Promoting Child Rights and Participation

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Promoting child rights and participation
Promoting child rights: who, whom, how?

- History of the UNCRC – evolution of child rights
  - 1924 – League of the Nations- Geneva Declaration on the Rights of the Child (Eglantyne Jebb (Save the Children founder) Janusz Korczak, (Polish Jewish doctor and educator, writer) – empowering children, provision, protection, participation
  - 1959 – United Nations - Declaration of the Rights of the Child
  - 1979 – International Year of the Child
- Roles and limitations of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child
- Composition of the Committee – members as experts, limitations and opportunities of the role
- Dialogue with NGOs, children and State Parties
- Concluding Observations – promoting rights of the child in all possible ways
- General Comments
- DGD - 12 September 2014 Digital media and child rights
- Other activities – letters, consultations, visits, presentations
- Impact of the work done: monitoring, follow up, methodology, accountability of the States?
Promoting the rights of children

• Treaty Bodies’ system – 9 Committees: all other conventions also relevant (CRPD, Torture, CEDAW…) overlaps, synergies, using information, promoting human rights, child rights

• UPR – Human Rights Council established in 2008, the Universal Periodic Review, a peer review system where all states can review the human rights records of other UN member states – Governments asking each other – role of international and national NGOs, UN Agencies on the themes, impact, 100% reporting, strong impact

• Regional conventions, bodies (Council of Europe, EU…) – recommendations, policies, projects

• National implementation strategies, action plans, legislation, procedures, coordinating bodies, “child rights based approach…., child budgeting”, advocacy, civil society, education, research, media, integrated, inter-sectorial work,

• Can/should the requirements be the same in all circumstances? War, natural disaster, economic situation, culture, religion, children in vulnerable situations – “All children have one thing in common – their rights”
Promoting the rights of children

• The Convention provides a comprehensive, universal set of principles and standards, whole child perspective, – “Children are not mini adults with mini rights” but need more protection
• Parents have the primary responsibility of the upbringing of children, but the State must provide all possible form of support to them to fulfill their obligations – How is it defined?
• “It takes a village to raise a child!” - Division of resources and responsibilities? Why and how?
• Family as the fundamental group - changing family formations, perceptions of parenting – new challenges
Promoting the participation of children

• Art. 12 right of children to express their views, it must be considered in all matters affecting them, subject to the age and maturity - many meanings, opportunities, barriers – tokenism, lack of impact, resistance of adults,

• Many typologies, many debates on: the purpose, method, encouragement, which children, interpretation by adults, fitting it with adults’ views, ethical issues, meaning for those involved, impact on decisions – implications on all, on society
Promoting the participation of children

- Awareness raising, education, access to information
- Children aware of their rights including participation varies widely
- Are adults aware of their rights? Can/ do they want to exercise them?
- Do politicians, professionals, parents, the community members want to empower children (and others) to participate?
- Risks of empowerment, power games, changing social, political life, changing environment (media, Internet...).
Promoting child participation

- Participation at home, family and other disputes (mediation, court), in education settings, in public life, in the media, in consultations and actions concerning children (reporting to the UN committees, monitoring, evaluation, implementation), politics (e.g. voting age, family voting), civil society, child led organisations

- Different forms and content of child participation, experiences in the UN CRC Committee – child friendly environment, language, approach, practice needed
A possible tool to promote child rights and participation

- Complaint mechanism for children
- Rules of procedure prepared by the Committee, CRIN Toolkit,
- Individual – individuals or groups of individuals on violations on their rights or through their representatives where local courts fail
- Inquires – looking at serious or widespread violations of children’s rights violations in a country initiated and carried out by the Committee based on information provided
- Inter-state communications – states can lodge complaints against other governments who failed to fulfill their child rights’ obligations
- Can only be used against governments that has specifically given permission to the Committee to do so
- Great achievement with many obstacles and barriers to overcome
Thank you for your attention!