

GLOBALCHILD OVERVIEW

BACKGROUND The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) is the most ratified human rights treaty in history, with 197 States Parties (SPs). The CRC represents the almost universal and unanimous intention to protect and promote children’s rights internationally. Given this particularly important period of development, the CRC provides a framework of 54 articles outlining government responsibilities to prioritize the best interests of children in all decisions; to provide them with opportunities to participate in decision making; and to respect children’s human dignity and right to life, survival, and development. This must all be done in an equitable and non-discriminatory manner while respecting the views and evolving capacities of children.

Since the inception of the CRC in 1989, periodic reporting from the SPs to the Committee on the Rights of the Child (the Committee) is required every five years. Such reports contribute to future planning and implementation of policies and programmes, and highlight States’ shortcomings in ensuring the rights under the CRC. Upon review of the reports, the Committee provides Concluding Observations, which make recommendations towards the progressive fulfilment of the CRC. However, delayed, missed, and inadequately prepared reports limit the Committee’s capacity to properly play its advisory role. Streamlining the process of monitoring and reporting on the CRC may reduce the “report fatigue” experienced by most SPs, and add to the efficiency of the Committee’s review process.

GLOBALCHILD The GlobalChild project includes a group of international child rights academics and advocates working under the auspices of the Committee, with a mandate to create a comprehensive electronic monitoring platform for the CRC. The overarching aim of the platform is to operationalize all substantive rights under the CRC by creating indicator sets to facilitate the implementation and monitoring of each right. The 41 indicators sets collectively (developed based on the provisions of the 41 substantive articles of the CRC) would streamline the processes of monitoring implementation of the CRC and producing periodical reports to the Committee. While GlobalChild will effectively serve this international obligation, the platform will also provide data on the structures and processes that support different rights vis-a-vis outcome data on children’s health and development. Analysis of such data sets will assist in bringing the gaps in capacities to the attention of politicians, policy makers and other stakeholders who are in the position to make decisions, plan budgets, and advocate for policy or program change.

GlobalChild takes a rights-based approach to promoting child health and development. The data collected can inform interventions, policy development and changes which will ultimately enhance health outcomes for children around the world. Over time, as the 197 SPs use this platform to monitor implementation, report compliance of the CRC, and upload documents to support their responses, this tool will become an invaluable data repository comprised of all policies and initiatives in support of different rights under the

CRC, including the impacts of these policies and initiatives on children. This remarkable infrastructure itself can be conducive to an improved state of child health and development by facilitating further research and creating an increased understanding of what is successful or counterproductive for child health and development.

GlobalChild is led by Dr. Ziba Vaghri, a global health researcher with a program of research at the University of New Brunswick, Canada. GlobalChild builds upon a decade (2007-2017) of work by Vaghri and an international team of experts whose work, under the auspices of the Committee, resulted in the development of the [Early Childhood Rights Indicators \(ECRI\)](#).

While ECRI was built upon General Comment 7—*Implementing child rights in early childhood*—and is comprised of indicators to monitor governments' capacities (e.g., policies and programs) in support of children's rights during the early years (0-8 years), GlobalChild is based on the 41 substantive rights of the CRC and serves as a comprehensive child rights monitoring platform for all children below the age of 18 years.

METHODOLOGY GlobalChild is a 5+5 years project dedicated to developing a comprehensive child rights monitoring platform based on the SPO model, a framework advised by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR¹), comprised of **S**tructure, **P**rocess and **O**utcome indicators. In its first five years, the team built the indicator sets, created the structure of the platform, and then populated the platform with the developed indicators. The platform, called GlobalChild, is now ready to be piloted in 1-2 regions of Canada, starting with the home province of New Brunswick. In the subsequent

five years, working in close collaboration with the Committee, GlobalChild will be piloted in one country from each of the five regions of the globe prior to its global deployment. The vision for GlobalChild is to become the single CRC report-writing tool for all 197 governments across the globe, and to provide a central monitoring system and database for both the CRC and the child-focused targets of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) globally.

In recent years, the fields of human rights and international development have been overwhelmed with indicators designed for monitoring and tracking progress. However, the unique value of GlobalChild stems from the structural organization of its indicator sets. Unlike most of the current indicators, which address only outcomes or the structural aspects of a given right, GlobalChild has created indicators to comprehensively address and collect data on all three aspects – the structures and processes in place to support the fulfillment of each right, in addition to the outcomes of these supports. Review of the three sets of compiled data will reveal discrepancies in the capacity to support the different rights and the impact of this capacity, or lack thereof, on children.

All 41 indicator sets are comprised of three categories of indicator questions:

- 1) Structure-related indicators**, which ask about the government's structural commitments to that right, such as policies, budgetary allocation, etc.;
- 2) Process-related indicators**, which collect data on the processes (e.g., programs) put in place to support that right; and
- 3) Outcome-related indicators**, which compile data to show any evidence of change in children's lives (e.g., reduced under-five mortality) or the environment of that right (e.g. increased high school enrolment).

¹ United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. (2012). Human rights indicators: A guide to measurement and implementation. Available from https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/Human_rights_indicators_en.pdf

THE CURRENT STATE OF THE PROJECT

At this point, in year five of the first five-year plan, the indicator sets for all 41 substantive rights under the CRC have been developed. These indicators have been subjected to two avenues of feedback: experts as well as children. The team has digitized the indicator sets and built the electronic GlobalChild platform.

1. Feedback from children: [The Global Child Rights Dialogue \(GCRD\)](#) is a study that GlobalChild undertook in order to seek feedback from children of all five regions of the world. Through this outreach, children participated in workshops to discuss their rights using child-friendly versions of these articles. Overall, children from 52 sites in 35 countries participated. The team then carefully reviewed this input and incorporated it into the developed indicator sets when applicable.

The child-friendly documents were a collaborative project between the GlobalChild team; the Centre for Children's Rights at Queens University Belfast, Northern Ireland; Save the Children UK; and [Initiative for Article 12](#), Greece.

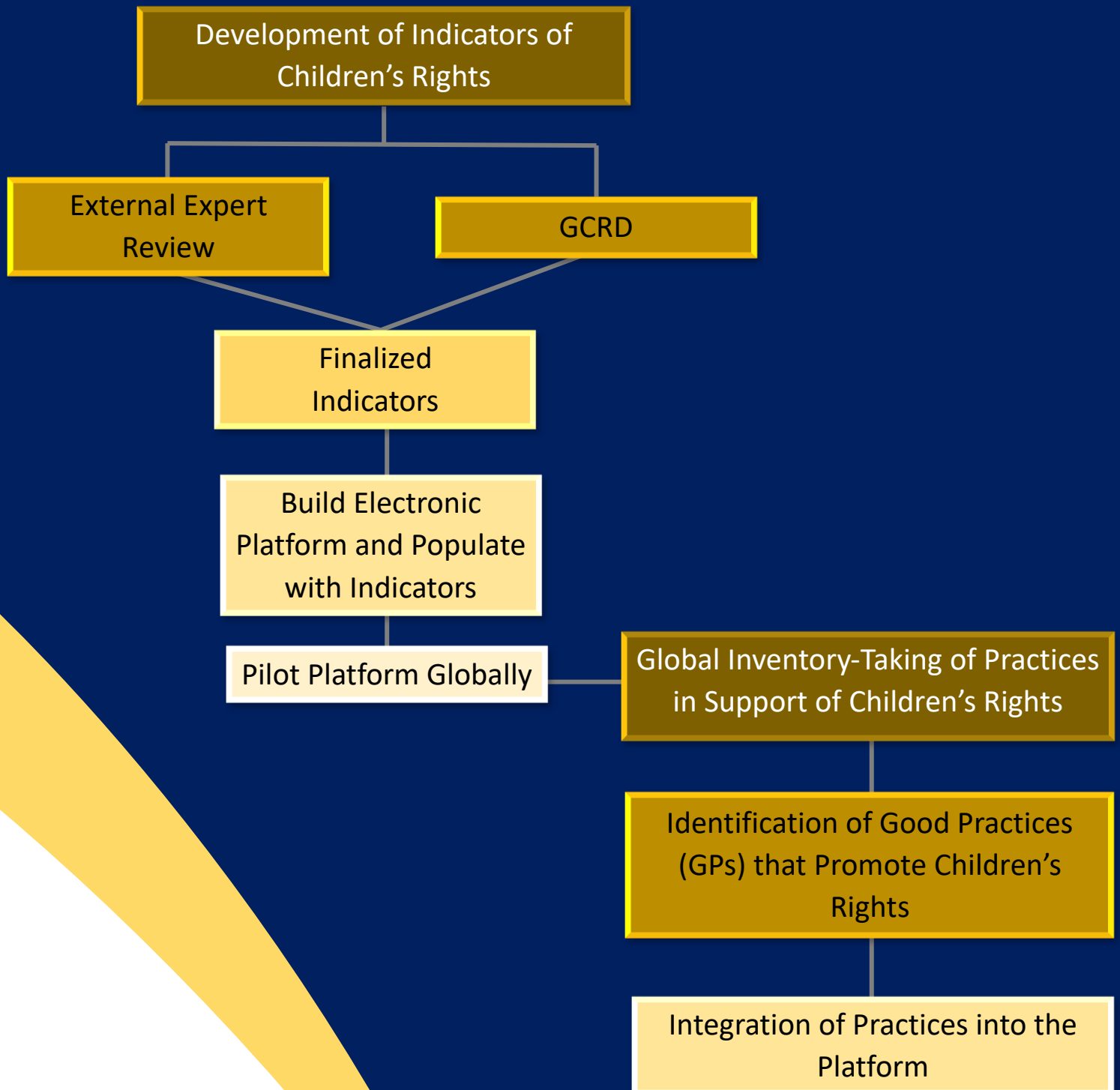
2. Feedback from external expert review: Over 100 child rights advocates, academics, researchers, and other experts were contacted through extensive email, word of mouth, and online networking to elicit feedback and recommendations on the completed indicator sets. The external review was conducted in spring 2019, using an online system accessible through GlobalChild's website.

Similar to the feedback received from the children, the experts' feedback was carefully reviewed and amendments to the indicator sets were made.

3. InspiRights: Good Practices to Inspire and Facilitate Children's Rights: To elevate the GlobalChild platform from a children's rights monitoring and report writing tool to a capacity-building one as well, we have embarked on another global journey and initiated the SSHRC-funded project [InspiRights](#). This involves a large-scale global consultation with stakeholders to research and build a compendium of Good Practices that promote the implementation of children's rights under the CRC.

The compendium of Good and Promising Practices will be published and made available to a broad range of stakeholders. It will also be fed into the GlobalChild platform to serve as an immediate resource for governments to draw from and improve their child rights implementation capacities.

OVERVIEW OF THE WORKPLAN FOR GLOBALCHILD



GLOBALCHILD MEMBERS AND CONTRIBUTORS

GlobalChild Steering Committee (SC)

The SC membership is representative of each topic area of the CRC (health, education, protection, development...), and of all regions of the globe.

Dr. Yanghee Lee, Chairperson – Child psychology/Korea

Dr. Ziba Vaghri, Vice-chairperson – Child development/Canada

The honourable Landon Pearson, Honorary Member – Advocacy/Canada

Justice Renate Winter, Chair, UN Committee on the Rights of the Child – Justice/Austria

Dr. Jeffrey Goldhagen, Professor, University of Florida College of Medicine-Jacksonville – Societal paediatrics/USA

Dr. Hynd Ayoubi-Idrissi, UN Committee on the Rights of the Child – Law Professor/Morocco

Mr. Benoît Van Keirsbilck, UN Committee on the Rights of the Child – Advocacy/Belgium

Mr. George Moschos, Children's rights expert, former children's ombudsman in Greece – Children's ombudsperson/Greece

Former Members:

The honourable Jean Zermatten, Former Chairperson – Juvenile justice/Switzerland

Dr. Susan Bissell, Former Member, Director of the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children – Advocacy/New York, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh

Dr. Najat Maalla M'jid, Former Member, Special Representative to the UN Secretary General on Violence against Children – Child protection/Morocco

GlobalChild Reference Group (RG)

The RG reviewed the work of the IDT once per year and had representation from all key actors of the global child rights community who have developed or are working with indicator systems.

Mr. Ioannis Dimitrakopoulos, European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), Vienna, Austria

Dr. Lothar Kappmann, Max Planck Institute for Human Development, University of Berlin, Germany

Prof. Kristen Sandberg, United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, University of Oslo, Norway

Mr. Marcus Marcellus Stahlhofer, World Health Organization, Switzerland

Mr. Alan Kikuchi-White, Representative to the United Nation for SOS Children's Villages International, Geneva, Switzerland

Ms. Lisa Wolff, Director of Policy and Education, UNICEF Canada, Toronto, Canada

Indicator Development Team (IDT)

Dr. Ziba Vaghri, Principal Investigator of GlobalChild, Associate Professor at the Faculty of Business, University of New Brunswick, Canada

Ms. Gerison Lansdown, International children's rights consultant and advocate, Founder director of the Children's Rights Alliance for England, UK

Mr. Adem Arkadas-Thibert, international child rights consultant and advocate, France

Dr. Roberta Ruggiero, Senior research and teaching associate at the University of Geneva's Centre for Children's Rights Studies (CCRS), Switzerland

Mr. Christian Whalen, Deputy Advocate and Senior Legal Counsel at the New Brunswick Office of the Child and Youth Advocate, Canada

Larger GlobalChild Team

GlobalChild team members are a diverse group of experts from many universities and institutions across Canada and the globe. These members participate in various parts of the project when the work aligns with their expertise.

Dr. Lothar Krappmann, Max Planck Institute for Human Development, University of Berlin, Berlin, Germany

Dr. Gilles Julien, Fondation du Dr Julien, Montreal, Canada

Dr. Joan Durrant, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Canada

Dr. Sue Bennett, University of Ottawa, Ottawa, Canada

Dr. Jean Clinton, McMaster University, Hamilton, Canada

Ms. Lisa Wolff, UNICEF Canada, Toronto, Canada

Dr. Frank Tompa, University of Waterloo, Canada

Dr. Abdul Roudsari, University of Victoria, Canada

Dr. Ali Vaghri, Consultant, Calgary, Canada

UN Committee on the Rights of the Child

Dr. Hynd Ayoubi-Idrissi, Professor of Law at Rabat-Souissi Mohammed V University, Morocco

Mr. Benoit Van Keirsbilck, Director of the Belgian section of Defence for Children – International (DCI), Belgium

For more information

Visit our website: <https://www.unb.ca/globalchild/>

Twitter: [@GlobalChild_Can](https://twitter.com/GlobalChild_Can)

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/globalchild>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/GlobalChildCanada>