

PRESS RELEASE

KidsRights Index 2017: violence and discrimination against children global concern

UK and New Zealand among global bottom-ten in children's rights

Amsterdam, 15 May 2017 – International children's rights foundation KidsRights and Erasmus University Rotterdam have today published the KidsRights Index 2017, the annual global ranking which charts countries' performance records concerning children's rights. Its scope is truly unique, as the Index collects data from various reputable sources and identifies global themes and trends in the children's rights arena. Portugal is lauded as the global frontrunner in 2017. It owes its first place to strong performances in the fields of child legislation, health and education. Notable examples of underperforming countries include the United Kingdom, which fell from an 11th to the 156th place, and New Zealand (down from 45 to 158).

Interestingly, economically prosperous countries are not necessarily outperforming the rest. The Index does not only assess countries' commitments to children's rights in absolute terms, but also relative to the available resources. This is reflected, among other examples, by top ten rankings for poorer countries Thailand and Tunisia, which both perform well in cultivating an enabling environment for the rights of the child. Overall, the Index shows that industrialised nations are falling drastically short of allocating sufficient budgets towards creating a stable environment for children's rights. Although many poorer states deserve praise for their efforts relative to their budgets and means, it is alarming that the industrialised world is neglecting its leadership responsibilities and failing to invest in the rights of children to the best of its abilities.

Consider, for example, the industrialised nations the UK and New Zealand, which this year both hold bottom-ten positions following very poor performances in domain 5, i.e. *Child Rights Environment*. The methodology for obtaining the final score in the Index is such that extremely poor performances in one domain cannot be compensated by higher scores in other areas, as all children's rights are equally important. Extreme underperformance in one of the domains therefore creates an insurmountable bottleneck that automatically demotes the concerned country to the lower-most region of the Index.

The highly alarming trend of discrimination against minority groups has continued across the globe in 2017 but is especially distressing in the Middle East and North Africa. Many vulnerable and marginalised groups including refugees and street children are still widely discriminated against. Marc Dullaert, founder and chairman of the KidsRights Foundation, urges all 165 countries listed in the Index to treat non-discrimination as a policy priority in 2017: "Discrimination against vulnerable groups of children and youths should be met head-on by all 165 governments represented in the Index. It is severely hampering the opportunities of future generations to reach their full potential."

On average, countries across the globe score high on *Enabling Legislation*, i.e. the indicator which measures the legal framework in place to protect and promote children's rights. Various states have adopted new child laws in recent years. However, many new laws fail to fully comply with the principles and provisions of the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)*, which is the crucial international benchmark. South Africa and the United Kingdom are just two examples of countries that must take steps to align domestic legislation with the CRC.

Overall ranking

Portugal is the Index's number one. Runners up in the top ten are Norway, Switzerland, Iceland, Spain, France, Sweden, Thailand, Tunisia and Finland. Brunei (111 → 65), Peru (87 → 62) and South Africa (109 → 84) receive honourable mentions for rising among the ranks significantly since last year's Index following noticeable improvements in fostering an enabling environment for children's rights. Worst performing countries overall in the Index are the Central African Republic, Afghanistan, Sierra Leone, Vanuatu, Chad, Equatorial Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea and the United Kingdom.

End of press release

The KidsRights Index: why it matters

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child has been ratified by all the world's nations except one: The United States of America. Its adoption in 1989 marked a crucial step in improving children's rights across the globe. However, there is still a considerable gap between the good intentions of policymakers and the actual effects policy has on the everyday lives of children. The KidsRights Index is the tool to uncover said gaps, chart the performances of countries and identify themes and trends in the children's rights arena. Its significance is arguably greater than ever, given the rise of political unrest and war in many regions. Geopolitical instability, e.g. civil war in the Middle East, will inevitably adversely impact the way our planet treats its youngest generation. The KidsRights Index serves as the watchdog that keeps track of how humanity is promoting or failing the rights of the child.

Further information about the KidsRights Index

The [KidsRights Index](#) is the annual global index published by the KidsRights Foundation which charts how countries adhere to and are equipped to improve children's rights. The KidsRights Index is an initiative of the KidsRights Foundation, in cooperation with Erasmus University Rotterdam: Erasmus School of Economics and the International Institute of Social Studies. It is a ranking of all states that have ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child for which sufficient data is available, a total of 165 countries in 2017. The Index pools data from two reputable sources: quantitative data published and regularly updated by UNICEF at www.data.unicef.org and qualitative data published by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in its Concluding Observations for all states that are legally bound by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The KidsRights Index's overall ranking and additional information, including a trend report of the rankings on the individual domains and other available information, are available at www.kidsrightsindex.org.

About the KidsRights Foundation

KidsRights is an international non-governmental organization that promotes the wellbeing of very vulnerable children across the world and advocates the realisation of their rights. KidsRights strives for a world where all children have access to their rights and are enabled to realise the great potential they carry within them. KidsRights sees children as *changemakers* with the power to move the world, and facilitates in voicing their opinions and acting to bring about change.

KidsRights supports children by commanding global attention for the realisation of children's rights and acting as a catalyst to ignite change, together with children and youths. We support this with research and action. KidsRights frequently conducts research to gain insight into the status of children's rights. The foundation also finances local projects aimed at directly improving the rights of vulnerable children and

stimulating child participation and change-making by youths. Please visit our website to find out more about KidsRights: <https://kidsrights.org>.

About Erasmus School of Economics and the International Institute of Social Studies

Erasmus School of Economics (ESE) is a leading centre for scientific research and education. As an internationally acclaimed institute, Erasmus School of Economics contributes to future economic developments and to answering issues related to government and business policy. <https://www.eur.nl/ese>.

The International Institute of Social Studies (ISS) is an international graduate school of critical policy-oriented social science. ISS staff does research, teaching and public service in the field of development studies and international cooperation. The ISS is part of Erasmus University Rotterdam, but is based in The Hague. <https://www.iss.nl>.

Additional information for media (not for publication)

All available press materials, including a summary report of the KidsRights Index and more information about research methods, are accessible via the KidsRights News Room: kidsrights.pr.co.

Please address interview requests or other media inquiries to KidsRights' media relations officer:

Elise Latour (The Netherlands)

E: elise@issuemakers.nl

T: +31 (0)20 345 5088

M: +31 (0)6 4749 2612