

Child Rights Centre of the University of Crete

Consultation Workshop on Child Rights

20 & 21 June 2024
UoC, Rethymnon

Sessions organized by:

Dr. Ghassan Khalil, UNICEF Representative in Greece;

Dr. Eteri Kirtskhalia, Coordinator, Child Rights Centres, UNICEF Georgia

Day I	20 June
10:00 - 10:15	Opening : Dr. G. Khalil UNICEF Representative in Greece Professor A. Chatzidaki, UoC
10:15 – 10:30	Objectives of the training
10:30 – 11:00	Child Rights: an imperative on the international agenda
11:00 – 11:45	Historical evolution of child rights
11:45 – 12:00	Coffee break
12:00 – 12:30	Child Rights Centres, Role and Functions
12:30 – 13:00	Drafting process and characteristics of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch
14 :00 – 15 :15	Provisions of the CRC
15:15 – 15 :30	Break
15:30 – 16 :15	Complementarity of the rights covered by the CRC
16:15 – 16:30	Wrap up and rapid evaluation of the first day

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Day II	21 June
10:00 – 10:30	Recapitulation of Day I
10:30 – 11:30	General Principles of the CRC
11:30 – 11:45	Coffee break
11:45 – 12:30	Incorporation of Child Rights into University Curricula
12:30 – 13:00	Complementarity of the CRC with other related international instruments
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch
14:00 – 15:00	Monitoring of the implementation of the CRC and the role of Treaty Bodies
15:30 - 16:00	Concluding remarks
16:00 – 16:10	Evaluation
16:10 – 16 :30	Distribution of certificates and closure

Child Rights Consultation for Professors and Faculty Members

Background

The integration of child rights across university curricula, despite the improvements, is very limited in Greece. Child rights most of the times appear as a distinct lesson (yet not as a core but as an elective lesson) in the curricula of few faculties of pedagogy or are partly addressed in the context of other disciplines (usually public international law in the faculties of law). However, even in these cases, child rights are only understood as a strictly disciplinary subject leading to a fragmented approach that limits the understanding of their modern concept by the students. Based on the recent developments in the discipline of child rights, a more cohesive and interdisciplinary approach that ensures a complete understanding of child rights beyond the boundaries of a specific discipline is very much needed to increase the impact that university institutions can have in promoting child rights knowledge and awareness. Similarly, high-quality thematic research on child rights issues even though in place, is not always conceptualized through the lens of a child rights-based approach while it is not organized under a cohesive framework and structure within universities that can effectively consolidate and disseminate the relevant knowledge generated. The result is this knowledge not being visible and accessible by government agencies and policy makers to be used in decision making and positively impact on the realization of child rights in Greece while its academic and broader social mainstreaming remains limited. In addition, the role of university institutions in promoting child rights across society can be further strengthened by adopting a more coordinated and extroverted approach addressing actors and institutions beyond the area of education. The vision of establishing child rights centres in collaboration with Greek university institutions in all administrative regions in Greece is expected to gradually address these shortcomings in the long term through embedding and institutionalizing an academic culture that considers child rights as an autonomous and primary scientific discipline.

The theoretical framework for child rights education lies in the political socialization of the individuals which shapes their perceptions on political concepts, values, and institutions. When it comes to child rights, political socialization influences individuals' perceptions on the social value of child rights and their understanding which plays a key role in establishing a culture of upholding child rights in societies. Integrating child rights in the academic culture requires a basic level of understanding by all teaching staff which is an enabler for universities to take on their role in mainstreaming child rights in higher education. Building a high level of awareness on child rights amongst future professionals through their university education can have a multiplier effect on the social impact of child rights in the long term. The starting point for these changes is a high-quality consultation with the university teaching staff on child rights which will increase their awareness and can have multiple significant effects within universities in the first place. Having university teachers with a high level of awareness on child rights can be very beneficial to this end as it can contribute towards:

- Incorporating child rights in curricula to ensure better understanding of child rights by students,
- Adapting teaching methods and pedagogical practices in a way that better reflect and promote child rights,

- Incorporating human and child rights principles in research and evidence generation while strengthening ethical research practices,
- Fostering partnerships and linkages of university institutions with child rights actors outside university which can better combine theory and practice and contribute to a more comprehensive learning of child rights by students as well as increase the academic footprint of child rights in their implementation,
- Benefiting the professional development of teachers through the addition of a new dimension in their discipline which will also increase their awareness on their role in shaping students' social perceptions,
- Mainstreaming child rights in university institutions, policies and practices including the development of a more safe and participatory learning environment for students that promotes inclusivity and fights discrimination within universities,
- The outcome of these multiple effects is expected to be an increased mainstreaming of child rights in the broader environment of university institutions and knowledge among their graduates which is expected to leverage the social impact and positively affect the cultural norms on child rights.

Learning Outcomes of the two-day Child Rights Consultation

- Developing a better understanding of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the interdependency and interrelation between its Articles,
- Developing a global vision on the role of child rights in achieving the SDGs,
- Understanding the importance of teaching Child Rights to future professionals,
- Understanding the importance of the role of Child Rights Centers in generating evidenced-based knowledge on children, which can serve for informed relevant decisions by the government and parliament,
- Understanding the role of the Centers in promoting Child Rights and creating a stronger culture of child rights by connecting to schools, professional groups, governmental entities and the society.
- Initiate the exchange of views and ideas on the development of an action plan for the specific CRC.

Style of the two-day Child Rights Consultation

The two days will be highly interactive and characterized by the rich exchange of ideas and thoughts between Dr. Khalil and Dr. Kirtskhalia and the professors of University of Crete. The knowledge of child rights will be shared and presented by all participants from different dimensions and perspectives, leading to creating a common understanding of child rights issues and a way forward for the role and functions of the Child Rights Centre.