



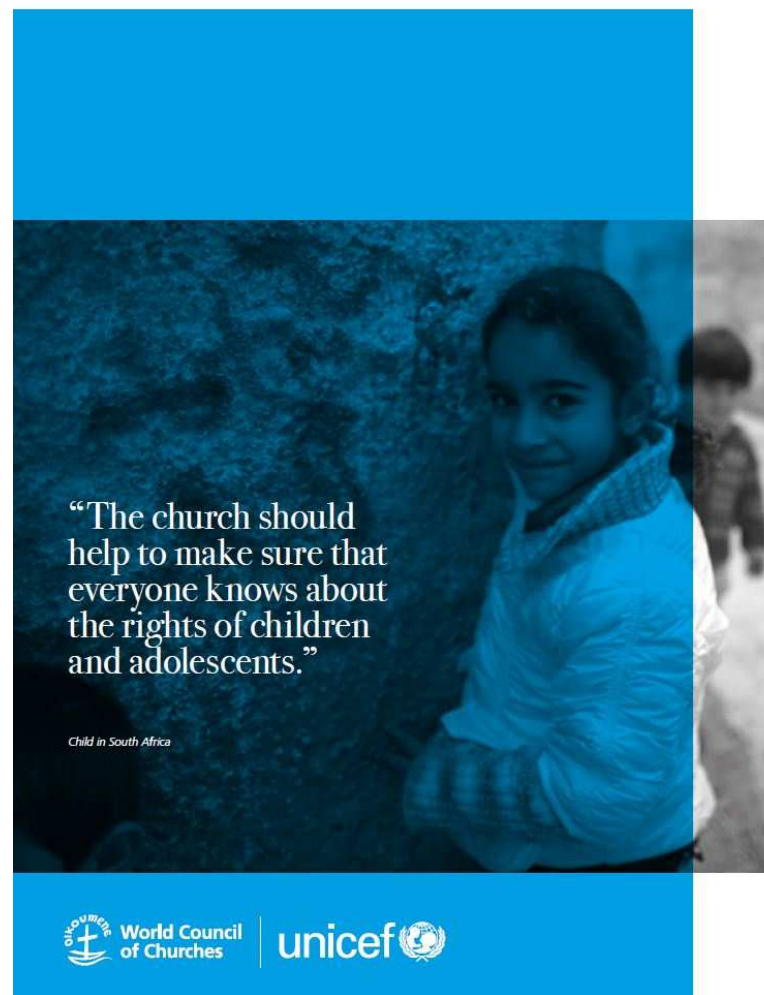
World Council
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CHURCHES' COMMITMENTS TO CHILDREN

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Churches' Commitments to Children

Churches uniting for children in the pilgrimage of justice and peace



The World Council of Churches (WCC)

- Worldwide fellowship of churches with over 70 years of experience uniting Christians for the common pursuit of justice and peace.
- Representing over 500 million Christians in more than 120 countries.
- Together with those of different faiths and the secular community the WCC condemns the misuse of religion and creates platforms for peace and reconciliation.
- Through its 350 member churches the WCC works at the grassroots for a more equitable society.



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WCC-UNICEF global partnership

- **Nov. 2013:** WCC 10th General Assembly, declaration: «*Putting Children at the Centre*», children's suffering witnessed by churches
-> churches asked the WCC for support
- **Sept. 2015:** Launch of the WCC-UNICEF global partnership to strengthen the capacity of member churches and ecumenical partners on child rights





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Aug. 2015 – Dec. 2016: worldwide consultation:

***How can churches use their influence to improve
children's lives?***

- 16 months of consultations among member churches and partners
 - *Collaboration by 235 experts (secular and religious)*
 - *Theological Working Group including various denominations*
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Consultations with children/youth





Churches' Commitments to Children

Churches uniting for children in the pilgrimage of justice and peace

- ### 1 Keep children safe

The church will do everything possible to keep children safe

 - Make sure that children feel safe in their churches, homes and communities and that children know whom to go to for help if they have a problem
 - Help stop children being hurt by other people in villages, cities, countries and throughout the world
 - Find ways in which churches can protect children in dangerous situations (for example: refugee children, children affected by storms, earthquakes, wars)
 - Help all children to have a "birth certificate".
- ### 2 Listen to children

The church will try very hard to make all decisions together with children when such decisions have something to do with children's lives. They also will plan activities for children together with children

 - In church activities and planning for services and praying
 - In society (including family, school, community, leaders, politicians and decision-makers).
- ### 3 Protect the planet for our children

The church will organize activities with children to protect our planet and to deal with problems caused by climate change - inside the church, and in society.



Do you find these commitments important? Do you have ideas for your own church?
If yes, then it will be interesting to discuss your suggestions with the community.

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www.oikoumene.org

Result: Consensus on the *Churches' Commitments to Children (CC2C)*

Invitation launched by WCC General Secretary in March 2017:

1. Promote child protection
2. Promote meaningful participation by children and adolescents
3. Raise church voices for intergenerational climate justice for and with children/youth

Unprecedented number of immediate responses by churches:

200 positive responses within only 3 months

-> UNICEF supported development of Online Platform **promoting mutual support** around CC2C implementation:

<https://commitments-to-children.oikoumene.org/>





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Churches commit to:

- Promote **non-violent discipline** and **positive parenting**





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Churches commit to:

- Help **end harmful traditional practices**, including female genital mutilation/ cutting, early marriage, gender-based violence, and violent discipline;



**End Violence
Against Children**
THE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP

Example - Nigeria: Up to 40 million people reached through member churches to help prevent domestic violence.



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Churches commit to:

- **Advocate with local and national authorities** for prevention of violence against children and adolescents, requesting them to provide services for the protection of children and adolescents (e.g. helplines);





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Churches commit to:

- Provide psychosocial support to children and adolescents in emergencies
<http://wechoosefaithoverfear.com/>



Examples: AGORA Genève, Eglise Protestante du Canton de Vaud (Familles-Relais), Italian Federation of Protestant Churches, Evangelical Lutheran Church US (Guardian Angels Programme)



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Churches commit to:

- Consider contributing to **alternative reports** to the UN Committee on the Right of the Child and the Universal Periodic Review;
- **Support children in giving their own views** and be heard by decision-makers at all levels of society, in religious and secular fora.



Examples of church engagement

- *United Church of Christ US*: Children supported in court case against US government, for threat caused to the planet (Juliana vs US)
- *Oeku Switzerland*: Eco-certification process of churches supporting children's initiatives
- *Church of South India*: Green pastors and teachers supporting children's initiatives - half a million people reached, eco-transformation





Facilitation of mutual support between partners:

- Collaboration by churches with UNICEF country offices in 12 countries (Argentina, Colombia, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Jamaica, Malawi, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Uruguay, Zambia, Zimbabwe)
 - Promoting churches' **inter-faith efforts for child rights**, thanks to support by Arigatou International
 - Sharing of tools and good practices for implementation of CC2C:
www.oikoumene.org/children
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Lessons learned in relation to ***The right of the child to freedom of thought, conscience and religion (CRC art.14)***

- Process which led to CC2C consensus: Need for safe spaces promoting dialogues.
- Strong innovations by some churches around Commitment 2 (meaningful child participation): eg Ethiopian Protestant Church, El Salvador Methodist Church, [Theopopettes](#) (Eglise Protestante de Genève) -> Children help to focus on the essence rather than on dogma.
- Role of faith organisations in global refugee response: evidence on spiritual support as a source of healing and resilience (<https://refugee.iliflc.com/refugees-forced-migration-hub/faith-related-global-compact-resources/>)
- Observations captured in collaboration with UN SG Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief around General Comment on freedom of religion/belief of the child:
http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/70/286



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