

## **Chapter 11**

### **The Right to Participation: Reflections on Young People's Participation in Climate Protests in the United Kingdom and Sri Lanka**

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#### **Introduction**

Participation of children and young people in school and in society has been a prominent topic in human rights education in the past decades. This discourse has expanded further against the backdrop of ongoing climate protests. Climate protests initiated by young people gained headway in 2018, when a 15-year-old Swedish activist named Greta Thunberg initiated a school strike for climate, in front of the Swedish Parliament, leading up to the Parliamentary elections (Crouch, 2018). Greta's actions later generated a widespread movement among young people around the world, where many took to the streets to advocate for climate action instead of attending school (Thunberg et. al, 2019). As the number of young people joining climate protests increase, the dominant standpoint of viewing young people as 'objects of concern' lacking the sufficient competency to make decisions is challenged (Hartas, 2010: 94). Young people are being viewed as 'subjects of rights', entitled to the freedom of participation, expression as well as assembly (Ferguson, 2019). However, the question of whether climate protests should encompass participation of young people remains a topical subject at present. Noteworthily, the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child (The Committee) is also currently in the process of fielding the draft General

Comment No. 26 on children's rights and the environment with regard to participation and climate change. (UNOHCHR, 2021).

Whilst participation of young people in school and society has been discussed under different perspectives, in this study we will be adopting a legal perspective to examine participation as a right of young people. In doing so, our intention is to examine the way in which right to participation encompasses young people's right to protest against climate change. Further, we will also analyze the challenges to participation faced by young people in the context of climate protests. The distinction between children and young people is made in certain instances to address the nuances associated with the right of participation. However, such a distinction will not be made within the discussion of this paper. Article 1 of the United Nations Convention of the Right of the Child (UNCRC) defines a child as 'every human being below the age of 18 years old, unless under the law applicable to the child, a majority is attained earlier'. For the purposes of this study, we will be referring to 'children' and 'young people' interchangeably to identify everyone who is entitled to rights under the UNCRC.

The Committee defines participation in the light of Article 12 of the UNCRC (2009, para.13), which deals with the child's right to be heard. Article 12 (1), that 'States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child; the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child'. Further, Article 12 (2) states that, 'For this purpose, the child shall in particular be provided the opportunity to be heard in any judicial and administrative proceedings affecting the child, either directly, or through a representative or an appropriate body, in a manner consistent with the procedural rules of national law'. Owing to its scope, this study will build on the substantive elements constituting the right to be heard under Article 12(1) of the UNCRC in order to analyze the right to participation in climate protests.

Drawing from Laura Lundy's legal perspective on participation (2007: 932), we argue that climate protests encompass young people's right to participation under Article 12 of the UNCRC. In this case, participation, in the

form of protests, is not only an inherent right, but also places a legally binding obligation on States to assure that legal and pedagogical barriers to such participation are duly addressed. Further, we argue that empirical challenges in balancing the principle of best interests with the right to participation has been a stumbling block to participation in climate protests, particularly in ensuring that protests are not hindered by adult decision makers. In the present analysis, we focus on the climate protests movement ‘Fridays for Future’ (FFF), in the context of school strikers in the United Kingdom (UK) to draw insights for child participation in climate protests in Sri Lanka. In this regard, we will first examine the theoretical framework surrounding the right of participation embedded within the UNCRC, with particular reference to Article 12. Next, we will analyze the right to protest as a form of participation, with specific reference to the FFF climate protests in the UK. Subsequently, we will examine the empirical challenges to participation, especially in striking a balance between the principle of best interests of the child and the principle of participation in climate protests. Lastly, the analysis will examine the insights that could be drawn from UK’s experience, in relation to participation in climate protests, for Sri Lanka.

## **Background**

To begin with, we will first expand on the right to participation and the principle of best interests of the child against the backdrop of climate protests in the UK. we will also outline the emerging discourse surrounding child participation in climate protests in Sri Lanka.

### ***Defining the Right to Participation***

The Committee defines participation as ‘ongoing processes, which include information-sharing and dialogue between children and adults based on mutual respect, and in which children can learn how their views and those of adults are taken into account and shape the outcome of such processes’ (2009, para. 3). Further, the Committee underpins the right to be heard as ‘a crucial element of such processes’ (2009, para. 13). Accordingly, States have an obligation to guarantee the right to be heard for groups of children as well.

States should ‘exert all efforts to listen to or seek the views of those children speaking collectively’ (2009, para. 10). Therefore, in implementing the right to participation under the UNCRC, States are obliged to: ‘encourage the child to form a free view and provide an environment that enables the child to exercise her or his right to be heard’ (2009, para. 11); ‘The views expressed by children may add relevant perspectives and experience and should be considered in decision-making, policymaking and preparation of laws and/or measures as well as their evaluation’ (2009, para. 12). In analyzing these comments made by the Committee, it is evident that the UNCRC views participation as a right of young people, which places a robust legal obligation on States to guarantee the right. Importantly, the State obligation to listen to and seek views from a collective of children or a group of young people, indicates several legal implications on States in terms of guaranteeing the right to participation in climate protests.

### ***Participation in Climate Protests in the UK and Sri Lanka***

Child participation in climate protests in the UK has raised several questions with regard to the obligations of the State in guaranteeing the right to be heard to young people. Despite the UK having ratified the UNCRC in 1991, there are gaps in implementing the right to be heard in decision-making (Lundy, 2007: 928). In 2021, the UK Department of Education, introduced a ‘Draft Strategy of Sustainability and Climate Change for Educational and Child Services Systems of the UK’ (Draft strategy). The Draft Strategy explicitly dissuades schools and students from taking part in climate protests (UK Department of Education: 21). Therefore, the gap between policy and the right to participation in climate protests remains a key concern in the UK.

On the contrary, child participation in climate protests is still an emerging topic in Sri Lanka. In this study, we will focus on the ‘Stop Ecocide’ climate protest, which was held on the 19<sup>th</sup> of March 2021 (Hamza, 2021). The protest was organized as a demonstration in line with the Global Climate Action movement, to raise awareness on environmental protection through various artistic means, including painting and displaying a large mural with a message stating ‘Stop Ecocide’ against a hand-painted backdrop depicting

the effects of deforestation. The mural was taken down by the Colombo Police Environmental Unit shortly after it was displayed. This incident has several implications with regard to child participation in climate protests in Sri Lanka. The most critical implication being the response of adult decision-makers to child participation, especially in balancing participation with the best interests of the child.

### ***The Principle of the Best Interests of the Child***

The best interest's principle housed under Article 3 of the UNCRC, underpins that the best interest of the child will be the 'primary consideration' in 'all actions concerning children'. However, according to Lansdown this does not mean that the best interests principle "trumps" other rights in the UNCRC, particularly the right to participation. (2009: 19). In fact, the Committee underpins that '[T]here is no tension between articles 3 and 12' and stresses on the complementary role played by the two articles in ensuring the right to participation on the child's own terms (2009, para. 74).

### **Theoretical Framework**

The centrality of UNCRC Article 12 within the discourse of right of participation stems from the work of scholars such as Laura Lundy. In her paper 'Voice is not enough: conceptualizing Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child', Lundy stresses that '[T]here is a need for a greater awareness of the fact that respecting children's views is not just a model of good pedagogical practice (or policy making) but a legally binding obligation' (2007: 930). In Lundy's work, a new model to conceptualize Article 12 is introduced, where she outlines the following elements embodied within Article 12: Space; Voice; Audience; and influence (2007: 933). Lundy cautions discussions about UNCRC Article 12, where due weight has not been given to the entirety of the Article, particularly the obligations of the State (2007: 927). Lundy elaborates on the right of the child to be heard, with specific reference to the term 'assure', stressing on the mandatory obligation on the part of the State in enabling young people the ability to express their views freely and give those views due weight. In fact, the State has 'a positive

obligation to take proactive steps to encourage children to express their views' (2007: 934). In line with Lundy's assessment, it is evident that, States are legally obliged to play a role beyond a passive recipient of young people's views.

Building upon Lundy's work, Gerison Lansdown has further developed the conceptualization of participation in terms of highlighting the involvement of young people in decision making processes (2009: 13). Lansdown cites four-levels of involvement within a decision-making process, where young people are entitled to rights. These four levels are: the right to be informed; the right to express an informed view; the right to have the view taken into account; and the right to be the main/joint decision-maker (2009: 13). According to Lansdown, 'if advocacy to promote children's right to participation is to be effective, it is imperative that it is grounded in a clear understanding of the scope of the relevant rights in the Convention and the obligations they impose on governments' (2009: 12). Lansdown also points at the debate on the 'potential risks of participation' and the best interests of the child. Accordingly, Lansdown notes that "[W]ithout explicit recognition that assessment of children's best interests must be directed towards the realization of their rights and take serious account of children's own views, it can be used as a powerful tool in the hands of adults to defend any action or decision made on behalf of children" (2009: 19).

Dimitra Hartas, in her work on "Young People's Voice and Participation", outlines key principles of 'minor politics' as the foundation of young people's participation (2010: 113). These include inclusion, empowerment, citizenship and political education, independence as well as community. Accordingly, Hartas notes that, '[M]inor politics offer an important framework within which to place inclusion, empowerment and citizenship in ways that relate to young people's everyday life. It is only then that the right to participation becomes a lived experience' (2010: 113). The idea here is that minor politics has the ability to challenge the consensus as well as the discretion of those who are making decisions, thereby paving the way for young people to participate at a local level and ultimately make an impact even at a global level (2010: 113).

Writing in the context of climate protests initiated by school children, Nicholas McMurry (2020) elaborates on the right to protest as a form of participation for young people. According to Murry, Article 12 of the UNCRC consists collective rights for groups of children to advocate and influence decisions that concern them (2020: 94-95). Accordingly, protests are a form of communication utilized by young people in expressing their opinions and views under Article 12 of the UNCRC (2020: 95). An important question raised by McMurry is whether the Committee endorsed a child's right to be heard in 'general political mandates' (2020: 95). McMurry concludes that the Committee's wide interpretation of 'all matters affecting the child' renders that "the social processes of their community and society' fall within the ambit of Article 12 of the UNCRC. Therefore, in his view, expressing views on climate change and environmental degradation is a form of child participation in the context of present climate protests (2020: 95).

In the light of the views expressed by Lansdown, Lundy, Hartas and McMurry, it is evident that participation is a multi-faceted right, embodying freedom of expression, right to access information, best interests of the child as well as the right to be heard in the form of protests. Further, participation also entails the legal obligation on the State to facilitate the right to participation. This becomes critical consideration in the debate surrounding climate protests, especially when the right to protest is also placed within the right to participation. Accordingly, the key question is whether such placement ensues an obligation on the State to facilitate protest movements as a part of guaranteeing young people the right to be heard for young people under UNCRC Article 12.

## **Protesting as Participation: FFF Climate Protests in the UK**

### ***Obligation of the State to Guarantee the Right to 'Space' and 'Voice'***

In Lundy's conceptualization of Article 12 of the UNCRC, the right to participation embodies the rights to: voice; space; audience and influence. These four elements are analyzed in a chronological manner, in which voice and space are seen as the first stage of guaranteeing young people the right

to express views freely in all matters affecting them (Lundy, 2007: 933). In other words, voice and space are two sides of the same coin which promotes a positive obligation on the part of the State to facilitate the expression of views.

On the one hand, the right of space places an obligation on the State to “assure” the environment for young people to express their views freely. The importance of assuring a ‘space’ for young people to express views freely involves a positive obligation on the part of the State to facilitate the process of expressing views, irrespective of the medium in which young people express their views. One key consideration in such assurance is also ensuring that the space provided for the expression of views are free from any rebuke or reprisal. Thus, the right to participation also relates to Article 19 of the UNCRC, especially concerning the right of young people to be protected from any kind of abuse (Lundy, 2007: 934).

On the other hand, the right of voice also places an obligation on the State to facilitate the right to express views freely without any arbitrary limitations. As Lundy outlines, the only limitation to expressing the voice is to consider whether the child is capable of forming a view (2007: 935). The significance here is that, the views expressed by young people, need not be mature. The most important requisite is to determine whether they are capable of formulating a view (Lundy: 35). In this context, the State has the obligation to listen without presuming that young people are incapable of expressing their views. In both of the aforesaid instances, space and voice relates to ‘all matters affecting young people’. As highlighted by McMurry in the preceding section, discretion on what matters affect young people is open to wide interpretation. The Committee also notes that ‘States parties should carefully listen to children’s views wherever their perspective can enhance the quality of solutions’ (2009, para. 27). These dimensions of the right of participation indicate that participation can even be in the form of protests.

However, it is imperative to distinguish the right to participation from the freedom of expression (Article 13, UNCRC) and the freedom of association and peaceful assembly (Article 15, UNCRC). Whilst, both of these latter rights are integral to participation, the right to participation

under Article 12 remains unique in terms of the obligation it places on the State. In the words of the Committee, ‘Article 12 imposes an obligation on States parties to introduce the legal framework and mechanisms necessary to facilitate active involvement of the child in all actions affecting the child and in decision-making, and fulfil the obligation to give due weight to those views once expressed’ (2009, para. 81). Therefore, the State has the legal obligation to even facilitate protests of young people, especially if it is the medium of expression of views chosen by young people.

### ***Challenges to Voice and Space: Empirical Gaps in terms of State Obligations in the UK***

Empirically however, several gaps exist in terms of the State’s obligation in facilitating the right to participation for young people, especially relating to climate protests. In the Draft Strategy of Sustainability and Climate Change for Educational and Child Services Systems of the UK (Draft strategy) brought forth by the Department of Education in 2021, young people as well as schools are not encouraged to take part in climate protests (UK Department of Education, 2021: 21). The Draft strategy explicitly notes that, ‘whilst schools should support pupil’s interest in climate change and tackling both its causes and effects, it would not be appropriate to encourage pupils to join specific campaigning groups or engage in specific political activity, such as protests’ (UK Department of Education, 2021: 12). The main issue in taking such a position, especially in an educational strategy is that it eliminates the views expressed by young people who have participated and continue to participate in climate protests since 2018 (Fridays For Future, 2021).

Further, taking such a standpoint restricts the space and voice of young people in climate action, particularly as climate protests are marked out as an ‘inappropriate’ way of expressing views. This questions the hierarchy of authority in deciphering which views count as legitimate in decision making processes. Although the Draft Strategy underpins that it has been developed with multi-stakeholder engagement including children (UK Department of Education, 2021: 10), there remains a critical question as to whether the participation of children in drafting the Draft Strategy was merely consultative.

Lansdown classifies child participation into three key criteria, which includes consultative participation; collaborative participation as well as child-led participation (2009: 20). ‘Consultative participation’ refers to the process of adults seeking young people’s views to improve on their own understanding of the experiences of young people. This is primarily informative and does not involve young people in decisions made by adults. ‘Collaborative participation’ provides the opportunity for young people to be involved in making decisions alongside adults. In contrast, ‘Child-led participation’, refers to the process whether young people take their own decisions, and adults play the role of facilitators in the process by extending support in different ways. Whilst, participation of young people can take all three forms in different stages, in the event of climate protests, there is an obligation on the State to ensure collaborative or child-led forms of participation in fielding a mechanism in which children’s concerns regarding climate change and environmental degradation is given due weight in educational decision-making. The Draft Strategy evidently falls short in this regard, especially as it undermines the views, sentiments and agency of children who are actively engaging in climate protests.

### ***Securing the Right of ‘Audience’ and the Right of ‘Influence’ in Climate Protests***

Accordingly, the right to ‘audience’ and the right to ‘influence’ under Article 12 of the UNCRC is critical as it links to the State obligation to give young people’s views due weight. The obligation placed upon the State in guaranteeing the right of audience relates to young people having the opportunity to communicate views to ‘an identifiable individual or body with the responsibility to listen’ (Lundy, 2007: 937). Influence signifies the obligation on the part of the State to ensure that once the views are expressed by the child, they are given due weight. The Committee has stipulated that, “appearing to ‘listen’ to children is relatively unchallenging; giving due weight to their views require real change” (2003, para.12).

In my analysis of the Draft strategy and its actions and outcomes, it is evident that the strategy has not given due weight to the expression of young

people's views in the form of climate protests. In fact, the key action areas pertaining to climate education is geared towards a climate change adaptation route, promoting children to take up skills to adapt to changing climatic conditions (UK Department of Education, 2021: 12-14). There are explicit references to the duty of schools to remain 'politically impartial' and avoid climate education as a 'political issue' (UK Department of Education, 2021: 12). In this regard, it is debatable whether the drafters of the strategy took into account the existing reality of young people's participation in climate protests. Further, in light of Hartas's principles of 'minor politics' outlined above, there appears to be an exclusion of the views expressed by young people over the FFF climate protests in the decisions made by the drafters of the strategy. This raises a serious concern relating to whether the best interests of young people particularly in climate protests have been taken into consideration within the Draft strategy.

### **Balancing the Principles of Best Interests and Participation in Climate Protests**

The best interest's principle is crucial in order to ensure that views are given due weight by decision makers once they are expressed by young people. However, it is imperative to balance the principle of best interests with the right to participation, especially in instances where adult decision-makers police the right to participation on the basis of protecting children. Lansdown notes that, the best interest's principle is key in striking a balance between protection and participation (2009: 18). As discussed in preceding sections, the Committee has also stressed that the principles of best interests of the child and participation as mutually constitutive, where 'one establishes the objective of achieving the best interests of the child and the other provides the methodology for reaching the goal of hearing either the child or the children' (2009, para. 74). Thus, evidently the principle of best interests is concomitant with the right of participation embodied in Article 12 of the UNCRC.

However, one cannot disregard the risks associated with children joining protests, particularly climate protests by skipping school. As highlighted by Lansdown, children are the most vulnerable group in society and a 'higher

duty of care' is required in dealing with the exercise of their rights. (2009, p.18). In any event, participation cannot undermine the protection of children. Lansdown (2009: 18) and Hartas (2010: 102) analyzes various instances where child participation might run the risk of children falling prey to adult agendas. There can also be various unintended and long-term consequences when children actively participate in climate protests as activists. For instance, participation could affect children negatively in future employment opportunities or risk the physical and psychological health of young people. In societies where child participation is not accepted or prominent, these risks are even more heightened.

Nonetheless, there is also the need to acknowledge the experiences, views and emotions expressed by young people in the form of resistance. Adult decision-makers who hold the power to take decisions with regard to young people cannot override and eliminate such views expressed by young people on the basis of the best interests of the child. In 2021, amidst the Cop26 discussion, the Education Secretary of UK, Nadhim Zahawi noted that students should 'think about their own career in science and technology and innovation' as opposed to attending climate protests (Adams, 2021). He further stressed 'I would urge children not to miss school, not to miss class-we don't want to get into a situation where teachers and headteachers are having to issue fines for missing education' (Adams, 2021). It is evident that, although Zahawi has not used the exact terms of best interests of the child, the statement of the Secretary depicts the role of a gatekeeper who determines what is in the best interests of young people and which way the right to participation should be exercised by young people.

In contrast to Zahawi's statement, Article 12 of the UNCRC 'recognizes the child as a full human being with the integrity and personality and the ability to participate freely in society' (Freeman, 1996: 37). In fact, Lundy argues that '[I]n some decisions, at some point, the adults' views maybe irrelevant and the child's view should prevail' (2007: 939). She further highlights that, rights such as freedom of association and assembly can even be independently exercised by young people in certain circumstances (2007: 939). As seen in Hartas's conception of minor politics, participation of young

people encompasses participation in the form of challenging decision-makers by raising questions that affect the present lives of young people (2010: 113). In this regard, it is vital to understand that vulnerability of young people is not a result of their lack of capacity, but could also be a result of them being excluded from making decisions about their own lives. The best interest's principle cannot be a predetermined adult judgement. On the contrary, resistance expressed by young people through climate protests should be the predominant consideration in determining the best interests of the children.

Therefore, it is apparent that amongst the numerous challenges ahead of the right to participation, the restrictive role played by adults as gatekeepers of UNCRC Article 12 remains a major challenge to participation of young people (Lundy, 2007: 937). Thus, levelling principles of Best Interests or protection against participation of young people continues to be a stumbling block to the exercise of the right to participation at present. In this regard, for young people to realize the right to participation in the essence of what the drafters of Article 12 of the UNCRC intended it to be, a 'cultural shift' is required. Such a shift would mandate participation, even in the form of protests, as an integral element of decision-making with regard to young people (Sinclair, 2004: 118). It is equally imperative to underpin that the right to participation 'should not only be a momentary act, but the starting point for an intense exchange between children and adults on the development of policies, programmes and measures in all relevant contexts of children's lives' (The Committee, 2009, para. 13). Thus, it is evident that recognizing young people's ability to exercise agency is a starting point to underscore the true meaning of participation, especially in the context of climate protests.

### **Insights for Sri Lanka**

The above analysis of child participation in climate protests in the UK is insightful for Sri Lanka due to two key reasons. Firstly, it outlines the obligation on the part of the State to guarantee the right to participation for young people, even in the form climate protests. Secondly, it is also a useful case study to map out the challenges ahead of right to participation, especially in relation to balancing the best interests of the child in the context of

participation in climate protests. Sri Lanka ratified the UNCRC on the 19<sup>th</sup> of July 1991 and thus, is under obligation to guarantee the right to participation for children. This involves guaranteeing the right to voice, space, audience as well as influence. In other words, if children resort to artistic means or protests to express themselves, the State has the special obligation to facilitate the expression of such views by children. However, in its Concluding Observations on the combined fifth and sixth periodic reports of Sri Lanka, the Committee has noted that respect for the views of the child ‘continues to be insufficiently implemented’ in Sri Lanka, especially in relation to General Comment No.12 of 2009 (2018, para. 18). In this context, the Committee was predominantly referring to legislations, judicial and administrative proceedings in the country. However, in analyzing the response of adult decision-makers to the ‘Stop Ecocide’ climate protest, it is evident that the Committee’s observations remain valid with regard to the lack of respect shown towards the views of children advocating against climate change.

In fact, during the ‘Stop Ecocide’ climate protest, the adult decision-makers took immediate steps to remove the mural painted by children, who were expressing their sentiments against climate change through a visual medium. Further, the President of Sri Lanka, Mr. Gotabhaya Rajapakse, made a statement in national media noting that the mural was ‘damaging the environment’ (News First, 2021). In his remarks, the President stated that ‘displaying murals is not the way to protect nature’ (News First, 2021). Whilst the aforesaid responses of adult decision-makers show explicit disregard towards views expressed by children especially in climate change narratives, it also signals the restrictions posed by adults in terms of exercising the right to participation by limiting the scope for voice, space, influence and audience. It is also evident that the adult pre-determination of what is the ‘appropriate’ or ‘proper way’ of expressing disagreement is mirrored in the ‘Stop Ecocide’ climate protest similar to what was observed in the UK case study. However, unlike in the UK, Sri Lanka has not explicitly restricted participation in climate protests at present. In its National Climate Change Policy (NCCP), Sri Lanka adopts a national ambition to promote policies geared towards creating a ‘climate change sensitive generation’ and ‘promoting proactive and responsible participation’ (Kagawa, 2021: 18). Empirically however,

the adult responses to the ‘Stop Ecocide’ climate protest stand against these policy objectives delineated to encourage a proactive generation responsive to climate change. It is imperative in this context to stress on the obligation of the State in assuring the right to participation for young people, especially in matters affecting them. The ‘Stop Ecocide’ climate protest could be one of many forthcoming climate protests in the country, which will pinpoint legal and pedagogical barriers to participation in Sri Lanka, particularly in formulating policies for climate change education in the future. Thus, the experience of the UK is useful to understand the multi-faceted nature of the right to participation and the legal obligations places upon the State to assure the right to be heard under Article 12 of the UNCRC.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, drawing insights from Laura Lundy’s legal perspective on participation, we have argued that young people’s right to participation under Article 12 of the UNCRC includes the right to engage in climate protests. To arrive at this conclusion, we first examined the theoretical framework surrounding the right of participation embedded within the UNCRC, with particular reference to Article 12. Next, we assessed the right to protest as a form of participation, with specific reference to the FFF climate protests in the UK. Subsequently, we analyzed the empirical challenges to participation, especially in striking a balance between the principle of Best Interests of the child and the principle of participation in climate protests. Lastly, we drew insights from UK’s experience of climate protests in order to outline the empirical challenges to participation in Sri Lanka.

Accordingly, in this case, participation in the form of protests is not only considered as an inherent right of young people, but also as a right that places a legally binding obligation on States to assure that legal and pedagogical barriers to participation are duly addressed. In our analysis, it was apparent that, even if the principle of best interests is not theoretically juxtaposed to the right to participation, empirically it is a stumbling block to participation, especially in the context of climate protests in the UK. In our analysis of the Draft Strategy of Sustainability and Climate Change for Educational and

Child Services Systems of the UK and the ‘Stop Ecocide’ climate protest in Sri Lanka, it was apparent that adult decision-makers continue to hinder the right to participation by limiting the scope for young people to exercise voice, space, audience and influence.

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