

BOOK AND MEDIA REVIEWS

Child impact analysis: a way of addressing children's rights in practice

Lundin Karphammar, M. (2019). *Implementering av barnkonventionen – med hjärta och hjärna (Implementing the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child – with our hearts and minds)*. Lund, Studentlitteratur. 165pp., 320 SEK (paperback) ISBN978-91-44-12068-3.

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As with other human rights documents, the effort to transform the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child into practice is very challenging. Among other things, it requires a process of translation (I'Anson, Quennerstedt & Robinson, 2017) into various national political contexts to adapt its directives and rules to educational systems. In the implementation of these rights, all forms of education are important (Tibbitts, 2017), and so is the fact that children's rights education not only concerns knowledge *of* rights but also involves putting rights into practice in relation to and together with other people (Quennerstedt, Tellberg, Brantefors & Thelander, 2019).

This book deals with how the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child can be implemented and realised in organisations such as preschool, school and social care services that work with children and young people in Sweden. The book is written in Swedish. In Sweden, municipal autonomy is far-reaching, which means that the obligation to implement directives and policies lies at the local/municipal level. This makes the municipality and its administration key actors in implementing children's rights in education and social care settings. However, *how* and *to what extent* efforts are made in the municipalities differs. Based on her own experiences of long-standing implementation initiatives in various organisations, and with a focus on education, Lundin Karphammar identifies two essential aspects in implementing children's rights in a municipality: a basic knowledge of the Convention; and an efficient management structure, together with strategies that enjoy legitimacy in the organisation. These are the components proven most likely to ensure successful implementation. Regarding basic knowledge of the Convention, the author underlines that this involves more than knowledge of the articles. It is equally important to create an understanding of the views and perspectives of children. This is inherent in the Convention and constitutes the *spirit* and approach that is expected to guide adults in realising children's rights. Together, knowledge and understanding generate the basic competence required to assess what is in the best interest of the child in different contexts. In short, implementing the Convention involves both our hearts and our intellects, and is a process based on human rights insights. Besides

emphasising the importance of Human Rights Education (HRE), the author provides material and planning as a basis for teaching a course.

The book comprises twelve chapters, with three clear themes. The first theme includes basic knowledge of the historical background, the Convention and its view and perspectives on children. The second theme focuses on implementation and the use of various methods and tools. Based on experiences of implementation in a municipality, the method of child impact analysis is introduced and presented in terms of how it can be applied in municipal organisations and administrations. The third theme develops the initial introduction to the basic principles of the Convention and the view of the child, which is presented in relation to legislation and the general principles of the UN's Committee on the Rights of the Child, which in various ways are indicative interpretations of the Convention. In the last two chapters, the author discusses how children as right holders are affected now that the Convention is law in Sweden.

The book deals with the Swedish situation in which, as mentioned, municipal autonomy provides a special context in relation to how the Convention can be implemented, when compared with other countries. At the same time, this work will be very valuable to anyone working with children and young people: It provides a basic knowledge of children's rights as well as a detailed survey of the development of the Swedish legislative process, from the ratification of the Convention to it becoming law. Several examples illustrate the importance of cooperation between various institutions and functions that are commonly in contact with children and young people. In addition, the book is full of clear descriptions and instructions regarding implementation measures.

One such measure is child impact analysis, which features prominently in putting the Convention into practice. Child impact analysis is defined as part of a decision process which in advance evaluates the possible consequences a decision can have for the child; it ensures that the child's views are considered through the whole process. The aim of the method is to highlight the child's best interests and, by extension, improve children's and young people's lives. Lundin Karphammar generously shares her own examples and experiences of different organisations, and shows how different interests and needs were in conflict and how this was addressed. Examples from the daily preschool and school activities illustrate how child impact analysis displayed the interests and views of different actors on an issue, and thus helped to provide a basis on which decisions were made. Other examples presented relate to issues on which the interests of teachers/school, guardians and children pointed in different directions, and how this was resolved. It is above all through the examples that readers understand how and why child impact analysis can be a tool in their own work. From my point of view, the method of child impact analysis is an effective instrument to highlight children's views and therefore it should be considered by HRE scholars in matters involving children and young people.

In sum, the author provides a hands-on manual with many examples of how the Convention can be practised in daily educational activities to strengthen children's rights. The strength of the book is its holistic perspective, which takes into account all municipal services relating to children and young people. However, more references to previous research in recent years would have been useful. Finally, it is noteworthy that although the author does not specifically refer to HRE, the topic of the book definitely belongs in the HRE research field.

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