

# I Introduction

This child rights programming (CRP) practitioners' guide will help you apply child rights principles and values<sup>1</sup> at every stage of your programming. It answers many of the “how to” questions that staff and organisations using a CRP approach have raised.

CRP puts children at the centre of your programming. It recognises children as rights-holders and helps you engage them as actors in their own development. It recognises governments as the main duty-bearers in fulfilling children's rights, and promotes accountability to their citizens. It will ensure your plans and activities are based on four fundamental principles relating to children's rights: survival and development; non-discrimination; child participation and the best interests of the child.

Each chapter in the guide gives you: key steps that are tried and tested; top tips to help you as you begin the process; case studies of successful practice from a range of countries and contexts; a ‘yes, but’ section with common dilemmas and possible solutions; and key websites and publications if you need further information. The key steps and case studies are mostly taken from Save the Children's own global experience.

The guide shows that adopting a child rights-based approach is the most effective way to bring about positive and lasting change for children, their families and communities. It is not an easy process to embark on – many organisations are still addressing the challenges it involves.<sup>2</sup> It will take time, resources (both human and financial) and commitment, in both the short and long term. You might need to change the way your organisation works, its culture, structures and management. You might also need to change the way you work with children, communities, partners and donors. But your investment will reap huge rewards.

## Who is this guide for?

The guide is designed primarily for people working in humanitarian and development programmes, in a wide range of situations and contexts. It has been written with the needs of senior national programme staff in mind. It also targets organisational decision-makers, policy advisers and programme support staff. And it is relevant to your partner organisations, donors and others with an interest in rights-based approaches and/or children's rights.

The guide assumes that you:

- have a working knowledge of the UNCRC
- have some understanding of CRP, its concepts and principles, and that you are familiar with the basic concepts of programming (eg, the programme cycle, including planning, setting goals and objectives, implementation, monitoring and evaluation)<sup>3</sup>
- have a basic understanding of good practice in humanitarian and development work
- ideally will have read the handbook *Child Rights Programming: How to Apply Rights Based Approaches to Programming* (Save the Children, 2005).

## How to use this guide

We hope the guide gives you a framework you can use to incorporate a child rights perspective when you draw up new strategies and plans or update existing documents. The following tips should help you get the most out of the guide:

- Take your time to read Chapter 2, as it is more conceptual than the others. It sets out what we mean by child rights programming and the key tools and processes involved. **An understanding of Chapter 2 is essential, as it provides the basis for each subsequent chapter.**
- Chapters 3, 4 and 5 look at three key stages of a child rights programming cycle – situation analysis; planning; and monitoring, evaluation, learning and feedback.
- Chapters 6, 7 and 8 explore three aspects of implementing a child rights-based approach in greater depth – partners and working relations, advocacy, and emergencies.
- Chapter 9 looks at what it means to become a rights-based organisation.

Try out the various tools with your team members. They are not blueprints but should be explored and adapted to your specific context. We encourage you to test out the ideas and share your own experience and insights with others. You can use the guide during inductions of new staff, with partners and donors, in planning workshops, training sessions and at any stage of your programme cycle.

### CD-ROM resources

The accompanying CD-ROM contains various resources that are referenced in the guide or the further information sections.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> These concepts have previously been set out in the Save the Children handbook, *Child Rights Programming: How to apply rights-based approaches to programming*, Save the Children, 2005

<sup>2</sup> For an analysis of Save the Children's progress to date, see *A Study to Benchmark Progress in Adopting and Implementing Child Rights Programming*, Save the Children, 2004

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, *Toolkits: A practical guide to monitoring, evaluation and impact assessment*, Save the Children, 2003