to social security (Article 26); right to basic education (Article 28); right to protection from economic or sexual or other forms of exploitation (Articles 11, 32–5); right to freedom of expression, thought, conscience, religion, association and information (Articles 12–17 and 30))

education. The results of the first prong (action) without the second prong would be very limited and vice versa.

Operationally the linkages between the HRA and the CA can be captured from a multidimensional perspective. As reported in Table 2.1, capability well-being domains are those conceptualised directly by children (see Biggeri et al. 2006). These domains adequately capture most of the UN CRC articles (and even more, those of the UN CRPD) (for detail see the appendix at the end of the chapter and Biggeri and Mehrotra 2011). The data reported in Table 2.1 are extremely interesting and challenging as they show how it is both possible and fruitful to complement the CA and the HRA. They also help to understand if more rights need to be considered, or which rights enforcement can help to reduce the current capabilities deprivation, especially those indicated by Sen (1985) as basic capabilities.

Therefore, we can follow Nussbaum when she writes that “The capabilities approach is closely allied to the human rights approach” and that, despite their differences, the capabilities approach is in fact “a species of the human rights approach”.⁸ In fact, she emphasizes that the advantages of the capabilities approach, as she would call it, that lends precision to the language of rights. However, it is also true that many basic capabilities, as they appear in Nussbaum’s list, overlap with core human rights, such as those concerning political liberties and free choice of leisure time (among others).⁹

2.3 Participation, Rights and the Life-Cycle of Capabilities

As we have argued elsewhere individual and social empowerment and participation are key elements to favour children agency. From a life cycle perspective it is also important to consider the age and maturity of the child in defining the relevance of a capability approach and the level of participation. This means that a careful timing of interventions for children’s well-being is required, including different types of education objectives and socialisation according to the age and the maturity of the child and to the child aspirations (Hart 2012). Children, from this point of view, by becoming part of the decision making processes, can also contribute to shaping future conversion factors and be considered as a vehicle of change.

Rights have a central role in guaranteeing the opportunity freedom as well as the process aspects of freedom. However, as we have argued in the previous section, human rights discourse does not automatically translate into social change. The most crucial way to realize human rights is through creating opportunities,

⁸ Nussbaum (2006, p. 284).

⁹ In the end, both perspectives refer to basic standards of humanity that should be fulfilled in the process of development and that need to be secured for the most vulnerable (Nussbaum 2006). Very important linkages between the HRA and the CA in the case of children have recently been outlined in the paper of Dixon and Nussbaum (2012).

capacities and participation. By participation we mean the process of sharing decisions that affect one's life and – in a broader sense – the dynamics of the community individuals live in. We argue that participation is not only a right ("right to participate"), it is also central for the process and agency freedom and it is instrumental to capabilities expansion and facilitating the fulfillment of the rights.

Therefore, capabilities expansion through participation works on realizing human rights and vice versa through focusing on available opportunities and values. Thus the CA and participation help in a certain sense to actualize and localize the HRA.

According to Karkara (2011):

Supporting children and youth to be active right holders is central to the understanding of inclusive participation. Girls/young women and boys/young men from all backgrounds and diversities have their human right to participate in the realization of their rights based on their evolving capacities and age of maturity¹⁰

The framework presented by Karkara (2011) can be reinterpreted inserting the elements related to the capabilities expansion and agency as reported in Fig. 2.3.

Taking this holistic perspective requires a multi-sectoral and multidimensional response throughout the life cycle. This is to ensure that child and young people's participation is seen as cross cutting in all aspects of child rights programs, ranging from social budgeting, national plans of action in fields like protection, health, education, environment, water and sanitation, etc. (Karkara 2011). A life cycle analysis can help to identify the main capabilities according to the age, the talents and the maturity of the child. It also emphasizes that a careful timing of the interventions for children's well-being and well-becoming is required, including different types of education objectives.

The rights and capabilities enjoyed have an intrinsic value as well as an instrumental value in determining life trajectories of children and young adults. Figure 2.4 shows how HRA and the CA together can have an impact at individual and at community level.

Participation varies according to a child's evolving capabilities (opportunity, capacity and agency). Children can participate in different ways since the earliest ages. Competence comes through experience, and is not suddenly enjoyed at a certain age (Ballet et al. 2011). According to Karkara:

Our earliest interactions establish our sense of who we are and the confidence and skills to express ourselves and negotiate our rights¹¹

Thus, it is not just competences arising from experiences: adult perception of themselves is built upon early childhood experiences. For instance, boys and girls who are born into societies that practice discrimination, oppression and non-participation learn and may practice prejudicial behaviour during childhood. Some children easily bully other children and are likely to exclude certain groups of

¹⁰ Karkara 2011, p. 17.

¹¹ Karkara 2011, p. 23.

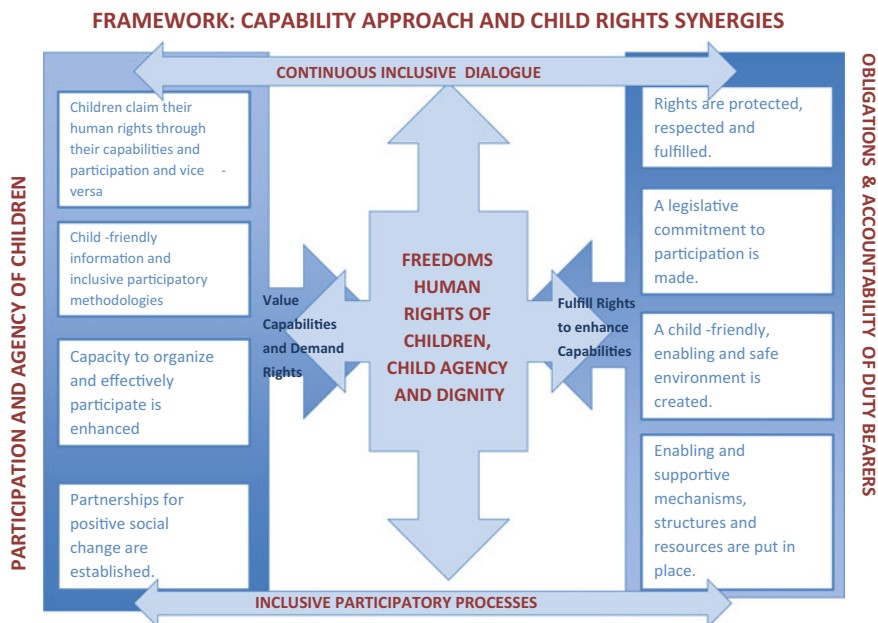


Fig. 2.3 Child rights, capabilities and participation (Source: Our elaboration)

children in their game, for example girls, children with disability and children from minority groups. If they go unchallenged, a young person may act on the basis of these stereotypes; this becomes discriminatory behaviour as they move into adulthood. A cycle of oppression and exclusion results in transmitting the same practices to the next generation and generally discourages participation and democratic processes. However, children experiencing exclusionary processes are not passive agents. They can progressively re-build a sense of personal worth and therefore they can break the cycle of oppression and exclusion. Being engaged in participatory processes since childhood might thus strengthen the capacity to resist exclusionary practices.

Building on work with children in the early years, a life cycle approach to children and young people's participation can be explored, enabling girls' and boys' participation at different ages and abilities. Therefore, a life cycle approach in a multi-dimensional perspective encourages building upon their strengths and abilities to participate. In practice, we need to access the childhood culture (James et al. 1998; Baraldi 2009) and to understand what 'childhood' means for girls and boys in each particular context and at different stages of the life cycle. What are girls and boys encouraged to do or not to do? What active role can girls and boys play?

It has to be acknowledged that, in recent years, UNICEF has attempted to increase children's participation substantially (see UNICEF 2002). Children's social participation needs to be visible in public contexts, being conducted through

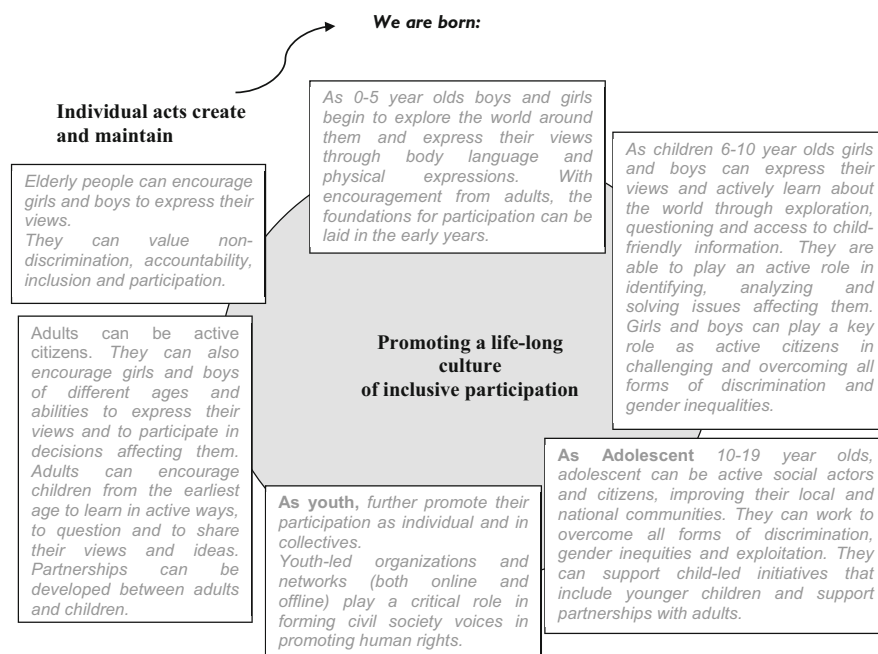


Fig. 2.4 A life-cycle perspective (Source: O'Kane (2003, p. 9) and Karkara (2011, p. 24) both adapted from Karkara (2003))

a clear manifestation of their citizenship and inclusion in a society that provides a full range of rights and opportunities (Biggeri et al. 2011b).

All these aspects have profound policy implications that will be addressed further below.

2.4 Policy Implications and Recommendations

Bridging between the CA with the HRA for transforming children's rights into real freedom requires a systematic understanding of the process of capabilities expansion and the role within this of human rights and legal rights. This analysis has a series of important and self-reinforcing policy implications.

Reducing the level of abstraction, the capability dimensions can be linked to previous works on human capabilities (see for instance Nussbaum 2000; Nussbaum 2003; Robeyns 2003) and to conceptualisation of children as subjects (Biggeri et al. 2006), and then establishing a link with the articles of the UNCRC as in Table 2.1.

The articles – or part of them – are recalled in Box 2.1 for each capability dimension only if they are directly or indirectly (reported in parenthesis) linked to each capability (Detrick 1999; Santos Pais 1999).

Box 2.1: Bridging Between Capabilities' Dimensions and CRC Articles

Life and physical health: being able to be born, being able to be physically healthy and enjoy a life of normal length. For instance, according to the UNCRC this is an inherent right to life (Art. 6) and a full and decent life. The child should be able to enjoy the highest attainable standard of health and access to facilities for the treatment of illness and health rehabilitation. States Parties shall strive to ensure that no child is deprived of his or her right of access to such health care services (Art. 23 and 24). Articles of the UN CRC 6, (17), (19), 23, 24, 25, 27, 29, (33), (37) and (39).

Love and care: being able to love and being loved by those who care for us and being able to be protected. This is fundamental in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.

The child shall be registered immediately after birth and shall have the right from birth to a name, the right to acquire a nationality and as far as possible, the right to know and be cared for by his or her parents (Art. 7). Care and protection of children in the areas of safety, health, competent supervision and appropriate assistance and protection (Art. 3). Both parents have common responsibilities for the upbringing and development of the child. The best interests of the child will be their basic concern (Art. 18). As a girl put it "Parent's must realise that they are responsible for their children's welfare" (girl -from Indonesia- UNICEF, Voice of Youth, 2003). Articles of the UN CRC (3), 7, 9, (10), 18, 20, 21, (22), 26 and 27.

Mental well-being: being able to be mentally healthy. Such as all forms of mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse. Articles of the UN CRC (17), (19), 23, 25, 27, 29, (33), 37 and (39).

Bodily integrity and safety: being able to be protected from violence of any sort. Such as all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse. Articles of the UN CRC 19, (23), (24), 25, 26, 37 and (39).

Social relations: being able to be part of social networks and to give and receive social support. In accordance with the age and maturity of the child. Family friendship affiliations. Articles of the UN CRC (12), 15, 27, 29.

Participation: being able to participate in and have a fair share of influence and to receive objective information. In accordance with the age and maturity of the child. Children should not be voiceless. At least they must participate initially within the family and among friends and later with the community. Articles of the UN CRC 12, 13, 15, 17, 23, 29, (40).

Education: being able to be educated. Freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form

(continued)

Box 2.1 (continued)

of art, or through any other media of the child's choice (Art. 13). Furthermore, the right of all children to relevant and good quality education (Art. 28). The development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential. Articles of the UN CRC 13, 24, 28 and (32).

Freedom from economic and non-economic exploitation: being able to be protected from economic and non-economic exploitation. The Article 32 of the Convention recognizes "the right of the child to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child's education, or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development" (UNICEF 2000: 62). Articles of the UN CRC 19, 32, (33), 34, (35), 36.

Shelter and environment: being able to be sheltered and to live in a safe and pleasant environment. Articles of the UN CRC 24 (c), 27 (3) and 29 (c).

Leisure activities: being able to engage in leisure activities and undertake projects. As reported in the article 31: 1. States Parties recognise the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts. 2. States Parties shall respect and promote the right of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and shall encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activity. Articles of the UN CRC 31, (40).

Respect: being able to be respected and treated with dignity. Articles of the UN CRC (2), 16, 19, 23, 30, 39 (2).

Religion and identity: being able to choose to live or not to live according to a religion. In accordance with the age and maturity of the child. Freedom of thought, conscience and religion. States Parties undertake to respect the right of the child to preserve his or her identity, including nationality, name and family relations as recognised by law without unlawful interference (Art. 8). The development of respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values, for the national values of the country in which the child is living, the country from which he or she may originate, and for civilisations different from his or her own (Art. 29). Articles of the UN CRC (2), (7), 8, 14, 29, 30, 31, (37).

Mobility: being able to be mobile. Articles of the UN CRC (31), (37).

Time-autonomy: being able to exercise autonomy in allocating one's time. Articles of the UN CRC (31), (37).

Furthermore, following Trani et al. (2011b) it is possible to highlight (Fig. 2.5) the potential actions that could be undertaken and thus the role of policies within the CA framework. Human rights (on the left side) are determinant in shaping, together with other factors, a common vision which is going to influence the community

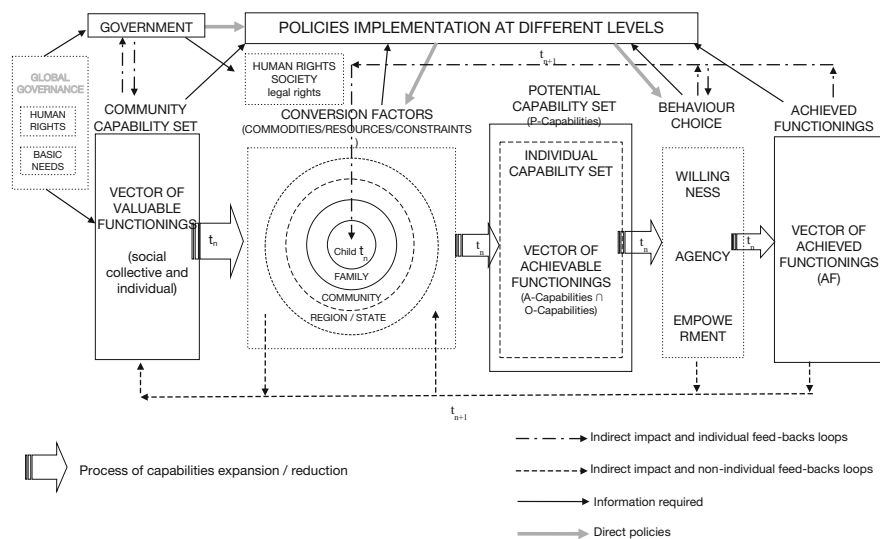


Fig. 2.5 Children evolving capabilities and policy makers' strategies according to values and human rights (Source: Own elaboration on Trani et al. (2011a, p. 252; b, p. 150) and Ballet et al. (2011, p. 24))

valuable functionings and capabilities – i.e. the community capability set that is composed of individual, collective and social capabilities – as well as government actions and, hence, the final achieved functionings or final outcomes. The community capability set (Fig. 2.5, large box at the far left) includes all potentially valuable functionings that should be guaranteed for members of the community, and that can be considered the starting point for policies implementation. These include the potential capability set of the children. More in detail, the diagram shows that policies can affect children well-being using the basic capabilities and human rights discourse by influencing three main aspects: public resources availability, the conversion factors (including legal framework and entitlements) and through services enhancing the capacities of the child. In this direction, Sen affirms that

human rights should motivate the vision and the law, but they have to be distinguished from legal rights, since these human rights exist whether or not the makers and interpreters of law have had the wisdom and opportunity to reflect these rights in actual legislation. The legal relevance is posterior rather than prior to ethical reasoning, and legal use is not the only field of application of the ethical and political idea of human rights. This is not to deny that there can be very important legal connections that make the ideas of human rights more effective and consequential. Legislation can indeed, often enough help to promote the ethical claims reflected in human rights, and many concerned citizens and many NGOs have been intensely involved in promoting fresh legislation.¹²

¹² Sen 2007, p. 8.

At the same time however, although legislation is important, it is possible to protect and advance human rights through channels other than legislation. As mentioned in the previous sections, some human rights cannot be easily translated into legislation, thus some other instruments may be necessary to achieve social change (Sen 2007). Children capabilities thus depend on the capabilities of other persons. In synthesis:

What opportunities children have today and will have tomorrow, in line with what they can be reasonably expected to want, is a matter of public policy and social programmes, involving a great many agencies.¹³

Human and sustainable development relies on people's freedom to make decisions and to advance key objectives as agents of change. Children and the youth (according to their age and maturity) will need the freedom to be educated, to be loved and cared for, to participate in community life, to be respected and to have freedom of expression and association (amongst many other capabilities and basic functionings). Therefore, it is also by being capable agents that people (including children and youth) can contribute to the environment in which they are educated, loved and cared for, as well as be able to speak freely, and participate in decision-making processes (amongst other things) (Biggeri and Santi 2012).

Therefore several policies and actions can be implemented at different stages of life and levels as reported in Figs. 2.3, 2.4 and 2.5. In practice, in this dialogue between the HRA and the CA, the synergies between the two are the basis for an advancement of capabilities and rights i.e. real freedoms. Following Karkara (2011) several actions and policies can become central. However, there are no linear processes on child and young people's participation; processes must be based on bottom up structures, with upstream advocacy and downward flow of commitment.

Here, we recall the central elements of this framework as a set of recommendations.

- Putting children at the centre, recognizing them as rights-holders as well as social actors (Biggeri et al. 2011a, b). This means a shift from skill-based childhood education to building their capacities to participate, promoting capable agents and enhancing critical, creative and caring thinking for active citizenship (Biggeri and Santi 2012; Nussbaum 2011). Children should be then taught not just cognitive skills, but also how to imagine new ways of connecting experiences and how to deal with emotional and motivational dimensions during reasoning and argumentation (Biggeri and Santi 2012).
- Recognising governments as primary duty-bearers accountable to their citizens – including children and youth – and to the international community. Creating structures and mechanisms where rights holders have continuous dialogue with duty bearers. This facilitates the connections between capabilities and functionings and the legal framework.

¹³ Sen 2007, p. 5.

- Recognising parents and families as primary care-givers, protectors and guides – and supporting them in these roles (Comim 2011) by insuring resources as means for household capabilities satisfaction. Ensuring parenting programs are for both father and mother with clear focus on encouraging children, especially girls and young women, to express themselves and participate in decisions that affect them, based on their evolving capacities and maturity.
- Giving priority to young people and to creating a child and youth friendly environment (including spaces for dialogue among children). An environment that is based on respect, mutual trust and safe, so that children can engage and dialogue with key actors at all levels (local, sub-national, national, regional and global) and in all settings (family, community, school, media, internet, etc.) i.e. promoting their civic engagement. Integrating participation, civic engagement and citizenship education in school systems and informal education systems (primary, middle and secondary school, based on the principle of evolving capacities).
- Addressing horizontal inequalities and unequal power structures (class, gender, ethnicity, age, caste, religion, sexual preference, HIV status, etc.). Ensuring that while working with children/youth this power structure does not hinder child and young people's participation processes. For instance, being gender sensitive, tribal sensitive and disability sensitive and seeking inclusive solutions that involve a focus on those boys and girls who are at risk and who are discriminated against. "Policy makers and programmes must ensure a non-discriminatory and inclusive response that ensures the participation of girls, children/adolescent/youth with disabilities, indigenous and minority children/youth, young people living with and affected by HIV and AIDs, street children, children forced into prostitution, children on the move, etc. As applicable, work with boys/young men in various stages of their life cycle on gender equality" (Karkara 2011, p. 19)
- Holding a holistic vision of the rights of the child/youth while making strategic choices and taking specific actions. Setting goals in terms of the fulfilment of rights, as well as in terms of capabilities deprivation. At the same time, building partnerships and alliances for the promotion of human rights of children and youth. Developing inter-government working groups across various Ministries to ensure that child and young people's participation is institutionalised.
- Establishing a long-term goal, which clearly sets out international legal frameworks that are shared with governments, donors and civil society. Promoting implementation of General Comment 12, counting on international co-operation. Furthermore, aiming at sustainable results for children by focusing not only on the immediate, but also on the root causes of problems. It is crucial to address social norms and values that discourage participation and expression of women and children. Patriarchal structures and hegemonic norms of masculinities need to be made more inclusive. Establish an independent human rights institution like an Ombudsman office that supports child and young people's participation and other spaces of dialogue for children and among children to develop a

childhood culture, i.e. this means also to form their own organisation, networks and initiatives for social transformation.

- Using participatory, non-discriminatory, inclusive and empowering approaches, particularly with regard to children and young people. In particular, develop inclusive and participatory communication tools and channels that support children and young people to actively participate in social action. Apply an inclusive approach to use of progressive technology like social networking, etc.
- Encouraging legal and other reforms, such as regular monitoring mechanisms that create a much greater likelihood of sustainable change. Develop and adopt a child and young people's participation law with children and young people. In the meantime, establish local to global structures that are bottom up and promote children/youth's voices and partnerships with them in development. It is crucial to see community action to policy advocacy at national and international levels on child and young people's participation.
- Evidence and results on impact of children's and young people's participation is crucial. Develop young people centred knowledge management, monitoring and evaluation systems that promote active role of children in knowledge creation and knowledge management. Develop child led indicators.

2.5 Final Remarks and Future Challenges

"The promotion of human development and the fulfilment of human rights share, in many ways, a common motivation, and reflect a fundamental commitment to promoting the freedom, well-being and dignity of individuals in all societies." (UNDP 2000, p. 19). The CA and the HRA provide a different vision from the economic growth strategy, since they are opportunity based theories. Bridging the HRA and CA is one of the key goals of this chapter that is devoted to build up a synergic and fruitful dialogue among the two approaches. The capability approach is per se a powerful framework for understanding children's well-being in terms of capabilities since it forces us to think about the complexities that characterize their lives (from opportunity freedom to agency freedom). Yet, without an operative legal framework based on HRA, the CA is incomplete.

On the one hand the human rights approach can be used as the main argument for defending relevant capabilities for children. On the other one, the capability approach can become a framework for normative evaluation and policy implementation. Therefore, it seems that the libertarian HRA and the CA can dialogue and complement each other quite well, with the first calling attention to the deprivations, while the second can concentrate on their causes and assessment. Together, they can produce a cogent set of policy prescriptions and policy evaluation.

One critical point is that the *capability to be an agent* means being able, to a varying extent (according to the maturity and the age of the child), to influence his/her life and/or general rules in the society. Democratic societies should therefore aim to produce capable agents (Bonvin and Galster 2010; Nussbaum 2011;

Stoecklin and Bonvin 2014) and communities. Hence, the development of a democratic society implies the promotion of critical, creative and caring thinking among its citizens, so as to enhance their autonomy and at the same time, open their minds to confrontation and cooperation with different perspectives and points of view (Biggeri and Santi 2012).

Furthermore, an authentic and meaningful participation requires a radical shift in adult thinking and behavior from an exclusionary to an inclusionary approach for children and their capabilities, from a world defined solely by adults to one in which children contribute to build the kind of world they want to live in (UNICEF 2002, p. 5). This means that the on-going discussion on the post-2015 development agenda needs not only to ensure that children remain at the heart of the agenda but to make them part of these processes for institutional changes.

Acknowledgements This chapter is the fruit of an encouraging and ongoing debate with several scholars. During this period we have been privileged to receive comments and suggestions from a large number of people, all of which have been very useful to us. In particular, we would like to thank: Caterina Arciprete, Jerome Ballet, Nicolò Bellanca, Sara Bonfanti, Sandra Boni, Jean-Michel Bonvin, Enrica Chiappero-Martinetti, Federico Ciani, David A. Clark, Flavio Comim, Michela Da Rodda, Francesca D’Erasmus, Alex Apsan Frediani, Cristina Devecchi, Diego Di Masi, Maria Laura Di Tommaso, Jean-Luc Dubois, Andrea Ferrannini, Alex A. Frediani, Des Gasper, Caroline Hart, Vittorio Iervese, Leonardo Menchini, Ayacx Mercedes, Giuliana Parodi, Altair Rodriguez, Marina Santi, Daniel Stoecklin, Lorella Terzi, Elaine Unterhalter, Polly Vizard and Melanie Walker. Furthermore, organisers of the workshops within the Thematic group on Children Capabilities of the Human Development and Capability Association are thankfully acknowledged.

We have benefited of comments and suggestions by the participants of two relevant conferences on these issues where we both were invited as keynote speakers: the International Conference on “Human Development and Human Rights: Two decades of advancement, What’s next for Children and youth? Agency and participation for enhancing equity”, organised jointly by UNICEF and UNDP at Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, 27–29th October 2011 and the Scientific Meeting on “Children rights and children capability approach: standpoints and prospects” at IUKB – Institut Universitaire Kurt Bösch, Sion, Switzerland 5–6th July 2012.

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Children's Rights and the Capability Approach
Challenges and Prospects

Stoecklin, D.; Bonvin, J.-M. (Eds.)

2014, XII, 293 p. 10 illus., Hardcover

ISBN: 978-94-017-9090-1