OUR KIDS

A Practical Guidebook for Parents and Teachers

August 2017

Content

Introduction

In general terms, both children and adults possess all the same inherent human characteristics and are presented with the same opportunities. However, they differ in the level of development of these opportunities and characteristics. Children have not yet completely developed their skills. They need guidance from adults.

Children are human beings in the stage of physical, cognitive, social and emotional development. Thus, children have special needs, which other people don't. As physically and emotionally immature human beings, children can not enjoy their full rights without assistance from adults and the state's added care. Compared to human rights, these facts give children's rights a different and specific dimension.

Children's development is only achieved when all human rights are enjoyed, thus adults must make sure that children enjoy all these rights with the best possible quality. Adults have to take responsibility in this regard and they must interact with children in such a way that through the interactions they help children to recognize their rights, to acquire the skills to practice them and to establish attitudes that demonstrate democratic civic engagement. All initiatives on the promotion and protection of children's rights should be based on the involvement of children. Thus, the state, through its institutions, and the society must work for the children and with the children.

This guidebook is designed by the project "Promoting and Protecting Child Rights", funded by the European Union Office in Kosovo and implemented by the Kosova Education Center - KEC, in partnership with the Forum Ziviler Friedensdienst e.V. - forumZFD. The project aims to *empower local communities to improve child protection measures in schools through mediation and peaceful settlement of conflicts.*

Children spend most of their time at home and at school. Thus, it is of paramount importance for parents, other family members and teachers to have the knowledge, skills and values needed to promote and protect children's rights. This guidebook is designed to provide parents and teachers, as well as the general public, with information on children's rights and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, on successful interaction with children and provision of opportunities for children to actively participate in family and school life, as well as on decision-making on issues related to them.

The first part of the guidebook contains basic information on human rights and children's rights, describes the principles, form and content of the Convention and demonstrates the importance of creating child-friendly environments everywhere, starting from the family. This part comprises practical tips for readers, with links to more electronic content to reinforce the given piece of information, but it also provides the authors' experiences on the discussed aspects.

The remainder of the guidebook provides:

☐ a number of ideas for action that can be used both in schools by teachers (or teachers together with parents) and at home by parents and other adult relatives of children;

☐ some good practices in the field of promotion and protection of children's rights, from various projects around the world;

☐ a summary of resources to be used by parents, teachers, but also others, in their work with children. Some of these resources are available in Albanian, others in English, and they are easily applicable to the daily context;

☐ a school assessment form, in the context of the child-friendly environment, to be used by parents and teachers, but also by school management, to reflect on the school situation and to initiate measures to improve the promotion and protection of child welfare in schools;

☐ a summary of the text of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, to be used by readers as constant reference during their interactions with children and their engagements to promote and protect children's rights.

We hope that this content will encourage you to improve your personal practices and to contribute to raising the awareness of the people around you, for the need to protect and promote children's rights and to create a friendly and non-violent environment for children!

1. Human rights

❝All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.".

(Article 1 of DUDNj).

Human rights are general moral norms that derive from human nature and address social relationships. They can generally be defined as inherent rights to our nature, without which, we as human beings can not live. As such, human rights enable us to utilize and develop our intelligence, skills, talent and consciousness, and thus meet our physical and spiritual needs.

Human dignity is at the core of the idea of human rights. This is best reflected in Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, proclaimed by the UN on 10 December 1948.

1.1 Characteristics of human rights

Human rights have some characteristics or features that clarify their nature. They are:

Universal and inalienable - On the one hand, the universality of human rights prohibits discrimination based on gender, color of skin, social position, etc. This is why the prohibition of discrimination was introduced in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 2) and in almost all international human rights treaties. On the other hand, the universality of human rights leads to the global application of human rights. Human rights are the same for all people on all continents, regardless of cultural and economic differences.

In principle, human rights are often described as the essential rights of each individual human being. The essence of a human being is inalienable. Therefore, human rights are inalienable. However, under certain circumstances, rights can be alienable in practice. For example, a person may transfer their property

rights to someone else. Or a person's freedom of movement may temporarily be restricted because of general security.

Interdependent and indivisible - the different rights within the human rights system are closely linked to each other. Different rights are dependent on one another and complement each other, in the sense that the the fulfillment of one right affects the fulfillment of another right. For example, the right to security enables the freedom of movement of people. Freedom of movement enables economic development and equality. And so on.

Related to responsibilities – this characteristic is best expressed through reflection. Such reflection may be interpersonal or intrapersonal. Rights can not stand separated from responsibilities. A person's right can not be fulfilled if the surrounding world shuns the responsibility to respect this right. For example, the right to freedom of movement can not be fulfilled if others do not refrain from actions that restrict this freedom. Or, the constituents' right to education can not be fulfilled if state authorities do not provide the conditions required for education, which implies the opening of schools, the organization of the teaching process, etc. Both of these cases are examples of interpersonal reflection of rights and responsibilities. In the first case, the right of one individual is interconnected to the responsibilities of other constituents, while in the second case, an individual's right is interconnected to the responsibility of state authorities. In the first case, responsibility is related to not engaging in, or refraining from an act that violates another person's right, while in the second case, the responsibility is related to acting or the obligation to act.

It is very important to mention that each person who is entitled to human rights, is at the same time responsible to respect the rights of other persons. Let us now talk about the intrapersonal effect of reflection. Each individual's right is accompanied by the responsibility to respect the same right of other individuals. My right to freedom of thought and speech is at the same time my responsibility

to respect others' free thought and speech. It is not in vain that we say, one's right ends where the others' right begins. Such a responsibility derives from the principle of equality between all people.

1.2 Evolutionary development of human rights

We haven't always had human rights, as we know them today. They emerged and grew in the wake of development of the society, thus following the evolutionary context of humanity. For example, rights such as women's rights, indigenous peoples' or minority peoples' rights, emerged only during a certain period of development of the human society. The right to sustainable development and the right to exploit natural resources were only proclaimed in the last decades, when humanity began facing new development challenges.

Today, we speak of generations of human rights. The first to introduce the system of human rights' generations was the Czech scholar Karel Vasak, in 1979. According to him, there were three generations of rights, whereas today there are authors who talk about four generations:

☐ Civil and political rights - freedom-oriented rights;

☐ Economic, social and cultural rights - equality-oriented rights;

☐ Sustainable development rights - solidarity-oriented rights;

☐ Good governance rights.

Of these human rights' generations, the first two are already sanctioned by international human rights instruments. The third generation is still relatively controversial, although there are already a number of developments to give legal and political recognition to these rights. Meanwhile, the fourth generation is still taking shape.

1.3 International human rights instruments

International human rights instruments are all human rights documents derived from international agreements or international organizations. According to one type of categorization, they can be classified in declarations, approved by organizations such as the United Nations General Assembly, which are not legally binding, although politically they may be; and agreements or conventions, which are legally binding instruments issued under international law.

Type of document	Type of responsibility		
	legal	moral	political
Conventions	✓	✓	✓
Declarations		✓	✓

International human rights instruments can be further divided into global instruments, in which any country in the world can be a party; and regional instruments limited to countries in a particular region of the world.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights – is the most important human rights instrument. It was adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 10 December 1948. It consists of 30 articles that represent the views of the General Assembly regarding the human rights that are guaranteed to all people. Although legally not binding, this declaration urges member nations to promote a number of human, civil, economic and social rights, asserting these rights as the "foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world". Following the model of dualism between rights and responsibilities, the Declaration was the first legal effort to limit the freedom of behavior of states and press upon them duties to their constituents.

Due to the need to regulate particular groups and aspects of human rights other human rights instruments have emerged, and as a rule they are all based on the human rights' principles established by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

A list of international human rights instruments, according to the human rights they address, can be found on the website of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/UniversalHumanRightsInstruments.aspx

2. Children's rights

2.1 Children's peculiarities

There are certain categories of people with features that differentiate them from all other people. Such categories are children, people with special needs, indigenous peoples, refugees, etc. Human rights carry a special meaning for these categories of people, because they have to be adapted to their circumstances and characteristics. This gave rise to the need to regulate the rights of these categories of people, in particular with international instruments and local legislation.

In general terms, both children and adults possess all the same inherent human characteristics and are presented with the same opportunities. However, they differ in the level of development of these opportunities and characteristics. Children have not yet completely developed their skills. They need guidance from adults.

When talking about a child, we must first consider the child's development. The measures taken by society must to be tailored to this development.

Child development covers three main areas:

☐ Physical development - changes in body size, appearance and functioning of various bodily systems, brain development, perception and motor capacities and physical health;

☐ Cognitive Development - development of a wide variety of mental processes and intellectual skills, including attention, memory, academic and common knowledge, problem solving, imagination, creativity and the ability to present the world through language;

☐ Emotional and social development - development of emotional communication, self-understanding, ability to manage feelings, knowledge on other people, interpersonal skills, friendships, close relationships, as well as moral reasoning and courtesy.

This definition of child development and these areas of child development make us aware of the peculiarities of children in relation to adults. Children are human beings in the stage of physical emotional development. Thus, children have special needs, which other people don't. As physically and emotionally immature human beings, children can not enjoy their full rights without assistance from adults and the state's added care. These facts give children's rights a different and specific dimension in relation to human rights.

2.2 The need to specifically address children's rights

The specific characteristics of children compared to adults have presented the need to address children's rights in a specific manner, by regulating them through special acts and by including special mechanisms for the protection of these rights. Being a group in need and incapable of fully and independently enjoying their rights, children depend on the care of adults and especially on institutional care. Past experiences, as well as recent ones, show that in countries where institutions have not established sustainable care policies and mechanisms for their constituents, children's rights are most vulnerable in situations of war, but also at times of peace. Over the last decade, millions of children died as a consequence of armed conflicts, suffered serious mental injury because of war, and have even been involved in combat operations. Furthermore, there are just as many children who also suffer from starvation, lack of health care, sexual exploitation, forced labor, and much more. All of the above justify the commitment of the international community and individual states to regulate

children's rights and to establish sustainable mechanisms for the protection and promotion of these rights.

2.3 Historical background of children's rights

The advent of the twentieth century was characterized by important initiatives and engagements in the field of children's rights. These initiatives were pushed forward by people of goodwill, acting individually and through different organizations. These engagements resulted in a series of documents that strengthened children's rights around the world.

The most significant are:

☐ The Declaration of the Rights of the Child, commonly known as 'Declaration of Geneva of the Rights of the Child', is an international document promoting children's rights, written by Eglantyne Jebb and adopted by the League of Nations in 1924.

☐ In the spirit of the principles established by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the United Nations General Assembly, on 20 November 1959, proclaimed the Declaration of the Rights of the Child.

☐ In 1979, during the international year of children, a proposal was made to extend this declaration and make it mandatory under international law. Following such efforts, the draft of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, written by the Government of Poland, was presented.

☐ The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopted by the UN on 20 November 1989, and it entered into force on 2 September 1990.

2.4 Children's rights under the Convention on the Rights of the Child

The Convention on the Rights of the Child has the same meaning for people all over the world. While laying down common standards, the Convention takes into account the different cultural, social, economic and political realities of individual states, so that each state must find the right ways to enforce the rights to which all people are entitled.

There are four general principles enshrined in the Convention. They help to interpret the Convention as a whole, serving as a guide for national implementation programs. The four principles are particularly formulated in Articles 2, 3, 6 and 12.

Non-discrimination (Article 2) - States Parties shall ensure that all children within their jurisdiction enjoy all rights. No child shall suffer discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child's or his or her parent's or legal guardian's race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status.

The best interests of the child (Article 3) - When state authorities make decisions concerning children, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration. This principle applies to decisions made by courts, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, and public or private social welfare institutions. Obviously, this is the fundamental message of the Convention, but its implementation is the greatest challenge.

Right to life, survival and development (Article 6) – This principle includes the right to survival and development, which must be ensured "to the maximum extent possible". The term "development" should be interpreted in a broad sense, including the dimension of quality: it doesn't imply only physical health, but also mental, emotional, cognitive, social and cultural development.

Child's views (Article 12) - A child shall have the right to express his or her views freely in matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child. The basic idea is that children have the right to be heard and that their views must be taken into serious consideration in all instances, including any judicial or administrative proceedings affecting them.

2.5 Form of the Convention

The Convention on the Rights of the Child begins with the introduction or the preamble. The normative part of the Convention contains 54 articles, which are divided into three parts. The first part, containing the first 41 articles, defines the state's obligations in ensuring, protecting and strengthening children's rights. The second part, which includes Articles 42 to 45, deals with the definition of mechanisms that ensure the implementation of the Convention. This part defines the obligation of States Parties to report on advances in the implementation of the Convention, then the competences of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, and the participation of specialized agencies of the United Nations in the examination of the Convention's application and in issuing opinions on concrete issues relating to the implementation of the Convention. Whereas the third part, beginning with Article 46 and ending with Article 54, sets forth the procedural issues relating to the Convention, such as the entry into force, the accession of new States to the Convention, the proposal of amendments by States, the submission of reservations by States during ratification or accession, the official languages of the Convention, etc.

Preamble

Normative part - 54 articles

1-41
State's obligations

42-45
Mechanisms to ensure the
Convent's implementation

46-54
Procedural issues
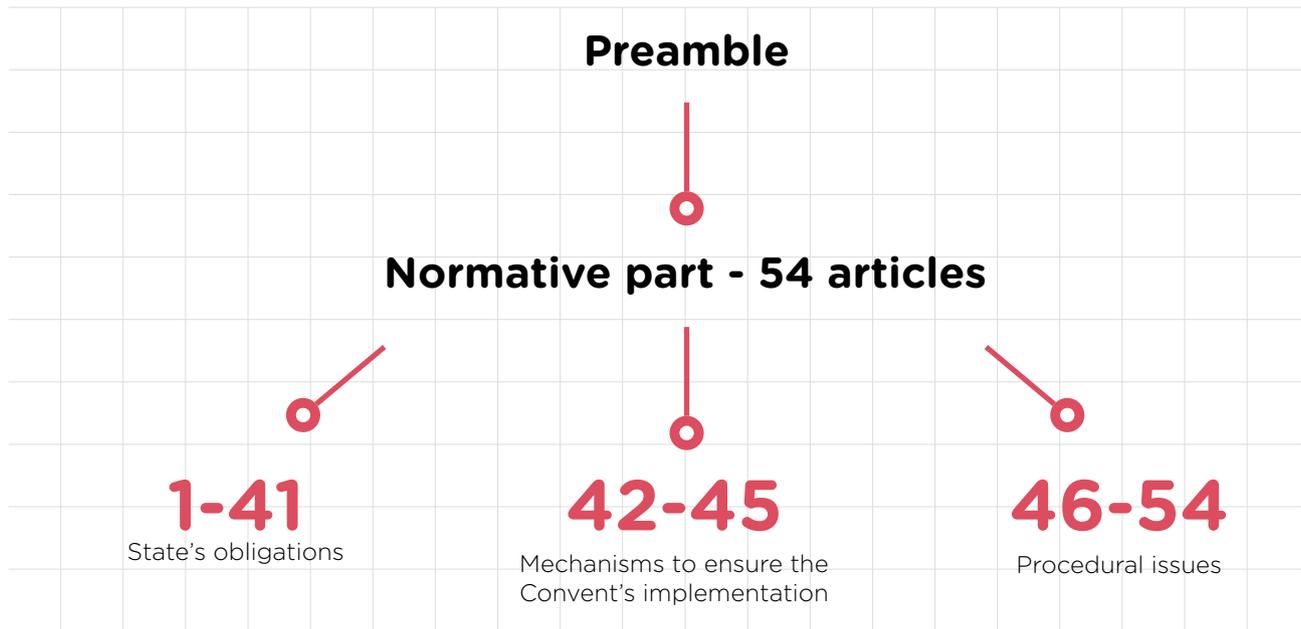
2.6 Content of the Convention

With regards to the subject of the Convention, different parts, identifiable through the specific clusters of issues they deal with, can be distinguished. Thus, there are five distinct parts:

1. Civil rights and freedoms

(a)   Birth name and nationality **(Article 7);**
(b)   Preservation of identity **(Article 8);**
(c)   Freedom of expression **(Article 13);**
(d)   Access to appropriate information **(Article 17);**
(e)   Freedom of thought, conscience and religion **(Article 14);**

(f)   Freedom of association and peaceful assembly **(Article 15);**

(g)   Protection of privacy **(Article 16);**

(h)   The right not to be subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.**(Article 37).**

2. Family environment and alternative care

(a)   Parental direction and guidance **(Article 5);**

(b)   Parental responsibilities **(Article 18);**

(c)   Separation from parents **(Article 9);**

(d)   Family reunification **(Article 10);**

(e)   Securing the conditions of living necessary for the child **(Article 27);**

(f)   Children deprived of their family environment **(Article 20);**

(g)   Adoption **(Article 21);**

(h)   Illicit transfer and non-return **(Article 11);**

(i)   Abuse and neglect **(Article 19),** including physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration **(Article 39);**

(j)   Periodic review of placement **(Article 25).**

3. Basic health and well-being

(a)   Survival and development **(Article 6);**

(b)   Children with disabilities **(Article 23);**

(c)   Health and health services **(Article 24);**

(d)   Social security and childcare facilities and services **(Articles 26 and 18);**

(d)   Standard of living **(Article 27).**

4. Education, leisure and cultural activities

(a)   Education, including vocational training and guidance **(Article 28);**

(b)   Scope of education **(Article 29);**

(c)   Leisure, recreation and cultural activities **(Article 31).**

5. Special protection measures

(a)   Children in extraordinary situations **(Articles 22, 38 and 39);**

(b)   Children in conflict with the law **(Articles 37 and 40);**

(c)   Children under exploitation **(Articles 32, 33, 34, 35 and 36);**

(d)   Children belonging to minority or indigenous groups **(Article 30).**

Children and society as beneficiaries

Civil rights and freedoms | Family environment and alternative care | Education, leisure and cultural activities | Basic Health and Well-being | Special protection measures
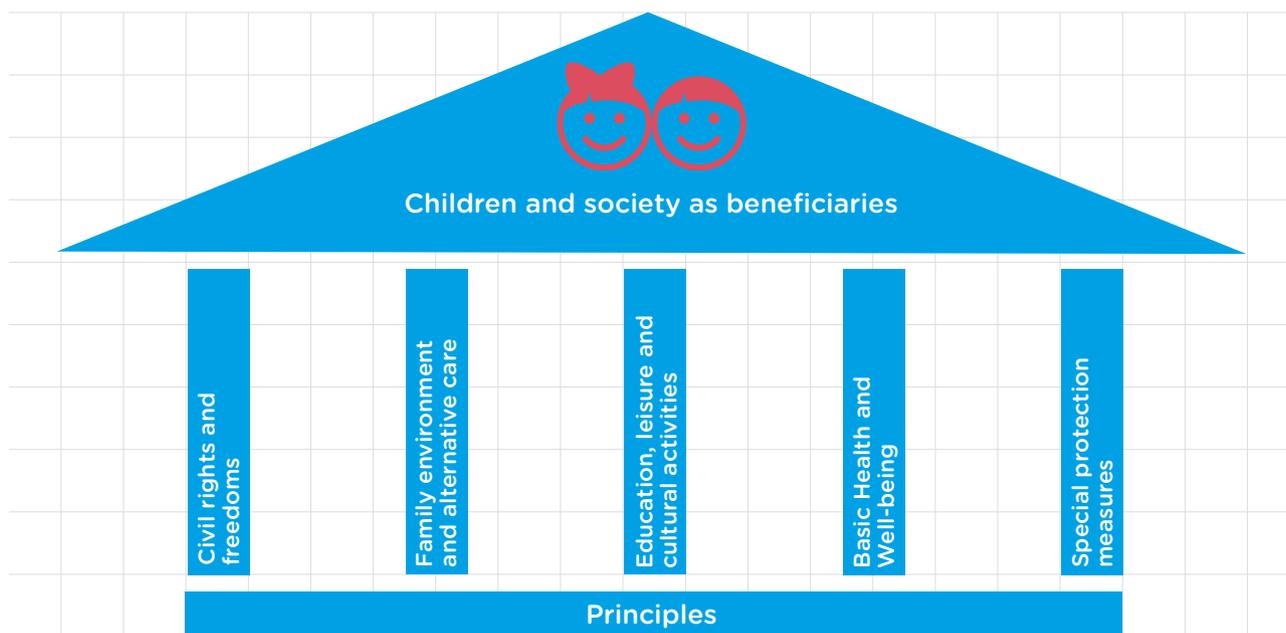
Principles

2.7 The Convention as a source of global policy

Undoubtedly, the Convention on the Rights of the Child constitutes the foundation of every action in the field of children's rights. Its principles are enshrined in international policies that affect the lives of children, but also in domestic and local policies.

In order to improve the lives of the poor, the international community launched in 2000 the Millennium Development Goals, an initiative of world leaders consisting of eight goals, from the eradication of poverty and hunger to the global partnership for development. Following the end in 2015 of the Millennium Development Goals' term, world leaders officially launched at the United Nations the Sustainable Development Agenda in 2016. This agenda promotes 17 sustainable development objectives to transform the world by 2030[1]. To achieve these goals, each should do their share of work: governments, private sector, civil society and all constituents. Achieving these goals is especially important in the context of children, because all these goals affect children the most.

1 NO POVERTY	End poverty in all its forms everywhere	2 ZERO HUNGER	End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture
3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING	Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages	4 QUALITY EDUCATION	Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
5 GENDER EQUALITY	Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls	6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION	Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

1   http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/

7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY

Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation

10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES

Reduce inequality within and among countries

11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

13 CLIMATE ACTION

Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts (as defined by agreements reached at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, UNFCCC).

14 LIFE BELOW WATER

Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

15 LIFE ON LAND

Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

3. Child-friendly environment

The environment surrounding the child is of great importance for the child's psycho-physical and social development. This environment is determined by the physical living conditions, available services, and the social relationships developed within the living environment. The society at large, from parents and guardians to local and central level institutions, must make sure that the environment in which the child lives provides opportunities for development in terms of the psycho-physical, cognitive and social aspects. The family, the neighborhood, the school and the city shape the environment that must to be friendly to the child.

From birth and throughout their growth, children need education in a friendly, safe and stimulating environment. The more love and interactions children receive in a safe and friendly environment, the more they will interact socially and learn and acquire new skills, which they fully develop in the course of their lives. When children are actively supported by guardians to develop their potential during early childhood, they are well prepared for school and thus benefit more from education. They also gain more confidence, are better at social interactions and contribute more positively to all aspects of family and social life. Whether we are parents, sisters, brothers, grandparents, neighbors or service providers, we are all responsible guardians who must provide for the best childhood life for children. We owe it to them, because it is their inherent right. We also owe it to ourselves to see children grow up in a safe and friendly environment and advance in life.

3.1 Impact of social environment and social relations on child development

There is plenty of evidence to demonstrate that one's development is influenced by the individual's social environment. For example, there is a hypothesis that

> *"Humanity owes to children the best it can afford".*
> **(Eglantyne Jebb)**

children can imitate what they see in their environment, meaning that those who grow up in an environment characterized by high levels of education and child care, access to a range of basic services and recreational facilities, and social cohesion, experience better development than those who grow in an environment characterized by lack of resources and social antagonism.

Cognitive development and educational achievements – The child's social environment affects cognitive development and educational achievement. Children involved in good social relationships, have better academic performance than others. Children who enjoy housing security are less likely to be absent at school and achieve better results. Children living in neighborhoods with low quality housing (i.e. with poor socio-economic conditions) are more likely to drop out of school before the end of term. Children who attend preschool education achieve better results in progress and are less likely to repeat an academic year.

Emotional and psychological well being – The feeling of belonging experienced by individuals when they have good social relationships, positively impacts the emotional and psychological aspects. Usually, these children have greater self-esteem and are less likely to experience mental health problems, including depression and anxiety. This is, however, only a tendency, as it does not mean that children who are more introverted should necessarily have such problems - they may have full mental health and serenity.

Through its influence on the behavior of the parents, the social environment also affects the health of the child. A study in Australia came to the conclusion that parents living in communities with more accessible services, are less inclined to use harsh parenting methods (which have a negative psychological impact on children) than parents living in communities where there is a lack of resources.

Motivation – Individuals living in social environments characterized by positive social relationships, are more motivated than those who do not live in such environments. For example, peer support is considered as a boost to the child's motivation to pursue social goals, while the teachers' support increases their students' motivation to pursue social as well as academic goals. Parental support also affects children in terms of their interest in school and pursuit of their goals.

Physical health – A positive social environment promotes improved physical health, including: reduced risk of food disorder, increased likelihood of vaccination, low risk of teen pregnancy, increased abilities for sports, etc.

3.2 Child care and education based on child rights

It is extremely important for every society to pay close attention to the care and education provided to children. Education is generally the best tool to equip children with knowledge, skills, attitudes and values. These competences enable future generations of constituents to actively take part in social life and to manifest democratic and civic behaviors. Meanwhile, education based on child rights enables the establishment of a loving environment for children and a promising environment for their future. In such an environment, adults are aware of the need to support children and are committed to acting to facilitate the fulfillment of child rights. Even children will have a different attitude, because they will be aware of their rights, of the easiest way to fulfill them, of the addresses of those who can be of assistance to them, etc. However, education based on child rights does not mean that children should only know their rights. Through such education, we must also make the children aware of their behaviors with regard to adults and their peers. We have to instill human and responsibility values in

them, such as: good communication, empathy, cooperation, common sense, tolerance, solidarity, etc.

Child education begins at birth and is carried out continuously. This continuity is by no means uniform, because it is heavily dependent on the age of the child and the environment surrounding the child. Both of these factors - age and environment - interact and jointly shape the basic layer of the whole process. These can also be called direct factors, while there are a number of factors with indirect influence, which often deploy their weight through the environment. Such factors may be the economic and social situation at large, legal infrastructure and law enforcement, political will, civic awareness, etc. In a way, these factors can also be called prerequisites, because they determine the quality of engagement of people directly interacting with children, during their years of growth, to provide them with general education and to particularly prepare them to become conscious individuals.

Parenting tips:

- Parental love is essential and a prerequisite for the development of all the child›s skills.

- Harmony, security and family support positively influence the child›s development.

- A child's self-confidence is important for the development of his/her potential.

- Both boys and girls need the same care during their development.

- Good communication with the child from the very beginning creates healthy relationships and influences the development of the child.

3.3 Involvement of different stakeholders in child education

After birth, the child is reared with care by the parents and the family. From their first breath, children begin to learn what determines their attitude towards others. The way children are treated by their families and the nature of caring they experience, will show them how they are appreciated for their human values and what they can expect from the world. This experience has a profound impact on how the child sees the world and those who live in it. Parental love and care are the first signals children receive from the first emotional connections with the people around them. Children learn love and care by experiencing them. These should be offered in such a way as to stimulate in children the feeling of appreciation of their own values. Children who do not appreciate their human values are not likely to appreciate the values of others, nor can they turn into concerned constituents or actively promote human rights. Care can therefore be considered as the first stage of education on child rights.

At the early stage of childhood, the child is educated in the family environment, but this is often combined with attending preschool institutions, like nurseries. By caring for their health, feeding them regularly, fulfilling their needs and desires, paying attention to their words, offering toys and fun, we respect the rights of the child. At the same time, we make our children aware that these rights are an integral part of their being. By advising them, reproaching them for any unpleasant action, giving them positive examples through our behavior, we manage to make them aware of behavioral norms. Developing respect for others, appreciating human similarities and honoring human differences should be consciously cultivated from the first stages of socialization, and must continue in the next stages. Obviously, all this is done with added care, taking into account the very young age of children. The atmosphere surrounding the child is also very important. To give positive examples to the child, family relationships and generally all interpersonal relationships in the child's environment should be healthy. Some children who attend nurseries during the day, require special attention to avoid the adverse effect, stress or complications that may arise due to the change of environment from the family to the nursery. Instead, such change should be refreshing for them. Here we open a chapter in the process of education based on child rights - cooperation between parents and educational institutions. This cooperation also continues in the later stages, as it becomes even more necessary and increases in intensity and quality.

At the preschool age, the child reaches a certain degree of cognitive development, and this enables him/her to analyze situations, make comparisons, react to the events taking place around him/her, and display his/her attitudes more strongly. Adults need to understand this and behave accordingly with the child. First of all, this means supporting the child and avoiding situations that may confuse the child. Such cognitive development in the child indicates that the child is prepared for the new phase of primary

education. The school environment is an environment that differs from the family environment and this is an interesting thing for the child. New experiences from school life complement the child's picture of the world and help the child's further development. Here, once again, great importance must be given to the school's cooperation with parents. Parents should be part of the school, helping the school with information about their children, helping in the daily management of situations and events at school. At the same time, parents must help their children to better adapt to the school. It is very important for the child to realize that his/her life has not suffered any disruption, that parents are also present in his/her school life. In this, a great role is also played by the school, which should provide opportunities for parent involvement in school affairs.

To obtain additional information about cooperation between the family and the educational institutions, you can review the guidebook on this link:

https://albania.savethechildren.net/sites/albania.savethechildren.net/files/library/manual%20per%20prinderit%20%281%29.pdf

We must also remember that the child's environment is not restricted to the family and the school. The child may attend a sports club, a music school, a foreign language course, an amateur theater group and so on. All these activities serve to gain special skills and to advance the child's personal talents. But they should also be used for the child's general education based on child rights. In fact, these activities fulfill the rights of the child, because the right to play, recreation and participation in cultural and artistic activities is fulfilled through sport, music, theater, etc. Here, the issue lies in the awareness and education of the child. The attitude of the sports coach, music instructor, theater director or

Family

School

Amateur
Theatre

Language
School

Sports
Club

Music
Academy

Neighbourhood
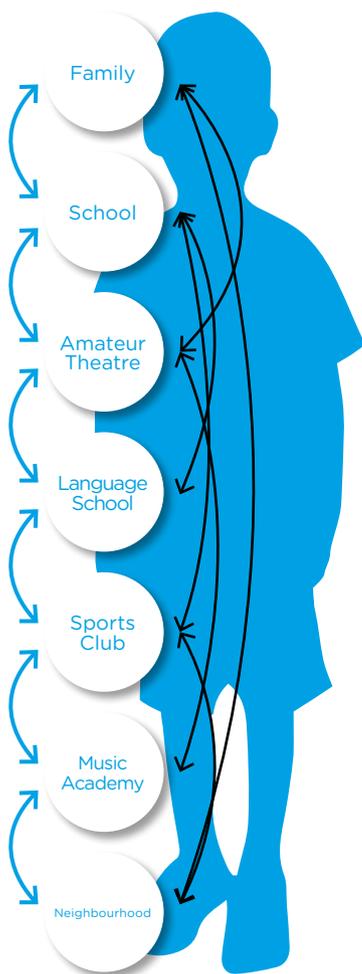
foreign language teacher should reflect positive values on the child. That attitude exceeds the initial purpose of providing the child with special skills. Ultimately, this is in line with the contemporary definition of education.

From the image we can easily conclude that apart from the existence of numerous "environmental players" in the education on children's rights, the interaction between these "players" is indispensable. They exchange information and engage in mutual counseling, joint actions and other forms of interaction that contribute to the growth of a young, conscious individual.

3.4 Protecting and promoting child rights as part of the child-friendly environment

To promote and protect children's rights, numerous measures are needed beyond education. Institutions, both at local and central level, are directly responsible to ensure such measures in the areas of health, social welfare, safety, justice for children, leisure and recreation, etc.

The work of these institutions is complemented by the work of informal and formal civil society groups, as well as other combined mechanisms that are established and operate to provide an environment in which child rights are protected and promoted.

The following chart illustrates how many institutions, agencies, organizations and groups are involved in this comprehensive child rights initiative. Obviously, more stakeholders can be added to this chart.

Office of the President, Assembly and Municipal Directorates

Informal and religious groups

Line Ministries

People's Advocate

Office for Good Governance within the Office of the Prime Minister

Promotion and protection of children's rights

Justice for Children (Police and Judiciary)

Coordination mechanism at the municipal level for child protection

International organizations

Office of Human/Child Rights in the Municipality

Civil society organizations

Center for Social Work

Several mechanisms for the protection and promotion of children's rights are presented below along with a description of their activities. It should be noted that some mechanisms are linked to central level institutions (line ministries),

but their activity is conducted locally, and although they are hierarchically linked to the central level of governance, in practice they are heavily related to municipalities at the local government level.

Center for Social Work (CSW) – It operates in the field of social welfare. It manages social assistance schemes and the provision of services to children in need of protection, development and rehabilitation (abandoned children, orphaned children, abused children, neglected children, children with disabilities, children whose parents are prevented from exercising parental rights, children of divorced or separated parents). The center for social work is also responsible for: appointing case managers; making professional assessments of the needs of children; conducting consultations with the family; providing psycho-social counseling for the child and family; ensuring the provision of medical and educational services, etc. Some of the forms of child protection that fall under the powers of the CSW are: guardianship, family housing, residential housing, social assistance as needed, family reunification, adoption.

Prosecution and Courts – perform their duties in the field of justice. Regarding children, these mechanisms provide special protection for them. More specifically, the Juvenile Department of the Basic Prosecution prosecutes criminal offenses committed by juveniles (14-18 years old), while the Juvenile Department of the Basic Court adjudicates on juvenile delinquency.

Both of these bodies issue special protective measures on children, while looking after the well-being of minors; any measure or punishment against offenders of this age group must be proportionate to the circumstances of the offender and the offense, and the rights of minors to privacy must be respected at all stages, in order to avoid any harm from improper publicity. Likewise, they take special measures to protect the dignity and rights of juveniles in contact with the law.

Kosovo Police – Works to help children who are juvenile delinquents, victims and suspects. It provides prevention and awareness, protection, emergency assistance for victims, referral of victims (to the prosecutor's office, social work center, hospital, court and attorney), protection of victims, etc. Police also cooperate with other parties to prevent cases of child rights' violations, such as abuse of children through trafficking, forced child labor, child abuse, etc.

Kosovo Probation Service – It deals with the execution of sentences and alternative measures, supervision, re-socialization, reintegration and rehabilitation of juveniles who have run into conflict with the law. There is a practice of cooperation with the municipalities for the performance of unpaid work, as well as diversity measures (8 types of measures) and vocational training of minors in conflict with the law.

Victims' attorney – Provides support and assistance to crime victims for access to justice. He/she acts as an authorized representative who has the power to notify the injured party of his/her rights and to represent the interests of the victim in the proceedings before the prosecutor and the court. He/she refers the victim to other service providers. He/she acts on behalf of the victim, when necessary and appropriate, to stop the violation of the rights of the victim and to seek action to guarantee their protection.

People's Advocate – It is an independent institution governed by the principles of impartiality, independence, primacy of human rights, confidentiality and professionalism. The scope of the institution of the People's Advocate relates to the promotion, supervision and protection of the fundamental rights and freedoms of natural and legal persons from unlawful and irregular acts or omissions of public authorities, institutions and persons or other authorities exercising public authority in the Republic of Kosovo. With regards to the specific perspective on children, the People's Advocate is called upon to draft and adopt special procedures for receiving and handling complaints

from children, as well as to establish a special team for children's rights and a permanent program for making children aware of their rights and of the role of the People's Advocate Institution in their defense.

Coordinating Mechanism Against Domestic Violence - Provides an immediate and comprehensive response to domestic violence. It provides efficient coordination of the institutional response to address cases of violence and contributes to the establishment of proactive policies against domestic violence. Works on improving / building a data collection and sharing system among group members.

Protection Networks Against Violence in Schools - They raise awareness at the municipal and school level on the Protocol on prevention and referral of school violence, on the establishment of school-level peer clubs for prevention and response to school violence, and on familiarization with the school violence incidence module within the Education Information Management System (SMIA).

Teams for Prevention and Response to Dropout and Non-Enrollment in Compulsory Education (EPRBM) – are established at the school and municipal level, under the Administrative Instruction No. 19/2012 of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology of Kosovo. Their role consists in preventing and responding to students' dropout from compulsory education, as well as addressing cases of non-enrollment.

To learn more about the work of these teams you can review the manuals for these teams found in the links below:

https://masht.rks-gov.net/uploads/2015/12/doracak-per-ekipet-shkollore-per-parandalim_1.pdf and
http://masht.rks-gov.net/uploads/2015/12/doracak-per-ekipet-komunale-per-parandalim_1.pdf

Local Youth Action Councils – They represent in front of the respective local institutions the youth organizations of the municipality in which they operate. They address municipal youth issues with municipal institutions and other public and private persons. Along with local councils, there is the Central Youth Action Council, which is composed of the local councils and where issues related to young people are discussed.

Local Youth Action Councils provide opinions and advice to municipal bodies and institutions on the actions they need to take regarding youth in the municipality; present views on legal documents and other documents regarding youth issues in the municipality; engage in advocacy, lobbying, representation, coordination of civil society work in the municipality, but they also offer advice, training, policy drafts or proposals, etc.

Children's Municipal Assemblies - are children's organizations, composed of children from the different schools of the municipality. Assemblies serve as places to exercise democracy and where children promote and protect the rights of children. Within the assemblies, children also have the possibility to acquire the skills needed to become child rights advocates and agents of change in their community. Their operations include drafting action plans and implementing them in the community.

3.5 Child-friendly municipality

The "Child-Friendly Cities" initiative was developed decades ago under UNICEF leadership and since the 1990s it has been tried in many cities around the world. This process supports child rights and promotes the Convention on the Rights of the Child at the local level.

The concept of creating child-friendly cities relies on identifying the steps for building a local government system that pledges to uphold the rights of children.

More specifically, this is a process to implement the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child at the local level of governance, at the level where it has the greatest impact on the lives of children.

But what does a child-friendly city mean? The Framework for Action on Building Child-friendly Cities[2] considers a Child-friendly City one that guarantees the right of every young citizen to:

☐ Influence decisions about their city

☐ Express their opinion on the city they want

☐ Participate in family, community and social life

☐ Receive basic services such as health care, education and shelter

☐ Drink safe water and have access to proper sanitation

☐ Be protected from exploitation, violence and abuse

☐ Walk safely in the streets on their own

☐ Meet friends and play

☐ Have green spaces for plants and animals

☐ Live in an unpolluted environment

☐ Participate in cultural and social events

☐ Be an equal individual of their city with access to every service, regardless of ethnic origin, religion, income, gender or disability.

Gjakova is the first municipality in Kosovo that has drafted, through a UNICEF-funded project, the 2017-2021 Strategy and Action Plan for the Child-Friendly Municipality. The concept of child-friendly cities is the starting point of this whole enterprise, which is also based on the local context.

2 https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/cfc-framework-eng.pdf

3.6 Child-friendly schools

Education is a shared experience for most children around the world, as well as the most common tool through which societies prepare young people for the future that awaits them. It is therefore very important that schools provide a suitable environment for children, where they can develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes of responsible constituents. This can only be achieved if schools offer good learning opportunities, healthy and safe physical spaces, support from teachers and other staff, and above all active participation of the students themselves.

UNICEF has developed a framework for child-friendly schools, which are characterized as inclusive, healthy and protective for all children, and involved with families and the community - and children themselves. Within this framework:

☐ the school is an important personal and social environment in a child's life;

☐ teachers are the most important factor in creating effective and inclusive classes;

☐ children learn naturally, but this learning capacity can be damaged, and sometimes even destroyed. The child-friendly school recognizes, encourages and supports the growing capacities of children as students, by providing a child-centered and learning-oriented school culture, teacher behavior and curricular content;

☐ the school's ability to be and to consider itself child-friendly is directly related to the support, participation and cooperation it receives from the families;

☐ the child-friendly school aims to develop a learning environment in which children are motivated and able to learn. Staff members are friendly and caring towards the children and observe all their health and safety needs.

Such schools, based on rights and friendly to children, are not there just to help children fulfill their right to quality basic education. They have to do many other things like: helping children learn how to cope with contemporary challenges; improving the health and well-being of children; ensuring safe spaces for them to learn, without threat of violence and abuse; boosting the morale and motivation of teachers; and mobilizing community support for education.

Above all, a child-friendly school should posses a good quality environment, characterized by some essential aspects. It should be:

- inclusive for all children

- effective in learning

- healthy and protective for children

- sensitive in terms of gender and other social aspects

- involved with children, families and the community

You can find a checklist for the child-friendly school based on rights on page 78

4. Empowering children through participation

4.1 The concept of participation

Child participation is one of the essential principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which states that children and young people have the right to freely express their views and that there is an obligation to listen to the views of children and to facilitate their participation in all processes that affect them within the family, school, local community, public services, government policies, and administrative and judicial proceedings. Put in practice, participation is adults listening to children. It entails their freedom to express their views and taking these views into account in matters affecting them. Involving children in dialogue and social exchange allows them to learn constructive ways to influence the surrounding world.

Children's participation must be true and meaningful. It should originate from the children and young people themselves, in the way that they see fit and in pursuit of their visions, dreams, hopes and concerns. Above all, children's true and meaningful participation requires a change in the thinking, attitudes and behaviors of adults. The exclusive approach must be transformed into an inclusive approach on children and their capacities.

Promoting meaningful and quality participation of children and young people is essential to ensuring their growth and development. Children have proven that when they are involved, they can make a difference in the world around them. They have ideas, experiences and knowledge that enrich the understanding of adults and contribute to the actions of adults. If we all reflect for a while, we will see how many such examples of children in our vicinity we will find.

" Nothing for children, without children. That is, everything for children, with children".

Anecdote:

Once upon a time, when people lived in simpler conditions, a mother lived with her 10 year old son in a small house. Their closest neighbor was a man whom all considered wise and would ask for counsel about their various problems.

One night, the mother wanted to start the fire, but she had no matches. So, she told her son to go to his neighbor and ask him for a match. When the boy asked the man for matches, he sadly replied that he did not have any. Then, he said to the boy: "I have embers you can use to start the fire, but I have nothing to put them into so you may carry them home." To which, the boy replied: "You can fill my hands with ash, and put a piece of ember on it." The man did so. As the boy left, he smiled to himself, enchanted by the solution offered by the boy.

❝ Children are undoubtedly the most photographed and least listened to members of society".
**(Roger Hart)**

Children's participation in decision-making on issues affecting them is a fundamental value described in Article 12 of the Convention. However, it is not restricted solely to this article, but it relates to the content of many other articles in the Convention. Thus, it is linked to the right to obtain information described in Article 13, which is a prerequisite to exercising participation in meaningful manner. Article 15, however, indicates that children have the right to join organizations and associations and to assemble peacefully. This right too, is substantial to enabling active civic participation in decision-making. Participation, on the other hand, is a way of exercising a range of other rights. Thus, when adopting a child, the consent of the child must also be taken into account, within the limits of the capacity of the child to express his/her interest (Article 21). In the same way, the child's opinion should be heard in case of separation from parents, or change of name. The right to health can only be achieved if children have access to information and receive support to use basic knowledge for their own health and nutrition (Article 24). In the field of

education, children's participation takes on a special dimension, because the right to education is a civic exercise. The full exercise of civic duties requires that children should not be considered as passive recipients of knowledge, but as active players in the learning process (Article 28).

There is no minimum age when children can begin to express their views freely. The Convention recognizes that children can form views from an early age and it refers to the developing capacity of children. Understandably, the expression of views and participation in decision-making increase in value and understanding as children grow up and develop, gain maturity and experience, become more independent and more conscientious.

The child's developing capacities represent only one side of the equation. The other side involves the adult's evolving capacity and willingness to listen and learn from children, to understand and consider the views of children, to review their views and attitudes, and to provide solutions that address the views of children.

| Children's developing capacity to express their views | = | Adults' capacity and willingness to take the views of children into account |
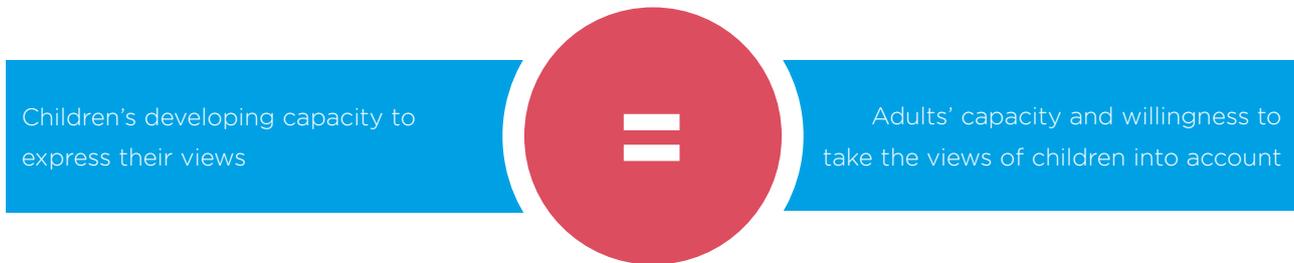
Participation is a challenging process of learning for both adults and children, and can not be shrunk into a mere formal process. Fulfilling the right of children to participation means preparing and mobilizing the adults who live and

work with children, to make them willing to give children the opportunity to freely and progressively participate in society and gain democratic skills. Parents and other family members are clearly included in this group, same as teachers and other members of the society that interact with children.

4.2 Children's participation in school

Participation in school means giving children the opportunity to express their views on education, listening to them and involving them as much as possible in school life. This means appreciating their views and ideas and giving them control over school experiences. When children have the right to express their views on education, they not only exercise their rights, but they also:

□ achieve more;

□ improve their self-confidence;

□ behave better with their peers and their teachers;

□ contribute to a better school environment, with better discipline and culture, where the learning process is a shared responsibility.

The school is a microcosm, where school management, teachers, students, parents and the wider school community continuously interact. Therefore, the school is an ideal place to exercise democracy. However, democracy can not be exercised if there is a lack of active involvement of students in school life, if they do not participate in decision-making about the teaching process and the way the school is led.

Children spend a good part of their day at school, so it is very important to use this time to gain the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes of democratic constituents. The school should provide opportunities for children to be well informed, to get involved, to express and argue their views and ideas, and to influence decision-making in the school.

4.3 Student organizations

Organizing children through student organizations is a good way to familiarize them with democracy, enabling them to elect and be elected, to be held accountable for the impact of their actions on themselves and the surrounding community, to effectively address issues affecting the school community, etc. Freedom of association in organizations and of peaceful assembly is a child right sanctioned by the Convention. Student councils at schools are a good way to teach children how to use this right. The Law on Pre-University Education in the Republic of Kosovo foresees the establishment and functioning of a student/ student council in each secondary and high school. The student council consists of at least one representative of the students from each class, usually a member of the class presidency. The law specifies that the role of the student council is to work on improving the learning environment, working conditions and look after interests related to the health, safety and well-being of students, and to be represented in the steering committee. Thus, a representative of the student council is member of the School Council, which is the highest decision-making body in the school.

Personal experience:

My son was in the sixth grade, when one day he came home and told me he had been elected class president. I asked him how he was elected and he told me that he was nominated by someone from the class, along with some of the other nominees, followed by open voting, and that the students had argued over the two students who seemed to have gathered most votes. Consequently, the tutor made the decision that since the students could not agree on their choice, she would assign my son as president. When I asked him if the teacher had previously discussed the election procedures, he answered "no". When asked what his duties would be as president, he told me that he would have to oversee the situation in the classroom, and if someone would made a mistake, he would have to mark his/her name and report to the tutor. I was disappointed when I came to the conclusion that the school was turning students into spies, instead of creating leaders from them. I found some strength to try and convince my son that his real duties were to try to foster good relationships in his class, to intervene to avoid or transform the conflicts that might occur, to help, together with others, students with learning difficulties, to address issues of importance to the students with the tutor and school management, etc. I told him that he should represent the class community, rather than oversee it.

Unfortunately, practices in our schools show that in most cases the student council and other children's organizations are formally established through procedures that aren't democratic at all, but on the contrary are often imposed by teachers and school management. Instead of adequately representing the interests of the children, such student councils are primarily used to keep students under control by teachers and school management. Instead of nurturing democratic representation, they rather create separation and potential for conflict between students. These are typical cases of fictitious participation, tokenism and manipulation of children, instead of having real and meaningful participation. These practices need to change and teachers and parents have an important role in this regard.

A manual on the human rights school committees, prepared in the framework of a project focusing on empowering children to protect and promote their rights, provides some practical ideas on how to organize, operate, and engage in activities that children can develop within such student structures. The manual can be downloaded at:

http://www.kec-ks.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Shqip-2.pdf.

4.4 Parents' involvement in school as a stimulus for children's participation

We are already convinced that parent involvement in the child's education is of particular importance. When parents are involved in their children's education, the children are more likely to be successful in learning, to have better behaviors, more positive attitudes towards school, and grow to become more successful in life. After all, parents' involvement in school affairs boosts the students' interest and stimulates their active participation in issues related to school life. This occurs because children feel the atmosphere of an open school to everyone.

Some ways to get involved in the school as parents:

☐ Participate in the start-of-year meeting - Meet the teachers and other school staff. Listen to their plans, understand what they want to achieve with their students and why they have chosen these goals.

☐ Learn what the school offers - Read the information that the school sends home. Talk to other parents to understand what the school offers. There may be a music program, extracurricular activities, sports team, tutoring program or other support that your child would like. Keep track of events throughout the school year.

☐ Participate in school events - Attend sports events or concerts, student shows, charity events, etc.

☐ Participate in parents' meetings - Parent council meetings present you with good opportunities to talk to other parents and work together to improve the school, as well as to articulate hopes and concerns about your child and the school. Participate or even help in organizing the parents' meeting with teachers. Discuss openly, ask for information, give ideas and suggestions.

☐ Contribute voluntarily to your child's school - If your agenda allows it, look for ways to help your child's school. Often, the school may need you to help as volunteer in various aspects, such as: to participate as parents' representatives in a school commission; to assist in your child's classroom, school library, or school canteen; to prepare food for any school event, and to provide tutoring for students in various fields of study, such as maths, reading, information technology, etc. If your work or other commitments do not allow for volunteering at the school, look for ways to contribute from home. For example, you can help in translating or editing the school's information letter.

Personal experience:

At a parents' meeting with the tutor teacher, besides other information on classroom activities, she showed us that a distinguished student is selected every month. Further on, she told us that this month they found it difficult to choose the student to receive this recognition, as there are over 10 students with the highest learning outcomes. I took the floor and asked if success in learning was the only criterion to recognize a distinguished student. Excusing herself, she said that this was how they had done it so far. Then I asked, "Shouldn't a distinguished student be someone who helps out in the streets, or does some other good deed? Or shouldn't this recognition go to Gjin, a class student who had created the school s web site?" I inquired about who decides for the distinguished student of the month. The teacher indicated that the teachers make a decision. Again, I reacted, saying that this is a good opportunity for students to be given ownership of this process, so that they would propose and select the distinguished student.

4.5 Children's participation in family-school cooperation

As children spend most of their time at home or at school, it is not only important how these institutions perceive participation, but also to what extent they coordinate in promoting child participation. It is not enough for children to attend only student councils and classroom or school projects. Significant participation of children implies that school life is fully ingrained with the principles of participation. Child participation and cooperative action should be reflected in the daily life in school, in communication models in school and in parent-teacher-student relations. Therefore, it is very important to involve children in family-school cooperation. The quality of family-school cooperation and the circumstances in which it develops, determine whether the rights of participation are respected or denied. The main criterion of the quality of

this cooperation is precisely the degree of active participation of children in such cooperation. The primary purpose of family-school cooperation is the child's well-being, so the child should be given an active role in situations of direct collaboration between the family and the school, in light of Article 12 of the Convention, which emphasizes the right of children to freely express their views on issues affecting them. Therefore, child participation practices should be established, which demonstrate the active participation of children in family-school cooperation, where they not only express their views, but also reason about those views, propose solutions, and even organize family-school meetings. Such practices not only protect the best interests of children, but also support expanded decision-making, as children have unique knowledge about themselves, of which adults may not even be aware.

5. Ideas for action

The first years of life are critical to the child's development and the decisive role in this process is initially played by the family, and later by teachers and other staff in the school, as well as other adults who are part of the child's life. It is therefore important that as parents and teachers we provide a wealth of opportunities to children to develop knowledge about their rights and responsibilities, and to help them make these rights and responsibilities an inseparable part of their lives. MacNaughton et al. (2003)[3] argue that from an early age children have the ability and desire to express their views about the things that affect them. The authors also emphasize that children should be encouraged and supported in order to develop the knowledge and skills that serve them to become active constituents and participants in decision-making processes.

In order to develop children's knowledge, skills and attitudes regarding their rights and responsibilities, as parents and teachers we must create appropriate conditions that encourage children to think about these topics and their importance. On the other hand, it is also important for parents and other adults who play a role in raising children, as well as teachers, to be familiar with the concepts derived from the Convention on the Rights of the Child and to act based on these rights.

The following pages introduce some practical activities that can be organized by parents and teachers to develop children's knowledge, skills and attitudes toward their rights and responsibilities.

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3   MacNaughton, G., Smith, K. and Lawrence, H. (2003) ACT Children's Strategy – Consulting with Children Birth to Eight Years of Age. Hearing Young Children's Voices. Children's Services Branch, ACT Department of Education, Youth and Family Services.

Visualization of children's rights

This activity can be conducted in the early stages, when you start addressing children's rights with your students or children. The activity aims at presenting children's rights and encouraging students to think more about their rights.

Combine a number of pictures that illustrate the rights of children. These photos can be found online, on magazines or other sources. Then write some sentences that represent children's rights under the Convention. It is good to adjust the text of the Convention articles to the level of students/children, in order to be as clear as possible for them.

Ask the children to attach the pictures to the sentences and then discuss them.

Variation:

With younger ages, to complete the activity, you can ask the children to choose one of the rights and present it through the illustration.

With older ages, ask the children to select one of the sentences (articles) and to write down some concrete steps they can take to enforce and promote that right.

In both cases, the activity is completed with a summary for reflection, giving the students / children time to present their work and giving comments as needed.

This activity can be used by parents and teachers. In the latter case, you can conduct the activity in the form of group work.

Secret box

The secret box can become part of the classroom to gather the good examples of respect for rights and responsibilities. Through this activity, you encourage students to think about their rights by observing their behavior and that of other people around them, and by giving them the opportunity to reflect on how we behave.

Initially, arrange a discussion and together with the students talk about different values,like respect, tolerance, help, solidarity, diversity and similar topics. If students have no knowledge of these concepts, introduce their meaning and then encourage students to reflect and recall concrete cases when they have demonstrated respect for these values, or when they have promoted these values. To introduce new concepts you can use different photos, association games or any other activity.

Afterwards, tell the students about the Secret Box and its purpose. You can even organize the students to make and decorate a box by reusing various materials.

Encourage students to observe themselves and others for a certain time and to write down personal cases when they respect their rights and responsibilities or cases when they see others doing so. Each time students notice a positive example in themselves or others, they should immediately write it down and then place it in the box.

After a while (for example, after a month), open the box together with the children, read the collected examples and discuss them. You can also encourage students to illustrate these examples through drawings, or other forms of expression, and create a gallery for your class.

The secret box can also be practiced by parents and can be used by all family members, as well as other visitors.

The website http://www.aces.or.at/methods *offers a host of activities that can be organized with students to address different topics, such as solidarity, diversity, intercultural dialogue and the like. Collaborate with English language teachers to better access these materials and organize activities for your students together.*

Peer support

It is often said that the best way to learn something is by teaching others. Establish school-based mechanisms that encourage older students to introduce children's rights to younger students and guide them in practicing them. Collaborate with students to create a work plan and discuss how they will perform their activities depending on the level of students they will work with (for example, different games, drawings or storytelling can be used with the younger classes, while presentations, brochures or other techniques may be used to engage older students).

At the end of the activity, ask the students to prepare presentations describing the work they have done, the things they have learned and how they felt. They can make these presentations for their classmates or even for a wider audience.

Through this activity, students learn more about children's rights and develop planning, management, collaboration, reflection and presentation skills.

Design your project and make it happen

Teachers and parents can collaborate to carry out a joint project with the students. Some of the possible projects are producing a show, dance, exhibition, literary hour, fundraising campaign or something similar that focuses on children's rights.

Such an event can be organized over a period of months, involving students in all planning steps. Some of the steps you can take in cooperation with your students:

☐ Discuss this idea and jointly decide the type of project you want to accomplish;

☐ Create a journal of activities and record all the activities you want to organize, their goals, steps you need to take, and the people who can assist you to conduct the activities (i.e. parents, non-governmental organizations, professionals of different fields, such as actors, painters, writers, etc.);

☐ Determine the duration of the entire project based on the information that emerges from the activity journal;

☐ Conduct the foreseen activities with the children and with the help of the project partners, whom you have already defined in the previous step;

☐ Mark the project's completion with an event that presents the work of the children to the public;

This activity can be developed with different age groups of children, by adapting the project activities to the children's knowledge, skills and potential. By carrying out this activity, children will not only learn more about their rights and responsibilities, but will also develop skills to promote them.

Special days

Create a calendar and mark the special days. Use these days to carry out various activities that promote children's rights.

Some of the special days identified by UNICEF:
Child Cancer Day (February 15th) - a day to carry out activities that mark the International Day of Child Cancer and to show support for children and families affected by this disease.
Relation to rights:
Article 24: health and health services

World Book Day (March 3rd) - a day set by UNESCO to celebrate books and reading.
Relation to rights:
Article 29: scope of education

Autism Awareness Day (April 2nd) - a day aimed at raising awareness on autism in order to encourage states to undertake diagnostic and intervention measures at an early stage.
Relation to rights:
Article 2: non-discrimination

International Children's Day (June 1st) - In 1925, the World Conference for the Well-being of Children in Geneva, Switzerland, set June 1 as the International Children's Day.
Relation to rights:
The Convention as a whole.

To see the full list published by UNICEF, see the 'Linking Events to Rights' tool in the Resources section.

Most precious rights

Through this activity, teachers and parents can encourage students to think more about their rights and their importance.

Create a list of ten sentences that stem from the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Divide the students into groups and distribute the list with sentences to each group.

Ask students to discuss each sentence in a row, giving reasons why they consider those rights to be important. Then ask the students to select three statements from the list that they consider to be the most precious. Encourage the students to give at least three arguments for their choice.

After the students have selected the three rights that they consider to be the most precious, ask each group to show their decision by elaborating on the selection they have made. Finally, ask each group to determine a number of responsibilities they have towards the rights they have chosen as the most important.

This activity, besides helping students think more about their rights and responsibilities, also offers them the opportunity to articulate their thoughts by presenting arguments and coming to a common conclusion as a group through discussion.

Here are some examples of statements, however the sentences should be prepared in accordance with the students' level and their previous knowledge.

I want to have the right to express my opinion on the issues that affect me.
I want to grow in a clean environment
I want to have access to reliable information.
I want to have access to quality education that develops my skills and talents to the maximum of my potential.
I want to be free to choose the groups or organizations I wish to participate in.

Parents can use this activity at home to encourage discussion with their children about their rights and responsibilities.

Detectives of Children's Rights and Responsibilities

This activity enables students to identify positive cases when children's rights and responsibilities are respected by themselves and their peers, but also by adults, and to present them through different forms of expression.

After discussing with your students about their responsibilities and rights, ask them to observe for a week the environments they spend most of their time in (for example the school, neighborhood, sports clubs, online platforms) and to keep track of cases when rights and responsibilities are respected.

After a week, divide students into groups in order to discuss their findings. Then ask them to present their findings through posters, booklets, poems, brochures or other promotional content. The content created by the students can be displayed in the classroom, school, school website or even at an exhibition organized for a wider audience.

Students can create such promotional content by drawing, using various recyclable materials, or even on a computer. In the latter case, some of the online tools that can be used, which are easy to use and have some or all free functions, are provided below.

www.easel.ly

www.storyjumper.com

www.powtoon.com

www.canva.com

www.smore.com

Young researchers

This activity is carried out over a period of time and gives students the opportunity to develop research skills while addressing issues related to children's rights.

Learning through research is a form of active learning that encourages students to ask questions or present problems, collect data on the questions asked, analyze the data, and come to conclusions based on their findings.

It is recommended that you conduct this activity after the students have been introduced to the children's rights and after having carried out various activities to encourage them to think and reflect more about this topic.

Divide the students into groups and to each group assign a theme that comes out of the Convention (e.g. education, health, non-discrimination). Ask them to list some questions related to their field. Then ask them to discuss the importance of each question, in order to eliminate the options and select only one of the research questions.

Introduce students to the various tools that serve to collect data, such as questionnaires, review of various documents or interviews, and how they are applied.

It is good for students to read more about the field they have chosen before they prepare the questions that they will include in interviews or questionnaires and before starting the research. Arrange with the students an hour in the technology lab to search the Internet in order to get more information about the topics they have selected (in the absence of infrastructure you can ask the students to research from home and then discuss their findings in class).

Ask each group to determine how they will collect the data to find the answer to the research question they have filed. Likewise, students should determine who will carry out the research (e.g. other students, different constituents, their family members, teachers) and how many participants there will be in their research. In the case of interviews, it is best to select a smaller number of persons, and in the case of questionnaires it is recommended to include more.

Once the students have determined the questions of the interviews or questionnaires, or the documents they want to analyze, they can carry out their research. Ask students to record the interviews, and to take photos of their work during the research.

Students analyze the data and present them through charts, tables or any other form. Students can write a report about their findings or present them in some other form, including photographs of the activities they have accomplished.

Proclaim our rights

Debates organized with students provide opportunities for reinforcing reflective and argumentative skills, as well as public speaking, critical thinking, and becoming active listeners. Therefore, you can use the method of debate to develop these skills in students, but also to encourage them to think more about children's rights by actively reflecting on them.

Form four groups of students. Three groups are going to debate, while the fourth group is not, since the members of this group are the audience during this debate, i.e. persons who should be persuaded by the groups through their argumentation. This is the assessment group.

Beforehand, prepare small sheets with the statements related to child rights (for example: Every child has the right to healthy nutrition; Every child has the right to play; Every child has the right to have good health care; etc.)

Before the students begin their work, introduce them to the structure of the debate, its progress and what is expected of them (a model of the structure is provided in the following page). Thus, students will be more focused when preparing their speeches. Debate skills develop gradually, so provide students with multiple opportunities to reinforce them.
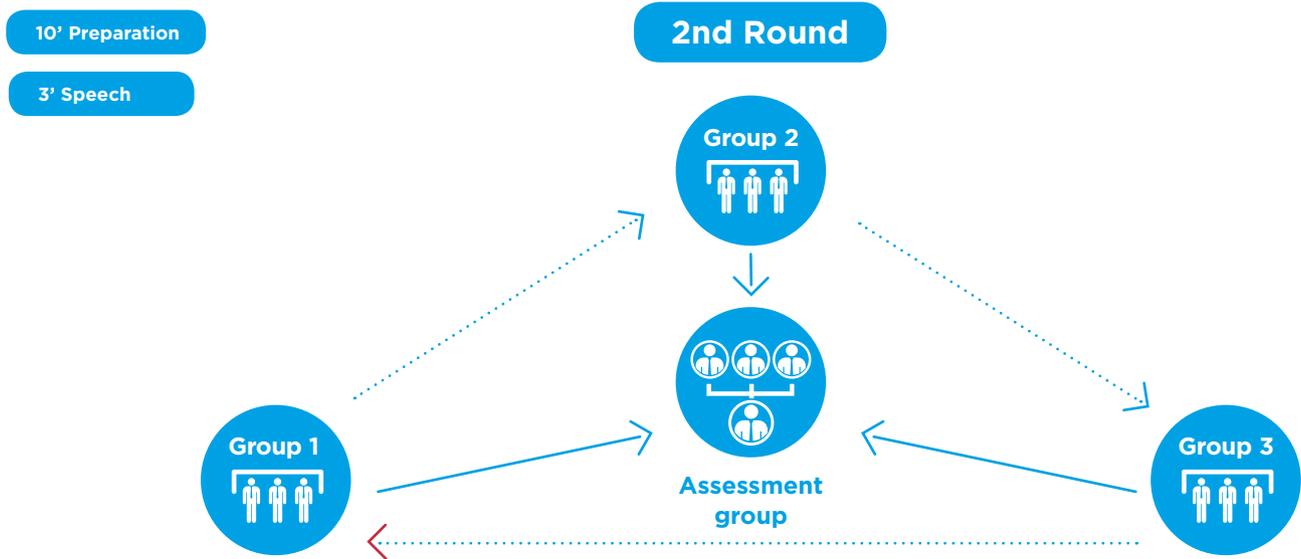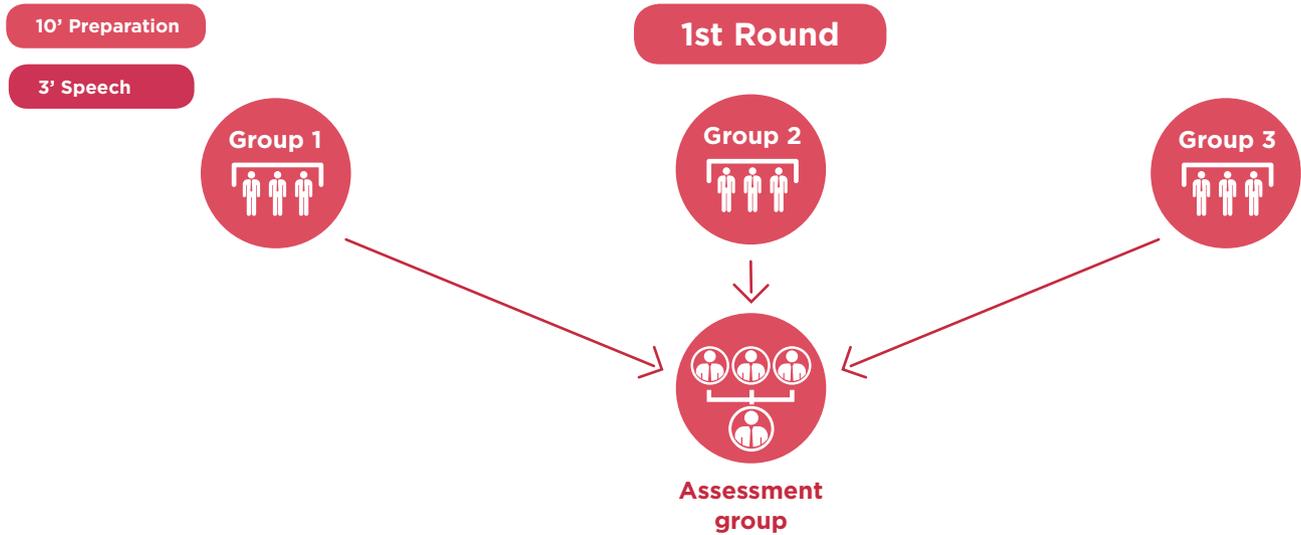
Each of the three groups draws a sheet with a statement. Tell students they have 10 minutes to prepare a three-minute talk to proclaim their right as prevalent or of higher priority compared to those of other groups and why exactly that right should be respected at all costs. While the students prepare the speech, the assessment team visits the groups and follows their work.
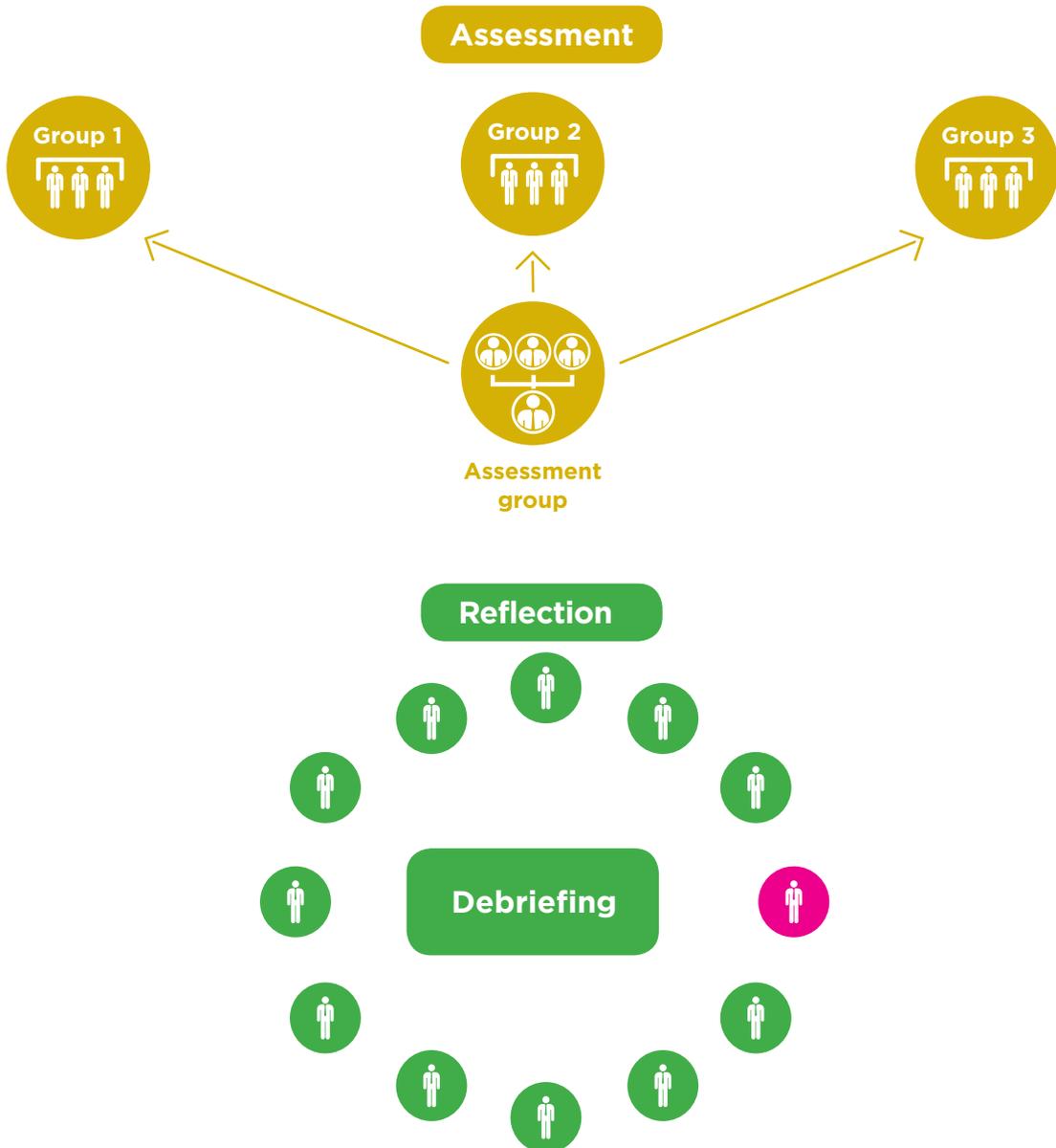
Ask the groups to offer their three-minute speech in turn, giving a brief description of the statement they have selected and providing arguments for its relevance and possibly accompanying these arguments with examples. The students conclude the speech with a summary sentence repeating the key points they have introduced.

After the first round, students have up to 10 minutes to prepare for the second round. In the second round, within 3 minutes, each group gives remarks on the arguments provided by one other group (e.g. group 1 on group 2, group 2 on group 3 and group 3 on group 1) and provides additional arguments for the right they represent, thus strengthening their position.

Following this, ask the assessment team to make an assessment of the speeches and arguments provided by the three groups and to make a decision on the sequence of speeches. The assessment team should also justify its assessment and decision by indicating which elements were most relied upon during the assessment.

Ask the students to disengage from the atmosphere of the debate and to sit in a circle. Make a final discussion on the activity, starting with how they felt during the activity, the elements of learning from this experience, and how they can use this lesson in the future, in real life situations. Make sure that when discussing the elements of learning and the rights of children, you reach the conclusion that all rights are important and we as human beings are not fulfilled if we only enjoy a part of them, while we miss another part of our rights. Human rights acquire meaning only as a collection of rights.

10' Preparation

3' Speech

1st Round

Group 1

Group 2

Group 3

Assessment group

10' Preparation

3' Speech

2nd Round

Group 2

Assessment group

Group 1

Group 3

Assessment

Group 1

Group 2

Group 3

Assessment group

Reflection

Debriefing

6. Examples of good practices

"Be the change you want to see in the world".

Gandhi

Each of us can engage in various forms to contribute to the development, support and protection of children and their rights. Undertaking any humanitarian action, engaging in volunteering in a non-governmental organization, advocating, urging institutions through different activities, or simply the greater discussion of children's rights, are just some of the forms that may have an impact on raising civic and institutional awareness with regards to respecting and promoting children's rights. Below are a number of examples of various initiatives that address the issues of children's rights in different ways and angles.

National Framework for the Protection of Children

The Children's Protection Center in Indonesia is a joint initiative of the University of Colombia, the University of Indonesia and UNICEF, which was established with the purpose of improving the child protection system in Indonesia through the creation of a national framework that addresses this issue. The framework serves to improve programs and policies designed to protect children.

Moreover, this center intends to develop the capacities of academics and other persons drafting policies on structuring models for project development, based on findings from the research.

http://www.cpcnetwork.org/indonesia.php

Use of technology to increase the participation of children in advocacy for children's rights

This initiative, which is conducted in Lebanon by the Manara Network for Children's Rights and Save the Children Sweden, has been selected as a good practice because it directly involves children in creating messages aimed at raising awareness and increasing support for children's rights. By utilizing technology and using animations, children discuss issues that concern them and also use this form of expression to educate other children and adults about issues that are important to their lives.

At the same time, participating children gain the skills they need to create animations through technology, they write their stories and create characters that tell their stories.

> *http://www.nabaa-lb.org/project2/en/Manara-Network-(Child-Rights-Network)*
>
> *http://www.savethechildren.se/*

Basic education and child development through active learning using sports and games

The right to education, health and play, included in the Convention as rights that each child should enjoy, are the focus of the Right to Play organization. This organization promotes exactly play and sports as the means of achieving these rights. According to the organization, playtime and recreation are important factors in the development of children in emotional and cognitive terms. Right to Play promotes sports as the means to make children more tolerant, patient and cooperative, and better leaders.

The organization achieves its goals through the development of various guiding materials on the use of this technique and through the training of leaders, trainers and other participants who intend to apply this learning method.

http://www.righttoplay.com/

'It's about ability' campaign for inclusion of children with disabilities

The "It's about ability" campaign implemented by the Government of Montenegro and UNICEF aimed to develop people's knowledge, attitudes and practices on inclusion and non-discrimination of children with disabilities. The campaign also aimed at ensuring access to quality services and education for all without discrimination.

This campaign led to a fivefold increase in the number of children with disabilities enrolled in schools, it contributed to the improvement of the childcare systems and opened new daycare centers.

An assessment conducted just three years after the campaign began, found that this campaign had positively impacted several issues. Only during the period August 2010 - December 2013, the percentage of constituents who considered it unacceptable for children with disabilities to be students in the same classroom with their children decreased from 64% to 20%. Likewise, the percentage of constituents who previously considered it unacceptable for their children to be accompanied by children with disabilities, decreased by about 30%.

The advocacy and inclusion of children with disabilities in all campaign activities, helped make this campaign successful.

https://www.unicef.org/montenegro/15868.html

Provision of a help line for child-related matters and special school programs for youth at risk and juveniles

This children's counseling service, provided by the non-governmental organization Brave Phone in Croatia, is there to receive telephone calls aimed at protecting children from abuse and at the same time to provide help to parents. This line also provides advice on forms of violence, characteristics that show that children are neglected, and other counseling that deal with the various challenges that can lead to the disintegration of the family. Also, the phone line provides information about resources available at the local level, such as police, medical staff and the like. Psychologists, social workers and education students engage as volunteers to provide advice through this line. Brave Phone prepares volunteers in order to be ready to provide advice.

All services are free and anonymous.

http://www.hrabritelefon.hr/o-nama/programi

There are also many other practices that address the issue of children's rights in different levels and forms. Some of them are summarized in the following documents:

http://www.protectionproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Best-Practices-in-Child-Protection-2013.pdf

https://www.unicef.org/eca/UNICEF_Compendium_of_promising_practices_Web.pdf

7. Resources

Different links that can help parents and teachers in terms of protecting and promoting children's rights

Resources in Albanian on the Internet are limited, especially when it comes to resources that can be used during the learning process. However, in recent years, a considerable number of Albanian language papers have been prepared, addressing children's rights issues with a view to promoting them and providing better information to teachers, parents and other stakeholders involved in the process of child growth and development. In English, however, there are plenty of such resources that are very user-friendly.

Below are listed some of the resources that may be of assistance to you teachers and loving parents to address issues that concern children's rights. This content comes in the form of manuals, guidebooks, model lessons and practical activities that can be implemented with students/children as well as other tools, including cartoons and videos, an electronic games for children and other materials. In the blue boxes you will find the content in Albanian, while in the orange ones we have summarized some English content that can be easily adapted to use in different contexts.

Tool name: Convention on the Rights of the Child

Description: On this website you can read in Albanian the Convention on the Rights of the Child adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 20 November 1989.

Address: https://www.unicef.org/magic/media/documents/CRC_albanian_language_version.pdf

Tool name: Human Rights Education with Children

Description: A handbook published by the Kosova Education Center, which contains practical activities that can be conducted with children/students. The handbook utilizes the methodology of learning through experience and aims to empower students through the development of their knowledge, skills and attitudes on human rights. The program is tailored to the age group 12 to 15 years old, but the activities of the manual can easily be adapted to other age groups.

Address: https://kec-ks.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Edukimi-per-te-drejtat-e-njeriut-me-femije.pdf

Tool name: Handbook on Children's Rights School Committees

Description: This handbook encourages the active participation of students in school activities and decision-making that affects students. The handbook provides detailed information and advice on how the Children's Rights School Committees operate and how they are organized. Inclusion in Children's Rights School Committees also offers students the opportunity to expand their knowledge and to acquire skills for active participation in issues that play a role in student well-being, the school environment, and the wider community. Teachers and parents can work with this tool to cultivate in students/children the skills related to active participation in their school, through the establishment of Children's Rights School Committees (or similar student organizations), thus directly influencing even the promotion of children's rights.

Address: http://www.kec-ks.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Shqip-2.pdf

Tool name: Children's Rights and Teacher's Ethics (University Textbook for Students of the Faculty of Education)

Description: Although this publication is intended for students of the faculty of education, both serving teachers and parents can use it as a substantial source in Albanian to learn more about the rights and responsibilities of children. Furthermore, the book offers strategies and practical techniques that can be integrated into classrooms to address children-related topics.

This material was published by the Kosova Education Center, in cooperation with the University of Prishtina, within the framework of the Child Rights Education project.

Address: http://www.kec-ks.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Te-drejtat-e-femijes-dhe-etika-e-mesimdhenesit.pdf

Tool name: Standards for Child-friendly Schools

Description: Child-friendly schools is an approach that is implemented in different countries of the world as a UNICEF initiative. These schools are characterized by environments that are safe for children in the physical, emotional and psychological sense. This approach is also being promoted in Kosovo, therefore this material prepared by the Kosovo Pedagogical Institute with the support of the UNICEF Office in Kosovo aims to provide information on the implementation of this practice.

Address: https://masht.rks-gov.net/uploads/2015/06/standardet-per-shkollat-mike-per-femije.pdf

Tool name: Peer Mediation Team Handbook

Description: The handbook gives instructions on the initiation of mediation, training and qualification of teachers to make students/children capable of resolving differences between them peacefully and without violence, through mediation methods and developing communication skills.

The material was developed within the project "Support to Justice for Children", supported by the EU Office in Kosovo and UNICEF, and it was drafted and adapted by the Kosova Education Center.

Address: https://kec-ks.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Doracak-p%C3%ABr-ekipet-nd%C3%ABrmjet%C3%ABsuese-n%C3%AB-mes-t%C3%AB-bashk%C3%ABmoshatar%C3%ABve.pdf

Tool name: Protocol on the Prevention and Referral of Violence in Pre-University Education Institutions

Description: The Government of the Republic of Kosovo, with the support of the UNICEF Kosovo office, adopted this Protocol in order to "set out the obligations, to clarify the roles and procedures of the institutions for the prevention, identification, collection of data, referral, treatment, reporting of violence against children in pre-university education institutions"[4]. Moreover, this Protocol aims to foster cooperation between institutions in order to protect children's rights and to protect children from violence.

Address: http://www.kec-ks.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Rregullore.pdf

Tool name: Instructions on Implementing Regulation QRK No. 21/2013 on the Protocol on the Prevention and Referral of Violence in Pre-University Education Institutions

Description: The Protocol on the Prevention and Referral of Violence in Pre-University Education Institutions is also accompanied by a guidebook to facilitate its implementation. The guidebook is intended for all those involved in the child education process and is intended to assist in the implementation of the Protocol by providing specific guidance and activities that serve as conflict resolution alternatives in a positive way, as well as forms of conflict prevention before it occurs.

Address: https://kec-ks.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Udhezuesi-Final.pdf

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4   http://www.kec-ks.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Rregullore.pdf

Tool name: Didactic Manual on the Prevention of Violence

Description: Save the Children has also supported the design of a Didactic Manual on the Prevention of Violence that serves as a tool for raising awareness against violence by providing information on child development, violence patterns, and how it can be prevented. Also, the manual provides model lessons that can be implemented in classrooms with different age groups of students.

Address: https://kosovo.savethechildren.net/sites/kosovo.savethechildren.net/files/library/Didaktik%20material%20for%20prevention%20of%20violence%20ALB.pdf

Tool name: Equal Opportunities in Education for All

Description: There are two manuals prepared for the teams for prevention and response to dropout and non-enrollment in compulsory education. One is intended for school teams, the other for municipal teams. The manuals were developed in the framework of the project "Advancing access and retention in education for vulnerable and disadvantaged children" implemented by ECMI Kosovo and the UNICEF Office in Kosovo.

The manuals provide schools and municipalities with general information, guidelines and strategies for creating teams that help prevent and respond to school dropouts. Also, the materials are accompanied by model instruments that are utilized by the school teams, as well as the municipal ones.

Address: http://masht.rks-gov.net/uploads/2015/12/doracak-per-ekipet-shkollore-per-parandalim_1.pdf

Address: http://masht.rks-gov.net/uploads/2015/12/doracak-per-ekipet-komunale-per-parandalim_1.pdf

Tool name: Community Center Schools Guidebook

Description: This guidebook was prepared by the Albanian Institute of Education Development in cooperation with Save the Children. The guidebook aims to support the approach of schools as community centers, based on the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and it promotes partnership between the school, family and community, a partnership that benefits the children's development. The material provides wider information on this approach, concrete steps for turning schools into community center schools and model tools that can be applied to promote this approach.

Address: http://myschool.al/resources/programe/doc2.pdf

Tool name: Child Protection Platform for Southeast Europe

Description: Developed in several languages, including Albanian, this platform provides many materials that address the protection of children and their rights. The platform offers various online guides and reports, online courses, child-friendly material, forums for discussion and exchange of ideas, and many other tools that can be used to get more information about child protection, as well as materials that can be used when working with children.

Address: https://childhub.org/sq

Tool name: Living Democracy

Description: The Living Democracy page developed by the University of Teacher Education in Zurich in cooperation with the Council of Europe, offers a large number of materials useful for teaching and learning activities. Organized in six volumes, the materials address 9 key concepts, such as: government and politics, identity, rules and laws, media, conflict, rights and freedom, diversity and pluralism, responsibility, equality. The purpose of this site is to "develop democracy and human rights in schools"[5] providing guidance on how to implement it in the classroom.

Address: http://www.living-democracy.al/

Tool name: Exploring Children's Rights.

Description: This is one of the volumes published on the Living Democracy website that directly relates to children's rights and provides model lessons for grades 1-9, general information about the Convention and other documents and materials related to children's rights.

Address: http://www.living-democracy.al/textbooks/volume-5/

Tool name: Through the Wide Web Woods
Description: Online game developed by the Council of Europe to help children learn the core security rules on the Internet. In addition, the game promotes concepts such as democracy, respect for others, and children's rights. You can play this game as part of a lesson you can conduct in the IT lab as an extracurricular activity or share it with your students so that they play it outside the classroom and follow up with a classroom discussions. For teachers, a guidebook is available that can be downloaded from the web site.

Once you open the page and click on the name of the game that appears on the page, you can select the option to play the game in Albanian. You may be prompted to download or allow to run Adobe Flash Player by clicking on the respective icon.

Address: https://www.coe.int/en/web/children/through-the-wild-web-woods

5   http://www.living-democracy.al/

Here are some of the tools in English that can be adapted for use in Albanian.

Tool name: Compass – Manual for Human Rights Education with Young People

Description: In this page of the Council of Europe is provided a guidebook that can be used to educate young people about human rights. Compass is suitable for use in both informal learning environments with young people from youth organizations, as well as in schools with high school students. The manual provides a range of activities that rely on learning through experience and address many topics related to human rights' aspects.

By clicking on the "Resources" button on this website, a list of other resources opens, among which Compasito is the same manual as Compass, but is more suitable for use with children.

Address: http://www.coe.int/en/web/compass/home

Tool name: Rights Respecting Schools - Classroom Charters

Description: On this page you can find a material prepared by UNICEF in Canada which provides ideas for establishing the Classroom Statute which is used as a practice to make children's rights more meaningful understandable for students.

This Statute can be used as an activity to encourage students to think and discuss more about their rights and also as an artifact that can become part of the classroom, and which can be referred to whenever necessary.

Address: https://rrscanada.files.wordpress.com/2013/09/classroom-charters.pdf

Tool name: Cartoons

Description: UNICEF has produced a number of cartoons related to the articles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. These videos can be used by teachers and parents with different student/child age groups to encourage discussion of children's rights, as additional material for activities carried out with students to promote children's rights or to encourage students to create their own promotional materials. This site also contains other materials that encourage young people to think more about this topic, as well as to undertake specific self-advocacy to promote children's rights by becoming part of the network of young people from different countries, working on this issue.

Address: https://www.unicef.org/rightsite/433_cartoons.php

Tool name: Kids Go Global

Description: This platform is intended for primary and secondary school students and provides students with opportunities to explore topics related to global issues, including human rights. The platform contains various resources, including online courses, resources that can be used by teachers in the classroom, examples of youth work and various school projects.

Teachers and parents can use the resources of this platform to address the topic of human rights and children's rights, to suggest to children/students that they themselves should use this platform, or to use it as an inspiration to discover and undertake various initiatives with students/children.

Address: http://www.kidsgoglobal.net/the-issues/human-rights/

Tool name: Resources for early schooling and primary schools by Amnesty International

Description: This site provides a considerable amount of human rights related material, including children's rights for different age groups, starting from early childhood up to 11 years of age. Sources come in various forms, including different books, posters, videos and teacher packages.

Address: https://www.amnesty.org.uk/primary-schools-education-resources

Tool name: Rights Respecting Schools – Teaching Resources

Description: On this website you will find a variety of learning resources for different age groups that focus on children's rights. Ideas for integrating the topic of children's rights in different subjects, additional activities that you can accomplish with students, special-day calendars, best practices implemented in different countries are just few of the resources you can find here.

Address: https://rightsrespectingschools.ca/teaching-resources-schools/

Tool name: It's Only Right

Description: Another material prepared by UNICEF in Canada for use with students/children to help them better understand the Convention on the Rights of the Child through activities. The site also provides ideas for undertaking concrete actions by the children/students themselves.

Address: http://www.unicef.ca/en/our-work/article/it%E2%80%99s-only-right

Tool name: Twenty One Assemblies for Primary Schools

Description: The following material was published by UNICEF in the UK and is intended for primary schools. This resource provides various activities and model lessons to address children's rights during special days such as Teachers' Day, Book Day, Children's Day, and so on.

Address: https://www.unicef.org.uk/rights-respecting-schools/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2016/09/primary_assemblies_unicef.pdf

Tool name: Linking Events to Rights

Description: Another resource from UNICEF linking the important days that are marked in the world and the articles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Address: https://www.unicef.org.uk/rights-respecting-schools/linking-events-rights/

Tool name: Thinking Rights: Secondary School Resource Pack

Description: This UNICEF resource in the UK is intended for high school students. The purpose of this resource is to encourage the development of youth concepts and skills on how they think about human rights.

Address: https://www.unicef.org.uk/rights-respecting-schools/resources/thinking-rights-secondary-school-resource/

Tool name: Children's Rights Develop English Skills with 8 – 11 year olds Oxfam

Description: The following material is designed to support and develop reading, writing and speaking skills for the English language curriculum in Britain while addressing children's rights issues. The material can be easily adapted for use in the English language course.

Address: http://www.oxfam.org.uk/education/resources/childrens-rights

Tool name: How to Create Child-friendly Environments – Guide Book

Description: This UNICEF-supported guidebook provides ongoing care information that serves the cognitive development of children and features methods on how to create adequate and safe environments for child rearing. The manual dealing with early childhood is mainly devoted to parents, but it can also be used by other persons present in the early childhood of children, including educators in preschool institutions. The guidebook, in addition to information, features illustrations and practical ideas for creating different games that stimulate the development of children.

Address: https://www.unicef.org/bangladesh/ChildFE.pdf

Note:

Since the Internet is very dynamic, very often a link can be moved to another area or it will not work anymore. If any of the links do not work, try searching on Google (or any other search engine) the name of the tool that is provided on these pages.

To access these tools more easily, you can use the manual available in electronic form through the address http://www.childrights-ks.org/ and then you can access the resources with one click.

8. Characteristics of a Rights-Based, Child-Friendly School

1. Reflects and realises the rights of every child - cooperates with other partners to promote and monitor the well-being and rights of all children; defends and protects all children from abuse and harm (as a sanctuary), both inside and outside the school.

2. Sees and understands the whole child, in a broad context - is concerned with what happens to children before they enter the system (e.g., their readiness for school in terms of health and nutritional status, social and linguistic skills), and once they have left the classroom - back in their homes, the community, and the workplace.

3. Is child-centred - encourages participation, creativity, self-esteem, and psycho-social well-being; promotes a structured, child-centred curriculum and teaching-learning methods appropriate to the child's developmental level, abilities, and learning style; and considers the needs of children over the needs of the other actors in the system.

4. Is gender-sensitive and girl-friendly - promotes parity in the enrolment and achievement of girls and boys; reduces constraints to constraints to gender equity and eliminates gender stereotypes; provides facilities, curricula, and learning processes welcoming to girls.

5. Promotes quality learning outcomes - encourages children to think critically, ask questions, express their opinions - and learn how to learn; helps children master the essential enabling skills of writing, reading, speaking, listening, and mathematics and the general knowledge and skills required for living in the new century - including useful traditional knowledge and the values of peace, democracy, and the acceptance of diversity.

6. Provides education based on the reality of children's lives - ensures that curricular content responds to the learning needs of individual children as well as to the general objectives of the education system and the local context and traditional knowledge of families and the community.

7. Is flexible and responds to diversity - meets differing circumstances and needs of children (e.g., as determined by gender, culture, social class, ability level).

8. Acts to ensure inclusion, respect, and equality of opportunity for all children - does not stereotype, exclude, or discriminate on the basis of difference.

9. Promotes mental and physical health - provides emotional support, encourages healthy behaviours and practices, and guarantees a hygienic, safe, secure, and joyful environment.

10. Provides education that is affordable and accessible - especially to children and families most at-risk.

11. Enhances teacher capacity, morale, commitment, and status - ensures that its teachers have sufficient pre-service training, in-service support and professional development, status, and income.

12. Is family focused - attempts to work with and strengthen families and helps children, parents and teachers establish harmonious, collaborative partnerships.

13. Is community-based - strengthens school governance through a decentralised, community-based approach; encourages parents, local government, community organisations, and other institutions of civil society to participate in the management as well as the financing of education; promotes community partnerships and networks focused on the rights and well-being of children.

These features are adapted from the UNICEF Guidance Document, which schools can use to promote the approach of child-friendly schools.

9. Reflection on the school

Teachers and parents can complete the assessment independently (individually) and then use it as a reference point for discussion. However, the assessment can also be done jointly by teachers and parents, providing opportunities for discussion and exchange of ideas at the same time.

The assessment can be used by teachers and parents to reflect on current school practices. Subsequently, based on the reflection and through parent-teacher cooperation, concrete steps can be devised to undertake initiatives that benefit children's rights and consequently affect the raising of school awareness for the child-friendly school.

This evaluation sheet has been prepared based on the standards for Child-friendly Schools, promoted by UNICEF.

All students in the school are treated equally.

I completely disagree   ①   ②   ③   ④   ⑤   I fully agree

Students feel safe at school.

I completely disagree   ①   ②   ③   ④   ⑤   I fully agree

The school offers mechanisms for identifying students' needs and difficulties and for taking concrete steps to meet/overcome them.

I completely disagree   ①   ②   ③   ④   ⑤   I fully agree

Students have the right and are encouraged to express their opinions both during the teaching activities and outside them.

I completely disagree   ①   ②   ③   ④   ⑤   I fully agree

The school involves students in decision-making about the processes that directly affect them.

I completely disagree   ①   ②   ③   ④   ⑤   I fully agree

Parents are involved in decision-making on school life issues.

I completely disagree   ①   ②   ③   ④   ⑤   I fully agree

The school offers mechanisms to support students in the development of their potentials.

I completely disagree   ①   ②   ③   ④   ⑤   I fully agree

The school cooperates with parents and the community to achieve maximum development and protect the best interest of students.

I completely disagree   ①   ②   ③   ④   ⑤   I fully agree

The school offers students the opportunity to reinforce the values of civilization (e.g. respect, tolerance, solidarity, etc.).

I completely disagree   ①   ②   ③   ④   ⑤   I fully agree

The school has clear procedures for caring for the physical and psychological health of students.

I completely disagree   ①   ②   ③   ④   ⑤   I fully agree

10. Summary of the International Convention on the Rights of the Child

ARTICLE 1 (definition of the child)
Everyone under the age of 18 has all the rights in the Convention.

ARTICLE 2 (non-discrimination)
The Convention applies to every child without discrimination, whatever their ethnicity, gender, religion, language, abilities or any other status, whatever they think or say, whatever their family background.

ARTICLE 3 (best interests of the child)
The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all decisions and actions that affect children.

ARTICLE 4 (implementation of the Convention)
Governments must do all they can to make sure every child can enjoy their rights by creating systems and passing laws that promote and protect children's rights.

ARTICLE 5 (parental guidance and a child's evolving capacities)
Governments must respect the rights and responsibilities of parents and carers to provide guidance and direction to their child as they grow up, so that they fully enjoy their rights. This must be done in a way that recognises the child's increasing capacity to make their own choices.

ARTICLE 6 (life, survival and development)
Every child has the right to life. Governments must do all they can to ensure that children survive and develop to their full potential.

ARTICLE 7 (birth registration, name, nationality, care)
Every child has the right to be registered at birth, to have a name and nationality, and, as far as possible, to know and be cared for by their parents.

ARTICLE 8 (protection and preservation of identity)
Every child has the right to an identity. Governments must respect and protect that right, and prevent the child's name, nationality or family relationships from being changed unlawfully.

ARTICLE 9 (separation from parents)
Children must not be separated from their parents against their will unless it is in their best interests (for example, if a parent is hurting or neglecting a child). Children whose parents have separated have the right to stay in contact with both parents, unless this could cause them harm.

ARTICLE 10 (family reunification)
Governments must respond quickly and sympathetically if a child or their parents apply to live together in the same country. If a child's parents live apart in

different countries, the child has the right to visit and keep in contact with both of them.

ARTICLE 11 (abduction and non-return of children)

Governments must do everything they can to stop children being taken out of their own country illegally by their parents or other relatives, or being prevented from returning home.

ARTICLE 12 (respect for the views of the child)

Every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously. This right applies at all times, for example during immigration proceedings, housing decisions or the child's day-to-day home life.

ARTICLE 13 (freedom of expression)

Every child must be free to express their thoughts and opinions and to access all kinds of information, as long as it is within the law.

ARTICLE 14 (freedom of thought, belief and religion)

Every child has the right to think and believe what they choose and also to practise their religion, as long as they are not stopping other people from enjoying their rights. Governments must respect the rights and responsibilities of parents to guide their child as they grow up.

ARTICLE 15 (freedom of association)

Every child has the right to meet with other children and to join groups and organisations, as long as this does not stop other people from enjoying their rights.

ARTICLE 16 (right to privacy)

Every child has the right to privacy. The law should protect the child's private, family and home life, including protecting children from unlawful attacks that harm their reputation.

ARTICLE 17 (access to information from the media)

Every child has the right to reliable information from a variety of sources, and governments should encourage the media to provide information that children can understand. Governments must help protect children from materials that could harm them.

ARTICLE 18 (parental responsibilities and state assistance)

Both parents share responsibility for bringing up their child and should always consider what is best for the child. Governments must support parents by creating support services for children and giving parents the help they need to raise their children.

ARTICLE 19 (protection from violence, abuse and neglect)

Governments must do all they can to ensure that children are protected from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect and bad treatment by their parents or anyone else who looks after them.

ARTICLE 20 (children unable to live with their family)

If a child cannot be looked after by their immediate family, the government must give them special protection and assistance.

This includes making sure the child is provided with alternative care that is continuous and respects the child's culture, language and religion.

ARTICLE 21 (adoption)

Governments must oversee the process of adoption to make sure it is safe, lawful and that it prioritises children's best interests. Children should only be adopted outside of their country if they cannot be placed with a family in their own country.

ARTICLE 22 (refugee children)

If a child is seeking refuge or has refugee status, governments must provide them with appropriate protection and assistance to help them enjoy all the rights in the Convention. Governments must help refugee children who are separated from their parents to be reunited with them.

ARTICLE 23 (children with a disability)

A child with a disability has the right to live a full and decent life with dignity and, as far as possible, independence and to play an active part in the community. Governments must do all they can to support disabled children and their families.

ARTICLE 24 (health and health services)

Every child has the right to the best possible health. Governments must provide good quality health care, clean water, nutritious food, and a clean environment and education on health and well-being so that children can stay healthy. Richer countries must help poorer countries achieve this.

ARTICLE 25 (review of treatment in care)

If a child has been placed away from home for the purpose of care or protection (for example, with a foster family or in hospital), they have the right to a regular review of their treatment, the way they are cared for and their wider circumstances.

ARTICLE 26 (social security)

Every child has the right to benefit from social security. Governments must provide social security, including financial support and other benefits, to families in need of assistance.

ARTICLE 27 (adequate standard of living)

Every child has the right to a standard of living that is good enough to meet their physical and social needs and support their development. Governments must help families who cannot afford to provide this.

ARTICLE 28 (right to education)

Every child has the right to an education. Primary education must be free and different forms of secondary education must be available to every child. Discipline in schools must respect children's dignity and their rights. Richer countries must help poorer countries achieve this.

ARTICLE 29 (goals of education)

Education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full. It must encourage the child's respect for human rights, as well as respect for their parents, their own and other cultures, and the environment.

ARTICLE 30 (children from minority or indigenous groups)
Every child has the right to learn and use the language, customs and religion of their family, whether or not these are shared by the majority of the people in the country where they live.

ARTICLE 31 (leisure, play and culture)
Every child has the right to relax, play and take part in a wide range of cultural and artistic activities.

ARTICLE 32 (child labour)
Governments must protect children from economic exploitation and work that is dangerous or might harm their health, development or education. Governments must set a minimum age for children to work and ensure that work conditions are safe and appropriate.

ARTICLE 33 (drug abuse)
Governments must protect children from the illegal use of drugs and from being involved in the production or distribution of drugs.

ARTICLE 34 (sexual exploitation)
Governments must protect children from all forms of sexual abuse and exploitation.

ARTICLE 35 (abduction, sale and trafficking)
Governments must protect children from being abducted, sold or moved illegally to a different place in or outside their country for the purpose of exploitation.

ARTICLE 36 (other forms of exploitation)
Governments must protect children from all other forms of exploitation, for example the exploitation of children for political activities, by the media or for medical research.

ARTICLE 37 (inhumane treatment and detention)
Children must not be tortured, sentenced to the death penalty or suffer other cruel or degrading treatment or punishment. Children should be arrested, detained or imprisoned only as a last resort and for the shortest time possible. They must be treated with respect and care, and be able to keep in contact with their family. Children must not be put in prison with adults.

ARTICLE 38 (war and armed conflicts)
Governments must not allow children under the age of 15 to take part in war or join the armed forces. Governments must do everything they can to protect and care for children affected by war and armed conflicts.

ARTICLE 39 (recovery from trauma and reintegration)
Children who have experienced neglect, abuse, exploitation, torture or who are victims of war must receive special support to help them recover their health, dignity, self-respect and social life.

ARTICLE 40 (juvenile justice)
A child accused or guilty of breaking the law must be treated with dignity and respect. They have the right to legal assistance and a fair trial that takes account of their age. Governments must set a minimum age for children

The Convention has 54 articles in total. Articles 43–54 are about how adults and governments must work together to make sure all children can enjoy all their rights, including:

to be tried in a criminal court and manage a justice system that enables children who have been in conflict with the law to reintegrate into society.

ARTICLE 41 (respect for higher national standards)

If a country has laws and standards that go further than the present Convention, then the country must keep these laws.

ARTICLE 45

Unicef can provide expert advice and assistance on children's rights.

ARTICLE 42 (knowledge of rights)

Governments must actively work to make sure children and adults know about the Convention.

*Also available at:

https://www.unicef.org.uk/what-we-do/un-convention-child-rights/?gclid=Cj0KEQjwnazLBRDxrdG-Mx-Km4oQBEiQAQJ1q63OsrQWALg--BL3zP5CUfC2EUDkMpwHBmdx10nQs6eAaAs918P8HAQ&sissr=1