

“global telecommunications have given young people the possibility to raise their voices”

This ISSUE

Respect For Children's Views

Article 12. of the Convention on the Rights of the Child

Last Word

Teaching future generations skills to recognize their rights, raise their voices against acts of exploitation and heighten both their personal autonomy and greater participation in civic society.



Respect For Children's Views

The 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) was the first legally binding international human rights treaty to define the norms and standards for the protection of children.

It has since become the most widely ratified treaty in history, guiding 195 member countries to set up local laws and policies to protect children from violence and exploitation. The world agrees that children's rights are foundational pillars of civil society. This treaty, though valuable, still does not go far enough to meet the needs of children in the 21st Century.

In recent years, the emergence of new ways of communication has created issues that are not covered by the existing text of the CRC. Article 12 expressly states the right of a child to express their views, and for those views to be taken into consideration; thus, making it incumbent on nation-states to ensure their children's voices are being heard. Rising Advocates seeks to contribute to the discussion about bridging the gap between theoretical rights and practical rights. We advocate a common movement united in the mission to update children's rights laws.

Rising Advocates

We are asking countries to move beyond the narrow strictures of protected child's voice towards promoting their increased participation in the public conversation. In teaching future generations skills to recognize their rights, children will raise their voices against acts of exploitation and heighten both their personal autonomy and greater participation in civic society. In one very stark example found in disenfranchised communities, girls aged 12-18 who had full decision-making control over their reproductive health were found to be three times more likely to survive into late adulthood than those girls who grew up not possessing such bodily autonomy.

A vital question arises for parents and educators to ponder: Are we properly preparing the next generation to deal with the uncertainties of life in the present or the future? It is the view of Rising Advocates that we must ready our young people to meet this moment. Only by fostering core values of self-determination and self-worth in the formative years will they be able to make informed decisions for themselves and others during uncertain times in the years ahead.

Children are no longer waiting for adults to make the necessary legal and educational changes. Many are fighting for change themselves. Recent social movements due to the explosion of global telecommunications have given young people the possibility to raise their voices and claim their right to be heard on a host of social, political, and environmental issues. Younger generations are currently a leading faction in the worldwide campaign demanding action on climate change and combating police brutality. Their efforts demonstrate a growing lack of satisfaction with the current levels of governmental action and representation.

However, the circumstances of today's youths vary greatly around the globe. Children can face many challenges, including peer pressure, bullying, cyberbullying, mental health problems, lack of food, clean water, poor sanitation, housing insecurity, crime, abuse, forced child labor, and lack of access to health care. In terms of education, UNICEF found that during COVID-19, 100 million children worldwide did not attend school in person. These challenges serve to underscore the need for society and its laws to evolve and help better equip the coming generation with a robust acknowledgment of their rights, tools for conflict analysis and resolution and the confidence to take a more active role in the community-at-large.



RISING ADVOCATES
STORYTELLING FOR PEACEBUILDING

We hoped you were inspired by this newsletter which will continue to enlighten, empower, and encourage present and future little advocates.

