

Using Child Rights Impact Evaluations (CRIA) and Child Rights Impact Assessments (CRIE)

Video transcript

I'm Juliet Harris, Director of Together (Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights).

I'm here to talk to you about Child Rights Impact Assessments and Child Rights Impact Evaluations.

Child Rights Impact Assessments and Evaluations are tools to help us consider how a decision might impact or has impacted on children and young people's rights. They can vary widely in scope, from in-depth assessments for major strategic decisions and new laws to simpler, reflective evaluations for everyday activities.

Consider a strategic decision like revising local transport policies. An Impact Assessment for this would examine the impact of a change of policy on critical factors such as children's safety on the streets and on their access to education and after-school activities. A smaller-scale decision, such as changing a library's opening hours, would also need careful consideration from a children's rights perspective. An Impact Assessment would need to explore how these changes affect children's access to educational resources, particularly for those whose rights are at risk.

Effective Child Rights Impact Assessments consider varied impacts that a decision can have on different groups of children. A Child's Rights Impact Assessment helps to identify which rights could be impacted by a decision, and whether the impact will be positive, negative or neutral. It requires decision makers to look at the evidence or data that is available, and to identify any changes that might mitigate the negative impacts, and maximise the positive impacts.

They also help to identify and address potential issues early enabling preventative changes to uphold children's rights. They therefore need to be conducted at the very beginning of planning about a new decision, new law, or policy, and then updated on an ongoing basis.

It's important that children and young people are involved in Child's Rights Impact Assessment design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. Often children will identify issues that adults have missed. Involving children might mean commissioning engagement work. It's always important to look at what children have already said, as they say it's frustrating to keep

getting asked the same questions by adults if they don't do anything with the information. Children will need to be provided with accessible information about the process to meaningfully participate.

While significant decisions require formal, structured assessments, don't underestimate the value of informal assessments for smaller decisions. Simply contemplating key questions related to the UNCRC's general principles, can help to make sure every decision we make has children's rights at its core. For example, how does this decision affect those children whose rights are at risk? Will it have a negative impact on some children but not others? Is it in their best interests? Who is deciding what children's best interests actually are? Importantly, have we asked children and young people about this decision? What did they say? Is this decision the best option for helping make sure all children are able to thrive? Engaging with questions like this, whether in formal assessments or as part of reflective practice, helps to embed a children's human rights approach in every decision we make.

It's important to remember that Child Rights Impact Assessments must not be a one-off exercise and should always be followed by Child Rights Impact Evaluations. You do the Impact Assessment, and then you see whether it's had the results that you expected, you evaluate that, and then you move back around and through the cycle again.

Our Together members have some Top Tips. They are:

- Educate and train: Ensure you and your colleagues understand what Child Rights Impact Assessments are and why they are important. This may involve specialised training in children's rights.
- Gather comprehensive data, including disaggregated data and insights directly from children, to understand the impact of a decision on different groups.
- Clearly articulate actionable recommendations to help decision-makers implement necessary changes effectively.
- Transparency and accessibility: Publish your findings, including versions that are accessible to children, to maintain transparency.
- Continuous learning: Document and share your experiences and lessons learned to continuously improve the practice of conducting Impact Assessments.

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