

The role of civil society in implementing the General Measures of the Convention on the Rights of the Child ^[1]

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Source: UNICEF. Innocenti Research Centre.

Format: Report

Publication Date: 1 Jun 2010

AVAILABILITY

Report in pdf ^[2]

Summary:

This paper examines the role of civil society in the process of implementing the general measures of the Convention of the Rights of the Child, as defined in article 4 of the Convention and its General Comment No.5 (2003). While it is established in international law that States parties are the primary duty bearers to promote and protect children's rights, the Committee on the Rights of the Child has also recognized that other actors, including children, have a right and need to be engaged in this process. An examination of the variety of definitions provided of 'civil society' reveals that it includes, inter alia, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community groups, women's groups, environmental movements, faith-based organizations, professional associations, trade unions, self-help groups, social movements, business associations and advocacy groups.

Drawing on the author's experience in civil society organisations and her membership on the Committee on the Rights of the Child (2003-2009), the findings show that civil society plays an important role in the implementation of the CRC, and that NGOs, in particular, play a vital role. NGOs operate in different legal, economic, social and political settings, which results in varied modalities of work and impacts.

The paper draws attention to the wide issues and challenges affecting civil society today, including financial crises, poverty, globalization, and varying levels of political commitment. Based on the examples provided, many of which draw on the concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child and case studies of civil society activities, the paper lists recommendations for follow-up by key actors. In so doing, this paper seeks to provide concrete recommendations to government, the Committee, and actors at national, regional and international level.

Region: International ^[3]

Tags: children's rights ^[4]

international organizations ^[5]

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