

Appendix 7. Further information on child-friendly schools, rights respecting schools and Human Rights Friendly Schools

a. Child-friendly schools (CFS)¹

How did it start?

The CFS concept was first used in a systematic way by UNICEF, Save the Children and the World Health Organization in the mid-1990s, largely as the educational equivalent of the 'baby-friendly hospitals' that contributed to standards for hospitals where babies are born. With UNICEF's influence, the concept of CFS was soon widened beyond health and nutrition issues to include broader elements of quality in education, such as gender sensitivity, inclusiveness and human rights. In 1995 a UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre workshop resulted in an informal summary outlining 13 characteristics of a rights-based school that are essential to the CFS concept. In subsequent working papers, the CFS approach was presented as an 'umbrella' under which the diverse activities and goals of UNICEF's work on schools might be consolidated and rationalized.

While these efforts did not produce a formally accepted definition of the CFS model, the idea of '13 defining characteristics' gained currency and continues to be a reference point for the advocacy and implementation of CFS. By the end of 2001, UNICEF promoted a comprehensive and complex quality package that was nuanced to fit different country realities. Despite the difficulties involved in promoting such a complex and flexible approach, in 99 countries an estimated 579,000 schools received support through the CFS initiative. In March 2009 UNICEF published the *Child-Friendly Schools Manual*, which was developed with input from 155 countries. In December 2009, UNICEF published the *Child-Friendly Schools Programming Global Evaluation Report*, based on a review of documentation from all regions and six country site visits.

How does it work?

The 'umbrella'/'package' approach has given rise to variations on the CFS theme within UNICEF and, according to the *Child-Friendly Schools Manual*, the emerging CFS models present a confusing picture. They tend to focus on 'defining characteristics', but the number of characteristics varies from as few as 6 to as many as 16 depending on the context. These models also attempt to define CFS in terms of 'key components', including pedagogy, health, gender sensitivity, community participation, inclusiveness and protection.

A focus on emergencies has led to an increasing emphasis on the architectural aspects of CFS – location, design and construction; this also highlights the need to address environmental issues, community participation, the safety of school locations and the provision of 'safe areas' within schools. Most recently, issues of electric power (including solar, wind and other renewable sources) and Internet connectivity are being explored as part of the CFS approach. It is likely that, as in the earlier case of water and sanitation, these elements will become part of CFS models in some countries.

The complexity and flexibility of the approach make it difficult to sell the concept to countries or partner agencies as a coherent model for quality in education. These considerations suggest that it is counterproductive to regard the CFS model as rigid, with a pre-set number of defining characteristics or key components. Rather, it needs to be understood as flexible and adaptable, driven by certain broad principles that invite dialogue and bargaining, draw on proven good practices and embrace new concerns as the reality of different situations demands. In this regard, a CFS model is not so much about a destination at which schools and education systems can arrive and be labelled successful. It has more to do with the pathways along which schools and education systems endeavour to travel in the quest to promote child rights, quality and equity in education.

Based on the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), key principles of the CFS approach can be used to generate desired features/characteristics for CFS in particular settings. These in turn can be reviewed against the reality of available resources over a given timeframe, to arrive at a set of feasible standards for the design and implementation of CFS in a given country.

¹ Much of the information here is taken from UNICEF's *Child-Friendly Schools Manual*.

The key principles that drive the CFS process are so interrelated that efforts to interpret and implement any one of these principles invariably set off a 'chain reaction' that leads to other related principles coming into play.

Country example – Italy

The Italian Committee for UNICEF initiated the 'Child-Friendly School Programme' in 2006. The 'Towards a Child-Friendly School' publication outlined a theoretical approach proposing 'nine steps towards a Friendly School'. The central concept is that adults and children must work to create educational contexts where the CRC's principles are not only known but are also implemented in practice.

These are the nine components.

1. A Friendly School is a school of differences and solidarity: acceptance and quality of relationships are at the centre of school life.
2. Children actively share: their opinions are listened to and considered in decision-making.
3. Children are encouraged to lead the process of learning.
4. The learning environment is organized according to children's input.
5. A learning agreement is collaboratively developed with parents and all school stakeholders.
6. In coordination with the child-friendly cities initiative, a 'city strategy' for children is developed through a local plan of action, with schools at the centre of a regional network.
7. The planning for the child-friendly school takes place.
8. The 'Protocol of the Friendly School' is issued as a public agreement.
9. Self-evaluation: an annual monitoring exercise is conducted on the situation of children in the Friendly School.

In 2007, following an evaluation of the first year's activities, the programme started to develop some operational tools to help other schools implement the programme. Indicators have since been developed for seven of the nine steps, resulting in one or more practical questions per step (approximately 30 questions in total), based around the following questions.

- How can we know if a school is really a child-friendly school?
- How can we find out which rights are particularly difficult to implement?
- To what extent have rights been implemented?
- How can we judge whether a project or activity has achieved its purpose?

The questions are intended to elicit objective, concrete answers, not subject to personal opinion or interpretation. The indicators are used by teachers and children themselves. A simplified version has been developed for young children. The resulting picture demonstrates the extent to which different rights are being implemented in the school environment. This information is then used as a basis for participatory planning and implementation of activities and projects to improve the situation. The indicators also act as a baseline against which to measure progress.

The 2012 pilot phase of the programme 'Towards Child-Friendly Schools' involved 1,100 schools (realized by the Italian Committee for UNICEF in cooperation with the Italian Ministry of Education). At the beginning of the year each school is evaluated by a commission made up of the local Ministry of Education authority, a representative of UNICEF and a representative of the Board of Students. Every selected school is given a copy of the Operations Protocol, which provides school administrators with the objectives of the programme and all necessary information needed to implement it. Using this Protocol, including the indicators mentioned previously, the schools analyse the situation of rights implementation and collaboratively plan, with all school stakeholders, interventions to address any gaps. At the end of the pilot project each school will be evaluated by the same commission. The commission awards the best schools the title and certificate of 'child-friendly school'.

The 'Child-Friendly School Programme' requires time and commitment. Acknowledgement of difficulties, and even some failures, is an important part of the learning process. A publication has been developed to elaborate the first of the nine steps: the theme of acceptance. A scheme has also been developed to share good practices, focusing on children's leadership and participation.

b. Rights respecting schools (RRS)

How did it start?

RRS draws inspiration from UNICEF's CFS – see above. In 2000 in Canada, a collaboration between the Children's Rights Centre (Cape Breton University) and the Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board sought to encourage the integration of child rights education (CRE) into social studies and health core curricula, and to promote awareness of child rights among professionals working with children. Learning from this initiative led in 2004 to the 'Hampshire Rights, Respect and Responsibility Initiative' – a partnership with the Hampshire Education Authority in England. UNICEF UK then expanded their Rights Respecting Schools Award (RRSA) in 2005–2006; this is currently the largest and most well developed RRS model. The UNICEF Canada Rights Respecting Schools initiative was piloted in September 2008, building on existing CRE work with schools, teacher training and the Global Classroom initiative, and adapting materials from the Rights, Respect and Responsibility Initiative and RRSA. The initiative has now spread to other UNICEF National Committees. UNICEF Slovakia is implementing a version of RRS and models are being piloted by UNICEF in Spain, Germany and Sweden. In November 2011, UNICEF National Committee CRE staff from 17 countries attended a workshop hosted by UNICEF UK to learn more about RRS models.²

How does it work?

RRS models are based on 'standards' or 'building blocks' with benchmarks. In the UK model, the school, with support from UNICEF as necessary (for example, regional workshops, visits to schools and 'mentoring' and support from a UNICEF education officer), assesses what is already being done, identifies gaps in the fulfilment of children's rights, and establishes its own action plan to meet and monitor the standards. In the UK a school works through three stages of an 'awards scheme'.

1. **Recognition of Commitment** (by principal and senior leadership: a representative steering group of adults and students is formed to guide, promote and develop the initiative; they develop an action plan and procedures for monitoring impact [3–6 months' duration]);
2. **Level 1** (interim step to achieve full RRS status: school shows good progress [12–18 months' duration]);
3. **Level 2** (school has fully embedded the values and principles of the CRC into its ethos and curriculum and can show how it will maintain this [2–4 years' duration]). The school self-evaluates progress against the Level 1 and 2 standards and, when they believe they have met them, an external assessment by UNICEF takes place resulting either in accreditation or further guidance.

In the Canadian model particular weight is given to professional development and working with teacher education institutes. This provides a supportive and practical framework for educational improvement, with a focus on transforming the whole learning environment with a consistent child rights approach. The initiative is not meant to be delivered as an 'add-on' or new programme for a school, but as a way to bring cohesiveness to existing school programmes. UNICEF Canada's Rights Respecting Schools initiative is based on four building blocks: awareness, student participation, teaching and learning, and leadership (see table below).

The process begins with teacher training and assessing existing school practices. Schools then work with a UNICEF Canada staff member or a UNICEF Canada certified trainer to meet important benchmarks based on the four building blocks. These trainers can be professors with university partners, knowledgeable staff at strategically identified non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or child advocacy government departments.

² Intranet link to workshop materials (for National Committee staff): <www4.intranet.unicef.org/C12571FE002A2C63/5FBBBAC8EDCF6924852571550059E174/6FE411F5EC25585FC12579430038C38A>; (for other UNICEF staff): <<http://intranet.unicef.org/C12571FE002A2C63/5FBBBAC8EDCF6924852571550059E174/6FE411F5EC25585FC12579430038C38A>>.

UK RRSA 'standard'	Canada RRS 'building blocks' and definitions	
1. Rights-respecting values underpin leadership and management.	Leadership	Administrators are committed to promoting respect for children's rights. Children's rights are used as a lens for policies, programme choices, programme implementation and other decision-making.
2. The whole school community learns about the CRC.	Awareness	The school community (students, staff, teachers, parents) knows and understands the concept of children's rights, the rights children have as outlined in the CRC and how children's rights relate to school culture and to their own roles.
3. There is a rights-respecting ethos.	Teaching and learning	The CRC is a reference point for classroom rules, formal and informal curriculum implementation and other decision-making. Adults model rights-respecting attitudes and behaviour, and students are given regular opportunities to learn about and exercise their rights and responsibilities.
4. Children are empowered to become active citizens and learners.	Student participation	Every student has regular opportunities to be an active participant in the school community, and his or her opinions are sought and listened to by decision-makers.

In the Slovakian model schools work towards obtaining a certificate by fulfilling a set of criteria set by UNICEF Slovakia. Part of the assessment process requires that students evaluate their school's progress and communicate this information directly to the UNICEF programme coordinators, without it being filtered through adult intermediaries. After two years of being a RRS the school takes a more individual path, setting their own goals and actions to be taken for the next period.

In all countries, a multi-sectoral approach could be initiated to ensure integration with child protection efforts, among other things.

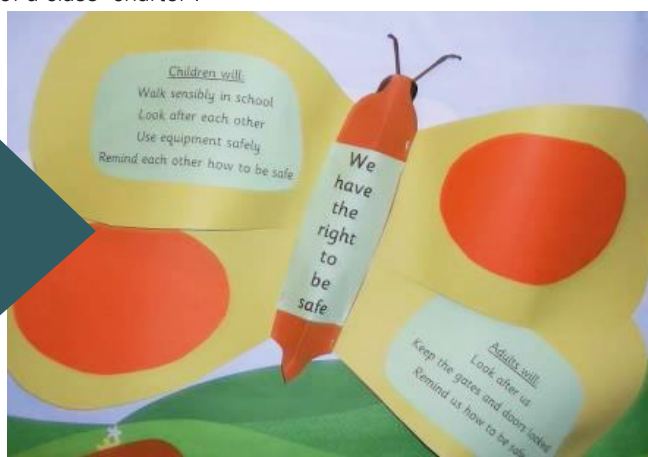
The process by which schools achieve the standards is not uniform: each school must find its own pathway. Nevertheless, a typical 'journey' of a school in the UK RRSA might follow these steps.

- **A teacher or principal hears about the RRSA**, often by word of mouth from a colleague in a school which is already involved in the scheme. (UNICEF UK does not proactively advertise: as of 2011 it was getting 10–15 new requests every week, purely by word of mouth.)
- **The teacher finds out more from the RRSA website and 'registers' the school online** (paying a small fee which encourages ownership, reduces drop-out and ensures that the principal is involved, as their approval is necessary for the release of school funds).
- The school receives an **introductory email** from the relevant UNICEF regional education officer, inviting it to attend a regional workshop. In some areas the local education authority, rather than the UNICEF education officer, has been trained to take on the local focal point role. The UNICEF education officer also contacts the relevant local volunteer to keep everyone in the loop.
- **The teacher attends a regional UNICEF workshop** which equips him or her to take the initiative forward in their school.
- The principal and senior leadership are enthusiastic and supportive. **The teacher explains the scheme and the concepts of the child rights approach and gets the 'buy-in' of all the teachers and support staff (and children).**
- Simultaneously, **a representative steering group** of teachers, non-teaching staff (for

example, administrators, caterers, playground supervisors), students (supposed to make up 50 per cent of the steering group), parents and governors is formed in order to guide, promote and develop the RRSA initiative. They develop an action plan and procedures for monitoring impact. They might start by conducting a **baseline survey of knowledge, attitudes and practice** in the school (via questionnaires and focus group discussions) and an 'audit' of existing records (for example, levels of attendance, staff sick leave, behaviour warnings and incidents of violence).

- This leads to the **development of the action plan** which is sent to the UNICEF education officer (or local education authority in places where it acts as the focal point) along with a summary of the baseline feedback and a letter from the principal showing commitment to the initiative, accompanied by evidence such as a copy of a leaflet sent to parents.
- Time is given, particularly at the beginning of the school year, to **introduce child rights to the children**, through whole school talks and classroom activities, in particular the participatory development of a class 'charter'.

Trimdon Village
Community Infant and
Nursery School, UK



King Street Primary
School, UK





Students choose selected CRC rights they think are particularly important for their school and create a wall display outlining the rights they are entitled to and the actions they have to take to ensure that other people can also enjoy these rights. Each student and the teacher signs the charter (for example, with a name, thumb print or photo), which is then displayed in the classroom and reviewed (for example, at the start of each term). Some schools also develop a whole 'school charter'. UNICEF UK reports that the more time spent really understanding rights, the better the charter development process will be. The development of charters should therefore not be rushed into. The 'rights charters' replace traditional 'school rules'. In the case of misbehaviour, the student is invited to reflect on the charter that they signed and think about the impact of their behaviour on the rights of others in the class. In some schools this has been further developed (based on the idea of children themselves) into a 'rights reflection sheet' which children take home to discuss with their parents, replacing, for example, 'behaviour warning sheets'. This has resulted in significant improvements in behaviour, according to feedback from both staff and students.

- After some initial specific activities on explaining the concepts of child rights, teachers are able to **begin to integrate child rights into their subject lesson plans** on an ongoing basis, and children and staff naturally come up with **ideas for child rights-related projects, displays and events**. Resources and ideas are available on the **RRSA Virtual Learning Environment website**, which is accessible to schools who have signed up to the RRSA.
- The school is **supported through the process** by the UNICEF education officer and volunteer (or local education authority focal point in some areas) and this relationship continues via email, phone and on-site visits as necessary until the school achieves the RRSA Level 2 standards.
- The whole process may take 2–4 years, but **after the initial up-front input from UNICEF**, schools are motivated by the positive impact on the school and become **increasingly self-sufficient**.
- **A follow-up takes place by UNICEF 3 years after a school has achieved Level 2** to ensure that standards are being maintained.

How widespread are RRS initiatives?

- 2,500 out of 25,000 schools in the UK were involved in RRSA as of 2011, reaching approximately 750,000 children. This includes primary schools, secondary schools, special schools and student referral units.
- 15 schools across Canada were involved in the RRS as of late 2012. UNICEF Canada will also develop an RRS initiative for secondary schools and Canadian Aboriginal schools.

The long-term strategy involves expanding the ‘train the trainer’ model, in which regional school board staff across Canada are trained and can be the leaders in their districts, eventually reaching 20 per cent of Canada’s approximately 700 school boards, or 20 per cent of Canada’s school-aged children (deemed to be reasonable given the challenging context of Canada’s geographically vast and highly decentralized education system).

- UNICEF Slovakia has a ‘child-friendly school’ initiative inspired by the UK RRSA model: 82 schools were registered in all regions of Slovakia as of 2011, with about 50 per cent obtaining a certificate to date.
- UNICEF Spain had a pilot initiative (December 2010 – March 2012) on implementing the CRC into school educational plans through school councils, working with 72 schools in different autonomies.
- UNICEF Spain in Catalonia had a pilot project starting mid-2011 – ‘A school with rights’ (*Una escola amb drets*) with three schools in Barcelona (one primary, one public secondary and one private secondary school).
- UNICEF Germany had a pilot initiative (2010–2012), ‘Pilot school-Network for Children’s Rights’ (*Modellschulen in Hessen*) in collaboration with the NGO Makista to establish 10 RRS in the Land Hessen. The evaluation of this pilot will lead to the integration of new criteria as standards of good quality schools. The 10 schools will be empowered to train other schools belonging to existing networks like ‘Democratic schools’.
- UNICEF Sweden piloted the UK RRSA model in two schools in southern Sweden (2009–2012). The evaluation will assess if UNICEF has the capacity to continue to spread the RRSA model and how this could be done.

How is it funded?

- Both the UK and Canada operate a cost-recovery/cost-sharing model. In the UK they charge schools for regional courses, school visits, local authority support, assessments and other activities. In both the UK and Canada the schools pay for the release time required to send teachers to the workshops, all photocopying and copying of teachers’ resources, along with optional additional costs for, for example, hosting external speakers at a school. The RRS programmes do not make a profit but they aim to cover the running costs.
- The UNICEF Slovakia initiative is funded by national grants, partnerships and fundraising (a share of fundraising done by schools goes to Education for Development projects). The UNICEF Spain initiatives are funded by UNICEF, the Spanish Agency for Development Cooperation and the Catalan government. The UNICEF Germany pilot is funded by two foundations and UNICEF. The UNICEF Sweden pilot is funded by the European Union.

c. Amnesty International’s Human Rights Friendly Schools project

This project is founded on the 10 Global Principles for Human Rights Friendly Schools. These are based on international human rights standards, norms and instruments such as the Universal Declaration on Human Rights. The Global Principles outline how schools can take the values and rights enshrined in these human rights instruments and apply them to a school setting.

The 10 Global Principles – A Human Rights Friendly School	
Promotes non-discrimination and inclusion by...	being a community where equality, non-discrimination, dignity and respect underpin all aspects of school life;
	providing a learning environment where all human rights are respected, protected and promoted;
	embracing inclusion in all aspects of school life.
Promotes participation by...	Encouraging all members of the school community to participate freely, actively and meaningfully in school life and in shaping school policies and practices regardless of gender, status or difference;
	ensuring everyone in the community has the information they need to participate fully in school life.
Ensures accountability by...	being fair, accountable and transparent in all its planning, processes and policies;
	protecting all members of the school community regardless of gender, status or difference, by making safety and security a shared priority and responsibility.
Prioritizes empowerment through teaching and learning by...	integrating human rights into all aspects of teaching and the curriculum;
	working to empower all students to reach their full potential through education, in particular those students who are marginalized due to their gender, status or difference;
	empowering students and staff to become active members of a global community, sharing their knowledge, understanding and learning with others and taking action to create a world where human rights are respected, protected and promoted.

How did it start?

The Human Rights Friendly Schools project was developed by Amnesty International within the context of the United Nations World Programme for Human Rights Education. The project developed out of Amnesty International's experience working on formal education, implementing human rights education activities such as teacher training and extra-curricular 'Human Rights Clubs' in schools. Building on these activities and its relationships with schools, Amnesty International started to implement the Human Rights Friendly Schools project in 2009 based on a whole school approach and founded on the belief that by increasing knowledge and changing attitudes and behaviours in entire communities, a global culture of human rights becomes possible.

How does it work?

The Human Rights Friendly Schools project is implemented by schools, with the involvement of the whole community and support from Amnesty International. The school has full creative control over how to integrate human rights, taking into account the framework of the national educational system and the social and cultural context in which it is situated.

As with CFS and RRS, it is a flexible model which is adapted to fit particular contexts. Nevertheless, a typical process might involve the following steps.

1. At the country level, contact is made between the national Amnesty International section and one or more schools. The approach may be initiated from either side.
2. The school decides, with the support of Amnesty International, if the project is right for the school.
3. Agreement is secured from the school leadership.
4. A Human Rights Friendly Schools Project Working Group is set up, with representation from students, teachers, non-teaching staff and parents. The Working Group is in charge of project planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation and is the main point of

contact with Amnesty International.

5. Awareness of the project is raised among students, teachers and the whole school community. The whole school community undertakes a self-assessment activity to map out the human rights situation in the school, often using the 'Human Rights Temperature Activity'.
6. The school develops a vision for becoming Human Rights Friendly, stating the main goal of the school.
7. The school develops an Action Plan: Amnesty International supports the school to develop a logical framework-type action plan, based on the school's wishes and capacity. The action plan sets out indicators and activities in order to integrate the 10 Global Principles into the four key areas of school life (governance, relationships, curriculum and extra-curricular activities, and school environment). Amnesty International provides guiding questions and suggestions on how to make changes in each of the four key areas.
8. Activities are implemented throughout the year. The component of education for rights can be linked to Amnesty International campaigns, taking advantage of the organization's strong advocacy messaging. For example, students might invite members of the wider community to take part in a debate on the death penalty. Amnesty International staff, supported by interns and volunteers, remain available for guidance throughout the year.
9. At the end of the year, the school undertakes a self-assessment using monitoring and evaluation tools developed for the schools. This is fed into a participatory, visual tool to measure the activities implemented and the changes seen.
10. The end-of-year assessment feeds into the revised action plan for the following year. In countries with more than one school involved in the Human Rights Friendly Schools project, a national network may be established to facilitate peer mentoring, joint trainings and competitions. Amnesty International Secretariat compiles a newsletter for the global network every two months, sharing case studies, project examples and other information.

Lessons learned

- The format of the project, using an action plan developed by the school itself, ensures the school's ownership of the project as school members identify their needs, the areas of work and the activities they want and are able to implement throughout the year. Amnesty International works in partnership with schools and provides guidance ensuring the school feels supported.
- Ownership and buy-in of the school leadership are essential, as is the establishment of a good, fully representative working group.
- It is helpful to clarify respective Amnesty International and school roles and responsibilities in a transparent and comprehensive memorandum of understanding.
- Training for teachers on how to teach in a rights-respecting way and how to integrate human rights into the curriculum is important and greatly appreciated.
- The more a school learns about human rights, the more self-critical they may become. A school may therefore judge itself more harshly in self-assessments as the years go by, even though they make increasingly good progress.
- Inter-country school exchange visits are very useful but are resource intensive.
- National networks are working well.
- The project is exploring ways to maximize opportunities for horizontal sharing of information through information and communication technologies.
- Translation to and from local languages requires resources and coordination in order to maximize cross-fertilization of learning between countries.
- There is currently no global lobbying strategy in relation to government engagement, but in many countries national authorities have been invited to participate in school events and this has led to dialogue about expanding the project to more schools, and ways to integrate human rights into the curriculum.

For further details, see Amnesty International, 'Becoming a Human Rights Friendly School: A guide for schools around the world', Amnesty International, London, 2012, <www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/POL32/001/2012/en>, accessed 19 July 2013.