Getting to know the Convention on the Rights of the Child

Activity sheet

Note that the Activity sheet: Rights and wants provides an introduction to this activity. Provide students with a copy of the (child friendly version) *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (available at: http://www.un.org/cyberschoolbus/humanrights/resources/plainchild.asp). Depending on knowledge levels, some discussion or overview may be required.

1. Students will need access to the internet (either at school or at home). Refer students to each of the following web links to so they are familiar with the purpose of each organisation:

   • UNICEF (www.unicef.com.au)
   • The Australian Human Rights Commission (www.humanrights.gov.au)
   • National Children's and Youth Law Centre (www.lawstuff.org.au)

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2. Ask students to research the topic of child rights in order to explore protection mechanisms for human rights in Australia. Suitable research questions could include:

   a. What is the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*? Who does it cover?

   b. Who decided what rights should be included in the Convention?

   c. How many countries have ratified the Convention? Who hasn't ratified the Convention – and why not? What happens when a country 'ratifies' a Convention?

   d. Is there any monitoring of whether or not countries are doing their job to protect the rights of children?

   e. What is Australia's record on protecting children's rights? (Where do we find out?)

   f. Does the Convention take away from parents the right to raise their children in the way they think best?

   g. Article 3 says that any decisions that adults make that affect you have to take into account your 'best interests'. What sort of decisions or situations might this cover?

   h. How does the Australian Human Rights Commission work to promote the rights of children:
      • In Australian courts?
      • In the United Nations system?
      • In the community?

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3. Groups share their answers with the rest of the class and discuss any issues that came up while doing the research.

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