

# How Children’s Visual Expression Can Transform Decisions

## *Across the Child Welfare Ecosystem*

Play2Transform Group — Dream On India Research — CIGSA Framework

Every entity in the child welfare ecosystem currently makes decisions about children using adult-generated data — field worker reports, enrollment statistics, nutritional outcomes, teacher assessments, policy indices. CIGSA (Child-Inclusive Governance Signal Architecture) inserts a single new input that none of them currently have: what children themselves expressed when given space to express freely. That’s not a replacement for any existing data source. It’s the one voice that has always been structurally absent from every decision made in its name.

**The value proposition is identical across all entities, expressed differently: You are currently making decisions about children without hearing from them. Here is what they said.**

### Nine Integration Pathways

<p><b>01</b> <b>NGO Program Directors</b> <i>Direct program design and dropout intervention</i></p>	<p><b>02</b> <b>School Principals and Teachers</b> <i>Classroom wellbeing, child protection, and teacher development</i></p>	<p><b>03</b> <b>CSR Initiatives</b> <i>Impact measurement, portfolio management, and employee engagement</i></p>
<p><b>04</b> <b>ESG Frameworks and Reporting</b> <i>Social pillar measurement, supply chain welfare, and BRSR compliance</i></p>	<p><b>05</b> <b>Government and Policy</b> <i>SDG reporting, district governance, and legislative input</i></p>	<p><b>06</b> <b>Multilateral Organisations</b> <i>UNICEF, UN Women, UNDP — country programming and treaty reporting</i></p>
<p><b>07</b> <b>Academic and Research Institutions</b> <i>Longitudinal studies, comparative research, and new empirical datasets</i></p>	<p><b>08</b> <b>Social Enterprise and Impact Investing</b> <i>Due diligence, portfolio reporting, and B Corp certification</i></p>	<p><b>09</b> <b>Media and Communications</b> <i>Journalism, public campaigns, and annual reporting</i></p>

**HOW TO INTEGRATE****Pre-program design**

Collect drawings from target community before designing curriculum — signal informs what the program needs to address, not what the NGO assumes it needs to address.

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**Mid-program pulse check**

Drawings collected at 6-week intervals reveal whether children's expressed concerns are shifting — early warning before dropout becomes visible in attendance data.

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**Post-program evaluation**

Compare pre and post drawing themes to measure whether children's sense of agency, safety, and aspiration actually changed — not just whether enrollment numbers held.

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**VALUE**

Replaces adult-guessed diagnosis with child-sourced evidence. Gives directors something they can show donors as proof of child-centered design. Most importantly gives them the early warning signal that currently arrives too late — after dropout, not before.

### HOW TO INTEGRATE

#### **Termly wellbeing scan**

A drawing exercise each term gives the principal a coded summary of what their cohort expressed, flagged by theme and intensity — a child-experience dashboard that currently doesn't exist.

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#### **Individual distress annex**

Drawings that signal abuse, isolation, or acute fear are separated from the aggregate report and routed directly to the school counsellor for individual welfare follow-up.

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#### **Teacher professional development**

Teacher collectives use aggregate child signal from their cluster to reflect on whether their classroom environment is producing fear, engagement, or indifference in children.

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#### **Parent-teacher meetings**

Instead of reporting only grades, teachers share what children's drawings suggest about their emotional experience of school — shifting the conversation from outcomes to experience.

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### VALUE

Gives principals a child-experience dashboard they currently don't have. Gives teachers a mirror that reflects what children are experiencing rather than what teachers think they're delivering. A government aided school is a live proof of concept — already done, already validated with 150+ students.

**HOW TO INTEGRATE****Pre-funding due diligence**

Before funding an NGO program, a CSR team uses CIGSA to run a baseline drawing exercise in the target community — understanding what children actually need before deciding which intervention to fund.

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**Mid-grant and end-grant impact measurement**

Drawing exercises replace or supplement adult-reported outcome metrics — CSR reports can show child-expressed change, not just enrollment or nutrition numbers.

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**Portfolio differentiation**

CSR teams managing multiple NGO grants use child signal across their portfolio to identify which programs are genuinely shifting children's sense of agency versus which are producing outputs without inner change.

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**Employee engagement**

Companies use drawing exercises with children in their communities as a participatory engagement activity — employees see firsthand what children express, creating authentic connection to the cause.

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**VALUE**

Solves the credibility gap in CSR impact reporting. “Child-centered program” stops being a claim and becomes an evidenced position. Increasingly important as SEBI tightens ESG disclosure requirements for listed companies in India.

### HOW TO INTEGRATE

#### **Social pillar measurement**

Child signal data becomes a quantified Social indicator — percentage of children in operational communities expressing safety, aspiration, and agency — reportable against SDG 3, 4, 5, and 16.

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#### **Supply chain child welfare**

Companies with supply chains in regions where child labour risk exists use drawing exercises in community schools as a non-intrusive child welfare signal — more honest than adult-reported compliance audits.

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#### **Community impact disclosure**

BRSR requires companies to report on community welfare. Child signal from communities where companies operate provides genuine evidence of social impact beyond financial donations.

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#### **Materiality assessment**

ESG analysts use child signal from affected communities to assess whether a company's social programs are actually addressing the issues children experience as most pressing.

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### VALUE

Transforms the S in ESG from the weakest pillar to the most differentiated. Current social metrics are almost entirely adult-reported and adult-designed. Child signal introduces a constituency that ESG frameworks have never had a methodology to hear from. First mover advantage for any ESG framework that adopts it.

**HOW TO INTEGRATE****SDG Voluntary National Reviews**

India's VNR submissions to the UN currently contain no child-sourced data. CIGSA output mapped to SDGs gives the government a methodology to include children's expressed priorities in national progress reporting.

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**NITI Aayog SDG Index**

The current index measures adult-observable outcomes. Child signal adds a perception layer — what children in each state experience as their most pressing development deficit — creating a new composite indicator.

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**District Collector dashboards**

Periodic drawing exercises across government schools generate a child welfare signal map at district level — helping administration identify where attention is needed before crisis indicators appear.

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**Parliamentary Committee inputs**

Child signal aggregated at state level provides evidence for Parliamentary Standing Committee deliberations on child welfare, education, and protection — a constituency that currently has no direct voice in legislative processes.

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**VALUE**

Gives government a child participation mechanism that satisfies UNCRC Article 12 obligations without requiring expensive consultative processes. Creates a low-cost, scalable, non-disruptive method for hearing from millions of children simultaneously. "We heard from children directly" is a powerful governance legitimacy claim.

**HOW TO INTEGRATE****Country programme design**

UNICEF country teams use drawing signal from target communities to inform programme priorities — replacing assumption-based needs assessments with child-expressed ones.

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**SDG progress monitoring**

UN agencies tracking SDG 4, 5, and 16 use CIGSA methodology to add child perception layers to their existing monitoring frameworks — a dimension no current monitoring system captures.

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**Child rights treaty reporting**

CIGSA output gives India's government and civil society a methodology to include child-sourced evidence in UN Committee on the Rights of the Child reviews.

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**Humanitarian rapid response**

In disaster or conflict-affected communities, drawing exercises provide rapid welfare signal before adult-reported needs assessments are complete — children often express distress faster and more honestly than adults report it upward.

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**VALUE**

Fills the Article 12 implementation gap that multilaterals have been trying to close for three decades. Provides a scalable, culturally adaptable, low-cost methodology that works across literacy levels, languages, and geographies. Positions India as a global innovator in child-inclusive governance methodology.

**HOW TO INTEGRATE****Longitudinal studies**

Repeat drawing exercises with the same cohort over 3–5 years — tracking how children’s expressed priorities, agency, and aspirations shift in response to specific interventions or policy changes.

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**Cross-country comparative research**

Using VGCF methodology to compare what children in India, Bangladesh, Kenya, and Brazil express as their most pressing development concerns — global child signal benchmarking.

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**Developmental psychology**

CIGSA data on self-agency patterns across age groups and resource contexts opens new research questions about how material conditions shape children’s belief in their own futures.

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**Education and curriculum research**

Signal from children about their experience of school environments informs pedagogy and curriculum design with a child-perspective dataset that currently doesn’t exist at scale.

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**VALUE**

Creates an entirely new empirical dataset — children as primary sources rather than research subjects. Generates publishable findings across education, child development, governance, and public policy. Positions CIGSA as infrastructure for a new field of child-inclusive research methodology.

## HOW TO INTEGRATE

### Investment due diligence

Impact investors assessing social enterprises working with children use CIGSA baseline and endline signal as part of their impact measurement framework — moving beyond SROI estimates to child-expressed outcome evidence.

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### Portfolio impact reporting

Impact funds with child welfare exposure use aggregate child signal across investees to report to LPs on genuine social return — a metric no current portfolio reporting system includes.

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### Product and service design

Social enterprises building educational technology, health products, or welfare services for children use drawing signal from target users to validate whether their product addresses what children actually experience as their problem.

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### B Corp certification

Companies seeking B Corp social impact scores use child signal from community programs as evidence of authentic child-centered impact — harder to manipulate than adult-reported metrics.

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## VALUE

Addresses the impact washing problem that plagues social enterprise and impact investing. Child signal is harder to manipulate than adult-reported metrics. Gives impact investors a genuinely independent signal source — the children themselves.

**HOW TO INTEGRATE****Primary source journalism**

Aggregate child signal data becomes a primary source for journalists covering child welfare, education, and development — “here is what children across Maharashtra said they experience” is a story no journalist currently has access to.

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**Public awareness campaigns**

NGOs and government departments use anonymised drawing excerpts and aggregate signal in public campaigns — shifting narrative from adult-described child problems to child-expressed child realities.

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**Annual State of India’s Children report**

A CIGSA-informed annual publication tracking what children across India expressed as their most pressing concerns — comparable to the ASER report but for child experience rather than learning outcomes.

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**VALUE**

Changes the narrative architecture of child welfare communication from adult advocacy on behalf of children to children’s own expressed signal amplified by adults. Significantly more powerful for fundraising, policy influence, and public awareness.

# The Common Thread

Every entity in this ecosystem currently makes decisions about children using adult-generated data. Field worker reports. Enrolment statistics. Nutritional outcomes. Teacher assessments. Policy indices.

**CIGSA inserts a single new input that none of them currently have.**

***What children themselves expressed when given space to express freely.***

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Interested in integrating children's expressions or knowing more about our work?

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