

CHILD RIGHTS AND CLUBS BOOKLET

Child-Friendly Version



Co-funded by
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terre des hommes
stops child exploitation



This child friendly version booklet provides a summary of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and also outlines the guidelines for the formation of Child Rights Clubs (CRCs). The intended users of this booklet are children, child rights practitioners and club patrons.

The Convention provides guidance on what governments must do to make sure the rights of children are promoted, protected and provided for.

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Terre des Hommes Netherlands Child Safeguarding Policy statement

Terre des Hommes Netherlands (TdH NL) is committed to the safety and protection of all children. TdH NL will uphold the principle of the Best Interest of children at all times. The Convention demands that the best interest of the child is the principle for any action (article 3).

Terre des Hommes Netherlands recognises and will uphold the individual responsibility for all persons to not only protect children from harm but also respond appropriately when they have a reason to suspect abuse is being perpetuated to a child.

Terre des Hommes Netherlands is committed to treating children with equal rights and opportunities and maintaining good links with the statutory child care authorities. It is committed to ensuring that the children who are in contact with its programmes, directly or indirectly, are kept safe at all times from all forms of harm.

Terre des Hommes Netherlands will uphold policies, procedures and structures that conform to internationally accepted minimum standards on Child Protection.



CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

The full list of rights for children (anyone under the age of 18) is set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the most accepted standard on children's rights in the world. Kenya committed to promote children's rights when it signed up to the Convention in 1992.

There are four general principles that underpin all children's rights:

- ◆ Non-discrimination means that all children have the same right to develop their potential in all situations and at all times. No child should be denied their right on any ground. For instance, every child should have equal access to education regardless of the child's gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, disability, parentage, sexual orientation or other status.
- ◆ The best interests of the child must be "a primary consideration" in all actions and decisions concerning a child, and must be used to resolve conflicts between different rights. In ALL decisions affecting children, consideration must be given to the well-being of the child and how that decision affects the child.
- ◆ The right to survival and development emphasises the critical importance of ensuring access to basic services and to fair and equal opportunity for children to achieve their full development. Development takes a broad interpretation to include physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social dimensions of the child's life.
- ◆ The views of the child mean that the voice of the child must be heard and respected in all matters concerning his or her rights. The views must also be given due weight in decision making. For example, teachers, parents and other leaders should consult with children before making decisions that will affect them and take their views into account.

A right is a legal entitlement to every human being. Children have these rights as enlisted in the UN convention on the rights of the child. You are born with these rights and no one should take them away from you. The government, teachers, parents and other adults have the responsibility to promote, protect your rights and do what is best for you. As a child you have a responsibility to also respect the rights of others, including other children around you.

RIGHTS OF CHILDREN

– CHILD FRIENDLY VERSION

1

A child is defined as any person below the age of 18 years. Everyone under 18 years of age has all these rights.

2

All children have these rights regardless of their race, age, gender, abilities, no matter who they are, where they live, what language they speak, what their religion is, whatever they think, whatever they say, whichever family they come from. No child should be treated unfairly or discriminated on whatever basis.



3

All adults should do what is best for you as a child. When they make decisions, they should think about how their decisions will affect children. All adults should do what is best for children. Governments should make sure children are protected and looked after by their parents, or by other people when this is needed. Governments should make sure that people and places responsible for looking after children are promoting and protecting their rights.

4

The government has the responsibility to make sure these rights are promoted and protected and that every child enjoys all their rights as committed in the Convention.

5

Your family has the responsibility to help you learn to exercise your rights, and to ensure that your rights are protected. - You have the right to be given guidance by your parents and family.



6

You have the right to life. Children have a right to live a full life, to survive and develop in a healthy way.

7

You have the right to a legally registered name and nationality. Children must be registered when they are born and given a name which is officially recognized by the government. Children must have a nationality (belong to a country). Whenever possible, children should know their parents and be looked after by them.

8

You have the right for your name, identity, nationality and family ties to be respected and protected by the government. No one should take this away from you, but if this happens, governments must help children to quickly get their identity back.

9

You have the right not to be separated from your parents unless it is for your own good and safety. For example if a parent is mistreating, neglecting or harming a child. Children whose parents don't live together should stay in contact with both parents unless this might harm the child.

10

If your parents live in different places far from you, you have a right to stay with them as family. If a child lives in a different country than their parents, governments must let the child and parents travel so that they can stay in contact and be together.

11

You have the right to be protected by the government not to be taken out of your own place or country illegally or unwillingly. You should be allowed to stay in your country unless it is not safe for you.

12

You have the right to say what you think should happen when adults are making decisions concerning you or that will affect you. Children have the right to give their opinions freely on issues that affect them. Your opinions should be considered when these decisions are being made.

13

You have the right to obtain and share information as long as the information is not damaging harmful or abusive to you or others.

14

You have the right to choose your own religion and beliefs as long as they will not harm or expose you to abuse and as long as it will not stop others from enjoying their rights. Your parents should help you decide what is wrong and right and what is best for you.

15 You have the right to choose your own friends, join groups as long as it is not harmful to you and others. Your parents should guide you on what is good or bad as you choose friends.

16 You have the right to privacy and you should be protected. The law must protect children's privacy, family, home, communications and reputation from any attack.

17 You have the right to get correct information that is important to your well-being from radio, TV, newspaper, books, computers among other reliable sources that will not harm or expose you to harm. Adults should make sure the information they are getting is not harmful. Governments should encourage the media to share information from lots of different sources, in languages that all children can understand.

18 You have the right to be raised by your parent(s) and that they should always consider what is best for you. Parents have the main responsibility for bringing up a child. When the child does not have any parents, another trusted adult, known as guardian, will have this responsibility. Parents and guardians should always consider what is best for that child. Where a child has both parents, both of them should be responsible for bringing up the child.

19 You have the right to be protected from violence abuse and neglect from parents, teachers or adult caregivers.



20

You have the right to special protection and help if you can't live with your parents. Every child who cannot be looked after by their own family has the right to be looked after properly by trusted people who will protect children rights.

21

You have the right to good care and protection if you are adopted by another adult or in foster care. When children are adopted, they deserve what is best for them.

22

You have the right to appropriate care, protection and help if you are a refugee child (forced to leave your home to live in another country). You should enjoy the same rights wherever you are.

23

You have the right to special care, protection and support if you have any kind of disability, so that you can live a full and independent life. All obstacles or barriers for children with disabilities should be removed to enable them to become independent and to participate actively like all other children.

24

You have the right to good quality health care, safe and clean water, better nutrition, and a clean environment to enable you stay healthy.

25

You have the right to have your welfare and living conditions checked regularly if you live where you are taken care of by others, to ensure your best interest is taken care of.

26

You have the right to receive help (material or financial) from the government if you are poor and in need. Your best interest needs protection all the time.

27

You have the right to a standard of living that is good enough to meet your physical and mental needs. You have the right to food, clothing and a safe place to live. You should not be disadvantaged to a point you cannot do what other children can do.

28

You have the right to a good quality education. You should be encouraged and supported to go to school to the highest level you can.

29

You have the right to have your education support you develop your personality, abilities and talents to the full potential.



30

You have the right to practice your own culture language and religion whether or not these are shared by majority of the people in your country as long as this does not harm you, expose you to harm or harm others.

31

You have the right to play, relax and participate in wider range of cultural, creative or leisure activities as long as they do not harm you or others.



32

You have the right to be protected from work that can harm you, affect your health or education. If you work, you have the right to be protected to be safe and paid fairly.

33

You have the right to be protected from harmful drugs include making, taking or selling these drugs.



34

You have the right to be protected from sexual exploitation (being taken advantage of) and sexual abuse, including people forcing children to have sex for money, or making sexual pictures or films of them.



35

You have the right to be protected from abduction or being sold. Governments have the responsibility to protect children from being kidnapped or sold, or taken to other countries or places to be exploited (taken advantage of).

36

You have the right to be protected from any kind of exploitation (being taken advantage of). You have the right to be protected from any activities that could harm your development.

37

You have the right not to be treated badly or punished in a cruel way when in conflict with the law. If you break the law you should not be tortured or punished in a cruel way but be treated as a child in need of care and support. You should always avoid breaking the law as a child and always do what is right.



38 You have the right to be protected from war and actions and effects of war. Children, especially those under 15, cannot be forced to join the army or take part in war. Children in warzone should receive special protection

39 You have the right to get special help if you have been hurt, neglected, treated badly or affected by war, so you can restore your self-respect, health and dignity

40 You have the right to legal help and fair treatment in a justice system that respects your rights. If you break the law you should receive legal help. Children accused of breaking the law have the right to legal help and fair treatment. All alternatives must be explored to help these children become good members of their communities.

41 If the laws of your country protect children's rights better than the convention on rights of the child, then those laws should be used. You have the right to these laws in your country that provide better protection of your rights.

42 You have the right to learn about and know your rights. Teachers, parents and all other adults should know these rights and help you to learn about them too.



The UN Convention on the Rights of the child has a total of 54 articles. Articles 43 -54 state how governments, the United Nations – including the Committee on the Rights of the Child and UNICEF – and other organisations work to make sure that ALL children are protected and enjoy all their rights.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF CHILDREN

What is a responsibility

A responsibility is something you are expected to do.

Article 31 of The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) states that:

You have responsibilities towards your family and society, the State and other legally recognized communities and the international community. As a child, subject to age and ability, you have the responsibility to:

- a. Promote unity and harmony in the family, to respect and obey your parents, superiors and elders at all times and to assist them in case of need, as long as this is not harming you in any way;
- b. Serve your national community using your physical and intellectual abilities to serve it;
- c. Promote and celebrate social and national unity and harmony;
- d. Preserve and strengthen national and cultural values in relations with other members of the society, in the spirit of tolerance, dialogue and consultation and to contribute to the moral well-being of society;

Whose Responsibility it is to protect Children

Government has the main responsibility to make sure the rights of children in the Convention on the Rights of Children are protected and provided for.

All citizens have the responsibility to respect and protect the rights of children. They have the responsibility to protect children from abuse.

Children have the responsibility to respect other children's rights. They should not enjoy their rights at the expense of others.

As a Child you have the responsibility to know your rights, protect yourself from abuse and from abusing others.

A few examples of children's responsibilities include:

Respect other children's rights

Not to distract others from learning

Follow safety rules

Obey school and classroom rules

Respect the opinions of others

Treat adults and peers with respect

Take care of all school materials

Attend school regularly

Treat others fairly

Listen and not talk when the teacher is talking

Respect all children regardless of their status

Complete assignments given by my teacher

Respect and obey adults



Introduction to Child Rights Clubs

Child Rights Clubs (CRCs) are child-led groups established to empower children, educate them about their rights and responsibilities, build their capacity to develop into great leaders, and encourage them to become active agents for change. To empower them to become their own actors in protecting and promoting their rights. CRCs present an opportunity and platform for child-led initiatives and activities where children voice and address any issues that affect them.

Why it is important to join the CRCs (a few examples of the advantages of Child Rights Clubs include:

- ◆ Children get to learn about their rights, the risks and dangers (Child protection concerns within their communities- who they can contact if they or their peers ever need help.
- ◆ Children get to have increased awareness of their rights and responsibilities and build their confidence and understanding about how to report incidents of abuse and advocate for themselves and their peers.
- ◆ Children get to access information and experiences that enable them to grow and develop better.
- ◆ Allows children to develop leadership skills within an environment of their peers.
- ◆ Fosters creative thinking among children.
- ◆ Children have the opportunity to share on issues affecting them either in schools or in the community and how to resolve them
- ◆ Children learn to make informed decisions and provide sound opinions to issues affecting them.
- ◆ Children get to learn on how to become more responsible citizens among other national values.
- ◆ Children build their confidence among other skills on living with others.
- ◆ Children gain confidence in expressing their views, come up with Child led initiatives to empower self and others.

Possible Clubs activities (A few examples of Child Rights Clubs activities include):

- ◆ Engaging children in role plays and skill- building exercises around child rights and protection themes.
- ◆ Children participating in joint trainings with key child protection actors in schools and communities to strengthen referral and service linkages for reporting and follow up on cases of abuse and neglect.
- ◆ School-wide and inter-school child protection events, including music, dance, drama, sports, mural painting, school gardens, public speaking, and savings clubs.
- ◆ Children participating in joint feedback meetings at community; sharing feedback with duty bearers and community members; sensitising peers from schools with no CRC.

Formation and Management

- ◆ Child Rights Clubs are important avenues for encouraging child protection education in for children in both schools (primary and secondary) and communities.
- ◆ Child participation is at the centre in the establishment of the child right clubs.
- ◆ Child Rights Clubs are supported by the patrons who are the school teachers and responsible for guiding members (children) through the clubs.
- ◆ Participation in these clubs is always voluntary.
- ◆ Membership is open to all children in schools.
- ◆ Children willingly choose to participate in these clubs as opposed to being chosen by the teachers.
- ◆ The Child Rights Clubs are directly run by the school children.
- ◆ Clubs provide children with a safe place and environment to express themselves, learn, play and carry out activities that benefit their community.
- ◆ The interest of the children should direct the club activities.
- ◆ Club members are at liberty to discuss and decide what their activities will be.

Leadership of the Child Rights Club comprises of:

- ◆ Chairperson
 - ◆ Vice-Chairperson
 - ◆ Secretary
 - ◆ Vice- Secretary
- ◆ The four are referred to as executive who coordinate the affairs of a child right club for a period of 1 year.
 - ◆ Child Rights Clubs meet at least once a week to deliberate on thematic issues affecting them.
 - ◆ Membership of the club. Each club has a maximum membership of 30 members per to ensure proper management and adequate participation. In schools where membership is more than 30, children will be guided by the patron to form a new CRC and sessions carried out concurrently.
 - ◆ Selection of leaders - the executive is elected annually by the members of the CRC. Members who express interest to join the executive are subjected to fair and transparent elections by the club members. Upon selection the executive is inducted by the patron on how to effectively run and manage the affairs of the club.

Functions of Child Rights Clubs in schools

- ◆ They give children an opportunity to speak out on issues affecting them.
- ◆ They also give children a chance to speak on behalf of other children.
- ◆ Allows children to know types of child abuse in and around school communities the community.
- ◆ Helps children to know cases to be reported when arises.
- ◆ Enables children to have a picture on channels of handling cases.
- ◆ Allows children to nurture their talents in order to unleash their potential and abilities.
- ◆ Equip children with skills and knowledge that will help them take care of themselves.

Principles of participation in Child Rights Clubs

- ◆ Equal participation and Inclusion; All children regardless of their status, ethnicity, age, gender, ability have equal opportunity to participate in the CRC.
- ◆ Gender Equity; Both male and female members of the CRC have fair and equal opportunities to participate and lead in CRC activities.
- ◆ Non-discrimination; No child should be denied their right in CRC on any ground. Every child has equal opportunity regardless of the child's gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, disability, parentage, sexual orientation or other.
- ◆ Voluntary; Participation in CRC will not be forced on any child. A child has the right to decide whether or not to participate and when to participate.
- ◆ Safety; No child should be exposed to actual or potential abuse or exploitation by participating in the CRC activities.

References

- ◆ *The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child: UN Convention on the Rights of the Child In Child Friendly.*
- ◆ *The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child: Child Rights International Child Rights Clubs 2020.*
- ◆ *Jones, Hannah Lynford. Putting Children at the Centre: A Practical Guide to Children's Participation.*
- ◆ *Terre des Hommes Netherlands Safeguarding policy.*

Terre des Hommes Netherlands (TdH NL) is an international child rights organisation committed to stopping child exploitation. Terre des Hommes Netherlands' vision is to work towards a world in which children are no longer exploited, a world in which all children can live in dignity and develop their talents in a safe and loving environment.

Terre des Hommes Netherlands fights against the exploitation of children in four regions: Asia, Africa, Europe and the Middle East. In Africa, 20 projects spread across Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Ethiopia and Madagascar are currently being implemented successfully. In March 2022, the organisation won the Diversity and Inclusion Award for Best NGO Promoting Human Rights in Kenya. For more information, please visit www.terredeshommes.nl.

Terre des Hommes Netherlands Regional Office, East Africa
P.O. Box 76340-00508, Nairobi, Kenya

 +254 (0)786 209 581

 kenya@tdh.nl

east.africa@tdh.nl

 tdhnl_africa

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www.terredeshommes.nl

