



The child rights approach in theory and practice

at **Save the Children Germany e. V.**

Imprint

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1 INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVES

Human rights apply to all human beings, including children and young people¹. In addition, young people have their own specific rights: children's rights. These rights recognise their unique needs and circumstances, and apply without any restriction from birth until the age of 18. The state is primarily responsible for respecting, protecting and fulfilling children's rights. However, society also shares this responsibility and must actively support the implementation of these rights in everyday life.

As the world's largest independent child rights organisation, Save the Children has spent over 100 years tirelessly promoting the rights and wellbeing of children and young people, without ifs or buts. Children's rights lie at the core of our identity, reflecting a commitment that dates back to our founder, Eglantyne Jebb. In 1924, she became the first person to articulate children's rights, a milestone which later led to the adoption of the **United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child**.² Adopted in November 1989, the [Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) (CRC) has since been ratified by all states worldwide except the USA. It forms the fundamental legal basis for our work.

To uphold our commitment to realising children's rights, Save the Children applies a child rights approach. This approach informs our organisation's stance and our entire way of working. This publication describes what it means to take a child rights approach.³ It has three central objectives:

- It promotes a common understanding of the child rights approach within our organisation,
- It serves as a guide for employees on how to implement the approach in practice, and
- It makes the fundamentals of our child rights-based work evident in our external communications.

To place children's rights within the international human rights protection system, Chapter 2 examines the legal framework, and shows how the child rights approach emerged internationally. Chapter 3 describes the fundamentals and key components of Save the Children's child rights approach and explains how we implement it in our German office. Finally, Chapter 4 outlines our plans to further embed children's rights within our organisation.

¹ The United Nations uses specific terms to describe children and young people of different ages. The CRC defines children as individuals under the age of 18. In addition, individuals aged 15 to 24 are often referred to as young people. In this publication, we adopt these definitions, referring to individuals under the age of 18 as children and young people.

² You can read more about Eglantyne Jebb and our history here: [100 Years For Children | Save the Children International](#).

³ This publication is largely based on the "Child rights programming handbook. How to Apply Rights-Based Approaches to Programming" which was published by Save the Children Sweden in 2006.

2 CHILDREN'S RIGHTS ARE HUMAN RIGHTS

2.1 Children's rights in the international human rights protection system

Children and young people are human beings and therefore have the same human rights as everyone else. These rights are enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was adopted by the United Nations in 1948. They are based on four fundamental characteristics that also apply to children's rights. They are:

- **inalienable:** they cannot be taken away or given up,
- **egalitarian:** they are held equally by all people and exclude any form of discrimination,
- **indivisible:** they are interdependent and only achieve their full effect when considered together,
- **universal:** they apply everywhere in the world, including in crisis and conflict situations.

Although children and young people are protected by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights⁴, there are good reasons to guarantee them additional, specific rights. After all, children and young people make up around one third of the global population⁵ – in some countries, they represent almost half. However, they are often not perceived as independent rights-holders. Their concerns are frequently overlooked or overshadowed by the interests of adults. Yet childhood and adolescence are delicate developmental phases during which children and young people require significant protection and assistance, that lay the foundations for their future lives.⁶ To ensure their healthy development, they need a safe environment and caring adults who act in their best interests. Nevertheless, children and young people are among the groups most affected by human rights violations worldwide. These include violations that affect only them, such as child labour and child marriage.

As a result, children and young people are rightfully granted special protection under the international human rights protection system. The CRC adapts general human rights to the specific needs and realities of young people's lives. However, other international treaties are also of great importance.⁷ These include, for example, the Women's Rights Convention, which strengthens the rights of girls, and the Geneva Convention on Refugees, which establishes special protection standards for refugee children and young people. In addition, there are numerous binding regional-level laws in place to protect children's rights. These legal instruments complement the CRC by providing more detailed protection in specific areas or addressing groups of children and young people with special protection needs.

⁴ Although the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) is not legally binding, it is widely regarded as the world's most prominent and influential human rights document. Numerous international agreements are based on the UDHR, including the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). These treaties have enshrined the UDHR's core provisions into legislation and added further rights. Even today, the UDHR continues to serve as an important reference framework for states and organisations.

⁵ Cf. Deutsches Komitee für UNICEF: UNICEF: 2024 war eines der schlimmsten Jahre für Kinder in Konfliktsituationen, in: Deutsches Komitee für UNICEF e. V., 2024, [online] (accessed on 04.09.2025).

⁶ Cf. Schmahl, Stefanie: Kinderrechtskonvention mit Zusatzprotokollen, Handkommentar, 2nd ed., Baden-Baden: Nomos, in association with Dike Verlag Zürich/St. Gallen, 2017, Introduction, para. 1.

⁷ You can find an overview of the United Nations' core international human rights instruments on the Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner website: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/core-international-human-rights-instruments-and-their-monitoring-bodies>.

2.2 The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

On 20 November 1989, the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child established the world's first legally binding framework for protecting the rights of children and young people. The Convention sets out universal standards for civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, which are vital for raising children and young people in a safe, supportive and just environment.⁸ According to Article 1 of the CRC, the Convention applies to all individuals under the age of 18.⁹

At the heart of the Convention lies the recognition of children and young people as independent **rights-holders**. Conversely, states that have ratified the Convention are **duty-bearers**. By acceding to the Convention, states have committed to actively promote the well-being of all children and young people, and to respect, protect and fulfil their rights in governmental actions. This applies to all state bodies and includes, for instance, the development and implementation of laws, political strategies, administrative procedures and programmes designed to strengthen children's rights. **Public institutions** such as schools, nurseries, child and youth welfare services, and health services are also duty-bearers. They must act in accordance with children's rights and implement the provisions of the CRC within their respective areas of responsibility. Additionally, states must ensure that children and young people are protected from third parties, such as **private institutions**, including **companies** or individuals, interfering with their rights.¹⁰ Although not directly addressed in international treaties, third parties are nevertheless responsible for respecting children's rights and must comply with national laws and directives that protect them.¹¹ As primary caregivers, **parents and other carers** play a special role in ensuring the well-being of children and young people. The state must support and strengthen them in this capacity. Ultimately, the implementation of children's rights is primarily the responsibility of the state, but also of society as a whole.

The Convention is based on **four general principles**, which are set out in Articles 2, 3, 6 and 12. These articles represent both rights and principles. As principles, they must be considered when interpreting all other children's rights¹²:

- Article 2 provides comprehensive **protection against discrimination**,
- Article 3 enshrines **the principle of the best interests of the child**. According to this principle, the best interests of the child must be a primary consideration in all actions affecting children and young people.
- Article 6 establishes the right to **life, survival and development**,
- Article 12 grants children and young people the right to **participate** in all matters affecting them.

⁸ Cf. Schmahl, 2017, Introduction, para. 2 and 28.

⁹ If the legal age of majority in a state is below 18, the national age limit applies instead.

¹⁰ Cf. Schmahl, 2017, Introduction, para. 37, and Art. 4, para. 6 and United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child: General comment No. 16 on the obligations of the State concerning the impact of the business sector on the rights of the child, CRC/C/GC/16, Geneva: United Nations, 2013.

¹¹ One example is the Act on Corporate Due Diligence Obligations in Supply Chains (Lieferkettensorgfaltspflichtengesetz, LkSG). This aligns with the prohibition of the economic exploitation of children (Article 32 of the CRC) and the Conventions No. 138 and No. 182 of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), which protect children and young people from exploitative and hazardous work. The Act stipulates how German companies and their suppliers should contribute to the elimination of child labour in procurement countries by taking preventive and remedial measures.

¹² Cf. UN Committee on the Rights of the Child: General comment No. 5 General measures of implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (arts. 4, 42 and 44, para. 6), CRC/GC/2003/5, Geneva: United Nations, 2003, para. 12.

The CRC consists of 54 articles that guarantee children and young people comprehensive rights. These rights can be categorised into three main groups: **protection rights**, **provision rights** and **participation rights** – also known as the *Three P's*:¹³

Protection rights

- Right to protection from discrimination (Article 2)
- Right to protection of identity (Articles 7 and 8)
- Right to protection from separation from parents (Article 9)
- Right to protection from unlawful removal abroad (Article 11)
- Right to protection of privacy and honour (Article 16)
- Right to protection from harmful information in the media (Article 17)
- Right to protection from violence and neglect (Article 19)
- Right to protection for children without parental care (Article 20)
- Right to protection in adoption procedures and placement (Articles 21 and 25)
- Right to protection for refugee children and young people (Article 22)
- Right to protection of minority groups (Article 30)
- Right to protection from economic exploitation (Article 32)
- Right to protection from harmful substances (Article 33)
- Right to protection from sexualised violence and exploitation (Article 34)
- Right to protection from abduction and child trafficking (Article 35)
- Right to protection from other forms of exploitation (Article 36)
- Right to protection from torture, the death penalty and during detention (Article 37)
- Right to protection in armed conflicts (Article 38)
- Right to protection in penal law and criminal justice proceedings (Article 40)

Provision rights

- Right to the best interests of the child (Article 3)
- Right to life, survival and development (Article 6)
- Right to maintain contact with both parents, if separated (Article 9)
- Right to family reunification and contact with parents abroad (Article 10)
- Right to be raised by both parents (Article 18)
- Right to support for children and young people with disabilities (Article 23)
- Right to health and well-being (Article 24)
- Right to social and financial security (Article 26)
- Right to an adequate standard of living (Article 27)
- Right to education (Articles 28, 29)
- Right to leisure, play and recreation (Article 31)
- Right to recovery and reintegration (Article 39)

Participation rights

- Right to participation (Article 12)
- Right to freedom of expression and information (Article 13)
- Right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion (Article 14)
- Right to freedom of association and assembly (Article 15)
- Right to protection of privacy and honour (Article 16)
- Right to access child-friendly information and media (Article 17)

¹³ The aspects of protection, provision and participation often overlap within a single child's rights. For this reason, some articles can be assigned to more than one group of rights. Article 17, for instance, encompasses both protection from harmful information and the right to access child-friendly information and media. This enables children and young people to develop safe and informed opinions, and thus participate more effectively.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child has been complemented by three **Optional Protocols**¹⁴, which provide additional protection for children and young people. Two of these protocols were adopted in 2000: the first protocol addresses the involvement of children and young people in armed conflicts, while the second contains measures to protect against child trafficking, child prostitution and child pornography. The third Optional Protocol was introduced in 2011. It gives children and young people, or their representatives, the opportunity to submit a so-called individual complaint to the relevant United Nations body in the event of a rights violation.

The **United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child** is the central monitoring body responsible for overseeing the implementation of the Convention and its Optional Protocols. Consisting of independent international experts, the Committee monitors how State parties to the CRC implement its provisions.¹⁵ As part of the **state reporting process**, states must submit an initial report to the Committee within two years of ratifying the Convention, and subsequently every five years.¹⁶ Alongside these official state reports, the Committee also considers so-called **parallel reports** submitted by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), national human rights institutions, civil society organisations, and child- and youth-led organisations. Together, these reports provide a comprehensive picture of the state of children's rights in a particular country. Following each review, the Committee adopts **Concluding Observations** containing specific recommendations on how to better realise children's rights.¹⁷ The Committee also regularly publishes **General Comments**¹⁸ which provide more detailed explanations of individual articles of the Convention and outline specific measures that State parties should take to implement them.¹⁹ Some of these observations address issues not explicitly mentioned in the original Convention, such as the digital environment and climate change. These ensure the continued applicability and relevance of the CRC, by emphasising the need to protect and strengthen children's rights in an ever-changing social and global landscape. Finally, the Committee considers **complaints** made under the third Optional Protocol. Children and young people who feel that their rights have been violated by state action can submit a complaint to the Committee, either themselves or through a representative. For this procedure to be applicable, the relevant state must have acceded to the Protocol, and all domestic legal remedies must have been exhausted²⁰. The Committee then determines whether a violation of children's rights has occurred. Although the Committee's decisions are not legally enforceable, they often have a significant impact, placing political and public pressure on the State parties to be held accountable²¹.

With 196 State parties, the Convention on the Rights of the Child is the most widely ratified human rights agreement in the world. It has been ratified by all countries except the USA. Germany has acceded to both the Convention and the three Optional Protocols, thereby committing itself under international law to respect, protect and fulfil children's rights worldwide. This responsibility applies to all children and young people living in Germany, regardless of their asylum and residence status. It also extends to governmental action abroad, for example in the context of foreign and development policy.²²

¹⁴ Optional Protocols are international treaties that expand upon the provisions of an existing treaty. For an Optional Protocol to be valid in a given country, its government must ratify it separately.

¹⁵ Cf. Schmahl, 2017, Art. 43, para. 1.

¹⁶ Cf. *ibid.*, Art. 44/45, paras. 2-3.

¹⁷ Cf. *ibid.*, para. 18.

¹⁸ The General Comments of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child are available here: tbinternet.net.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/TBSearch.aspx?Lang=en.

¹⁹ Cf. Schmahl, 2017, Art. 44/45, para. 24.

²⁰ Cf. *ibid.*, Overview of the individual complaint procedure, paras. 1, 4, 8-9.

²¹ Cf. *ibid.*, Art. 44/45, paras. 8 and 27.

²² Cf. *ibid.*, Art. 2, para. 1.

2.3 From a human rights approach to a child rights approach

In the 1990s, the development strategies of international organisations such as the United Nations, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund came under increasing criticism. Their programmes primarily provided financial and technical support to low-income countries with high levels of debt. It was assumed that economic growth would automatically lead to improved living conditions and reduced poverty. In practice, however, the expected progress failed to materialise. In many places, poverty persisted, and social inequalities even worsened.²³ This demonstrated the need to focus more on political, social and cultural development processes, in addition to economic factors.

A decisive turning point came with the Vienna World Conference on Human Rights in 1993. The conference reaffirmed that sustainable development could only be achieved by respecting people's dignity, strengthening their rights and involving them in political, economic and social decision-making processes. The Vienna Declaration therefore emphasised the importance of democracy and participation as fundamental requirements for realising human rights and achieving equitable development.²⁴ Consequently, UN organisations, donor institutions and non-governmental organisations began to integrate human rights more effectively into development policy, primarily by adopting a **human rights approach**.

This approach addresses the root causes of rights violations. It tackles the discriminatory power structures that hinder progress and lead to the systematic discrimination and exclusion of entire population groups. Rather than just alleviating symptoms, the goal is to improve people's living conditions in the long term. The approach also brings with it a change of perspective, recognising the rights and obligations of everyone involved. People affected by disadvantage are no longer merely viewed as recipients of aid, but as individuals whose rights have been violated. They are thereby put in a stronger position to claim their rights. At the same time, duty-bearers are encouraged and supported to fulfil their responsibility for respecting, protecting and fulfilling these rights more effectively.²⁵

The adoption of the CRC also brought this change in perspective to the area of children's rights. For the first time, children and young people were recognised as individuals with their own needs, perspectives and rights, rather than just as young adults in need of protection.²⁶ Consequently, they are no longer entirely dependent on the "goodwill of adults"²⁷, but have the right to express their opinions on all matters affecting them. The near worldwide commitment to the Convention on the Rights of the Child demonstrates the broad international consensus that realising children's rights is a collective responsibility.²⁸

²³ Cf. Andersen, Uwe: Entwicklungspolitik seit den neunziger Jahren, in: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung (bpb), 09.06.2005, [online], (accessed on 14.03.2025).

²⁴ Cf. Deutsche Gesellschaft für die Vereinte Nationen e. V.: Wiener Erklärung und Aktionsprogramm, in: Gleiche Menschenrechte für alle, Dokumente zur Menschenrechtsweltkonferenz der Vereinten Nationen in Wien 1993, Bonn: Deutsche Gesellschaft für die Vereinte Nationen, 1994, para. 1 and part 1 para. 8, [online], (accessed on 12.07.2025).

²⁵ Cf. United Nations Sustainable Development Group: The Human Rights Based Approach to Development Cooperation: Towards a Common Understanding Among UN Agencies, in: United Nations Sustainable Development Group, 2003, p. 1, [online], (accessed on 04.07.2025).

²⁶ Cf. Schmahl, 2017, Introduction, paras. 2, 19 and 36.

²⁷ Ibid., para. 19. This is a translation of the original German quote.

²⁸ The United Nations' Agenda 2030, with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also provides an international framework for implementing human and children's rights. According to the principle of "leave no one behind", the SDGs should benefit all people.

3 SAVE THE CHILDREN'S CHILD RIGHTS APPROACH

3.1 The fundamentals of the child rights approach

The adoption of the CRC marked a new era in the relationship between politics, society, and children. In the late 1990s, based on the United Nations' human rights approach, Save the Children developed its own approach tailored specifically to children: the **Child Rights Programming Approach**²⁹. This approach has fundamentally changed the way Save the Children works and continues to shape our organisational culture³⁰, including in our German office. At its core lies the recognition of children and young people as individuals with their own rights. This implies that we not only focus on their **needs**, but also consistently prioritise their **rights** in everything we do. The standards and principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child provide us with a binding framework. Realising children's rights is therefore not only our ultimate goal but also the means by which we achieve it.

Comparison of the needs-based and rights-based approach³¹

Needs-based approach	Rights-based approach
Children and young people are seen as objects of charity.	Children and young people are recognised as holders of their own rights.
Helpers act voluntarily.	The state, institutions and society are obliged to act as duty-bearers.
Selected children and young people receive support.	All children and young people have the right to protection, provision and participation.
Needs are individual and situational, and can be prioritised.	Rights are universal, legally protected, and equal.
Children and young people are passive recipients of help.	Children and young people are empowered to claim and exercise their rights.
Children and young people can participate in support initiatives.	Children and young people have the right to participate in the planning, implementation and evaluation of matters affecting them.
Existing power structures remain unchanged.	Existing power structures are questioned and actively changed.
Violations of children's rights are responded to quickly to alleviate symptoms.	The structural causes of violations of children's rights are eliminated in the long term.

The child rights approach ensures that children and young people are not just given symptomatic attention from crisis to crisis. When their rights are violated, they receive immediate assistance, while attempts are also made to eliminate the underlying causes. The approach can be applied in all contexts, including development cooperation and humanitarian assistance.

²⁹ Cf. Save the Children Sweden: Child rights programming handbook. How to Apply Rights-Based Approaches to Programming, 2nd edition, Stockholm: Save the Children's Resource Centre, 2006, [online], (accessed on 01.07.2025).

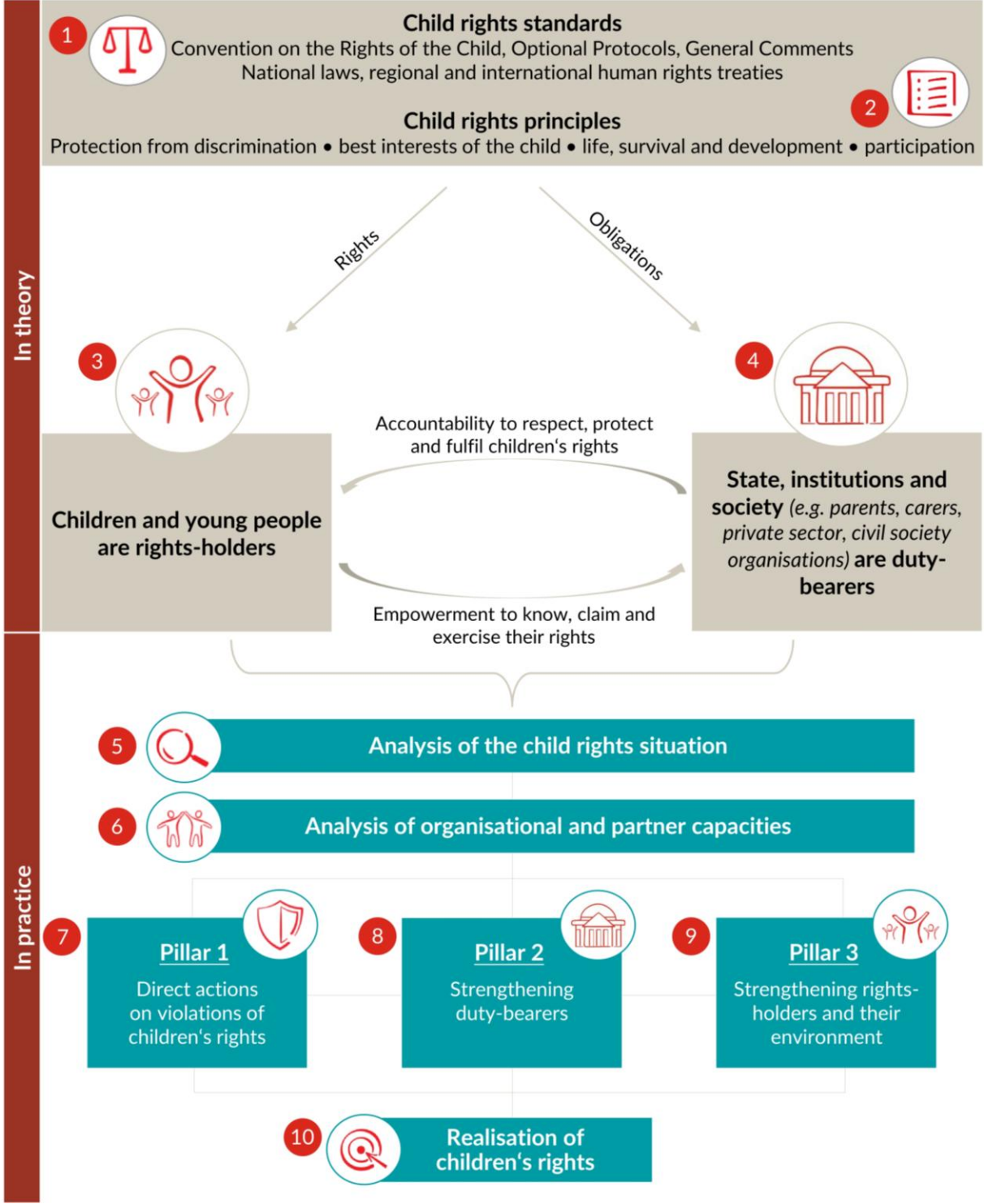
³⁰ Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 48–54.

³¹ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 23 and Maywald, Jörg: Recht haben und Recht bekommen – der Kinderrechtsansatz in Kindertageseinrichtungen, in: Kita Fachtexte, 11.02.2014, p. 4, [online], (accessed on 01.07.2025).

3.2 The components of the child rights approach

Save the Children's global child rights approach is the basis for our work in Germany. In this chapter, we explain how we interpret this approach, and demonstrate how its key components apply in theory and in practice.

Figure: The components of the child rights approach



3.2.1 In theory

1 Child rights standards

Child rights standards are based on the binding norms derived from the articles of the CRC, its Optional Protocols and the General Comments. These standards define the rights of children and young people, as well as how these rights should be implemented. The standards establish a legal framework for governmental action and serve as a central guide for our work. Additionally, national laws and regional and international human rights instruments are also relevant to the protection of children's rights, and therefore to our work.

2 Child rights principles

The **general principles** of children's rights are enshrined in Articles 2, 3, 6 and 12 of the CRC: the right to protection from discrimination; the right to primary consideration of the best interests of the child; the right to life, survival and development; and the right to participation. These articles represent both independent rights and principles, and must be considered when interpreting and implementing all other rights of the CRC. They guide all our work processes:

- **Protection from discrimination (Article 2 CRC)**

Article 2 of the CRC guarantees comprehensive **protection from discrimination** for all children and young people. It prohibits any form of discrimination based on gender, origin, religion, language, disability or political opinion. The list is not exhaustive and also includes discrimination based on "other status" such as age, sexual identity and orientation, or asylum and residence status. Furthermore, children and young people must not be disadvantaged because of their parents' status, actions or views. State parties are obliged to ensure that neither legislation, political measures nor social structures exclude or discriminate against children and young people. Particular attention must be paid to the risk of multiple forms of discrimination.

- **The best interests of the child (Article 3 para. 1 CRC)**

The right to primary consideration of the **best interests of the child**, enshrined in Article 3, is the central "guiding principle"³² of the Convention. It stipulates that the best interests of the child must be a primary consideration in all actions affecting it.³³ This acknowledges that children and young people require particular protection and support. Adults therefore have a special responsibility to actively protect and prioritise the child's best interests³⁴ in decision-making processes.

- **Life, survival and personal development (Article 6 CRC)**

Article 6 of the CRC establishes the right to life. State parties are obliged to ensure the survival and optimal development of the child. This includes creating a protective, just and supportive environment in which all children and young people can fulfil their potential.

³² Schmahl, 2017, Introduction, para. 30. This is a translation of the original German quote.

³³ To determine the best interests of the child, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child has formulated several elements to be considered in its General comment No. 14 on the right of the child to have his or her best interests taken into account.

³⁴ In German law, the term "child welfare" is used instead of "best interests of the child". However, this term is not explicitly defined. Instead, the focus is placed on the negative concept of "child welfare endangerment". According to Article 6 para. 2, sentence 2 of the Basic Law, in conjunction with Sections 8a of Book 8 of the Social Code and 1666 para. 1 of the Civil Code, the state only intervenes when a child is at serious risk. The CRC, however, takes a broader approach, interpreting the term "best interests of the child" as encompassing not only protection from harm, but also active promotion and participation to ensure holistic development and integrity.

- **Right to participation (Article 12 CRC)**

Article 12 grants children and young people the right to express their views in all matters affecting them, and requires that these views be given due consideration in decision-making processes. As minors depend on the decisions made by adults in many situations in life, this right is of central importance. However, this does not create an obligation on children and young people to participate, but rather a clear responsibility for adults to actively seek their views, take them seriously, and involve them in decision-making in accordance with their age and maturity.

3 Children and young people are rights-holders

All children and young people are entitled to the rights enshrined in the CRC until they reach the age of 18. As rights-holders, they should be **empowered to know**, understand and **exercise** their rights, and to **claim** them from the relevant duty-bearers, such as authorities or courts if necessary.

4 The state, institutions and society are duty-bearers

The primary responsibility for implementing children's rights lies with the states that are parties to the CRC. They are **accountable** to children and young people, and must ensure that their rights are realised in all areas of governmental action. This obligation has three key dimensions: States must equally respect, protect and fulfil children's rights. **Respecting** means that the state must not interfere, either directly or indirectly, with the enjoyment of children's rights. **Protecting** means taking measures to prevent third parties, such as private institutions, including companies and individuals, from interfering with the children's enjoyment of their rights.³⁵ To this end, the state must adopt appropriate legislative measures to which all parties involved must adhere. Finally, **fulfilling** means that the state must create the structural conditions necessary for the realisation of children's rights. This includes, among other things, developing child-friendly infrastructure, providing assistance or services, and adopting appropriate administrative, budgetary, and judicial measures. This is of central importance so that all state and social actors can fulfil their responsibilities towards children and young people.

3.2.2 In practice

5 Analysis of the child rights situation

To implement projects and activities that aim to realise children's rights, it is first necessary to understand the situation in each country. To this end, we regularly conduct analyses revealing country- and sector-specific child rights violations, as well as the underlying individual and structural causes. These analyses identify the responsible duty-bearers and examine the extent to which children's rights are considered, prioritised and implemented in legislation, policy and practice at local, regional and national levels. They also examine which groups of children and young people are particularly affected, and what barriers prevent them from accessing their rights and services.

6 Analysis of organisational and partner capacities

To achieve the greatest possible systemic and sustainable impact, we collaborate with both governmental and non-governmental organisations. We thoroughly analyse the strategic added value we can bring to existing systems, to ensure that we do not establish parallel structures or create competitive relationships. Instead, we focus on partnering with organisations that have specific strengths and access to relevant target groups. Collaboration in partnerships and the strategic promotion of synergies are central principles of our work.

³⁵ Cf. Schmahl, 2017, Introduction, para. 37 and Art. 4, para. 6 and UN Committee on the Rights of the Child: General comment No. 16 on State obligations regarding the impact of the business sector on children's rights, CRC/C/GC/16, Geneva: United Nations, 2013.

Based on our analyses and taking into account the available resources, we develop activities with our partners that can be assigned to the following three pillars. These activities are designed to address child rights violations at individual and structural levels using different, complementary approaches. The more balanced the implementation of activities from all three pillars by us, our partners or in synergy with other organisations, the more likely a sustainable positive impact can be achieved.

7 Pillar 1: Direct actions on violations of children's rights

We take direct action when children's rights are violated, and when there are gaps in provision. Our aim is to remedy the situation quickly and address urgent needs arising from violations of children's and young people's rights. To this end, we continuously monitor current developments and maintain close contact with our international country offices and partners. We respond to new events with programme, political and communication activities. Findings from this pillar directly inform our work with duty-bearers (pillar 2) and rights-holders (pillar 3).

8 Pillar 2: Strengthening duty-bearers

To prevent and stop child rights violations in the long term, we support duty-bearers to fulfil their responsibility to realise children's rights. To this end, we work closely with governmental agencies, institutions, and companies. We raise awareness of their legal obligations and promote an understanding of the realities faced by children and young people. Through advice, training, and practical support, we strengthen their capacity and advocate for improvements in policies, legislation, and administrative or business practices respectively. We focus our work on creating sustainable, child-friendly structures and mechanisms.

9 Pillar 3: Strengthening rights-holders and their environment

We raise awareness of children's rights among children and young people, as well as within their social environments. Caregivers, including parents, carers, and professionals working with children and young people, play a central role. They are responsible for helping young people exercise their rights in everyday situations. We support them in this capacity, while also creating spaces where children and young people can contribute their perspectives and participate in decision-making processes. Their involvement is essential to enforcing their rights. We also support civil society organisations that promote children's rights. This strengthens the social foundation for sustainable change.

10 Realisation of children's rights

Our ultimate goal is to realise children's rights. All our actions aim to eliminate the causes of child rights violations and ensure that children and young people have sustainable access to their rights.

3.3 Implementing the child rights approach

This chapter demonstrates how we implement the child rights approach in our organisation, based on the components described above. The following sections introduce some of the key thematic areas through which we contribute to realising certain children's rights. In line with the principle that children's rights are indivisible and interrelated, our initiatives promote specific rights while fostering conditions that facilitate the realisation of others. This creates synergies between projects and departments, enhancing the sustainable impact of our work. The three cross-cutting themes of child safeguarding, anti-discrimination and child participation guide our work and are consistently integrated into all our processes.

Our cross-cutting themes

We promote the systematic integration of **child safeguarding**, **anti-discrimination** and **child participation** throughout our organisation. To this end, we have established binding standards and processes that are continually being reviewed and adapted.³⁶ All employees receive introductory training and awareness-raising sessions on these topics. Additionally, we offer in-depth workshops and implement measures that effectively integrate the standards into our work processes.

The area of **child safeguarding** aims to protect children and young people from all forms of violence, accidents and other dangers, both within our organisation and in our work with partner organisations. This also applies to the digital space. In the area of **anti-discrimination**, we are committed to dismantling structural inequalities and creating equal opportunities for all children and young people, regardless of their circumstances. We design our services and initiatives to be inclusive, accessible and sensitive to discrimination. In the area of **child participation**, our goal is to actively involve children and young people as experts in their own lives. Their input is vital in tailoring our services and initiatives to address their actual concerns and needs.³⁷

3.3.1 In programming

All the countries in which we implement projects have ratified the CRC. This means they have committed themselves under international law to respect, protect and fulfil the rights of all children and young people under their jurisdiction. This obligation applies to their territory and to their foreign and development policies abroad.³⁸ The child rights approach therefore informs the way we structure our programme work both in Germany and internationally. It guides us through every stage of the project cycle, from analysis to planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

³⁶ Further information on these topics can be found in our [Child Safeguarding Policy](#), our [Guidelines on the Sensitive Handling of Children's Photos and Videos in Institutions and Organisations](#), and our [Policy on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion](#).

³⁷ To ensure meaningful ethical child and youth participation, we commit to the [Nine Basic Requirements](#) as set out in General comment No. 12 of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child.

³⁸ Cf. Article 2(1) CRC in conjunction with Article 4 CRC.

Domestic programmes

In Germany, the CRC and its Optional Protocols are part of federal law.³⁹ The government must therefore adhere to its provisions in all actions taken at federal, state and local levels. However, children's rights are violated in many areas. Poverty, unequal educational opportunities, and lack of access to basic services severely impact the well-being and development of children and young people. One in five children is affected by poverty and social exclusion.⁴⁰ A child's social background significantly influences their educational success, and thus future prospects⁴¹. The federal system exacerbates existing inequalities, as the implementation of children's rights varies from state to state. This is evident not only in the education sector, but also in the provision of accommodation for refugee children and young people: many of them live in inadequate shelters for long periods, which expose them to numerous risks and stresses. Due to the lack of nationwide uniform binding standards for protection, privacy, access to education, medical and psychosocial care, and leisure activities, these are often not guaranteed.⁴² Another cause for concern is the increasing violence to which minors are exposed,⁴³ whether in the family environment or in institutions such as shelters or schools. Although these institutions play a central role in identifying and preventing risks, they often become places where children and young people experience violence. A shortage of qualified staff across sectors exacerbates this situation, resulting in cases often not being recognised or dealt with appropriately, or referred to the relevant authorities.

The Domestic Programmes department is currently structured into four areas: **asylum and migration; protection from violence; education; and child poverty and social inequality**. The programme measures are aimed at shelters for refugees, psychosocial centres, educational and leisure facilities, digital counselling platforms, and public authorities, among others. In addition to implementing projects through its own teams, the department collaborates with governmental and non-governmental organisations that provide expertise and access to existing structures and target groups.

Asylum and migration: We advocate for the implementation of the right to protection and support for all refugee children and young people, in accordance with Article 22 of the CRC. Our projects help create child-friendly conditions in shelters, and support children and young people in exercising their comprehensive rights. These include the rights to an adequate standard of living, (mental) health services, protection, privacy, education and leisure activities. All of these rights apply without restriction, even when children are accommodated in shelters.

Protection from violence: In accordance with Article 19 of the CRC, our projects aim to protect children and young people from all forms of violence, including in the digital space. We focus particularly on schools and shelters for refugees to strengthen their protective measures.

Education: In accordance with Articles 28 and 29 of the CRC, we promote the rights to education and equal opportunities. Our projects aim to strengthen (digital) core competencies, as well as participation and self-efficacy, among children and young people from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds.

³⁹ Germany ratified the CRC in 1992. In accordance with Article 59(2) sentence 1 of the German Basic Law, the German parliament passed a consent law through which the Convention of the Rights of the Child, like all international treaties, was incorporated into German law. The CRC has the status of a simple federal law.

⁴⁰ Cf. Statistisches Bundesamt (Destatis): AROPE-Rate (Armut- oder Ausgrenzungsgefährdung) und ihre Teilindikatoren nach Geschlecht und Alter, in: Statistisches Bundesamt, 17.04.2025, [online], (accessed on 19.05.2025).

⁴¹ Cf. Autor:innengruppe Bildungsberichterstattung: Bildung in Deutschland 2024. Ein indikatorengestützter Bericht mit einer Analyse zu beruflicher Bildung, Bielefeld: wbv Publikation, 2024, p. 10, [online], (accessed on 01.07.2025).

⁴² Cf. Weber, Desirée and Rosenow-Williams, Kerstin: Kinderschutz in Unterkünften für geflüchtete Menschen, in: J. Olaf Kleist/ Dimitra Dermitzaki/ Bahar Oghalai/ Sabrina Zajak (eds.), Gewaltschutz in Geflüchtetenunterkünften (171-196), Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2022, pp. 172-173, [online] (accessed on 31.03.2025).

⁴³ Cf. Statistisches Bundesamt (Destatis): Zahl der Kindeswohlgefährdungen im Jahr 2023 auf neuem Höchststand, in: Statistisches Bundesamt, 2025, [online], (accessed on 31.03.2025).

Child poverty and social inequality: In accordance with Articles 26 and 27 of the CRC, our goal is to improve the standard of living and participation opportunities of children and young people affected by poverty. To this end, we promote equal access to social services and resources.

The following table shows examples of measures that have been implemented to date⁴⁴ :

Area	<u>Pillar 1</u> Direct actions on violations of children’s rights	<u>Pillar 2</u> Strengthening duty-bearers	<u>Pillar 3</u> Strengthening rights-holders and their environment
Asylum and migration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of child-friendly spaces for children and young people in refugee shelters • Provision of psychosocial support services for refugee children and young people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advising refugee shelter operators and staff on child-friendly accommodation standards⁴⁵ • Training for professionals and volunteers on providing psychosocial support for refugee children and young people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of digital tools for children and young people to assess their accommodation situation in shelters • Involvement of children and young people in the design of leisure activities in shelters
Protection from violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of child-friendly complaint mechanisms in refugee shelters • Provision of materials on focal points and advice centres for children and young people in need of protection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advising school and refugee shelter staff on the development of participatory child protection concepts • Training for school staff on how to deal with suspected cases of child welfare risks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshops with children and young people on designing child-friendly reporting and complaint channels • Involvement of children and young people in the development of child protection concepts
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of child-friendly reading rooms in schools and after-school care centres • Establishment of creative learning spaces (<i>MakerLabs</i>) in schools, leisure facilities and libraries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training of pedagogical staff in implementing participatory reading intervention programmes • Organisation of specialist conferences on child-centred and positive learning cultures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involving children in designing child-friendly rooms to promote reading skills • Training young people to become peer trainers to promote self-organised learning

The work in our domestic programmes is closely linked to national and European strategies that promote and prioritise children's rights. In Germany, for example, the strategy for promoting democracy and diversity⁴⁶ plays a central role. It strengthens democratic participation, protection against discrimination and promotes the social inclusion of children and young people. At the

⁴⁴ As the area of child poverty and social inequality is still under development, no examples of measures can be presented at this stage.

⁴⁵ As part of the federal initiative "Protection of refugees in refugee accommodation", Save the Children has helped to develop minimum standards for the protection of refugees in accommodation. These are available at [Minimum standards | Federal initiative for the protection of refugees in refugee accommodation](#).

⁴⁶ The Federal Government's strategy for a strong and resilient democracy and an open and diverse society "Working together to promote democracy and fight extremism", is available at [Working together to promote democracy and fight extremism](#).

European level, the European Union (EU) Strategy on the Rights of the Child and the European Child Guarantee⁴⁷ are important frameworks for our work. These strategies provide clear impetus for children and young people in the areas of political participation, social inclusion, health, and protection from violence. Our programmes actively contribute to the implementation of these strategies in Germany. At the same time, we identify areas where children's rights are not yet adequately addressed and advocate for them to be better respected, protected and fulfilled in the future.

International programmes

Although the CRC applies in all our partner countries, children's rights are violated in many ways all over the world. Acute and ongoing crises, structural poverty, and a lack of law enforcement endanger children's and young people's lives, healthy development, and social participation. Of particular concern is the increasing number of children and young people growing up in armed conflicts. In 2023, this affected almost one in six children worldwide.⁴⁸ Many of these children and young people are exposed to acute dangers, including military attacks, the targeted recruitment of child soldiers, and sexualised violence. Attacks on schools and hospitals as well as the denial of humanitarian access also constitute serious violations of their rights.⁴⁹ The climate crisis further exacerbates these problems. Extreme weather events destroy livelihoods and infrastructure, leading to a greater risk of shortages of resources, disease outbreaks and hunger. Young children are particularly vulnerable: almost five million children under the age of five die from preventable causes such as infections or malnutrition every year⁵⁰. This combination of crises is pushing more and more families into poverty. More than 333 million children and young people worldwide are at risk of extreme poverty⁵¹, which seriously impacts their access to basic rights such as clean water, food, healthcare and education. Poverty is also the main cause of child labour, affecting nearly 138 million minors. More than a third of these children and young people work in hazardous conditions⁵², in agriculture, mining or factories. Girls and young women face particular disadvantages. They are often denied an education or forced into child marriage to financially support their families.⁵³

Our international programme work encompasses humanitarian assistance, transitional development assistance and development cooperation, primarily in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. Localisation is a core principle for us. This means, we work closely with local partner organisations, shifting decision-making powers and resources to the local level⁵⁴. From our base in Germany, we support Save the Children's country offices in developing and implementing programmes in collaboration with national and local partners. They are best positioned to understand local contexts and power dynamics. By strengthening their role, we help ensure that programmes are effective, sustainable, and aligned with the rights and realities of affected communities.⁵⁵

⁴⁷ The EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child and the European Child Guarantee are available at [EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child and the European Child Guarantee | EUR-Lex](#).

⁴⁸ Cf. Save the Children: Stop the war on children – pathways to peace, in: Save the Children, 2024, p. 8, [online], (accessed on 01.12.2025).

⁴⁹ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 4.

⁵⁰ Cf. Charbonneau, Ninja: Kindersterblichkeit in Deutschland & weltweit, in: Deutsches Komitee für UNICEF e. V., 26.03.2025, [online], (accessed on 31.03.2025).

⁵¹ Cf. World Bank Group: Global Trends in Child Monetary Poverty According to International Poverty Lines, in: World Bank, 12.09.2023, [online], (accessed on 04.09.2025).

⁵² Cf. ILO and UNICEF: Child Labour: Global estimates 2024, trends and the road forward, New York, p. 8 [online], (accessed on 01.12.2025).

⁵³ Cf. Save the Children Deutschland e. V. and The Centre for Child Rights and Business: Erkenntnisse aus der Praxis kinderrechtsbasierter Abhilfe und Handlungsempfehlungen für Unternehmen, in: Save the Children Deutschland e. V., 2025, pp. 6 and 11. [online], (accessed on 29.07.2025).

⁵⁴ Further information on our position on localisation can be found in our [Localization Policy](#).

⁵⁵ Drawing on many years of experience and insights gained from its work, Save the Children has developed a number of evidence-based solutions (common approaches). These have proven to be effective and sustainable in addressing

The thematic priorities of our international programmes are **health and nutrition, education, child protection** and combatting **child labour**. Where possible, we combine life-saving measures with development and peace-building measures (humanitarian-development-peace nexus) to meet acute needs and promote long-term stability. At the same time, we focus on **anticipatory action** to respond to foreseeable crises early on. Our goal is to prevent or mitigate the humanitarian impact on children and their families as much as possible. By strengthening their resilience, they are better prepared for future crises.

Health and nutrition: In accordance with Article 24 of the CRC, we are committed to realising the right to health. This includes access to high-quality basic healthcare, clean water, safe sanitation facilities, and healthy nutrition. Our programmes focus on improving maternal and child health and promoting food security for families affected by malnutrition.

Education: Our projects aim to improve access to safe, inclusive and high-quality education. In accordance with Articles 28 and 29 of the CRC, we strive to provide children and young people with the opportunity to learn, even during times of crisis and emergency. Education is about more than just the transfer of knowledge. It creates a safe space, fosters social cohesion, and generates future prospects.

Child protection: In accordance with Article 19 of the CRC, we are dedicated to protecting children and young people from all forms of violence. We collaborate with local and national authorities to enhance legal frameworks and state protection mechanisms. At the same time, we strengthen community-based child protection systems to ensure that children and young people have access to safe focal points and support networks.

Child labour: In collaboration with our subsidiary organisation, *The Centre for Child Rights and Business*, we are striving to protect children and young people effectively from exploitative working conditions, as set out in Article 32 of the CRC. We aim to provide them with access to education, care, and development opportunities.

The following table shows examples of measures that have been implemented to date:

Area	<u>Pillar 1</u> Direct actions on violations of children’s rights	<u>Pillar 2</u> Strengthening duty-bearers	<u>Pillar 3</u> Strengthening rights-holders and their environment
(Anticipatory) humanitarian assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Early) provision of essential relief supplies, such as clean drinking water, food, hygiene products, cash assistance, etc. • Establishment of child-friendly emergency shelters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advising local authorities on setting up child-centred early warning systems and emergency plans • Training emergency staff on child protection in humanitarian contexts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training communities to interpret early warnings and take precautionary measures • Involving children and young people in the preparation of risk analyses and emergency plans

widespread violations of children’s rights in areas such as education, poverty, health, nutrition and child protection. They can be adapted and implemented in a context-specific manner.

Health and nutrition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of (mobile) health services and treatment for acute malnutrition • Providing families with agricultural seeds, tools and training to improve their income and food security 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training medical professionals in maternal and child health • Training community health workers to identify, treat and refer cases to professional health services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raising awareness among children and their families about health, hygiene and nutrition • Involving children and young people in health awareness campaigns
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of community-based learning spaces for girls and children with disabilities without access to formal education • Provision of educational and play materials, school uniforms and hygiene items 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training teachers to promote inclusive and child-friendly education • Collaboration with local education authorities to promote alternative learning models, especially for girls and children with disabilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raising awareness among families and in communities about the right to education for all children and young people • Promotion of community-based children's clubs and peer-to-peer learning opportunities
Child protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of quality child protection services for children and their families in crisis • Provision of psychosocial support services for children and young people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advising on the development and implementation of improved legislation and resource allocation • Supporting the establishment of effective national coordination mechanisms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raising awareness of child protection among families and in communities • Supporting the setting up of community-based child protection committees
Child labour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediate removal of children and young people from child labour • Provision of medical or psychological care for affected children and young people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice and support in establishing effective child protection systems • Advising international companies and their suppliers on how to prevent and end child labour in their supply chains⁵⁶ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint development of remedial plans with affected children and their families • Raising awareness about the risks of child labour and advice on safe vocational training and employment opportunities

The strategic guidelines and priorities of our country offices and local partners underpin our international programme work. We align these with the goals and principles of German foreign and development policy. In doing so, we create a coherent link between local needs and objectives, the practical conditions in the respective context, and the requirements of German donor strategies. Of particular relevance is the German Federal Foreign Office's (GFFO) strategy on humanitarian assistance abroad⁵⁷, which focuses on the protection of particularly vulnerable groups in crisis and

⁵⁶ The advice is based on the implementation of legal standards, such as those set out in the LkSG, as well as voluntary standards, such as the [UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights](#) by the UN Human Rights Council (2011) and the [OECD Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Business Conduct](#) by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2018).

⁵⁷ The German Federal Foreign Office's strategy on humanitarian aid abroad is available at: [Federal Foreign Office Strategy for Humanitarian Assistance Abroad](#).

conflict contexts. Equally important is the human rights strategy of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ),⁵⁸ which requires the consistent implementation of a human rights-based approach in development cooperation. This concept explicitly names children and young people as a priority target group, emphasising the realisation of their rights as an essential component of a human rights-based development policy. Our programmes contribute to the implementation of these strategies. At the same time, we provide targeted input to strengthen the child- and human rights-based approach to humanitarian assistance and development cooperation by contributing our technical expertise and many years of experience.

3.3.2 In advocacy and policy

Children's rights can only be implemented effectively and sustainably if political decision-makers fulfil their responsibilities. Their decisions significantly impact the lives of children and young people, determining whether they can grow up with equal opportunities and thrive. However, the concerns and interests of children and young people are often overlooked in political processes. The principle that the best interests of the child should be a primary consideration is repeatedly overshadowed by other interests that are prioritised instead.

The aim of our advocacy and policy work is therefore to make children's rights a greater focus of political action. We are committed to ensuring that children and young people are recognised as experts in their own lives and actively involved. We resolutely represent their rights and interests in the political arena in Germany and Europe. We critically monitor the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in Germany, drawing attention to violations and advocating accountability – both in public discourse and in direct dialogue with decision-makers. To increase our impact, we collaborate with other civil society organisations in alliances and networks.

Humanitarian assistance and crises: We urge states to fulfil their obligations towards children and young people in situations of conflict and crisis. In doing so, we refer to Articles 38 and 39 of the CRC, which enshrine the protection of children and young people in armed conflicts, as well as their right to recovery and social reintegration. We also refer to UN Security Council Resolution 1261, which explicitly condemns violence against children, emphasises the need to prevent attacks on places such as schools and hospitals, and stresses the importance of ensuring safe humanitarian access.

Global health: We draw attention to existing international inequalities and call on political decision-makers to promote equitable health care, immunisation and food security, as set out in Article 24 of the CRC.

Asylum and migration: In accordance with Article 22 of the CRC, we advocate for the protection of the rights of all children and young people, regardless of their asylum and residence status. In particular, young people should be better protected from detention, violence and separation from their families. Furthermore, we call for uniform minimum protection standards to be implemented in accommodation facilities, and for non-discriminatory access to education, healthcare and participation.

⁵⁸ The human rights concept of German development policy of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development is available at: [Human Rights Strategy for German Development Policy](#).

Child poverty and social inequality: In accordance with Articles 26 and 27 of the CRC, we advocate improved access to social services and provisions for all children and young people. We call for child-centred reforms to the social system to achieve a basic child allowance. In the context of the implementation of the European Child Guarantee through the National Action Plan "New Opportunities for Children in Germany" of the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ), we also call for better access to well-funded and well-staffed services and provisions.

The following table shows examples of measures that have been implemented to date:

Area	<u>Pillar 1</u> Direct actions on violations of children's rights	<u>Pillar 2</u> Strengthening duty-bearers	<u>Pillar 3</u> Strengthening rights-holders and their environment
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exchange information with our programme departments and country offices to identify urgent needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing and publishing position papers, statements and policy demands 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting children and young people in formulating their own demands
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring and reporting on severe child rights violations in armed conflicts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing advice to political leaders on child rights issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involving children and young people in political processes
Cross-cutting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinating measures in crisis contexts within country-specific ad hoc working groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisation and implementation of awareness-raising campaigns and political actions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raising awareness among children and young people of their rights and of how they can participate in politics
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confidential or public reporting of child rights violations to the relevant ministries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitating dialogue between politicians and experts from our country offices or partner organisations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exchange formats between children and young people and political leaders

3.3.3 In public relations and communications

Our public relations work forms an essential part of our approach to realising children's rights. It helps raising awareness of children's and young people's rights in society, highlighting violations and initiating change at political and social levels.

To make children's rights better known and accessible to a wide audience, we use a variety of communication channels, such as press releases, newsletters, print mailings, social media posts, TV advertising, and campaigns. We also raise awareness of children's rights in workshops, for example in companies or foundations.

We reinforce our programmatic and political objectives through targeted campaigns, media relations and reporting. This increases public pressure on decision-makers to take greater account of the rights and interests of children and young people. At the same time, we encourage people to support our work, whether through donations, signing petitions or spreading our messages.

Transparency is particularly important to us, and we regularly and openly inform our partners, donors, the public, and children and young people themselves about our goals, activities, as well as the impact of our work.

4 OUTLOOK

This publication establishes a foundation for placing children's rights at the heart of what we do and consistently aligning our work with the child rights approach. It fosters a shared understanding within our organisation while also making the approach visible externally. Its implementation is an ongoing process that requires continuous reflection and adaptation to new circumstances.

We are placing greater focus on the participation of children and young people. Our goal is to systematically create more meaningful opportunities for young people to get involved in our work. We can build on numerous examples of children and young people who have been successfully involved, for instance in our programming work. We would like to draw on these examples to establish participation more firmly at a greater level. One way in which we intend to achieve this is by establishing a new structure that will enable young people to play an active role in counselling and collaborating with us. As a child rights organisation, the perspectives of children and young people are indispensable to us. Only by involving them seriously can we act responsibly in their best interests and effectively contribute to the realisation of their rights – with them and for them.

5 LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AROPE	At Risk of Poverty or Social Exclusion
BMFSFJ	Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend
BMZ	Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
EU	European Union
GFFO	German Federal Foreign Office
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
ILO	International Labour Organisation
LkSG	Lieferkettensorgfaltspflichtengesetz
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UN	United Nations

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