

Executive Summary

Indicators Manual for General Comment 7: Implementing Child Rights in Early Childhood

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Executive Summary

Background

General Comment 7: Implementing Child Rights in Early Childhood (GC7) was drafted and adopted in response to the observation by the Committee on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) that young children under the age of 8 years were often overlooked in States parties' reporting in progress towards implementing the Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC). The implication of this inadequate awareness of young children's rights by States parties being that they often overlook their obligations towards young children, regarding them more as objects of care and need, than as rights bearers and active social participants. While GC7 represents authoritative guidance to States parties in fulfilling their CRC obligations to young children, without a corresponding operationalized framework of indicators GC7 had a very limited practical usefulness and remained underutilized.

A Framework of Early Childhood Indicators for GC7 has been prepared by the GC7 Indicators Group which was formed under the invitation of the UNCRC, and has sought to address these issues by creating sets of indicators that State Parties can use to assess the rights environments and the implementation of rights in early childhood. This framework addresses specific rights upheld in the CRC and elaborated in GC7 while also addressing the following underlying and cross-cutting themes: the need to recognize young children as rights holders and active social participants, States parties' obligations to provide appropriate and adequate support for caregivers of young children, the need for integrated service provision in support of holistic approaches to child development, the need to support and empower the evolving capacities of young children, empowering and positive education, preschool, and play experiences, freedom from social exclusion by virtue of young age, gender, race, disability etc, freedom from violence and understanding of the particular vulnerability of young children.

Organizational Framework

The 15 indicator sets proposed in this framework are organized according to the clusters of the UNCRC Reporting Guidelines: General Measures of Implementation, Civil Rights and Freedoms, Family Environment and Alternative Care, Basic Health and Welfare, Education, Leisure and Cultural Activities, and Special Protection Measures. Under each cluster heading there is a rationale for the indicator sets that provides appropriate references to relevant articles in the CRC and paragraphs of GC7. An overarching key question is also given in each rationale which provides the foundation for the indicator. Following rationale statements, there is a table in which each foundation question is unpacked into sets of questions that are divided into sections titled: Structure, Process and Outcomes. Structure, as an indication of commitment to take action, refers to the existence of institutions and policies aligned with the CRC and the realisation of the particular rights in question. Process refers generally to efforts made and actions taken following on from commitment, and thus to specific activities, resources and/or initiatives in pursuit of rights realisation. Outcome refers to a resultant and measurable change either in the "rights environment" or directly in early childhood development measures. Within these tables, we also identify potential Sources of Information and propose one or two measures, which may be most effective and parsimonious means to describe the specific achievement with regard to the rights under consideration. Within each table we also delineate the relevant Duty Bearers and provide references to sections of the Reporting Guidelines. An example of one of the 15 Indicator Tables is shown in an Appendix: Example Indicator Table.

Indicators' Manual

Based on the explained framework and the 15 sets of early childhood rights indicators we have also developed an implementation manual. The manual is an easy to follow and user friendly guide that will help the States Parties to assess whether the rights of their children' are being upheld. It promotes better data collection, more careful analysis of data, more complete monitoring and, as a result, a much more comprehensive reporting of early childhood rights. In short it is not only a tool for governments to fulfil their obligation for periodic reporting to the UNCRC in a very descriptive and thorough manner, it is also an efficient institutional self-assessment tool and an inventory check list for them to become aware of what is already there and what is not but needs to be there, in terms of policies and programs, to facilitate the realization of the child right convention.

The manual is written with a view to be concise, clear, and understandable, include examples and checklists for each set of indicator, employ a rights-language, provide knowledge, practice and coverage, provide examples of written policies in the form of policy papers

The manual is written based on the Committee on the Rights of the Child's structured reporting guideline that delineates eight clusters under the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).

1. General measures of implementation (CRC articles 4, 42 and 44.6);
2. Definition of the child (CRC article 1);
3. General principles (CRC articles 2, 3, 6 and 12);
4. Civil rights and freedoms (CRC articles 7, 8, 13-17 and 37a);
5. Family environment and alternative care (CRC articles 5, 18.1, 18.2, 9, 10, 27.4, 20, 21, 11, 19, 39 and 25);
6. Basic health and welfare (CRC articles 6.2, 23, 24, 26, 18.3, 27.1, 27.2 and 27.3);
7. Education, leisure and cultural activities (CRC articles 28, 29 and 31);
8. Special protection measures:
 - (i) Children in situations of emergency (CRC articles 22, 38 and 39);
 - (ii) Children in conflict with the law (CRC articles 40, 37 and 39);
 - (iii) Children in situations of exploitation, including physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration (CRC articles 32, 33, 34, 35, 36 and 39);
 - (iv) Children belonging to a minority or an indigenous group (CRC article 30).

Each indicator set in the manual contains a flow chart which is anticipated to be the focal point of the indicator set. The flow chart walks the report writer through a series of questions in regards to the existing policies, and programs. Then it moves to ask whether or not these existing policies and programs have resulted in any outcomes. These outcomes can be any change in the environment of that given right or in the state of the early child development all together as indicated by measurable indicators. In cases that the countries' answer to a given policy/program question is negative, the flow chart provides examples of these policies/programs from countries across the globe. A conscious attempt has been made to include as many examples from the resource poor countries as possible. These examples are often followed by the web site addresses or additional information. It is assumed that upon completion of CRC reports the governments would have a fairly good idea about the existing gaps in their systems and these examples of policies/programs and the additional information is meant to serve as good starting points for the governments in their journey of filling the existing gaps of their systems. Figure II depicts a part of the flow chart of indicator set: 12 an indicator to verify the right to educational service provision for vulnerable and excluded young children.

Piloting the Tool

With the UNCRC's advice in May 2008, the GC7 Indicators Group planned a number of field tests to refine the manual and the framework. The first pilot country was chosen to be Tanzania and the manual and the framework were subjected to a pilot test in Tanzania from February 2009 to April 2010.

The pilot was led by stakeholders in Tanzania with the technical assistance from the GC7 Indicators Group. Currently the outcomes of the pilot are being reviewed with two main objectives:

- a) to identify areas of improvement in the manual and to make necessary adjustments to the manual

- b) to create a snapshot of existing capacities around child rights in early childhood in Tanzania and share it with the in-country stakeholders

On June 22nd, 2010, the Minister of Community Development Gender and Children of Tanzania, together with the members of Pilot Task Force in Tanzania and the GC7 Indicators Group (including a UNCRC representative) officially closed the pilot during an informative as well as ceremonial gathering in Dar es Salaam. The information collected through this pilot enabled the group to make adjustments in the manual and to fine-tune the tool. It also provided an opportunity for the country to make an inventory check in terms of their existing as well as missing capacities around their child right policies, programs and outcomes. Lastly, it was through this practise (i.e. the pilot) that the group realized that although this tool is efficient, using the indicators as a report writing tool is time consuming and that creating an electronic version of the indicators is an effective step that may reduce the time required to make their periodic reports. The electronic version could also ultimately change the method of report submission to UNCRC. Moreover, we are confident that electronic reporting will be feasible in low, middle and high- income countries alike.

Soon after, the group embarked on developing the E-version of the manual (the E-Manual). On September the 28th, the developed E-Manual was launched during a special event in the World Conference on Early Child Care and Education (WCECCE) in Moscow.

Sample Indicator Table: Constructing and Implementing the Positive Agenda

Indicator Set 2 - Constructing and Implementing the Positive Agenda - CRC Article 4 Implementation of rights; CRC General Comment 5: General measures of implementation for the Convention on the Rights of the Child	
Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there clearly defined Positive Agenda for young children and a National Plan of Action (NPA), including budgets and allocated resources, both human and financial to implement the agenda, or written policy commitment to develop the Positive Agenda and/or NPA? • Is there written policy promoting a functioning and effective early childhood monitoring system, making use of indicators systems such as MICS/DHS/EDI or any other sets of relevant measures which provide suitably disaggregated data, for example, by sex, region, socio-economic status or other vulnerability factors? • Is there a written commitment/policy amongst individual agencies to adopt the Positive Agenda/NPA? • Is there clear written policy committing governmental, public-private, and/or NGO partnerships, and networks to intersectoral action on issues emerging from the Positive Agenda?
Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of activities to conceptualise, research, formulate, deliver, monitor and evaluate, the Positive Agenda/NPA for rights implementation in early childhood, with particular reference to vulnerable or excluded groups of young children. • Efforts to alter national policy, in education, health, social welfare, and other policy spheres, with regards to child development and developmental problems and barriers affecting young children as identified in the formulation of the Positive Agenda/NPA. • Evidence of implemented changes in policy and practice resulting from the promotion of the Positive Agenda/NPA. • Evidence of progressive action towards developing the Positive Agenda/NPA where not currently in place, including, for example, planning activity, development of timelines, allocated resources (human and financial); concrete goals; intermediate goals; monitoring mechanisms. • The emergence of new public-private-civil society partnerships actively addressing issues identified in the Positive Agenda.
Outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in written policy commitment across various government sectors with respect to the challenges identified in the preparation of the Positive Agenda. • Implemented changes in professional, parenting, and other practical settings, with respect to issues affecting young children elaborated in the Positive Agenda. • Evidence of improvements in the situation and development of young children both generally but with specific reference to vulnerable groups affected by issues elaborated in the Positive Agenda. • Increased awareness/activism resulting from lobbying and joint organizational efforts for example, through social marketing campaigns, and other actions promoting change through implementation of the Positive Agenda.
Sources of Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written Positive Agenda, or a NPA (specifically including young children) to implement (or a report on progress/plans towards construction and/or implementation). • Multisectoral key informant interviews to assess progress towards, or evidence of, improved realisation of rights with regards to Positive Agenda issues, and/or, desk reviews of evaluated interventions, trainings, programmes, etc. • Multisectoral key informant interviews to explore the development of partnerships between public-private-civil organisations and/or desk review of evaluations of advocacy/lobbying outcomes with respect to changes in policy and practice. • Communications outputs from emerging intersectoral networks cooperating towards the goal of either constructing or implementing a Positive Agenda for young children.
Duty Bearers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinating role for one Ministry or the office of a Child Advocate or Early Childhood Commissioner. • Ministries of Health, Education, Social Welfare, Constitutional Affairs, Finance, etc. • National Human Rights and other bodies. • Public, Private and Civil Society-based providers of any child services. • Parents and caregivers and professional and/or lay bodies representing or supporting these stakeholders.
General Comment 7 (paragraphs)	
5 : Positive Agenda 36 : special protections for vulnerable groups	Reporting Guidelines (sections) 6b : programmes 6c : resources 9 : general measures 11 : legislative conformity 12a and b : international assistance 14 : available remedies 15 : independent human rights institution 16 : raise awareness 17 : broad dissemination 18 : organisational cooperation on implementation

Sample Flowchart: Dissemination of GC7



