

**Washington Network on Children and Armed Conflict**  
*Rights-Based Approaches to Programming*  
Meeting Notes, March 31st, 2005

The March meeting of the Washington Network on Children in Armed Conflict convened focused on rights-based approaches to program planning for children affected by armed conflict. The dialogue addressed the meaning of a rights-based approach and how it can be done practically on the ground.

The conversation was framed by *Mima Perisic*, of the Adolescent Participation and Development Unit at UNICEF, *Christine Knudsen* of Save the Children, and *John Williamson* of the Displaced Children and Orphans Fund/USAID. Questions included: How can we use a rights-based approach as a tool for development programming and dealing with children in armed conflicts? How should we understand a rights-based approach in relation to a needs based approach? How can we best articulate a rights-based approach to different donors? What are the programming implications of understanding children as rights-holders?

**Discussion Points:**

*What is a right-based approach to programming for children in armed conflict?*

- Human rights and child rights principles should be used as tools for development programming. These principles include:
  - Universality, non-discrimination, accountability, the right to survival and development, the indivisibility and interdependence of human rights, and the best interest and respect for the voice (participation) of children.
- Human rights principles should be standards that help guide the development programs.
  - Human rights standards – such as the CRC – serve as a tool that can be used to hold people accountable at all levels, from governments to families.
- Mapping out the human rights situation helps in the analysis stage to inform efficient programming.
- A rights based-approach cannot address right-holders as passive beneficiaries, but rather as active participants in the protection of their own rights.
- Right-based programming leads to the preventions of patterns of abuse.

*What are some programming implications to a rights-based approach?*

- Asset based approaches draw people into the process, so that they can articulate what they need; pull out local leadership so that beneficiaries can control the protection of their own right.
- We should not forget the cultural systems in which these programs must operate.
- There should be analysis of both the process and output in rights-based programming, this would allow us to better educate donors that the process is as important as the outcomes.

*What are some of the issues in Advocating and articulating a rights-based approach to donors?*

- Is the framing of some programming discourse actually targeted more towards donors rather than the actual program population?
- It's necessary to frame the situation differently according to each donor and their priorities.
- There is a need to depolarize the dialogue so that needs and rights are not set into a false dichotomy.
- Grants with short limited funding periods often result in disintegrating programs when they expire.

*How should we understand the relationship between rights-based programming and needs-based programming?*

- There is a false dichotomy between needs-based and rights-based approaches.
- On the ground need-based and rights-based programming merge.
- It becomes a significant challenge to prioritize interventions when rights are all universal – however a human rights-based framework enables practitioners to assess situations on the ground and design interventions accordingly.

## **Resources and Program Sharing**

### **Upcoming Events:**

**"The Value of Human Rights to Development"** with Mary Robinson.

*When:* Tuesday April 5, 2005 – 7:15 to 9:00 PM

*Location:* Kay Spiritual Life Center, American University

*Contact:* Kindly RSVP to Amanda Rives, [idpsis@american.edu](mailto:idpsis@american.edu)

In Celebration of the 30th Anniversary of the International Development Program, and in honor of Millidge Walker Professor Emeritus and Outstanding and Caring Supporter of the International Development Program, The School of International Service, and American University, we would like to invite you to a public lecture by Mary Robinson, Former President of Ireland & UN Commissioner for Human Rights, Current President of Oxfam International and Executive Director of the Ethical Globalization Initiative.

**Film Premiere and Panel Discussion: Female Child Soldiers in the Congo, a film by WITNESS and AJEDI-Ka. Sponsored by: Citizens for Global Solutions.**

*When:* Wednesday April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2005 6:00 PM to 8:30 PM

*Where:* Woodrow Wilson Center, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Center. 1300 Pennsylvania Ave NW. Washington DC

*Contact:* RSVP to [events@globalsolutions.org](mailto:events@globalsolutions.org)

### Announcements:

The U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of International Labor Affairs (ILAB) is pleased to announce the publication of a *Notice of Intent to Solicit Cooperative Agreement Applications* in the *Federal Register* on March 15, 2005.

The Notice outlines ILAB's plans to program \$17 million of its FY 2005 Child Labor Education Initiative appropriations, and lists the countries in which it intends to fund projects. The solicitations for cooperative agreement application will be published in the *Federal Register*, and all awards will be made before September 30, 2005. The full notice can be seen through this link:

<http://www.dol.gov/ilab/grants/main.htm>

For further information on this Notice, please feel free to contact Lisa Harvey at [harvey.lisa@dol.gov](mailto:harvey.lisa@dol.gov).

### Resources:

UNICEF – Rights-based Approach to Programme Planning:

<http://www.unicef.org/rightsresults/>

Resources from [Save the Children Sweden Online Bookstore](#):

- **Children's Rights Turning Principles into Practice** (Save The Children).  
<http://www1.rb.se/Shop/Products/Product.aspx?ItemId=1190>
- **Promoting Rights-Based Approach**  
<http://www1.rb.se/Shop/Products/Product.aspx?ItemId=1188>
- **Children's Rights Programming: a handbook on child rights programming.** (The International Save the Children Alliance)  
<http://www1.rb.se/Shop/Products/Product.aspx?ItemId=1092>
- **An Introduction to Child Rights Programming: Concept and Application.** (Save the Children UK)  
<http://www1.rb.se/Shop/Products/Product.aspx?ItemId=1295>
- **Promoting and Protecting the Rights of the Child: How to approach the UN rapporteurs and independent experts**  
<http://www1.rb.se/Shop/Products/Product.aspx?ItemId=433>

Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict. *Caught in the Middle: Mounting Violations Against Children in Nepal's Armed Conflict*. <http://www.watchlist.org/reports/nepal.php>