Step by Step

Implementing the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child at the Regional and Local Levels

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The points set out below are suggested measures that should be taken into consideration when planning and taking decisions to implement the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) step by step at the regional and local levels. The list does not claim to be exhaustive but is intended to provide hints along the way in connection with efforts to realise the CRC. It is possible that some of the measures may not be able to be implemented on the basis of the local prerequisites while other measures may need to be added.

In overall planning and overarching decisions

- Begin working on a policy in all committees, administrations and companies around how the CRC can be implemented at the local/regional level.

- Draw up a “toolbox” and begin using one or two of the tools.

- Appoint an officer directly under the executive board to be responsible for coordinating the efforts to implement the CRC.

- Inform, educate, and continue to educate politicians, officers and staff at all levels who directly or indirectly affect children and young people.

- Initiate study and development efforts within the organisation regarding the content of the Convention’s articles

- Inform concerned groupings such as parents, professionals and children and young people themselves about the action plan for children and young people and the rest of the work related to implementing the CRC.

- Collect and disseminate to other local authorities and agencies both negative and positive experience of applying the CRC.

In the area of influence and participation

- Determine what forms for influence and participation already exist, for example pupils’ councils, youth councils, children’s and young people’s clubs etc.

- Invite active pupils’ councils or similar groupings to open discussions without preconditions.
• Set objectives for what the local authority or agency wishes to achieve as regards children’s and young people's influence and participation and measures to attain the objectives.

• Develop methods to provide children of all ages with comprehensible information on issues that concern them.

• Use pupils’ councils or young peoples’ clubs as voluntary referral bodies before taking decisions.

• Develop pupils’ councils into local children’s and young peoples' councils for schools and the immediate community.

• Arrange consultation meetings between children and young people and decision-makers where they can put forward their views to each other and exchange experience on issues of current interest.

• Hold meetings in pre-schools, schools, youth recreation centres and similar venues to obtain children’s and young people's views and opinions of these institutions and activities directly.

• Initiate meetings between existing groupings of children to give them the opportunity to exchange experience and develop their knowledge.

**In the area of play and leisure**

• Map children’s and young people’s play, leisure and cultural habits and find out their wishes at all ages by cooperating with children and young people, parents and the different occupational groups that are involved.

• Ensure that objectives with regard to play, leisure and cultural activities for children and young people are included in the overall action plan for children and young people where children’s and young people’s right to play and participate in cultural life and the arts is guaranteed.

• Ensure that children of all ages have access to areas where they can play freely close to their homes, for example by cataloguing the residential areas.
- Create meeting places for play, leisure and culture for children and young people where natural meeting places do not exist.

- Guarantee access to play and integrated leisure and cultural activities for children with disabilities.

- Educate politicians and employees involved, for example those responsible for technical matters, the environment, buildings, traffic, ports and harbours, and parks and streets, of the importance of play and creative activities to children's and young people's development.

**In the area of environment and safety**

- Ensure that policy documents contain an objective to create a good physical environment for children and young people so that accidents, injuries, and anti-social behaviour such as violence and bullying are actively counteracted.

- Begin preventive cooperation with those responsible for maintenance, security, action against violence and vandalism, and action to prevent accidents.

- Determine the routes that children of all ages take, for example on their way to and from school and leisure activities. Ask the children themselves and document their various movements during the day, describe what obstacles there are to their freedom of movement, and write down any wishes they may have.

- Survey the traffic situation and separate unprotected and motorised road-users as far as possible and supplement these actions with measures to reduce speeds.

- Check that requirements with regard to children’s safety and accessibility are fulfilled in connection with granting building permits, holding building consultation meetings, drawing up the inspection plan and issuing final certificates when homes, day-care centres, schools and recreational facilities are constructed or rebuilt. Pay special attention to accessibility for children with disabilities.

- Check maintenance and safety requirements for playgrounds and their equipment and check that procedures exist for ensuring their adherence.

- Put in place a local system for accident reporting in cooperation with local health and medical services, child care services, schools, recreation centres etc.
• Pay special attention to accessibility for children with disabilities.

Applying the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child involves:

• Creating the prerequisites for equal treatment (article 2)
• Making decisions in the best interests of the child (article 3)
• Prioritising children and young people to the maximum extent of available resources (article 4)
• Providing for every child’s right to life and development (article 6)
• Assuring the child his or her right to express his or her views freely (article 12)

What is required in decisions concerning children and young people:

• Obtain knowledge about rights, conditions and views
• Create channels to listen to children and young people and take their views into consideration
• Emphasise and include a child perspective in decision-making
• Translate the child perspective into concrete action
• Cooperate, prioritise, and use available resources in the best interests of the child

Source: Ett steg framåt! En bok om barnkonventionen för kommuner och landsting