

Fight4YourRight: The making of a youth-friendly version of the CRC's Concluding Observations for and with the children



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It is often argued that children also have an important role to play in the reporting process before the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and in monitoring the implementation of, and helping improving children's rights in their countries. Children do indeed – and very importantly – have the right to participation, enshrined in article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. It is however up to the State (and the adults) to provide a proper framework for participation, and to guarantee meaningful and effective participation. An important – but not the only – precondition towards such participation is that children be properly and clearly informed about their rights, and about matters and decisions that affect them.

Going back to the context of the CRC reporting process, the Concluding Observations of the Committee can in a certain way be considered the end and the beginning of each reporting cycle. They are a kind of “report card” of what the State has done well, and of what the State can do (much) better. They further contain country-specific recommendations about what a certain State needs to do to make children's rights real. As such, they can be an important benchmark in assessing progress made (or not).

But let's be real...the Concluding Observations are not necessarily drafted in accessible language... In empowering children to engage with these Observations, States are thus encouraged to translate the Concluding Observations into the national language(s) and to produce simplified and child-friendly versions of them. This is exactly the goal of the “Fight4YourRight” project, initiated by the Belgian National Commission on the Rights of the Child.

How? By engaging the youth and ensuring a broad supportive and participative steering group. By making sure the youth is listened to. By taking their recommendations into account as to the “translation” of the Concluding Observations as well as to its support materials. By respecting their views. By acknowledging that meaningful participation has limits and by not bestowing responsibilities upon them that are not really theirs to take up. And by all pushing our boundaries a bit, being open to continuous change, thinking out of the box and experimenting with new communication technologies.

Want to know more? Tune in on Wednesday 22nd September for getting to know our co-creation process and its results!