

The Rights of the Child in Ukraine

Key Highlights

BACKGROUND

The existing legal frameworks regulating the implementation of child rights in Ukraine are insufficient in practice due to the following reasons:

- ↪ There is a systemic lack of pro-active attitudes, approaches and methods towards child rights issues, at national level;
- ↪ There is no single focal point in the government to be responsible with the observation of child rights while inter-sector cooperation is not consistently organized;
- ↪ The work instruments are outdated and are not adapted to the current situation of vulnerable children – thus, these instruments remain ineffective and do not lead to results;
- ↪ The legislation regulating child rights employs a declarative discourse and does not put in place the necessary mechanisms for the implementation of its provisions;
- ↪ The entities and the actors dealing with child rights issues are severely underfunded.

Existing legal frameworks for implementation of the rights of the child need to be improved.

THE CURRENT SITUATION IN UKRAINE

A. UNSOLVED ISSUES

- ⬇ Violence against children is perpetuated in institutions, schools and family environment;
- ⬇ Poor access to medical services for children living in rural areas;
- ⬇ The inclusive education measures are being implemented too slowly, disadvantaging children with special needs;

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Funding

- ↓ Poor identification of the cases of sexual violence and abuse affecting children – and insufficient assistance services available for the violence victims;
- ↓ Juvenile justice system is not in place;
- ↓ Low level of vaccination resulted from lack of trust of people in the system – there is also a deficit of medicine guaranteed by the state;
- ↓ State programs are lacking mechanisms of implementations and budget funding;
- ↓ There is no system favouring a trans-sectorial and trans-disciplinary training of child protection specialists.

B. NEW CHALLENGES

- ↑ The conflict in Ukraine affected around 1,7 million children;
- ↑ There is no strategy to protect the displaced children affected by the conflict, and their parents - lack of family integration strategies for these vulnerable children;
- ↑ There are gaps at legislation and implementation levels which expose children to the risk of not being registered (as IDPs and citizens of Ukraine) – this excludes them to access social services and to exercise their rights;
- ↑ The involvement of children in the military conflict (in different roles - sometimes even as combatants);
- ↑ The mine risks children are exposed to: since March 2014 at least 109 children were wounded and 42 children were killed by the weapon remains;
- ↑ There is poor medical care available in the areas affected by the conflict affected (lack of medicines and funding);
- ↑ Not all children in the areas affected by the conflict have access to education.

1.7 mil children affected by the conflict

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 The Ukrainian legislation must be brought in line with the child rights international standards, with a specific focus regarding the prohibition of child participation in the military conflict.
- 2 A comprehensive program to respond to all child rights violations needs to be developed. This program also needs to

The rights and best interests of the child shall serve a ground for all state policies.

address the issues of children affected by conflict and to the internally displaced children, while ensuring the respect of the rights of every child. Furthermore, it needs to strengthen the monitoring of a child's right to life, security, education, psychological and medical assistance.

- 3 A new National Action Plan for child protection needs to be developed, aiming to implement the provisions of the UN Convention for the Right of the Child. This Action Plan should be elaborated in cooperation with civil society organizations. The Action Plan should also envisage that adequate funding is allocated for its implementation.
- 4 The Third Optional Protocol to the UN Convention for the Right of the Child on the Communications Procedure needs to be ratified by Ukraine.
- 5 The rights and the best interest of the child should serve as ground for all state policies. Child rights should be mainstreamed in Ukraine.



‘Children Rights in Ukraine’ is the Ukrainian coalition of child-focused NGOs, uniting 15 profile NGOs. The coalition was established to facilitate the monitoring of the implementation of child rights provisions in Ukraine, according to the Concluding Observations and Recommendations issued by the UN Children Rights Committee in 2011. The coalition aims to: (1) Facilitate the monitoring of the respect the rights of the child in Ukraine; (2) Monitor and assist in implementation of the UN CRC Concluding observations in Ukraine; (3) Share good practices in the area of child rights. Much of the Coalition's work is supported by Save the Children International, Save the Children in Kosovo and Save the Children Sweden. ‘Children Rights in Ukraine’ is a member of ChildPact, the Regional Coalition for Child Protection. Find more information at: www.childrights.in.ua.

ChildPact, the Regional Coalition for Child Protection, is a network of 10 child-focused national networks from 10 different countries: Armenia, Albania, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Georgia, Kosovo, Moldova, Romania and Serbia. Bringing together 600 NGOs, our members work with more than 500.000 vulnerable children from the Western Balkans and the South Caucasus areas. Find more information about ChildPact at: www.childpact.org.

For further information regarding information and recommendations on child protection and child rights issues in Ukraine, please contact:

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