

The Convention on the Rights of the Child

Helpful Definitions

Convention on the Rights of the Child = CRC. An international human rights agreement specifically designed for children. It not only provides protection and provision for basic needs, but it also provides children the opportunity to participate in decisions that affect them.

Convention- A convention can also be called a treaty. It is an international agreement on something. When countries agree to a convention, it is a law in that country. As when countries sign a peace treaty after a war, countries signing a convention on human rights or anything else are internationally expected to follow the agreements in it. **(Convention = Treaty)**

Human Rights- Are basic rights and freedoms that all people are entitled to enjoy no matter race, religion, nationality, gender, culture, sexuality, or any other identification they may be discriminated against because of. They include civil and political rights, like the right to vote, as well as economic, social, and cultural rights like the right to work and to an education. They are protected by big organizations like the United Nations and by laws in individual countries.

NGO- Non-Governmental Organization. These are organizations like Plan who work on a wide variety of things. Many work on human rights in specific countries or globally. Because the organizations are not a part of the government of the country they work in they have more freedom. They can do their own work, they can question or protest against a government, and do advocacy work. An NGO can also work with governments depending on what will help most.

Ratify- To formally approve, agree, or accept. After the United Nations wrote the CRC countries could voluntarily choose to join it. Formally approving (ratifying) the Convention *makes it a law that the country must follow.*

- For some countries just signing it was enough to join the Convention. For the United States and some other countries, signing the document is not enough to make it official. That must be followed by Congress voting on the document. Once the Senate and the House of Representatives have approved it, the US will have ratified (or formally accepted) the CRC.

United Nations- The United Nations, or the UN, is an international organization set up after World War II where countries could meet in an attempt to maintain peace. The UN has expanded a lot in 64 years, and today the UN has offices in New York City, Geneva Switzerland, Vienna Austria, and Nairobi Kenya. 192 Countries are members of the UN. They work on a wide range of issues and projects from peacekeeping missions, humanitarian assistance like the World Food Program, and climate change, to the political work that needs to be done to keep it all going, like unifying international mail policies and monitoring human rights. The UN is not however, a government, it only has as much power as the governments who belong to it give it. It is a large and complex organization that can be slow moving and under funded, but they also manage to accomplish a lot of good work. Check out www.un.org for more details on the many aspects of the UN.