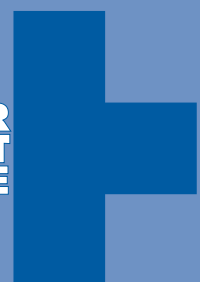


# KINDERNOTHILFE

The Child Rights Approach  
in Kindernothilfe's Work  
in Germany and Abroad

KINDER  
NOT  
HILFE



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# Preface

“Children and adolescents are a third of humanity, childhood is a third of life. Children do not become human beings – they already are.” When Janusz Korczak wrote this sentence in 1921, the international community was still far from making a binding political commitment with regard to children’s rights. Unlike then, children and adolescents nowadays make up more than a third of the world’s population.

In 2009 it will be 20 years that the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopted. Throughout the years it has been ratified by almost all countries. It is deeply rooted in the tradition of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. But it was also preceded by other experiences, reasonings and declarations like the “Magna Carta” of the rights of the child, the Magna Charta Libertatis, drawn up by Janusz Korczak in 1919. So the rights of the child have a long history, while the challenge of the future will be to realise them in practice on a day-to-day basis.

Even if the international community has adopted them as a guideline for political action, the reality of millions of girls and boys still looks as if they did not exist at all. Millions of children lack the opportunity to go to school. Poverty forces many to do hard physical work to feed themselves and their families. And exploitation does not even spare the children’s bodies and souls, as is shown by the fates of the many sexually abused children. Healthy food and medical care are out of reach for many. But still children have great potentials, as can be seen from their struggle for survival as street children or Aids orphans, to mention but two examples.

More often than not children are unaware of their rights meant to protect, promote and strengthen them. It is the more important that children and adolescents become aware of their rights and learn to assert them in their daily lives and with a view to their future. This will not happen on its own. They need human beings and organisations campaigning for the children’s rights together with them. To take an interest in children, to listen to them, to trust that they are able to develop their own ideas for themselves and their lives - together with the rights of protection and provision, participation is the third pillar of the rights of the child. There is talk of the “three Ps”: protection, provision and participation, which in their unique combination embody the essence of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Children have a right to a holistic development. This goes beyond securing survival. Who wants to fight poverty must help that children can enjoy their rights.

This is the mission to which Kindernothilfe feels committed today. In doing so, we are keeping continuity with our own history. Since 1959 we have been a reliable partner to children and adolescents suffering from injustice, poverty and violence. So Kindernothilfe’s 50th anniversary coincides with two other „milestone“ anniversaries: the 90th anniversary of the “Magna Carta” of the rights of the child and the 20th anniversary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The present concept informs about the rights of the child and their social, political and theological importance and points out their significance in combating poverty, exploitation and injustice.

In some countries we already have positive experiences how the knowledge of the children’s rights and their respect has had positive impact on the life of children. In other countries we are only at the beginning. Together we learn not to accept injustice and poverty fatalistically, but to change the situation with courage and resilience. In doing so, again and again we realise what power children have if only they speak out freely, tell, paint and express in manifold ways what is going on around them and what are the root causes of justice and poverty from their point of view. Thus children’s rights come to life. They are words of hope for many and at the same time constitute our commitment.

A working group composed of members of all of Kindernothilfe’s departments developed the present concept that was approved by the bodies of Kindernothilfe and therefore constitutes an important policy paper now. I thank the working group and wish that this document will be spread as widely as possible and that the rights of the child attract more and more attention for the benefit of the children.

*On the International Day of the Child 2008*

**Dr. Jürgen Thiesbonenkamp**

Chairman of the Board of Directors

# 1 Concept and Context

## 1.1 Purpose of the Concept

*The child rights approach as a process*

Kindernothilfe understands itself as a development cooperation organization which is particularly committed to children and their rights. In doing so, Kindernothilfe's action is oriented in the essence of the Biblical witness, as well as in international human rights treaties—above all, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. In its strategic planning, Kindernothilfe has set the goal of introducing and carrying out a child rights approach in its program objectives for Germany and overseas. The achievement of this goal is seen as a process extending over a number of years.

The present concept “Introduction of the Child Rights Approach in Kindernothilfe's Work in Germany and Abroad” shall:

- serve as an orientation framework for introducing and carrying out the child rights approach in the program and project work in Germany and abroad. It is not meant to be a guide to implementation;
- guide Kindernothilfe and its partners in developing a common understanding of a child rights-based approach in their work;
- make the child rights approach a mainstreamed task in all of Kindernothilfe's work.

The Concept is the result of an intensive consultation process in which all of Kindernothilfe's departments and committees in Germany participated along with its partners abroad.

## 1.2 Introduction

*Orientation in international agreements*

Kindernothilfe was founded with the goal of helping needy and disadvantaged children. This mission is derived from God's love and the principles of the Biblical witness. In addition, Kindernothilfe orients its actions according to international agreements such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and especially, the Convention on the Rights of the Child<sup>1</sup> (in the following CRC). The basic motivation remains unchanged; on the other hand, the way towards the best possible support for children has, over time, become more multi-layered.

To save children from dying of starvation, to help them find their way in life by means of nutrition, medical care, and education stood at the beginning of the work. Ensuring the children's survival and development has remained to this day an up-to-date goal, as formulated in Article 6 of the CRC.

As Kindernothilfe started its work, it mainly focused on caring for children and meeting their basic needs. A good school education and vocational training were intended to contribute to the children's integration into society and to guarantee them, over the long-term, an ordered life and regular income. The assumption was that children in need of protection, who receive a high-quality school education and vocational training, are self-confident and successful in confronting real life. The children's living environment, however, was not a prime focal point in this consideration.

*Further development of the work*

In Kindernothilfe's near 50-year history, the work has been developing further. According to Kindernothilfe's presently valid strategic framework, community development along with advocacy and lobbying work are programmatic priorities, destined to influence the entire individual living environment of children within their respective societies. Consequently, families and communities are supported in such a way that they, themselves, are able to take over responsibility for their children. Advocacy and lobbying work is supposed to improve the framework conditions for this kind of work at all levels – this means from the families and village communities, as well as the city neighborhood, up to national and international levels, at which rights are defined and compliance with them can be demanded.

More recent programmatic developments can be traced back to a change in the perception and definition of the reasons for poverty and underdevelopment. Poverty is seen as the social, economic, and political exclusion of those affected from their society, which is accompanied by a loss of legal rights and power. If poverty is to be overcome, then correspondingly, extensive strategies for societal development are required.

<sup>1</sup> Definition of children according to the CRC: “For the purposes of the present Convention, a child means every human being below the age of eighteen years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier.” (Art.1)

### 1.3 Basic Elements of the Concept

The following is a summarized survey of the basic elements of the present concept.

#### The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child as a Frame of Reference

The CRC contains of 54 articles, which can be divided into three groups: protection rights, provision rights, and participation rights. They are also called the “three Ps”.

- The right to be protected from violence, abuse and neglect, the right to know one’s ancestry, and the right to life (*protection rights*) – e.g. Art. 6, 8, 19, 32, 33, 34, etc.;
- The right to be provided with optimal health and social security, the right to education and leisure (*provision rights*) – e.g. Art. 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, etc.;
- Rights emphasizing the child’s status as a subject, such as the right to contribute, the right to be heard, and the right to participate in all issues affecting the child (*participation rights*) – e.g. Art. 12, 13.

Above all these stands the basic principle of Article 3 of the CRC, that for the best interest of the child, “in all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities, or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration.” This article contains the basic principle which is normative for the entire Convention. It makes clear that the child is acknowledged as a subject according to international law. Through Article 3, all of the other articles of the Convention are made concrete<sup>2</sup>.

Further fundamental principles of the CRC are:

- the basic rights to life, survival and development (Art. 6)
- the principle of non-discrimination (Art. 2)
- general measures of implementation of the child rights (Art. 4)
- the right of the child to be heard (Art. 12).

#### Definition of the Child Rights Approach for Kindernothilfe

Children are independent personalities and bearers of human rights. The realisation of their rights to protection, provision, and participation, enshrined in the CRC, is the aim of Kindernothilfe’s work. Therefore children participate actively in the planning, implementation and evaluation of child-related activities and projects in order to demand their rights.

#### A Change of Perspective

With the introduction of the child rights approach, the way things are viewed is expanded and the attitude towards children is changed. Situations of poverty are no longer seen simply from

the viewpoint of human needs and developmental deficits, but are being interpreted as consequences of unjust structures. In this connection, children and young people are independent beings and have rights which they can demand. Kindernothilfe is committed to the protection and realization of these rights. The aim of its work is to create conditions which enable young people to exercise their rights and to cooperate actively in shaping their own future.

#### The Added Value of the Child Rights Approach

The CRC is an internationally valid agreement on human rights which, as of January 2008, has been accepted by 193 nations as a framework of commonly shared values and common basis for action. This consensus is significant for the work of both Kindernothilfe and its partners. Not only we, but also our partners can refer to the Convention when petitioning governments, since political action must be measured against the CRC.

#### The Child Rights Approach

- understands children and young people as independent personalities and encourages them to stand up and fight for their rights;
- helps to focus stronger attention on children and young people who are exposed to specific risks and whose rights are daily and systematically violated (*children at risk*);
- contributes to the strengthening of local organizations, communities, and groups, because the awareness of rights increases;
- is an essential step in moving from the immediate elimination of need to sustainable assistance. Sustainability is achieved when children actively participate in the creation of just structures which will also endure in the future;
- is sustainable in a double sense because of its underlying principle of having children participate in all issues concerning them. Children are not only strengthened in their present situation, but also prepared for their role as adults. Thereby, the child rights approach also supports the democratization of a given country.

#### Implementation

The introduction and implementation of the child rights approach in Kindernothilfe’s work in Germany and abroad is an open-ended learning process extending over a period of years. A prerequisite for this is an understanding agreed upon by everybody involved regarding what the child rights approach is, and that appropriate methods and instruments for implementation be discussed jointly. It is crucial that the approach is *mainstreamed*.

<sup>2</sup> Lorz, Alexander: Der Vorrang des Kindeswohls nach Art. 3 der UN-Kinderrechtskonvention in der deutschen Rechtsordnung (2003)

## 1.4 The Rights of Children from a Biblical Perspective

Kindernothilfe lives from God's love for his world. This love follows Jesus' way of loving concern for all people and advocates for their rights and the overcoming of poverty and violence. Kindernothilfe works together with children and adults to change the world through justice, peace, and the conservation of Creation. The goal of all of such activities is, based on the God-given dignity of all human beings and in trust in God's love, to set signposts on the way to reconciliation, and to strive for a world in which children can develop and mature freely.

*Biblical stories point to the rights of the child*

Even though, in the modern sense of the word, there is no explicit mention of child rights in the Bible, important Biblical stories and central theological statements do point to the child rights. As also with human rights, we cannot and may not misappropriate child rights for Biblical ends. Whatever out of the Biblical tradition can contribute to their substantiation, although it had to overcome a certain ecclesiastical praxis and its justification, is surely significant and comes from the heart of the gospel.

Biblical stories tell us how children and young people lived in the societies of that time, what they suffered from, and under which promises and hopes their lives were lived. On the one hand, the Bible gives, for example, insight in drastic fashion into the fate of children in the ancient world (cf. Gen. 19:8; Gen. 34:2; Ki. 6:28-29, etc.), mentions the responsibility of adults in their education (Prov.13:24), and postulates, especially in the context of experiences of violence through the prophets, the right to protection and life (e.g. Jer. 7:6, Zach. 7:10) for widows, orphans, foreigners, and the poor. Also, big names in the Bible appear, in part, with references to their childhood and youth: Moses, Isaac, Rachel, Joseph, David, Daniel in the Old Testament, and the story of the birth of Jesus along with references to his youth in the Gospels. Special importance is given to the proclamation of Jesus, who placed children in the center.

He who reads the Bible with alert eyes, will discover that children are mentioned a lot more frequently than has long been realized. Their neglect in theology and in the church does not originate from the biblical witness, but from the interpretations of the Bible, which have been dominant for centuries and which in their theological reflections hardly had children in view. But, there is also a line running through various books of the Bible which places children in the center of God's love and of the Gospel:

Psalms 127:3 praised God with the words that children are a gift of God. Like all people, they also share in being made in the image of God which is the basis of human dignity – inalienable and impossible to lose for all human beings.

A special nearness to child rights can be seen in the stipulations for the protection of widows, orphans, and foreigners. They are part of the basic legal foundation of the nation of Israel, the Tora, which were claimed time and again by the prophets, and praised in the Psalms as God's glory. "The Lord watches over the alien and sustains the fatherless and the widow." (Psalm 146:9). A basic protection for the widow and orphan is established in individual rights (Deut.14:28-29; 24:19-21).<sup>3</sup>

God does not want the rights of the poor to be perverted (Ex. 23:6). He deals with them in mercy, righteousness, and justice (Jer. 9:23). He claims the rights of the poor against the corruption of the powerful (Is.1:23).

*Paradigm change in relating to children*

Through his words and his actions, Jesus demonstrates a special nearness to the life of children. He accepts them, shows them love, and places their lives under the promise of the emerging kingdom of God, as reported in Mk.10:13-16. This is also a central statement in the other Gospels, for example, Mt. 18:3 ff.; Mt. 19:13 ff.; Mt. 21:15 f. Set in the center, children experience themselves as persons and the subject of their own lives. Jesus' message and actions mark a paradigm change in relating to children and shape a new understanding of childhood. As children they remain fragile and threatened. In their vulnerability Jesus puts children under special protection. He hugs and blesses them, and at the same time gives them a share in his mission. In them the kingdom of God comes into the world. He who receives a child, receives God. The message of Jesus becomes concrete in one's conduct with children. What they contribute to life can become a blessing for the world. Jesus took five loaves from the hand of a child and two fish, blessed the little it was, and 5000 people were fed (John 6:9).

*Basic principles of the Bible and CRC are the mission of Kindernothilfe*

The three basic principles of the rights of the child, protection, provision, and participation, form a unity and have their roots in the message of Jesus. For Jesus, the power of faith that makes people strong to trust in God and his justice unfolds through childlikeness, as it is expressed in the Sermon on the Mount and the Beatitudes promise: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God." (Mt 5:9). He who believes experiences being God's son as being human. Paul addresses believers as children (Rom. 8:17). The fellowship of Christians with God and the sonship of Jesus are related to each other. Thus, being a child is not being reduced to a transitional phase,

while the whole of “being human” - which is valid before God - is only fulfilled in adulthood. Being a child is not a span of time, but rather in this sense, the status of a beginning and of a life which is loved by God without condition. He who understands himself as a child of God cannot pass over the real life of children, either spiritually, socially, or politically. The “glorious freedom of the children of God” (Rom. 8:21) is experienced in the liberation of children from poverty and violence. Theological reflection on the rights of children can keep us from a wrongly understood autonomy of the child. Moreover, it opens up new experiences of God, because in God’s revelation of himself in a child, the child is not made an absolute, but rather, according to Jesus’ words, is the way to the kingdom of God.

These experiences can build bridges to children, so that we can become open to their life-situation, to respectfully and attentively take part in their lives, to protect and support them, and for them and with them take action as the situation may demand. Children have a voice. They ought to and can speak out, plan, and decide together with us, where their lives and their future are concerned.

Kindernothilfe is committed to seeing that the rights of children become a reality. The basic principles of the Biblical witness and the Convention on the Rights of the Child are the mission and commitment of Kindernothilfe worldwide.

## 1.5 Basic Principles of the Human Rights Approach in Cooperative Development Work

### Concerning the History and Meaning of Human Rights

The adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the United Nations’ General Assembly on December 10, 1948 stands as a milestone of post-war history. In it, human rights were defined as rights to which every human being is equally entitled and which protect his or her dignity. These rights are inherent and inalienable, indivisible and universal. In 1966, two important human rights treaties were added to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (short: Social Pact or ICESCR<sup>4</sup>), and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (short: Civil Pact or ICCPR<sup>5</sup>), both of which did not enter into force until 1977. All three together build the so-called “International Human Rights Charter”. As of October 11, 2007, 157 nations have ratified the Social Pact and 160 nations, the Civil Pact.

From the treaties of this International Human Rights Charter arose other pacts and agreements which contributed to the concretization of the comprehensive human rights concept. Among these, beside others, are the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, as well as the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Social and Civil Pacts, as well as the four above mentioned treaties have a control or monitoring body - the so-called treaty bodies. These are UN committees whose task it is to check on the progress in the implementation of these international treaties.

*Human rights instrument*

Within the framework of the Human Rights Charter, three generations of human rights are differentiated: the classical civil and political freedom and participatory rights; the economic, social and cultural rights; as well as the collective rights which were, above all, brought in by the governments in the “South”. These include the right to development, peace, and a healthy environment. In the UN Declaration on the Right to Development, the human being is emphasized as the central subject of development. Following the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna in 1993, these collective human rights have achieved greater importance. The right to development was acknowledged and the holistic concept of human rights was stressed. Now as before, however, there is controversy as to whether collective rights should be conceded to ethnic groups.

Beside the international human rights treaties, there are the human rights standards of the International Labor Organization<sup>6</sup>, as well as instruments supposed to guarantee the protection of human rights at a regional level. So, in Europe, the European Convention for Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms applies. The region of America has a comprehensive human rights system. In 1969, the American Convention on Human Rights was adopted (the “Pact of San José”), which went into effect in 1978. Joining the Pact provides the possibility for individual and group complaints. Further control mechanisms are the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights

*Control mechanisms for the human rights*

<sup>3</sup> Quotations from: The Holy Bible – New International Version. International Bible Society. London Sydney Auckland Toronto 1987.

<sup>4</sup> ICESCR: e.g. right to work, right to trade unions, right to social securities, right to health, right to education, right to participation in cultural life, etc.

<sup>5</sup> ICCPR: e.g. right to life, the prohibition of torture, the prohibition of slavery, the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion, freedom of gathering, etc.

<sup>6</sup> e.g. die ILO Convention 138 on the Minimum Age and the ILO Convention 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour

and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights in San José. In addition, there is the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights (Banjul Charter), which took effect in 1986. Asia and the Middle East lack regional human rights mechanisms. Only declarations exist, which, however, are not legally binding.

**Rights holders und Duty bearers**

*The implementation of the human rights is the duty of each nation*

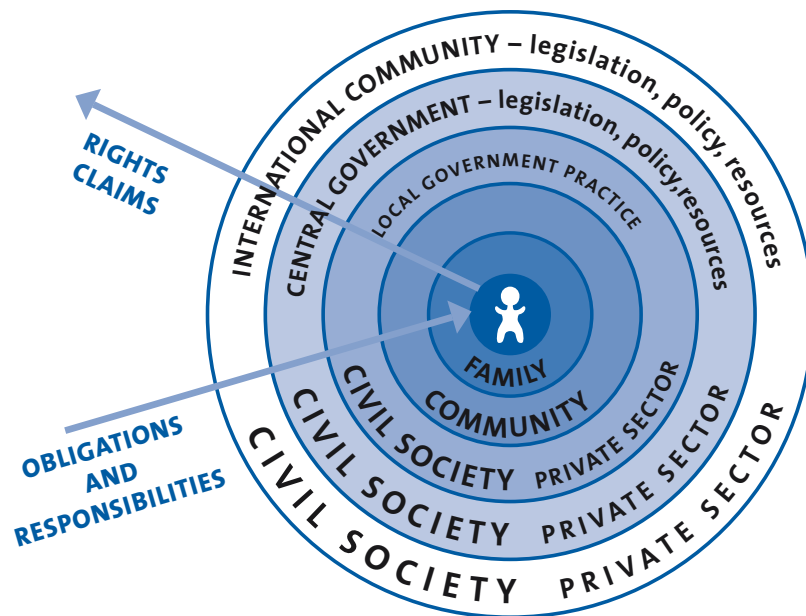
Holders of human rights (*rights holders*) are individual persons, even when a human rights convention focuses on special groups of persons, such as the rights of the child.

Each nation which has ratified the Human Rights Charter bears the main responsibility for its protection and implementation (duty bearers). Accordingly, these States must create the conditions so that human rights can be realized. Three levels of duty are indicated:

- “States may not interfere directly or indirectly with the enjoyment of the right (*respect*);
- States must take measures that prevent third parties from interfering with the enjoyment of the right, for example, companies of the private economy (*protect*);
- States must take long and short-term measures towards the full realisation of the right(*fulfill*)<sup>7</sup>.”

In reality, governments and their executive organs (police, military, and the like) are often themselves responsible for human rights violations. Moreover, in numerous nations in the South it is true that the infrastructure for the effective protection of human rights simply doesn’t exist. In past years, there has been increased discussion about how international financial institutions (for example, the World Bank) and business enterprises can be held accountable for complying with human rights. Meanwhile, there are a series of businesses which have pledged themselves to compliance, but only on a voluntary basis and not on a legally binding basis.

Beside the States, in the context of the rights of the child, different persons and groups in the living environment of children, such as parents, families, village communities, development organizations, are responsible as Duty bearers for the implementation of child rights.



**Human Rights — Human Duties**

*Duty of every individual: respect and uphold human rights*

“Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible.” It is so stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Art. 29, par. 1). Even when here the duties of every individual to his or her community are explicitly mentioned, claiming one’s human rights is not legally bound to the fulfilment of duties by individual persons. However, it must be noted that the duty to respect and uphold human rights refers not only to the State as an institution, but also to the society and therefore to every individual.

<sup>7</sup> Hamm, Brigitte: Menschenrechte (2003)

## The Convention on the Rights of the Child

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) has a long history of development which began on an international level with the *Geneva Declaration* of 1924. In the course of the Convention's evolutionary process, which the Polish government initiated in 1979, the meaningfulness of a convention for children has been questioned again and again. In spite of this, the intention of developing a convention for the protection of children was never abandoned.

On November 20, 1989, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child which entered into force on September 2, 1990 (in Germany, on April 5, 1992). In the meantime it has become one of the most widely accepted international treaties: 193 nations have ratified the Convention. Somalia and the USA are not among these nations. Many nations, however, have submitted reservations as provided for in Article 51 of the CRC. What is unusual about the CRC is that it encompasses extensive personal, political, economic, social, and cultural rights, and that children who have not completed their 18th year of life (Art. 1) are expressly defined as rights bearers. This means that children are not objects of education, but rather from the beginning, persons with a claim to individuality, freedom of development, and self-determination.

*The Convention  
on the Rights of  
the Child*

The CRC contains 54 articles which can be divided into three groups: protection rights, provision rights, and participation rights. They are called the "three Ps".

- The rights to be protected from violence, abuse and neglect, the right to know one's ancestry, and the right to life (*protection rights*) – e.g. Art. 6, 8, 19, 32, 33, 34, etc.
- The right to be provided with the best possible health and social security, right to education and leisure (*provision rights*) – e.g. Art. 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, etc.;
- Rights emphasizing the child's status as a subject, such as the right to contribute, the right to be heard, and the right to participate in all issues affecting the child (*participation rights*) – e.g. Art. 12, 13.

### Project example Bolivia: Participation of All Children in the Centro Comunitario Chilimarca (90021)

In its community center which arose out of a day-care center project, the Fundación La Paz, motivated by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, has developed a model for a participatory leadership style which is being consistently maintained. Children and young people participate, for example, in decisions about the project budget.

This means that all income and expenditures are openly explained to the parents, the representatives of neighborhood organizations, as well as the children and young people, and all decisions on investments are made jointly by adults and children. Dealing with the project's income and expenditures is also a topic in the continuing education and remedial teaching. It is important that, on the one hand, the rights of the children are implemented; on the other hand, however, that the children also learn step by step to take responsibility and make important decisions.

Additionally, the children and young people have collaborated intensively on the architectural plans for a new project building, submitting sketches, offering suggestions, and cooperating on the development of a concept for the center's use.

Above all these stands the basic principle of Article 3 of the CRC, that for the best interest of the child, "in all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities, or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration." This article contains the basic principle which is normative for the entire Convention. It makes clear that the child is acknowledged as a subject according to international law. Through Article 3, all of the other articles of the Convention are made concrete<sup>8</sup>.

Further fundamental principles of the CRC are:

- the basic rights to life, survival and development (Art. 6)
- the principle of non-discrimination (Art. 2)
- general measures of implementation of the child rights (Art. 4)
- the right of the child to be heard (Art. 12).

<sup>7</sup> Lorz, Alexander: Der Vorrang des Kindeswohls nach Art. 3 der UN-Kinderrechtskonvention in der deutschen Rechtsordnung (2003)

*Country reports  
as a monitoring  
tool*

The States which have ratified the CRC undertake to present a report on the status of the implementation of the child rights two years after their ratification of the CRC and afterwards every five years. The guidelines for these reports are found in Article 44 of the CRC. The States are required to report on all relevant legislative, judiciary, and executive aspects – with the inclusion of statistical data. The reports should contain details regarding the problems/challenges and progress made, as well as priorities in implementing the CRC and specific goals for the future. The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child reviews the country reports and offers the governments recommendations in the form of Concluding Observations. Beyond this, the Committee can also recommend to the UN General Assembly and to the UN Secretary-General to publish reports on particular subjects regarding child rights.

*Individual  
complaints  
procedure*

A procedure for an individual complaint as, for example, the ones anchored in the Convention on the Rights of Women and in the Civil Pact, is not yet provided for as a complementary control element for the reporting system within the framework of the CRC. In such a process, an individual can appeal to an independent UN committee and present a complaint regarding a violation of his or her human rights. Before taking this step, however, the individual must have exhausted the legal remedies in his or her own country. If the victim of human rights abuse is not able to do this by him or herself, a complaint can be filed in his or her name. After examining the complaint, the relevant UN committee can call upon the State to redress the damage done. For instance, this can involve a release from prison, indemnification, annulment of a court judgement, or changing administrative practices. Although these decisions are not legally binding, they have a great effect because they are made public and because of the committees' authority: No State wishes to be looked upon by the world community as a violator of human rights.

For a number of years, Kindernothilfe has been campaigning for the establishment of such an individual complaint procedure and has developed a draft of an Optional Protocol. By now the 18 members of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child are supporting this issue. In January 2008, an international campaign was launched for the elaboration of a Third Optional Protocol with an individual complaint procedure.

*Children as  
subjects taking  
responsibility  
for their actions*

The CRC has obtained more importance than was generally expected and has contributed to a change in awareness: Children are no longer perceived as mere objects of socialization, but rather as subjects taking responsibility for their own actions within their living environment. It is the task and commitment of Kindernothilfe to continue to strengthen this trend. The significance and binding character of the CRC has been further strengthened through the Optional Protocols (Child Soldiers and Child Prostitution) to the CRC, other treaties relevant to the rights of the child (ILO Convention, African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child) and declarations (World Summit for Children 2002). Thus it has also become an indispensable frame-work for the work of Kindernothilfe and its partners.

**Poverty and Human Rights**

A close causal connection exists between poverty and human rights. Extreme poverty is a human rights violation. Poor people are denied access to resources such as education, work, land, etc. In the Human Development Report 2000, with the title "Human Rights and Human Development", human poverty is described as "... a major obstacle to attaining a decent standard of living and realizing human rights"<sup>9</sup>. Poverty is often both the cause and the consequence of human rights violations.

**Stand-Up Against Poverty - A Worldwide Campaign Against Poverty**  
Since 2006, Kindernothilfe and numerous foreign partners abroad have taken part in a world-wide day of action against poverty. In 2007, 43.7 million people in 127 countries took a stand, either physically or symbolically, against poverty and injustice, and for the UN Millennium Goals. This action is important in order to remind the States of the promises to which they committed themselves with the Millennium Declaration and its agreed-upon goals through 2015.

*Human rights  
in the context  
of development  
cooperation*

Since the beginning of the 1990's, agencies involved in development cooperation have been discussing a human rights-based approach, which acknowledges the relationship between poverty reduction and human rights. The Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development explicitly follows a human rights approach, the concrete goals of which are stated in the Development Policy Action Plan for Human Rights. The human rights orientation results, among others, from the Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which are central to German development policy. The implementation of the eight Millennium Development Goals is closely linked to the realization of human rights, since many of the MDGs are directly aimed at the realization of certain rights. At least four of these goals explicitly refer to the situation of children, for example, the establishment of universal elementary school education by the year 2015.

<sup>9</sup> United Nations Development Programme (Hrsg.): Human Development Report 2000 - Human Rights and Human Development (2000)

The Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development commissioned the German Development Institute to conduct a study on this aspect of the subject. It was published in October 2003 under the title “Human Rights Approach for German Development Cooperation”<sup>10</sup>. In this study the human rights approach is defined as follows:

“... a conceptual approach which is normatively based on prevailing international human rights standards and principles and which seeks to make operational and implement these in a given political field (here: Development Cooperation). ‘Standards’ refer the norms and regulations contained in the international human rights treaties and conventions, to whose compliance and implementation the States have voluntarily committed themselves. The ‘principles’ of human rights approaches include the principles of participation, responsibility, non-discrimination, empowerment, and the direct referral to human rights standards. ...”

The following points are mentioned as dimensions of a human rights approach in the VENRO publication “How can the poor gain their rights?”:

- “The starting point is the human rights conventions which are of binding character in accordance with international law;
- Observance of the principle of non-discrimination and a special focus on vulnerable groups such as women, children, and minorities;
- Observance of the principles of participation and empowerment;
- The rule of law, efficiency, and participation as indication of good governance;
- A focus on political, economic, social, and cultural core rights.”<sup>11</sup>

The human rights approach brings about a change of perspective. Situations of poverty are no longer perceived simply from the perspective of human needs and development deficits: Needy people are no longer supplicants, but rather holders of rights which are claimable. From this perspective people should be strengthened to stand up for social justice and decent living standards as their rights. To contrast a needs-based approach with a rights-based approach is fruitless.

*A change of perspective*

## 1.6 The Child Rights Approach

The child rights approach is a human rights approach aimed at the special target group of children. The rights of children are defined in the CRC. Through a child rights approach, children are acknowledged as holders of such rights, and the fulfilment of these rights as the goal of development-focused project work in the comprehensive sense. Therefore every development-policy intervention must ensure the realization of the children’s legal claims to their rights. In this connection, child participation is an important element, but should not be exclusively equated with the realization of child rights. Participation is simply an indispensable instrument also for the actual realization of other rights of the child.

*Children are right holders*

Kindernothilfe defines the child rights approach as follows:

Children are independent personalities and bearers of human rights.

Children participate actively in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of child-related activities and projects in order to claim the realization of their protection, provision, and participation rights, defined in the CRC.

*Kindernothilfe’s definition of the child rights approach*

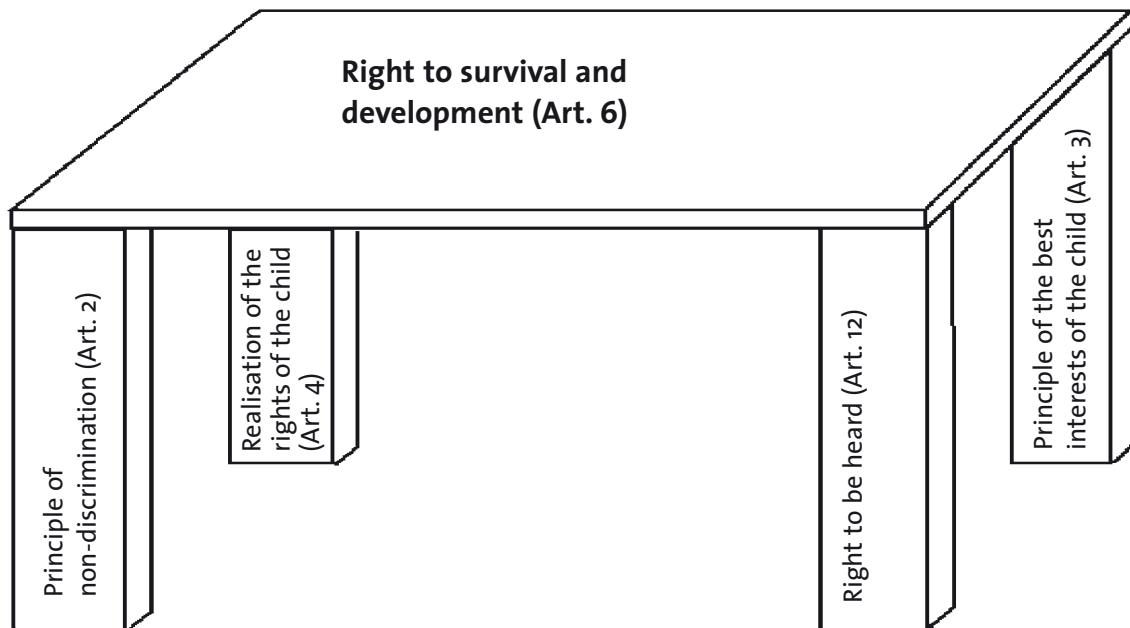
The child rights approach is characterized by the following essential elements:

- It presupposes a change of perspective. That means that children are perceived not only as needy, but rather as rights holders.
- Children are subjects; they have a right to be acknowledged as independent personalities.
- In the child rights approach, child rights are both the goal and the instrument for the development of children. The realization of child rights can be achieved through *mainstreaming* – anchoring the approach as a cross-cutting task in all areas of project and program work.
- At the project level, the child rights approach means, the consistent and consequent participation of children in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of development projects – that is, in all phases of the project cycle, in compliance with the principles of the CRC in order to achieve that the protection, provision and participation rights be granted and implemented in an appropriate way.
- It is an integral approach which links the “three Ps” (*protection, provision, participation*).

<sup>10</sup> Lingnau, Hildegard: Menschenrechtsansatz für die deutsche EZ (2003)

<sup>11</sup> VENRO (Ed.): How can the poor gain their rights? (2004)

The so called table leg test shows how the basic principles of the CRC work together. According to this test the CRC can only be implemented effectively, when all the four basic principles (symbolized by the table legs) are considered. Here, the child's basic right to survival and personal development is given the highest priority.



**Child rights approach: The so called „Table-Leg-Test“**

from: McMenamin B., Fitzgerald P.: A Handbook to Build Safer Organisations for Children, ECPAT Australia, 2001

*Empowering children to exercise their rights*

The change of perspective mentioned above, which makes children into rights holders, involves the public, political, moral, and legal responsibility and duty to put these rights into effect. Symptoms should not simply be reacted to, but instead, they should prompt us to focus on the primary reasons why child rights are withheld or violated. In this connection, it is absolutely necessary that children have the right to participate actively.

So, within the framework of the child rights approach, children are acknowledged as *rights holders*, who have a legal claim against persons and/or institutions (*duty bearers*). This means that projects which have children as their target group, should appropriately support and lead them, on the one hand, in exercising and demanding their rights, and on the other hand, must educate the duty bearers and require appropriate action from them.

The purpose of such a strategy is to raise the participation level of children as a target group within their society, and through organized representation to see to it that their interests are put into effect within the political system. In this sense, empowerment, along with political co-determination, are complementary and lead to social and economic improvement of the living situation of those affected. This form of holistic “strengthening” is based on the exercise of co-determination rights as guaranteed in the CRC, and which form one of the foundational pillars of the child rights approach.

Yet, the child rights approach should not be seen as abstract or exclusive; instead it opens a new and more far-reaching perspective in program work. Additional activities which in a narrower sense form the basis for the rights of the child (participation, information, awareness-building, legal representation, and legal enforcement), extend throughout the children’s living environment in the projects, and can be seen in the context of our work up to the present. In this context an essential role is played by the families, the social environment, the communities, and the church congregations. This finds expression in Article 5 of the CRC: States Parties shall respect the responsibilities, rights, and duties of parents, or where applicable, the members of the extended family or community, as provided for by local custom, legal guardians, or other persons legally responsible for the child, to provide, in a manner consistent with the evolving capacities of the child, appropriate direction and guidance in the exercise by the child of the rights recognized in the present convention.”

For the effective implementation of the child rights approach, it is of great significance that adults also know their rights and learn to claim them.

*Adults must also know their rights*

Within the framework of the child rights approach, children are perceived as self-confident and responsible, independent personalities so that they can take on an active role in the development of their society. In order to reach this goal, children must be given the freedom to develop and determine their abilities, creativity, their ability to participate, leadership, etc. In their particular local or national context, children can question and strive to change traditionally predetermined rules. This kind of change has a sustainable character, since it has been introduced and carried out by the person affected.

#### Project example Zambia: Chikuni Agroforestry Radio Schools Project (61391)

In the rural community of Chikuni in Zambia, the Chikuni Mission runs a radio school for children in cooperation with the Zambian Ministry of Education.

In these villages Kindernothilfe supplements the radio school program through courses in sustainable agriculture and forestry. The children learn how to use the endangered forests in the surrounding area in harmony with nature, to protect them through reforestation, and how they can grow especially profitable fruits and vegetables. The radio schools also have gardens, tree nurseries, and irrigation systems which are managed by children's committees led by the girls and boys themselves with the help of project employees. In this way, they determine what they will plant, how the harvest will be used, and distribute profits from sales among themselves.

They also control the keys to the pumps in the gardens. Some of the children's committees have decided that residents of their communities may only use the wells either when they work in the school garden or pay a small sum of money. This provides an additional source of income which is used for garden cultivation.

The girls and boys carry their newly-gained knowledge with them back to their families and communities. Because of the multiplying effect, the nutritional situation in many villages has measurably improved.

The basic pre-condition in this regard is to take the children's point of view seriously and to make it central to the project interests. Only through their own articulation can their existing needs be recognized and met, and the observance of their rights be guaranteed. In this connection, it is important to develop an educational theory of the rights of the child through which adults and children are enabled to develop openness and trust so that the various needs can be responded to respectfully and attentively, and be translated into goals for action.

The CRC is an internationally valid agreement on human rights which, as of January 2008, has been accepted by 193 nations as a framework of commonly shared values and common basis for action. This consensus is significant for the work of both Kindernothilfe and its partners. Not only we, but also our partners can refer to the Convention when petitioning governments, since political action must be measured by the CRC.

To summarize – the added value of the child rights approach can be summed up in the following points: The child rights approach

*The added value of the child rights approach*

- understands children and young people as independent personalities and encourages them to stand up and fight for their rights.
- helps to focus stronger on children and young people who are exposed to specific risks and whose rights are daily and systematically violated (children at risk);
- contributes to strengthening local organizations, communities, and groups, because the awareness of rights increases.
- is an essential step in moving from the immediate elimination of needs to sustainable assistance. Sustainability is achieved when children actively participate in the creation of just structures which will also endure in the future.
- is sustainable in a double sense because of its underlying principle of having children participate in all issues concerning them. Children are not only strengthened in their present situation, but also prepared for their role as adults. Thereby, the child rights approach also supports the democratization of a given country.

## 2 Aspects of Child Rights Work

*The rights of the child as a frame of orientation in project planning and execution*

### 2.1 Integration of the Child Rights Approach Into the Project Cycle

Principally, the child rights approach as a framework of orientation requires a consistent referral to the rights of the child stipulated in the CRC in all phases of the project cycle, especially in the analysis of the situation and problems, the definition of project aims and objectives, and the selection of the project strategy. Methodologically, this means that the orientation in the rights of the child must be integrated into the concept of project cycle management, which ought to be the basis of planning, implementation, and evaluation of projects of all of Kindernothilfe's partners.

In project planning and execution, the recognition of children as holders of their own rights demands a change in perspective in the relationship between adults and children. Instead of the subordination of children to adults, a relationship must be formed on the basis of equal basic rights, in which both parties involved are aware of their dignity and rights. This change of perspective, however, must not consequently eliminate the difference between adults and children. Children need spaces in which participation and responsibility in structuring projects can be practiced. Adults – this means parents and project personnel - have the binding responsibility “to provide, in a manner consistent with the evolving capacities of the child, appropriate direction and guidance in the exercise by the child of (its) rights.” (Art. 5 CRC)

#### 2.1.1 Project Planning

As a result from the recognition of children as rights holders children can claim their rights from persons and/or institutions (*duty bearers*). When dealing with how rights can be claimed from the duty bearers, we must look beyond the individual project to the institutional structures and competences on a local, regional, and national level. In Article 3 of the CRC its character as binding international law is clear, and that means, it is of direct applicability. In order to judge the status of the CRC's implementation, the responsible government agencies or semi-government institutions, as well as businesses and interest groups, must be integrated into the analysis of the situation and of the participants.

*The participation of children as a basic principle of project planning*

The participation of children – as Kindernothilfe's primary target group – is always important here as a basic principle of project planning. Only in this way it can be ensured that the children's opinions and viewpoints will be adequately taken into consideration, and also that subjects which are taboo, can be brought to discussion, for example, violence, maltreatment, and abuse.

#### Project example Chile: Rights for Peruvian Refugee Children (92047)

In the tenement-slums of Chile's capital, Santiago, Peruvian poverty-refugees live without valid visas or working papers, and are, therefore, constantly threatened with deportation. Primarily the women among them earn their livelihood as low-paid household employees, without any rights or social benefits. The children of many of these refugees have no legal possibility of attending school or receiving medical care.

The aim of this project is to demand the vested rights of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child for these girls and boys from the Chilean government, and at the same time, it also seeks to strengthen the self-confidence of the affected children and young people, to bring them out of the shadows, to organize possibilities for school attendance, and simultaneously, to sensitize the public to the situation of this racially discriminated group of people.

Important components of the project concept are also a highly intensive cooperation by the children and young people in actions and activities through which they become protagonists for their own cause. The project application was developed by the immigrant self-help organization *Colectivo sin Fronteras* together with the intensive participation of the children and young people. Meanwhile, these children and young people possess organizational structures which constitute a self-confident counterpart to the adult committees.

An analysis of social structures should take into account that the situation must be analyzed from the point of view of those affected. The participation of children in this analysis is an instrument, and at the same time, a goal. It is equally important that children and young people learn how to analyze their own situation, and what causes lie behind the grievances they have suffered. In the end, such learning-effects contribute to the social and political empowerment of those affected.

The analysis of “stakeholders” or participants is necessary to understand the complex pattern of relationships between *duty bearers* and *rights holders*. Who is, and to what degree, responsible for certain grievances, and who possibly profits from them? What effect do political decisions have at various levels? Poor parents alone, for example, cannot be held responsible for not being able to pay school fees for their children, or for not being able to afford them sufficient nutrition. On the one hand, teachers are *duty bearers* in their relation towards school children, and on the other hand, they are *rights holders* over against the educational system, for example, with a right to appropriate salaries.

When it is known who is responsible for violating a particular right, the next question is, why does it happen? The assumption is that *duty bearers* lack either knowledge, means, or the political will to take up their responsibility, or that they are trying to capitalize on the situation. A further assumption is that the *rights holders* lack the information and capacities to claim their rights. These assumptions must be examined so that appropriate project strategies can be developed.

### 2.1.2 Project Aims and Objectives and Activities

The CRC presents a vision of a just world for children, and its definition of the rights of the child is the standard for this vision accepted across the world. The individual articles of the CRC yield development goals for the realization of human rights whose priorities depend on the respective local context, for example:

*Development goals derive from the rights of the child*

- The right to life (Art. 6) and to appropriate living conditions (Art. 27) translate into the development goals of ensuring nutrition, raising income and the parents’ purchasing power, etc.
- The right to education (Art. 28) is concretized by ensuring elementary education for all children, material support to prevent school-dropouts, pedagogical support, ongoing education for teachers, etc.
- The right to health (Art. 24) requires health education, training of health personnel, supplying water, a sanitary infrastructure, setting up health services, etc.
- Protection from violence, abuse, neglect, and exploitation (Art. 19, 34, 36) is made concrete by prevention, through emergency help in acute abuse situations, rehabilitation, help in dealing with trauma, reintegration of street children, etc.

Along with support oriented in the specific needs and help towards self-help for target groups, child rights-oriented projects must direct their efforts to achieving sustainable, structural changes from *duty bearers* which benefit the children, young people, and their families, among others, through:

- Child rights groups and child rights movements
- Building of self-help groups and the communication of their interests at local or regional levels
- Campaigns and lobbying work with the participation of children
- Participation in actions of the civil society and/or NGO networks, which work politically for child rights
- Building networks
- Legal information and assistance

#### Project example Pakistan: Street Children; Child rights Committees Help Street Children to Return to Their Families (2580AC)

Street children are supported in the context of a project in Peshawar. Here, they receive protection and, above all, training. The project tries to help children to return to their families who have run away from home because of violence in their schools. In this process, a nationwide network of child rights committees attends to the returnees in their families and especially in their school environment. These committees inform parents and teachers about the rights of children and make sure that the reason for “running away” doesn’t occur again. Also, young people are members of the committees.

*Children themselves establish priorities*

In establishing project aims and activities, it is for the children themselves to decide, considering the background of the respective situation in the partner country, which child rights abuses have priority, and what short-term actions are necessary to prevent acute rights violations, and which are suitable over the longer term to improve the situation. In doing so, a balance between protection, provision, and participation rights should be observed.

Numerous partners already have integrated elements of the child rights approach into their projects, and because of the large variety of projects and the fact that this concept first and foremost offers a framework of orientation, at this point we recommend the Appendix with its several exemplary descriptions of project components.

### 2.1.3 Monitoring and Evaluation

*Fundamental principles for effective monitoring*

As in project planning, monitoring and evaluation must be done in a participatory manner so that the perceptions and judgements of children and young people come into play and in this way a realistic picture is formed. This, however, can only function under the condition that participation is already taken into account during the planning phase.

In project planning as well as in the monitoring and evaluation process, it is important to enhance the role of children. Normally this happens when the accompanying NGO makes all participants aware of this principle from the very beginning and before the respective intervention.

Regularly and over a longer time period, monitoring should determine the quality and effectiveness of the activities implemented, in order to ensure that the project is moving toward the agreed-upon aims. Within the framework of the child rights approach, monitoring and evaluation contribute to anchoring the rights of the child more strongly in the awareness of the participants and to demanding accountability from the duty bearers.

The fundamental principles for effective monitoring must be established in the project planning phase. In this connection, it is important to pay attention to the definition of intermediate objectives and the formulation of effectiveness indicators.

Monitoring and evaluation also affect Kindernothilfe itself, and with it, the implementation of the child rights approach through us.

### 2.1.4 Checking of Project Proposals

In checking project proposals, at least the following questions must be sufficiently answered on the basis of the information offered:

#### Child Rights as Cross-Cutting Task in Project Work

- How can it be ensured that the best interest of the child enjoys the highest priority in all activities which affect children? (e.g. budget, qualification of co-workers, mission/vision/goals of the partner organization)
- In what way and to what extent do children participate in the project planning, implementation, and evaluation?
- How can it be ensured that children within the target group are not being discriminated: because of their race, skin colour, sex, language, religion, political or other views, national, ethnic, or social background, financial condition, disability, birth, or any other status of the child, his/her parents or his/her guardian?

#### The Rights of the Child as Project Objective

- To what unrealized right does the project relate?
- What are the basic reasons for the violations of this right?
- Who is primarily responsible for the protection of these rights? Who shares this responsibility?
- Which project strategies should improve the situation?
- Which project activities take place with rights-holders and duty-bearers?
- Which activities in the area of lobbying and advocacy exist?
- In how far did the project contribute to improving the situation of children?
- How is sustainability ensured in the implementation of child rights?

## 2.2 Advocacy Work

Kindernothilfe's advocacy work serves to influence decisions which deal with the economic, social, and political structures of development. Consequently, advocacy work focuses on enforcing the rights of the child through lobbying work on different levels with target groups in an international, regional, and national context. In particular,

*Advocacy work focused on enforcing the rights of the child*

it targets political decision-making processes in governments, parliaments, or UN organizations, as well as *Bretton-Woods* Institutions. Campaigning, which as a rule is accomplished in alliances or networks, is aimed at the general public, civil society, the media, etc.

This is why networking of advocacy efforts in the international and national framework and possibly even up to the project level, as well as a corresponding “South-South exchange” of partners, needs to be considered as a great challenge for the future.

Among the instruments of advocacy work are: lobbying discussions, expert discussions, expert conferences, letter campaigns, campaigns, and events drawing public attention. Prerequisite to this is a solid understanding of the topic and a careful analysis of the political and societal decision-making structures, in order to be able to work in a focused and successful fashion.

Possibly the most important actor on the international level in the area of the child rights work is the Committee on the Rights of the Child. This UN committee is the responsible body in charge of monitoring the implementation of the CRC and of the two Optional Protocols by the States. In the respective reporting system, an active role is provided for NGOs which is often used for compiling “shadow” or additional reports. The work the committee practices further shows that this type of reports is not only acknowledged, but also included in the respective recommendations to the States concerned, and that, as NGO representatives, even children receive invitations to working sessions in the run-up to planned government hearings.

*The UN  
Committee on  
the Rights of  
the Child*

Since the beginning of 2004, Kindernothilfe holds a consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations. This status allows us to take part in international conferences and to submit written reports at ECOSOC meetings and its related commissions and committees.

The CRC is directed primarily towards States. In this sense the respective government, the police, and national legal, educational, and health systems of our partners’ countries can be seen as duty bearers. The experience and know-how of some of these actors can be directly used to move the implementation of child rights forward. Other actors must first be won over through awareness-building, training, ongoing education, etc., in order for them to make a contribution to implementation. Among these are: ministries and agencies at all government levels, national human rights offices, ombudsmen, non-governmental organizations and networks as well as (mass) media.

Also at the project level, the inclusion of advocacy work contributes to a more effective implementation of the project. Children (e.g. movements of working children) make an important contribution here. However, a framework must be created for this purpose. It is the goal of advocacy work at project level, to sensitize the public, local stakeholders, government employees, (teachers, policemen, judges), parents, etc. regarding the rights of children, in order to be able to win them as actors for the implementation of the rights of children.

*Sensitization of  
the public*

## 3 Work Perspectives of the Child Rights Approach in Kindernothilfe

For Kindernothilfe, the introduction of the child rights approach means a cross-cutting task which should be carried out in all areas of its work.

The child rights approach combines protection, provision, and participation rights. Participation rights include the right of children to child-appropriate and age-appropriate participation. They should be heard concerning all processes which directly affect them, and, within the framework of their possibilities, be allowed to co-determine subsequent activities. As a childcare organization, the inclusion of participation rights of our primary target group in project planning and implementation is a logical further development of our program work up to this point. The type of participation aimed at, i.e. the participation of the target group in the sense of influencing project planning and execution, is no longer virgin territory for Kindernothilfe, since the start of the programmatic expansion towards community development projects (CDP), but rather a component of every project planning in this area.

*The rights of  
the child as a  
cross-cutting  
task*

The positive experiences which Kindernothilfe and its partners have gathered - for example, in implementing the self-help group approach (SHG) - show what real participation in the development process and empowerment can produce. This also is a slow process in which lies, however, the power to bring about change. The added value achieved here can also be transferred to the child rights approach.

#### Project example Pakistan: Children's Self-Help Groups; Children Take Part in the Project's Decision-Making Process (25201)

The community project in Sindh works with severely marginalized minorities who, in large measure, live in serfdom. The land on which these people live belongs to feudal landlords, who also determine all the other living conditions of these communities. In addition to the self-help concept, in which the mothers are key, the organization LSRDA has also begun self-help groups for children. There are already initial successes: For example, young people have opened a grocery delivery service in one village which they financed with a loan. In this village the landowner had prohibited the opening of a shop. Children's self-help groups take part above all in decision-making processes concerned with schools in the villages. Here the children's self-help groups are directly involved.

*Concept is the starting point of a learning process*

The concept presented here should not have a statistical character, but be seen as the starting point of a critical learning process. Within the framework of open learning processes, continually new and unexpected challenges will arise. To confront these challenges constructively will be a complex task for Kindernothilfe in the coming years.

In addition to the concept, annual implementation plans for the child rights approach will be developed with concrete actions and activities for Kindernothilfe's work in Germany and abroad.

### 3.1 Sponsorship and Child rights

Kindernothilfe uses primarily the sponsorship form of assistance to offer holistic help for disadvantaged young people in the One World in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and Eastern Europe. For Kindernothilfe, taking on a sponsorship means entering into a voluntary commitment, long-term but limited in time, which involves a concrete responsibility for helping one or more young people to overcome poverty.

Within the framework of the child rights approach, children are acknowledged as independent personalities and human rights holders. Children learn to co-determine development and thereby become ambassadors of hope for their immediate living environment. The awareness of their responsibility that they, themselves, can make a contribution to improving their life situation is strengthened. In addition, the young people experience that they can take an active role and develop self-confidence and skills, which will shape their lives in the future.

*Sponsorships make participation and solidarity possible*

Sponsorships are, in this respect, a good opportunity to motivate people in German-speaking countries in a lasting way in the fight against poverty, and to develop an effectiveness which makes children strong for their lives. At the same time, sponsorships are not merely a marketing instrument, but rather an opportunity for communication which, in the view of the anonymity of global processes, makes participation and solidarity possible. Through a sponsorship the sponsor becomes active for children's issues, for child rights. In the sense of achieving equity between the generations, sponsorship can be seen as a public and community task which makes a self-determined future for children possible. In this relationship children take over the lead role as ambassadors of their social situation and as subjects of their own development. Simultaneously, the time limitation of sponsorship and program reduces dependencies. The sponsors can take interest in the development of the program and recognize its meaning, as they accompany the children. They learn that, through their contributions, children and young people are accompanied until they come of age and take responsibility for themselves, and that at the same time a community takes over responsibility and stands up for the implementation of child rights and human rights.

Sponsorship can be described as taking on a duty, which, on the one hand, contributes to publicizing child rights among other donors, since the sponsor can be seen as an ambassador for child rights. On the other hand, taking on responsibility through a sponsorship makes possible the sustainable realization of child rights in the reality of concrete projects

### 3.2 The Work in Germany

Kindernothilfe's strategic orientation toward the child rights approach must also have an effect on the work in Germany. It must be its perspective to win donors over to this intention. Their motivation to help to relieve children's sufferings must continue to be taken seriously. At the same time, it should be more strongly emphasized in communications with donors that children and their families have a right to a living situation in dignity, and that children are responsible personalities featuring in their own development and/or that, through the support of the project work, they should be helped to do so. The theme of child rights or the child rights approach is complex. The challenge is to make clear that the implementation of the CRC has a concrete effect on the life situation of children. The more this is achieved, the more credible the reporting of this aspect of the work abroad is going to be in Germany. The change of perspective from object to subject, which is connected with the child rights approach, is to enjoy an intensified attention in the entire communication of Kindernothilfe. That relates to the presentation of children in pictures and text.

*Winning donors over to the child rights approach*

In order to reach the desired objective of a stronger networking of advocacy activities between Kindernothilfe and its partners, there are already some concrete measures, for example, the Advocacy Mail composed semi-annually in English, Spanish, and Portuguese, which is sent to our partners. Still the challenge also remains, within the framework of the child rights approach, to improve or develop new instruments and, where possible, to involve children.

As Kindernothilfe tries to anchor the child rights approach in the project work, it pursues the aim to build a bridge between the partners and its established work area of advocacy<sup>12</sup>, where the rights of children have long been a focal point and cross-cutting task in order to achieve synergy effects between the work in Germany and the work abroad.

### 3.3 Program Work Abroad

It is a special challenge for Kindernothilfe as well as for the local project staff of our partners that children, from the very beginning, take on appropriate responsibility for the shaping of their environment.

The implementation of the concept contains the conscious openness to a child-friendly and human-rights-oriented debate with our partners. Kindernothilfe and its partners must have a clear understanding that the human rights work leads to taking a stand in their respective societies and, thereby, possibly opening themselves to being attacked. We shouldn't shrink from that since a basic Christian position includes positioning oneself on the side of the poor and voiceless.

*Defending the rights of the child means taking a stand*

While in a democratic state of law like the Federal Republic of Germany, no government repression is to be feared when unequivocal public pronouncements are made, this can be quite different on the side of our partners. In a large number of partner countries there are tendencies toward authoritarian regimes with a poorly formed culture of legal and civil conflicts; or even so-called failing states, in which the monopoly of power is no longer in the hands of the government.

The role of our existing and potentially new partners in their respective countries changes in a basic way, when the child rights approach is introduced. When the child rights approach is implemented consistently, it is the task of the NGOs to initiate structural changes and to contribute to the realization of the rights guaranteed by the state. In that way their role changes from the previous observer of national developments to an active participant, since in particular, they drive forward the direct involvement of people, who up to now have not been heard by the society. Their position then develops from the former "caretaker" of those benefitting from the project to the "enabler" of the target groups, so that these become aware of their existing rights and claim resources on various levels. This also presupposed a changed understanding of the role of the target group.

*The role of Kindernothilfe's partners*

Although the CRC represents existing international law, which was ratified by the governments of the partner countries, the state law, in fact, is not enforceable on all levels. Often for people at the local level, common law or religious law prevails, which, for example, is represented by the local chiefs and which is recognized by all. So cultural, political, and social particularities always have to be taken into account in each project context.

In order to promote such a new orientation in the selfunderstanding of our partners, conceptual and methodological clarity is required. This means for Kindernothilfe that resources have to be made available in order to guarantee

<sup>12</sup> The framework, the aims and objectives and the instruments of the advocacy work are included in Kindernothilfe's Partner Manual as well as a survey of networks in which Kindernothilfe cooperates.

capacity building for most partners. When identifying new partners in the area of the child rights approach, it has to be noted with equal care, whether they are convinced of this holistic approach and are capable of initiating corresponding project concepts, since in its contents the work in the project is all-encompassing. Beside the work with the target groups in the narrow sense, an accompanying conscientization in the affected population must be achieved. At the same time enlightenment of and possible cooperation with national government offices must be considered by our partners as a new field of action.

### *Cooperation in networks*

The partners must be open to enter into cooperation with new partners in their own countries. Experience shows that in an ever more complex world, problems cannot be solved by single organizations. Cooperation in networks between partners, limited in duration, is the appropriate approach for effective problem solving. In national and international networks, actors work together with their different comparative advantages in ever new campaigns and constellations, focused on results. Different from the past, today non-government advocacy and lobbying organizations strive for cooperation with government institutions such as the police and judicial system, in order to be able to solve certain problem situations successfully.

Many partners have a need for ongoing education and training in the subject of child rights and their realization. Kindernothilfe will support them through workshops and training sessions carried out by local resource persons, in order to guarantee the country-specific relation to child rights.

Already now several partners have adapted the child rights approach and Kindernothilfe supports some projects as well, which were conceptualized on the basis of the child rights approach. The increased acceptance of new projects in this area will widen the horizon of experience within Kindernothilfe.

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Photo: Barbara Dümmler  
 Presentation of a Kindernothilfe-partner at the World Social Forum in Nairobi 2007.

## Examples for Work Based on the Child Rights Approach

### 1. Advocacy Work

#### Start of an International Campaign for an Individual Complaint Procedure to the CRC

On January 15, 2008 an international campaign was started for an individual complaint procedure, for which Kindernothilfe has been campaigning since 2000. Its purpose is to improve the instruments for monitoring the implementation of the CRC and to strengthen the involvement of children. They should have the possibility of lodging complaints with a UN organ when their rights are being violated. Intensive lobbying efforts are necessary in order to achieve this. A list of petitions has been installed on the website: [www.crin.org](http://www.crin.org). To date (as of: 20/02/2008), 308 organizations worldwide have spoken out for a further Optional Protocol to the CRC.

In the last few years, Kindernothilfe has placed this subject again and again on the agenda, for example, of the German parliament, the Bundestag, of the 2002 World Summit for Children, in the formulation of the National Action Plan for A World Fit for Children 2005, in lobbying discussions with parliamentarians, as well as with the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child of the UN Human Rights Council.

Since 2007, The Cradle, a Kenyan Partner of Kindernothilfe, has been taking leadership in the area of advocacy on this subject. Through a conference in Nairobi, NGOs and government representatives were familiarized with the subject. In the meantime,

a permanent working group has formed in Nairobi. It would be desirable for more of Kindernothilfe's partners to take part in the campaign.

Kindernothilfe is a member of a Core Group of international organizations<sup>13</sup>, which especially at the UN level, seek to push ahead lobbying work. The goal is, by 2009, to have a UN working group which will begin with the elaboration of an Optional Protocol.

#### Studies Regarding Poverty Reduction Strategies and the Rights of the Child

In 2004 and 2005, Kindernothilfe published two studies on the subjects of poverty reduction and the rights of the child. They were centered on an examination of Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP) and concrete field studies in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Zambia. The result of these studies was that most of the PRSPs presented by African countries failed to deal with the situation of children and young people in detail. Therefore Kindernothilfe has raised the demand, in both technical discussions and lobby talks: Whoever wants to reduce poverty in a sustainable way, must focus on children. The studies were met with interest from the World Bank and the ILO.

#### Shadow Report "Child Soldiers"

In 2007, together with terre des hommes, Kindernothilfe published a shadow report in the context of the Germany's initial report to the UN on children in armed conflict. At the end of 2006, Germany had to report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child about the implementation of the Optional Protocol to the CRC. Kindernothilfe and "terre des homes" presented the shadow report to the committee in Geneva and held technical discussions with the German Institute for Human Rights in Berlin with representatives from various government ministries. The shadow report highlighted considerable deficits. For example, the subject of refugee children who come to Germany from war-afflicted areas and have been abused as child soldiers was not broached in the government's report. Through lobby and advocacy work, the subject could not only be placed on the UN committee's agenda, but a governmental delegation also had to travel to Geneva for public hearings.

#### Cooperation in the National Coalition and in the "Forum Menschenrechte" [National Human Rights Forum]

Since 1997 Kindernothilfe has been a member of the National Coalition for the Implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in Germany (NC). National Coalitions in more than 100 countries have assumed the task of making the rights of the child known. Moreover, they compile shadow reports, within the reporting framework, for the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, advocate and lobby for child rights, and host technical discussions and conferences. Kindernothilfe is represented in the NC's coordination group. Also, in the context of its membership in the "Human Rights Forum", and especially through its cooperation in the Working Group Child rights, Kindernothilfe is committed to the implementation of the CRC.

<sup>13</sup> Members of this working group are: World Vision International, Save the Children UK, Save the Children Sweden, Save the Children Norway, The Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children, CRIN, The World Against Torture, SOS-Kinderdorf International, European Network of Ombudspersons for Children (ENOC)

## 2. Project Work

### Latin America

#### Peru: Supporting Working Children Through IFEJANT (88005)

On the basis of years of experience in its commitment to working children, IFEJANT, together with a self-help organization of working children long established in Peru, has developed a convincing concept. Its goal is to strengthen the social, cultural, and economic rights of children and young people who have to earn their own living and assist their families as well. By means of a very successful micro-credit program, working children and young people from Lima are assisted so they can structure their sales activities more successfully, earn more, and therefore must spend fewer hours working, and can take advantage of their right to attend school.

At the same time, it is a priority of this project to protect working children from abuse, and work which is exploitive, demeaning, and hazardous to their health, as well as to accompany and advise them in building their own union and cooperative organizations. A commission of their peers elected by the children and young people decides about the allocation of micro-credits. Street social workers act in this process only as advisors. Small groups of children and young people act jointly as guarantors for the repayment of the loans. The rules for access to this support have been defined by the children and young people themselves.

From the very first contact on, both the delegates and elected representatives of the children and young people are seated at the negotiating table and take part in all of the discussions between Kindernothilfe and IFEJANT. They have decisively influenced the structure of the project application, know in detail all of the numbers and agreements, accompany the implementation, and evaluate the results.

By means of this project it has been possible to change the view of the public in Lima regarding working children and young people. The successes of this approach have contributed to an overall improvement of the legal situation of the working children and young people, and have also made possible a change of attitude among the teachers in participating schools.

#### Brazil: INESC Fights for the Implementation of Child Rights (9580 AB)

Brazil is a very progressive country as far as the legal implications of laws relating to children and young people are concerned. In 1989, it ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and which as of today, 193 nations have ratified. Brazil also belongs to the 117 countries which, in addition, have adopted a national action plan for children and young people. A further indicator that child rights are supposed to be consistently implemented at a national level has been the revision of national laws, and the adoption of a statute on children and young people (Estatuto da Crianca e do Adolescente - ECA) which, since 1990, has been valid for children (aged up to 12) and



*The children being supported through IFEJANT founded a trade union.*

adolescents (aged up to 18). A further positive, and, especially in comparison to the other signatory states, unusual step was that henceforth in Brazil public expenditures for children and young people must be listed separately. This budget position bears the name Orcamento da Crianca e do Adolescente (OCA). As a whole, the country's legislative steps in implementing the CRC have had an exemplary character at international level. Because of Brazil's leadership position in the region, this process has had an influence on legislation in Ecuador, Bolivia, Peru, and Nicaragua, where special laws for children and young people have also been passed.

Unfortunately however, these implementations at the legislative level stand in contrast to reports of the situation of children and young people in Brazil. All in all, according to the estimates of the UN Development Program (UNDP), nine out of 34 million children and young people aged between 15 and 24 live in extreme poverty. One of the consequences of this extremely high level of poverty among youths, is the mortality rate in this age group, which, compared on a worldwide level, is the third highest. Since the majority of youths pertaining to this age group have fewer than four years of school experience, 1.8 million have never visited a school, and 2 million youths are illiterate, the consequences of the lack of education are not surprising. The unemployment rate among the age group of 18 to 24 year olds stands at almost 30 percent in Brazil.

The Instituto Nacional de Estudos Socioeconomicos (INESC) is an NGO with its headquarters in Brasilia (Distrito Federal), which, through workshops on political education, goes right to the roots of the set of problems mentioned above. The overriding aim of the NGO is to strengthen representative democracy as well as to guarantee the validity and implementation of human rights. Since 1992, INESC has worked in particular for the interests of children and young people (effective implemen-



Photo: Dietmar Röhler

*Woman-Self-help-groups improve the living conditions of entire villages.*

tation of ECA and help shape/control the OCA). Children and young people are in effect directly strengthened and supported so they can learn to organize and articulate their ideas.

The above is a course of action which starts where the governmental social policy has failed up to this point: The program of the Brazilian federal government, *Agente Jovem*, had as its goal to support the group of 15-17 year olds through the involvement of young stakeholders. Young people were supposed to be encouraged to make an active contribution to their society and thereby to create prerequisites and a better understanding for planning the future. A study by the Federal Audit Office showed that through this program only 1.5 percent of the target group was reached, that the protagonists were poorly qualified, were not supported and/or were often used for other activities (office work, cleaning, etc.).

In the course of the project initiated by INESC, teenage stakeholders were enabled (and simultaneously structures for the target group were formed) to independently give critical attention to the social budgets (especially the OCA). After absolving qualifying workshops which the project responsables provided to train project employees on the subject matter of social control of the social budget, 50 young stakeholders from five satellite cities in the Distrito Federal were chosen. With political education and the allocation of a fund, they were enabled to organize and clearly express themselves, and to represent the interests of children and young people at the political level. Through the systematic selection of satellite cities, the expansion of the program, and continuous follow-up, development, strengthening, and networking of the local organizations initiated by the young people, the sustainability of the work is ensured. So in the long run the living conditions and future prospects for young people from lower income groups of the Distrito Federal will be significantly improved.

## Africa

### Kenya: The CRADLE (65201)

The child Rights Advisory and Legal Centre, The CRADLE, has worked in Kenya since 1997. The work of The CRADLE ranges from releasing children from situations of abuse, to psychological counseling for children and their families, and even to legal representation before the courts. Legal work has been taken on by a nationwide network of jurists who volunteer to work for The CRADLE. The children are prepared for court sessions so that they can appear with greater confidence. Through intensive media work and workshops, this is also connected with awareness-raising among the Kenyan public on the implementation of child rights. But, the strengthening of children to defend themselves against the violation of their rights also goes hand in hand with this – for example, through workshops in schools to inform the girls and boys about their rights. By means of suggestion boxes in the schools, children can communicate directly with The CRADLE, since in Kenyan schools corporal punishment and the abuse of girls by their teachers are widespread.

Another focal point is lobby and advocacy work to prepare the legal framework conditions. Thus, in 2001 The CRADLE was a significant contributor to the introduction of a child protection law, Kenya's Children's Bill. Among other things, this law should guarantee free basic education, access to healthcare, and prohibits genital mutilation of girls under 17 years of age. This law also introduced explicit penalties for abuse. Of great importance is also work in sex education and conscientization in order to make the subject of child rights more widely known in the country. In this way, they can attract attention and create awareness on the subject. Many newspaper articles and radio interviews ensure an effective coverage in the media which should also act as a deterrent. Child abuse should no longer be considered as a minor offense which isn't even reported to the authorities or is merely sanctioned with a minimal penalty. In connection with public prosecution, it is also important to train the police and court employees. By now, the Kenyan public is more keenly aware of this problem. The success is demonstrated by the fact that increasingly cases of abuse are brought to The CRADLE for legal assistance.

### Kenya: St. John's Community Centre (65291)

The organization St. John's Community Centre works to strengthen the rights of children primarily in Pumwani, a slum area in Nairobi. Their work for child rights is concentrated in four areas: educating volunteers on the subject of child rights, a children's parliament, children's clubs, and awareness-raising. Volunteers are trained to be able to actively prevent the violation of child rights, or when cases of abuse become known, to be able to intervene. At local counselling centers, volunteers act as contact persons to whom cases of child maltreatment and abuse can be reported. Less serious cases are dealt with by volunteers, and the children and their families receive appropriate counseling. In 2006, 22 cases became known, 10 of which could be successfully handled. Serious cases are passed on to specialized child rights organizations such as THE CRADLE.

Important topics for the volunteer's work are: awareness-raising on the subject of parental responsibility, and sensitizing people in key positions, such as teachers or local government authorities.

Students at the non-formal school of St. John's Community Centre elect a children's parliament. In weekly sessions they deal with all the topics which are relevant to them. Until now, they have achieved the improvement of hygiene and punctuality at the school.

In order to strengthen the children in their understanding of their rights, children's clubs have been established. By now, there are six children's clubs in Pumwani. The girls and boys coordinate their meetings themselves, discuss their issues, and record the results and their progress.

Through public campaigns, adults and children in Pumwani are informed about child rights. Each month, events especially for young people are held on the subject of child rights. Based on its experience, the St. John's Community Centre also trains other organizations regarding children's participation.

#### Swaziland: Self-Help Groups (74901)

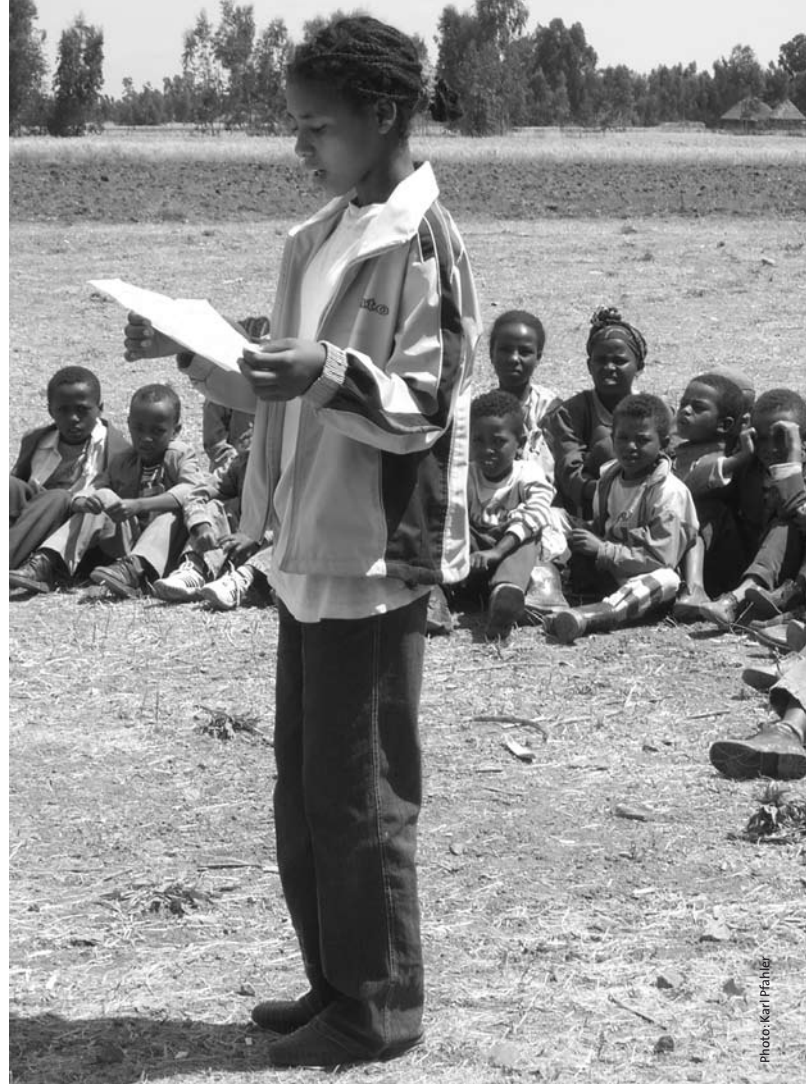
In cooperation with eight local non-governmental organizations, Kindernothilfe has instituted an approach using self-help groups in Swaziland. By using this instrument suitable for sustainable poverty reduction, the poorest of the poor, mostly women, are strengthened socially, economically, and politically so that they and their children can live in their society with dignity.

Some 15 to 20 members organize themselves in a group and meet weekly. These group meetings facilitate a personal exchange, encourage mutual support, and serve as a platform for training and workshops. Through exchange of experiences and discussion the members learn that they are not left alone with their problems; instead they learn to seek solutions together, and thereby to improve the situation of their families, their children, and their surroundings.

Each week, members of the group bring with them the agreed-upon amount of money for savings which is then paid in and registered in their savings books. The predominant feeling that the members, who all live in poverty, have no money, is transformed into an understanding that in the group much can be achieved and their self-esteem is strengthened. From the money saved in the group, micro-credits are granted to each member in turn, and with which the group members can realize their business plans. These loans can also be used to manage a tight financial situation in order to pay for food, school fees, or medical care for the children.

The children of the group members benefit in this way from the positive changes in their households. They experience how their mothers grow in self-confidence, work through problems, and earn their own income. Thanks to the improved financial situation they can attend school, and when necessary, receive medical care.

Based on their positive experiences, some mothers from the self-help groups and even their children, themselves, have suggested that the girls and boys also form groups. The children's



*Children demand children's parliaments.*

groups are an important instrument for organizing young people and enabling them to get actively involved in the development of their surroundings. As intended by the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the children get to know their rights at their weekly meetings, and have a platform from which they can claim them. Here they can learn or carry out projects which serve the local community. At the weekly meetings the children also have time for informal discussions, for playing, and for just having fun.

Furthermore, some children's groups have made it their aim to follow the example of the adults and each week to save a certain amount, and then to distribute the money among themselves as micro-credits. From these the girls and boys buy sweets or school materials to sell to other students. From this income the loan can be repaid and the profit can be used for personal needs. Some children report with pride that they now buy their own notebooks and pencils and thereby relieve their parents' household budget, or that they could fulfill a wish they had.

#### Ethiopia: Children Demand the Establishment of a Children's Parliament (60951)

On September 15, 2007, children from the city of Jimma and environs demonstrated for the establishment of a children's parliament. The children's parliament can contribute to putting an end to the violation of child rights, and make possible the



Photo: Dietmar Koller

*A member of the Children's Parliament in Virudhunagar District.*

implementation of international conventions for the protection of child rights.

The children demanded permission to establish the children's parliament because it could support positive developments toward peace and democracy, and in the new Ethiopian millennium, help to ensure that no more violations of child rights must be lamented. (In Ethiopia the new millennium was celebrated on September 11, 2007 AD - the Ethiopian calendar is based on the Julian calendar and runs seven years and eight months behind our Gregorian calendar.)

Furthermore, the over 200 demonstrators demanded from the NGOs a more sustainable approach to stop the violation of the rights of children. They made clear that rape, early marriage of children, child labor, and life as a street child are among the main problems that the children of Jimma and its surrounding area face.

A children's parliament should be established in order to contribute to preventing these problems for children, and to ensure education, healthcare and disease prevention, as well as social services for children. The children put pressure on all the inhabitants to support their concerns.

The head of the "Families for Children's Project" from Kindernothilfe's partner Facilitator for Change (FCE), Abdulkarim

Abagero, promised that he and his organization would take action to see that the children's concerns could be realized.

### South Africa: CREATE (7246)

For over 15 years, the partner CREATE has been carrying out two-year training courses for "community-based rehabilitation" (CBR) workers, this means for specialized workers engaged in the community-based support of people with disabilities (PWDs). This training, consisting of theory and practical sections, encompasses a broad variety of units from the areas of health, education, income-generating skills, integration, and observance of rights.

The South African government does not support this type of vocational training and CREATE is confronted with a strong academic lobby which seeks, first and foremost, the implementation of completed programs for people with disabilities and not their participation.

To reinforce the meaning of the CBR approach in contact with children and adults with disabilities, CREATE published a study in October 2007 in which arguments were put forward which are oriented toward the needs and dignity of every individual with a disability. The study was participatory in its conception, with the involvement of disabled people of all age groups by means of questionnaires, interviews and personal visits.

Under reference to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities adopted in 2006, signed by South Africa in early 2007 and ratified in late 2007, CREATE hopes, that a renewed push for the resumption of the CBR training courses more strongly oriented in the rights of PWDs will be possible. Kindernothilfe wants to support this effort.

## Asia

### India: Projects Against Child Labor: Children's Parliaments (21680)

RCPDS has begun a community project in ten villages of the Virudhunagar District in which primarily Dalits live. The parents of the approximately 200 children are dependent on seasonal agricultural work. Their sons and daughters often drop out of their schools in order to join their parents at work in the fields or go to work in a factory. In the meantime, women's self-help groups have been formed and/or expanded, which have already adopted measures – for example, setting up savings clubs which grant loans – and have analyzed problems for which government services can be claimed. Already joint efforts have been made to establish "Balwadis" (kindergartens) in the villages. Village development committees are attending to income-generating measures for the population and the improvement of the infrastructure.

Some improvements have already been achieved, for example, the opening of health centers, vaccination campaigns, and



*Traumatized girls in PREDA Rehabilitation Centre during a theatre-therapy.*

nutritional assistance from the government. Children’s parliaments and children’s forums are to be supported through the setting up of children’s committees and the pursuit of lobbying activities. Workshops are held in the villages on weekends, in which the children learn how a village is administrated, and how each individual can participate. They organize elections and the “candidates” go from door to door and explain their election program. The children who are elected then make up the parliament. Each of them pays a small sum which serves as common capital for their projects. For example, the children have determined, by presenting their complaint before the village council, that unreliable teachers, who did not always appear on time must now begin their class work punctually. A total of 186 children from five different countries took part in a child rights workshop in Bangalore, which was organized, among others, by RCPDS. At a press conference they explained journalists their ideas about child rights and what they expected from adults and politicians

#### **The Philippines: PREDA Rehabilitation Center and Advocacy Work Against Child Abuse (29701)**

Presently, 54 sexually abused girls have found shelter in the protection and therapy center of PREDA. Here they learn how to be a child again. The girls go to school and with experienced therapists work through the horrible experiences they have had in the red-light districts or through incest in the family. Legal proceedings against the perpetrators also serve to show the girls that they have rights – for example, the right to physical integrity which was violated by the perpetrator – and that this breach of the law will be punished. This is a part of the therapy.

Furthermore, PREDA conducts large-scale training and seminars on children’s and women’s rights in schools and communities.

The seminars are intended for village and community leaders, mayors, police, and parents. Co-workers use hand-puppet dramas, cartoon films, and diagrams to make the subject matter accessible. Beside this, they distribute brochures and business cards with the PREDA telephone hotline number. This has made it possible for PREDA to get quickly involved and a series of child-abuse cases to be uncovered. Additionally, a radio program about women’s and child rights is being produced. Continuing education and information seminars are offered for employees working with youths and in childcare.

#### **The Philippines: Support for Street Children; Advocacy Work for the Target Groups (29801)**

Street children who come mainly from the slums of Greater Manila have the chance in the Stairways facility to go through a one-to-two-year rehabilitation and support program. There, through diverse measures their physical, emotional, and mental development is encouraged, and traumas are overcome. With instruction which follows an unusual teaching plan, the children have the possibility of receiving an accredited diploma and have access to formal vocational training. A possible return of the children to their families or placement with a foster family is intended.

Public information and education are a further important element of Stairways’ work. The co-workers inform the children through films and in workshops and seminars about sexual abuse, drug abuse, and about their rights. Three animated films on the subject of sexual abuse have been produced at Stairways, and are used nationally as well as internationally as part of a sex education campaign. Related workshops for children, parents, and teachers are obligatory. Also, local units of government, police and other relevant social stakeholders are reached in this way.

## Masthead

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