

# A CHILD-RIGHTS BASED APPROACH TO CHILD AND YOUTH SERVICES

MONA PARÉ

UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA

INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH LABORATORY ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD (LRIDE/IRLRC))



# ON THE MENU:

---

- What are children's rights and why care about the CRC?
- What is a CRBA and how is it useful?



# WHAT ARE CHILDREN'S RIGHTS?

---

- **Human rights** of all children – persons under the age of majority
- All human rights – with some adjustments
  - What kinds of adjustments and why?
- Some that concern children specifically
  - Are they still human rights?
- Common framework: **Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)**

# INTRODUCTION TO THE CRC

---

- 1989
- One of the core UN human rights treaties
- 42 substantive articles
- Types of rights: civil, political, economic, social, cultural/ Protection, Provision, Participation
- General principles: non-discrimination (art. 2), best interests of the child, (art. 3), right to life, survival and development (art. 6), right to be heard (art. 12)
- Monitoring mechanism: Committee on the Rights of the Child
- Canada's commitment



# WHY USE THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD?

---

- Legal:
  - Rights-holders and Duty-bearers
  - Implementation :All appropriate measures; maximum extent of available resources (art. 4)
- Comprehensive
- General principles: **non-discrimination**, **right to life, survival and development**, **best interests of the child**, **right to be heard**
- Fills voids in domestic legislation: There is no Children's Charter
  - Canadian human rights legislation doesn't take children into account
  - Canadian child law is not rights-based enough

# WHAT IS A CHILD RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH (CRBA)?

---

- A type of a human rights-based approach (HRBA)
  - People are key actors of their own development – not just program recipients
  - Key elements:
    - International **human rights instruments** as a basis
    - Recognizing **universality, indivisibility and interrelatedness** of human rights
    - Identify **duty-bearers and rights-holders**
    - **Non-discrimination** and attention to vulnerable and marginalized groups
    - **Empowerment**

# CRBA – MORE SPECIFICALLY

---

- (the challenge of) Recognizing children as **subjects of rights** and partners with agency
- Based on the **CRC**
- Using CRC's **general principles**: non-discrimination, right to life, survival and development, best interests of the child, right to be heard
- Considering and working with **adults who are significant** in children's lives



# USEFULNESS OF CHILD RIGHTS AND APPLICATION OF A CRBA IN CHILD AND YOUTH SERVICES

---

- **Identifying rights:** Which rights could be better implemented; What rights violations are involved in specific situations?
- **Identifying all rights-holders** and giving attention to those whose rights to services are least: Who is left out? Why? Access to remedy in case of violations of rights?
- Provides a lens to **understand everyone's roles**, moving towards a comprehensive approach: Who can do what? How can we collaborate?
- Gives a **framework for assessing programs/activities**: What aspects are important in an evaluation? How can we improve accountability?



# CRBA IN CHILD AND YOUTH SERVICES

---

- For example:
  - Reaching forgotten/hard to reach groups
  - Offering programs and activities that are adapted and accessible, tailored to local and group realities
  - Recognizing and responding to the reality of changing family structures
  - Recognizing and addressing racism, racial tensions and cultural differences
  - Offering comprehensive services, collaborating with other organizations and government
  - Including children and youth as partners, using a bottom-up approach

# BENEFITS IN A NUTSHELL

---

- More effective action
- Better understanding of children's wellbeing and development
- More collaboration
- Accountability
- Common framework and language
- More actors having a key role: being heard, implementing the CRC

# THANK YOU!

---

Please get in touch : [mona.pare@uottawa.ca](mailto:mona.pare@uottawa.ca)

