



# Child Friendly Cities Summit

Cologne, October 2019

Our Cities. Our Lives. Our future.



Child  
Friendly  
Cities  
Initiative

unicef   
for every child



Members of the Child and Youth Advisory Board welcoming participants to the Summit.  
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# Child Friendly Cities Summit 2019

On 20 November 1989, the world made a promise to children, a promise to make the world a better place for every child. This commitment – the Convention on the Rights of the Child – holds special importance in cities and communities, where its impact on children’s well-being is most directly felt. Recognizing the importance of local governments in realizing children’s rights, UNICEF launched the global [Child Friendly Cities Initiative](#) (CFCI) in 1996 to respond to the challenge of upholding the rights and improving the well-being of children in the cities and communities where they live. More than 20 years later, the CFCI is implemented in thousands of cities and communities in more than 40 countries worldwide.

To celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Convention and more than two decades of the CFCI, UNICEF, the German Committee for UNICEF and the City of Cologne hosted the first international [Child Friendly Cities Summit](#) on 15–18 October 2019 in Cologne, Germany.

The Summit brought together more than 600 participants from 180 cities and communities, including mayors, local leaders, technical experts, private sector partners, civil society organizations, academia, and, most importantly, children and young people, to learn from each other’s good and innovative practices, as well as to commit to joint local action for children.

## Goals and objectives

In line with UNICEF’s vision for the CFCI, the overall goal of the Summit was to [advance the rights and well-being of children and young people through local commitment and action](#). To reach this goal, three objectives were defined, namely to (i) give children a voice beyond the CFCI and the Summit; (ii) ensure mayors and local leaders (re)commit to the CFCI and the Convention; and (iii) share good and innovative practices on local child rights action.

The Summit was designed to build on and reinforce UNICEF’s existing partnerships with local governments, children and other local stakeholders in Child Friendly Cities and Communities globally. Rather than being merely a stand-alone event, the Summit was a culmination of this collaboration over the past three decades and a stepping stone to further strengthening local commitment to child rights.

## The Summit in numbers

- 682 participants
- 180 cities in 53 countries
- 150+ speakers
- 23 technical sessions
- 5 plenary sessions
- 1 CFCI Inspire Awards ceremony
- 6 field visits to 5 cities in 3 countries
- 7 social activities, 3 specifically for children and youth
- 9 side meetings
- 17 bilateral meetings



Central government representatives discussing their role in creating child-friendly cities.  
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The Child and Youth Advisory Board enjoying social activities at Adventure Hall Kalk in Cologne.  
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# Co-creating with children and young people

To bring the voices of children and young people to the forefront of discussions on Child Friendly Cities and Communities, UNICEF launched a [10-month co-creation process](#) with children and young people from Child Friendly Cities and Communities across the world. Through this process, children and young people participated in planning the Summit and its [agenda](#), as well as defining their role before, during and after the event.

## Leading up to the Summit

In line with the co-creation strategy, a CFCI Child and Youth Advisory Board was established to ensure that children and young people have a voice in the development and execution of the Summit.

The Advisory Board was established in December 2018 in Geneva, and it convened again in April 2019, in Madrid. The objectives of these two meetings were to (i) identify topics for the Summit agenda (all proposals were included); (ii) prepare the CFCI Child and Youth Manifesto; and (iii) define children and young people's role at the Summit to make their participation relevant and meaningful. The Advisory Board expanded as child and youth delegates signed up for the Summit, and a total of 65 child and youth delegates between the ages of 12 and 23 years, from 32 countries<sup>1</sup>, participated in the Summit.

Taking different interests into account and recognizing that children and young people learn and prefer to contribute in different ways, the child and youth delegates divided themselves into four working groups:

1. **The Advisory Board Working Group** was responsible for advising UNICEF on topics to be included in the [agenda](#) and hosting a youth-led session for their fellow board members so the children and young people could learn from each other.
2. **The Speakers Working Group** was responsible for preparing and delivering interventions and speeches in plenaries or during technical sessions.
3. **The Manifesto Working Group** was responsible for finalizing the CFCI Child and Youth Manifesto and presenting it on the last day of the Summit.
4. **The Communications Working Group** was responsible for reporting on the Summit on social media and in traditional media, which included producing live Instagram videos, social media takeovers, blog posts and articles.

Aside from the two physical meetings in Geneva and Madrid, UNICEF continuously engaged with the four working groups using the [Telegram app](#), which proved an excellent platform for planning, welcoming new members, exchanging ideas and networking. The child and youth delegates also held regular meetings with the UNICEF's Child Friendly Cities Summit organizing team to discuss methodologies for meaningful participation, preparation of documents and other aspects of the event.

**“I left the Summit with a lot of inspiration and new perspectives on how to further and better work towards child-friendly cities.”**

Youth delegate

<sup>1</sup> Most were under 18 and came from Austria, Belarus, Belize, Brazil, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Guinea, Iceland, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Korea, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Mongolia, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, USA and Viet Nam.

An important component of the preparatory activities was the development of the [CFCI Child and Youth Manifesto](#). In early February 2019, children and young people from Child Friendly Cities and Communities and beyond were invited to share what they would want their cities or communities to look like if they were mayors or local leaders. This call for contributions was followed by in-country consultations applying different methodologies including surveys, focus group discussions, drawings and online polls.

In support of these contributions – and to reach an even wider group of children and young people - UNICEF launched a [U-Report poll](#) in June 2019 to reflect on the topics prioritized by the Child and Youth Advisory Board. In total, more than 120,000 children and young people from over 160 countries contributed to the Manifesto.

### During the Summit

Following a first day of social activities, the Child and Youth Advisory Board meeting took place on the opening day of the Summit. Central to the meeting was a child and youth advocacy training aimed at supporting the delegates in developing and implementing local advocacy strategies based on the Manifesto. Child and youth delegates also benefited from a media training and participated in focus group discussions to inform the technical sessions that would be held during the week.

During the Summit, some child and youth delegates presented and participated in panel discussions in plenaries and technical sessions. Others took over the social media channels of their local UNICEF offices, created photo and video footage and attended social events. Most importantly, the Summit culminated in the presentation of the [CFCI Child and Youth Manifesto 'Our cities. Our lives. Our future.'](#)

### After the Summit

Following the Summit, the child and youth delegates continue to engage with each other and share experiences and learnings. UNICEF will organize a follow-up advocacy training to further assist children and young people in their local advocacy endeavours.

Child and youth delegates also [participated in the celebration of the 30th anniversary of the Convention](#) in their respective countries. They, for example, met with political leaders, made presentations, took part in round-table discussions and arranged special sessions of child and youth councils.





IF WE HAVE  
A VOICE WE  
CAN SAVE W  
PLANET



Child and Youth Advisory Board meeting in Madrid, April 2019.  
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# The Cologne Child Friendly Cities Mayors' Declaration

Cities and communities are increasingly taking centre stage in advancing child rights and are crucial drivers in building the sustainable child-friendly cities of tomorrow.

We, mayors and city leaders from around the globe, gathered at the first Child Friendly Cities Summit in Cologne, Germany, on 11-12 October 2019 to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the growing commitment to improving the lives, opportunities and well-being of every child through the Child Friendly Cities Initiative.

We welcome the Child Friendly Cities Manifesto, presented by child and youth representatives from child-friendly cities and beyond at the Summit.

We recognize that the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) go hand in hand and that children's rights cannot be realized without the successful implementation of the SDGs and vice versa.

We declare our commitment to implementing the Convention on the Rights of the Child for every child together with all stakeholders within our cities and communities to ensure comprehensive solutions and fulfilment of the Convention.

We commit to implementing the Child Friendly Cities Initiative and ensuring that every child and young person is heard through equal realization of their rights within their cities and communities, by reaching the following goals:

1. Every child and young person is valued, respected and treated fairly within their communities and by the decisions affecting them;
2. Every child and young person has their voice, needs and priorities heard and considered in public life;
3. Every child and young person has access to quality essential services including health care, education, childhood development, justice and family support;
4. Every child and young person lives in a safe, healthy and clean environment;
5. Every child and young person has opportunities to enjoy family life, play and leisure.

To realize these goals, we are particularly committed to:

- Demonstrating concrete, sustainable and measurable results for children;
- Advancing meaningful and inclusive child participation;
- Eliminating discrimination against children and young people in policies and actions.

We call on national and sub-national authorities to support cities and communities in their commitment to ensuring that every child and young person reaches their full potential through equal realization of their rights in their communities.

We call on all stakeholders that directly and indirectly have an impact on the lives of children and young people (i.e. Nations, family, the private sector, civil society organizations, unions, academia and the media, to respect and support the rights and well-being of children in fulfilling their respective roles and mandates.

Adopted unanimously on 18 October 2019 in Cologne, Germany, and declared by the Mayor of Cologne, Henriette Reker, and the leaders of the following cities and communities:

*Mayor Reker*      *Hen*



Mayor Reker signing the Mayors' Declaration. © UNICEF/UNI217441/Wogram

# Mayors and local leaders recommitting to the Convention and the CFCI

Building on more than two decades of engagement and partnerships with local governments around child rights, the Summit provided the perfect opportunity to leverage these partnerships so that mayors and local leaders could recommit to the child rights agenda to mark the 30th anniversary of the Convention.

## Leading up to the Summit

Early and active engagement with mayors and local leaders was crucial to the success of the Summit and the commitment achieved. Mayors and local leaders were actively involved in preparing for the Summit, where they were invited to speak about their learnings as well as good and innovative practices in plenaries and technical sessions.

Mayors and local leaders also contributed to a [30-day awareness-raising campaign](#) in the month leading up to the event by sharing statements of commitment to child rights and the CFCI on the CFCI website.

Together with the Mayor of Cologne, UNICEF worked closely with mayors and local leaders to prepare the [Cologne Child Friendly Cities Mayors' Declaration](#), which was circulated for electronic signatures before the Summit.

## During the Summit

The Summit offered a variety of opportunities for the almost 100 mayors and local leaders in attendance to learn and exchange good practices, including through presentations and panel discussions in plenaries and technical sessions, regional side meetings and other networking arrangements.

A round-table discussion at the Cologne City Hall was organized specifically for mayors and local leaders to discuss opportunities and challenges in becoming and further developing child-friendly cities. This discussion resulted in a series of recommendations for local and national governments and UNICEF, including increased networking between cities, the development of guidance to become more child-friendly and allocation of resources to support with funding. Mayors and local leaders were also enthusiastically engaged in the [CFCI Inspire Awards](#) celebrated on 17 October.

The Summit culminated in the signing of the [Cologne Child Friendly Cities Mayors' Declaration](#), which to date has been signed by more than 180 mayors and local leaders from across the world.

## After the Summit

Following the Summit, UNICEF continues to work closely with local governments and other stakeholders in Child Friendly Cities and is also expanding the Initiative to new countries globally.

UNICEF continues to build on these partnerships and strengthen city-to-city networking and collaboration, which was one of the key asks put forward by mayors and local leaders at the Summit. Building on the growing interest in peer learning among cities, regional workshops will be convened in the years to come.

**“Participation in the Summit is an inspiration for our community to be child- and youth-friendly!”**

City delegate

# Bringing good practices and innovative approaches to scale

For the first time in the history of the CFCI, the Summit provided an opportunity for technical experts from Child Friendly Cities and UNICEF to come together and exchange experiences globally.

Technical experts and child rights experts were actively involved detailing the [agenda](#) and sessions at the Summit, where they were invited to speak about their experiences in building child-friendly cities and communities.

## Leading up to the Summit

Leading up to the Summit, wide consultations took place, including with children and young people, to ensure that the [agenda](#) reflected topics of global relevance to various stakeholders. These topics included for example child participation, child-responsive urban planning, climate change and budgeting.

The [CFCI Inspire Awards](#) were launched in the months leading up to the Summit with a call for evidence-based and scalable innovative practices to promote child rights locally. The Awards were also used to collect good practices to be shared with a wider audience, with an aim to inspire cities and communities to learn from them.

**“I left feeling even more connected to the CFCI mission.”**

Summit participant

## During the Summit

The Summit provided several opportunities for technical experts to share and strengthen their expertise through active participation in the technical sessions, plenaries with expert interventions and side meetings, based on geographical location or thematic topics. To provide opportunities for exchanges, all sessions included informal discussions and group work.

The Summit also offered participants opportunities for practical learning. Field visits were organized in select cities across Europe that were close to major transit hubs, including: Hämeenlinna, Finland; Regensburg, Germany; Basel, Switzerland; and Weil am Rhein, Germany. Several visits were also offered in Cologne, where participants had the opportunity to visit the local day-care centres, child and youth facilities, family support centres and sports and leisure facilities.

## After the Summit

Building on the growing interest in peer learning among cities, UNICEF will continue to strengthen opportunities for sharing and learning through local and national networks, as well as national and regional workshops. Child rights awareness-raising campaigns and capacity building initiatives to strengthen the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child will also continue to be at the core of UNICEF's support to Child Friendly Cities and Communities.



City delegates at the Mayors' roundtable discussion.  
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# Video gallery

More speeches, statements of support and other videos can be found on the [Child Friendly Cities Initiative's Youtube channel](#).



Angela Merkel, Chancellor of Germany



Child Friendly Cities Summit: We are the Changemakers



Child Friendly Cities Summit: We have a voice



Henrietta H. Fore, UNICEF Executive Director



Sonia Livingstone, Professor of Social Psychology, LSE



CFCI Signature video



Janis McDavid, Influencer and Disability Activist



Mara Mintzer, Programme Director, Building Up Boulder



Wolfgang Dietz, Mayor of Weil am Rhein

# Feedback

The overall feedback from the Summit was extremely positive. 98 per cent of respondents to an online survey agreed that the Summit had achieved its main objective of exchanging innovative and good practices and delivering useful new knowledge. The plenaries were highly appreciated: 97 per cent of respondents found them inspirational and useful, and 84 per cent of respondents were pleased with the delivery of the technical content and facilitation of the sessions.

**“I felt inspired, I felt motivated, I felt encouraged – and I realized that our work can truly make a difference.”**

Summit participant



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**“It was a very interesting and informative summit - and good to hear from so many people from across the world.”**

City delegate



UNICEF Deputy Executive Director Charlotte Petri Gornitzka.  
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**“I have learned a lot about different cities, what ideas or initiatives they took for the betterment of their own city, what challenges they faced, how they tackled them and what they will be doing to make their city more child-friendly.**

**I also learned, gained knowledge and new ideas on how a child can make their city a better place to live for all.”**

Youth delegate



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