

# Comment on the Implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in Hong Kong

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February 1, 2013 was a memorable day because at GENEVA, the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child announced the adoption of an official document, or "General Comment", that clarifies for governments worldwide the meaning and importance of article 31 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). The General Comment is online now:

[http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/docs/GC/CRC-C-GC-17\\_en.doc](http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/docs/GC/CRC-C-GC-17_en.doc)

The right of the child to rest, leisure, play, recreational activities, cultural life and the arts, UN General Comment no. 17

As an NGO advocating children's right to play in Hong Kong, we read the combined 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> reports of the People's Republic of China under the Convention on the Rights of the Child – Part Two: Hong Kong Special Administration Region and would like to highlight the following comments with respect to Article 31:

1. **Play is still a forgotten right** - Play is essential to the health and well-being of children. It is also a distinctive part of Article 31, equally important to leisure, recreation and cultural activities, but its meaning and values are not understood. Play is non-compulsory, driven by intrinsic motivation and is undertaken for its own sake, rather than as a means to an end. However, the report has mainly focused on the provision of structured and organized activities and its related facilities, especially arts and culture. Such an imbalanced development must be addressed;
  - ✓ 遊戲與閒暇、娛樂、文化活動同樣重要，但多年以來，仍然是被遺忘的一項權利
  - ✓ 遊戲並非只是為達成某種目的而來的工具
  - ✓ 報告只集中表述一些規範化及有系統的活動及相關設備，尤其偏重在藝術及文化範疇，發展不太平衡
2. **Hong Kong need provision of quality playable space in community** - Children need supportive and play-friendly environment to develop. Children never just play on designated play equipments. They need open space and in touch with the natural environments to expand their play horizon. Other than the outdoor and indoor playgrounds provided by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, children also need to play and in touch with natural environment, as well as neighborhood open play space close to their communities. The facilities management should be open to create a play-friendly or child-friendly culture to nurture our next generation.

- ✓ 兒童需要廣闊空間發展，室內或室內的遊樂空間並不足夠，還需要與社區聯繫，與大自然接觸
- ✓ 設施供應者需要開放視野，創造一個適合兒童、有助遊戲的空間

3. **Children need to play in school and in hospital** - Wherever there are children, their play need should be addressed. However, there is no mention in the reports about how children's right to play is implemented in school and hospital settings. Spontaneous play is of positive benefit to children's development and should be facilitated during the course of everyday life in school. For those children who are hospitalized, play is equally important in bringing enjoyment and strengthening their resilience in adversity condition. These play provisions will involve the concerted efforts of different government departments working together for the health and well-being of children, including but not limited to Education Bureau and Hospital Authority, etc.

- ✓ 每一位兒童都需要遊戲，不論在校園內還是在病房內
- ✓ 隨心而來的即興遊戲對學童有益
- ✓ 病房內的遊戲對病童的身體狀況及心理健康也有幫助
- ✓ 如何為學童及病童帶來遊戲，有賴政府各部門的通力合作，不限於教育局及醫管局

4. **Children with special needs need to Play** - We especially care for the play opportunities for children with special needs. In their entire childhood, most children with disabilities have been filled by "training" and surrounded by well-intended adults to meet the many developmental goals. Their right to play both in school and in community is often overlooked. Besides, there is still a big gap in the usage and provision of inclusive playground in public parks that require attention. And one of the most urgent agenda for playground improvement is to improve the design and types of provision, and for which the development of a guidelines on the design standards for inclusive playground is considered essential;

- ✓ 殘障的小朋友在技能訓練，完成發展目標以外，其實同樣需要遊戲
- ✓ 不過，不論在校園還是社區，殘障兒童的遊戲同樣被忽略，連共融遊樂設施的供應及使用也明顯存在一個重大間縫
- ✓ 所以，有必要改善供應及提升質素，而建立有關指引正是當前急務

5. **Supportive play provision for families need to further develop** - Community toy library provision has long been proven to be a supportive play provision for families. There is only one toy library at Central Library in Causeway Bay. Government should consider further develop this play provision to other districts.

- ✓ 社區內建立玩具圖書館，對親升親子關係有一大支持作用
- ✓ 不過，現時本港社區只有一間玩具圖書館，政府有必要在其他社區考慮建設

Finally, I would like to highlight again the General Comment just released by the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child on Article 31. The poor recognition of the significance of Article 31 in the lives of children has resulted in lack of investment in appropriate provision, weak or non-existent protective legislation and invisibility of children in national and local level planning. It is important to create time and space for spontaneous play, creation and creativity, and the promotion of societal attitudes that support and encourage the implementation of Article 31.

- ✓ Article 31 被廣泛忽略，引致投放資源、立法保障的缺乏，在規劃的層面，也漠視了兒童的聲音

The profound changes in the world in which our children are growing up are affecting the well-being of our children. We can no longer take happy and healthy childhood for granted. I trust that everyone care about children and earnestly call for your attention to the Rights of Children to Play, so that children can regain their childhood!

- ✓ 世界的轉變對兒童的成長舉足輕重，我們不可將健康快樂的童年視為理所當然
- ✓ 我相信每一位都關心愛護未來的主人翁，所以希望各位關注兒童的權利

Thank you for your attention!