

RIGHTS AND ADVOCACY WEBSITE: CRIN launches global portal for using child rights law

When governments fail to recognise and respect children's rights, they must be held to account. However, few child rights violations are brought before the international and regional human rights mechanisms which can be used to hold States to their legal obligations. At CRIN, we receive many enquiries from individuals or NGOs, in the developed and developing world, who are unaware of the national and international legal obligations entered into by their State. Others do not know how these obligations can be enforced.

CRIN is developing a guide for child rights advocates on how to use human rights complaints mechanisms to challenge breaches of children's rights. The goal of the legal tool is to make the international, regional and national laws and mechanisms which exist well known and freely accessible to those who need them on the ground. The guide will include the following:

- A summary of the international and national laws that protect children's rights.
- An explanatory guide identifying the international, regional and domestic mechanisms that can be used to vindicate breaches of children's rights.
- Links to national and international decisions in which those mechanisms have been used successfully in the past.
- A guide to States showing examples and best practices for implementing the CRC.
- A forum for debating what changes should be made to the existing laws and mechanisms to make them more accessible and sensitive to the needs of children and their advocates.

Visit our introduction page: www.crin.org/law

SEARCH THE DATABASE: BY INSTRUMENT

Instruments are legal tools used to designate, define and harmonise international human rights standards. They include treaties and protocols, declarations, resolutions, advisory opinions, standards and guidelines as well as case law. To find national, regional and international instruments related to child rights, search our child rights legal database at: <http://www.crin.org/Law/search.asp>.

BY MECHANISM

Mechanisms are international, regional or national bodies which monitor the implementation of instruments. Mechanisms include the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child and national courts of law.

BY COUNTRY

Country resources can be accessed from the CRIN homepage at www.crin.org. Over the coming months, the information below will be made available for all countries. We hope you will help us keep these pages updated. Email: info@crin.org

GLOSSARIES

To cut through the jargon of international human rights law, CRIN has published some basic glossaries.

- Human Rights Glossary
- A to Z of Child Rights
- Glossary on the Inter-American System of Human Rights
- Glossary on the European System of Human Rights
- Glossary on the African Human Rights System

Scotland: Adults' Attitude to Contact with Children and Young People

Adults are often too scared to work with young people for fear of being branded a paedophile, according to a new report. A survey by Scotland's Commissioner for Children and Young People revealed that the fear of being accused of harming young people was the main deterrent.

Kathleen Marshall's study found a shortage of adults prepared to take work roles and volunteering posts. More than 1,100 people took part in the detailed survey. Some 48 per cent of adults surveyed said fear of being falsely accused of causing harm was a barrier to contact with children and young people.

This same fear also made adults much less likely to help when they saw a young person in danger or distress.

The report also revealed that adults who work with young people in structured environments tend to have positive attitudes towards them, and enjoy seeing children and young people develop through their involvement.

However, people reported much more negative attitudes to meeting young people in informal groups, especially in large groups on the street. According to the report, fear was largely fuelled by media reporting rather than people's personal knowledge of young people.

Other concerns included fear of young people themselves, and concerns about bureaucracy and the culture of litigation.

'Social behaviour'

The survey showed that women are almost twice as likely to have formal contact with children and young people, either as a volunteer or through work.

Men in particular reported being afraid of being falsely accused of being a paedophile which they described as "the worst thing imaginable". Men are also disproportionately less likely to approach a lost child and try to help.

"The activities they want to take part in need adults to volunteer and support them and this report shows exactly why that isn't happening.

Potential volunteers

"We need to help bridge the divide between the generations and establish a framework for attractive activities that are stimulating, safe and fun for all involved.

The aim of the report was to start a public debate about how to bridge the generations and make it safe for children and adults without "wrapping either of them in cotton wool.

Further information: Organisation Contact Details:

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