

## World Forum Foundation Report Global Working Initiative on Children's Rights

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During the 2011 World Forum, a group of delegates began talking about the possibility of developing a Working Group on Children's Rights. They considered this an opportunity for those who are passionate about the rights of children to launch a global initiative, using the World Forum Foundation and the World Forum on Early Care and Education as a platform. Presentations by panelists and reflections and support by participants at the World Forum inspired the organization of a Working Forum Global Working Initiative on Children's Rights. Goals for the initiative included learning about the work of existing groups surrounding children's rights, determining the need for a World Forum Working Group on Children's Rights, developing initial goals for this Working Group, and planning preliminary strategies for accomplishing these goals.

Children's rights advocates from Brazil, Canada, India, Norway, Oman, Singapore, the United States, and Wales met at the American College of Norway. The meeting began with a question: How did you get to this chair? The intro-

duction to one another, through a sharing of our favorite chairs and the reasons we had made the journey to Moss, marked the beginning of the formation of many wonderful relationships within a community dedicated to children's rights. During the ensuing days, we shared our work, reflected on each other's work, identified common threads and interests, and developed a set of 'big threads' and goals and tasks that we wanted to pursue as a Working Group. Throughout our days together, we shared home-cooked food, walks through Moss, visits to preschools in the forest and by the sea, and many, many stories. And we played with wire, weaving our individual creations together, as we were weaving together our work and our lives. Each of us left transformed by the experience, with a desire to deepen the relationships we had formed and to begin the work to which we had committed. We came together as a group of people, unrelated in many ways, many of us perfect strangers; but through our shared passion for children's rights, we were able to find our similarities, acknowledge our differences, and become friends. This is the power of the World Forum.



## Our Work

We developed a document outlining the *Guiding Principles of the World Forum Working Group on Children's Rights*.

The document reads:

- We will be self-reflective about our reasons for being engaged in this work and how we will proceed.
- We will seek and see multiple perspectives and multiple contexts for children's rights as the basis for action.
- We will ensure that the child's voice is heard and represented authentically and protected from tokenism and/or exploitation.
- We will approach children's rights in context and in all their complexity.
- We will use the CRC as a guiding tool for our work.
- We will ensure that our work is globally accessible.

## Working Groups

We formed three working groups based on the 'big threads' that emerged during discussions and each participant's personal interests. Initial ideas include:

### 1. Bringing children's voices into the conversations

- a. Explore the idea of convening a youth conference on children's rights
- b. Create a video that would give visibility to children's thinking about their rights

### 2. Publishing

- a. Contribute to existing journals
- b. Increase awareness of the CRC and its implementation

### 3. Website

- a. Ask provocative questions and pose ethical dilemmas surrounding children's rights

- b. Create an online bibliography of existing resources on children's rights
- c. Create a historical timeline of children's rights

## Reflections on the Meeting and Our Work

During the months following the meeting in Moss, Norway, we compiled a document, synthesizing and summarizing our time together. The document was distributed to the Moss meeting group, with a request for comments, questions, additions, and edits. Replies highlighted the power and poignancy of the experience and underscored the commitments made to the work going forward. There was a recognition and appreciation of the ideas and actions of many members of the World Forum that inspired and encouraged the meeting and of the valuable contributions that each person made to the meeting dialogues. And there was an understanding that a great deal of time, organization, and energy will be required to support the momentum generated by the Moss meeting.

As a next chapter, the children's rights working group would like to take the role of provocateur in thinking about the complexities of children's rights to provision, protection, and participation in diverse cultural contexts. We would like to invite the entire World Forum community to join us in a dialogue around this topic. As we begin to organize as a World Forum Working Group on Children's Rights, we also invite members of the World Forum community to join us in this important work. Go to: [www.worldforumfoundation.org/childrensrights](http://www.worldforumfoundation.org/childrensrights) and click on: join us. We welcome you!



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