



Kigali Declaration

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Our World, Our Voice



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Our World, Our Voice

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Introduction

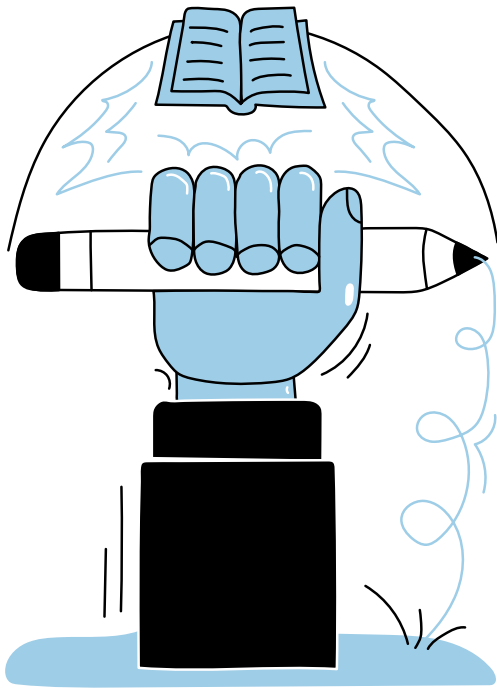
We – representatives of committees and associations of working children from 16 countries across the world – have come together for the Global Gathering of Working Children and Youth in Kigali, Rwanda from 16-20th January 2023, supported by the Dialogue Works campaign. We have used this unique opportunity to get to know each, to exchange and to learn. In addition, we have developed and discussed our suggestions and demands for policy-making and practice from local to global level.



1. Address poverty, provide decent jobs for our parents and ensure our basic needs are met

- Poverty and exploitation are causes of each other, and therefore must be eradicated from society, so that our families have sufficient resources to meet children's basic needs for food, clothes, health care, clean drinking water, sanitation, and education in urban and rural areas.
- The climate crisis, migration and displacement, health pandemics, conflict, environmental damage and corruption push us into new struggles that need to be dealt with. During pandemics and other emergencies, rights must be guaranteed for fair distribution, including social protection for adults and children, and all families should have access to quality health services, vaccines and a healthy environment.
- Parents and caregivers should have opportunities for work that is adequate and stable and vocational skill training in all settings, including rural, remote, camp and urban settings.
- Governments must guarantee rights, provide decent housing and land rights for families. Plus, we need more spaces for play, leisure and recreation for children's development.





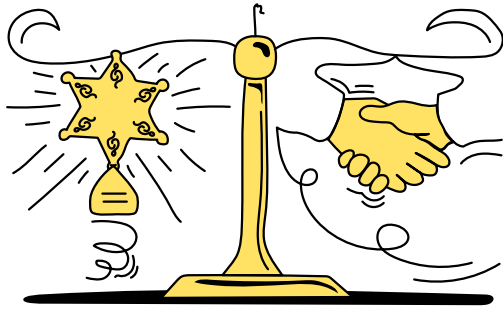
2. Take our education seriously and provide quality education and skill training

- We want our right to education to be respected, including during pandemics and other emergencies. This includes quality education as a right that is free, friendly, flexible to our needs, accessible, non-violent and non-discriminatory and skill training, including digital education. Education needs to be inclusive of all, including working children with disabilities, children speaking traditional languages and those without access to internet.
- We want to increase formal, social and community education on climate justice and respect for mother earth to all generations.
- We want informal education in our families and communities on children's rights and exploitation.
- We want more efforts from governments and states to re-enrol out of school children and to stop factors that hinder children from attending school, like discrimination and violence, as well as tuition fees. We don't want to miss school or drop out because of our work or for any other reason. In order to continue studying with our earnings we can cover part of the school costs and thus continue our education, and we also learn skills through our work.

3. Protect us from labour exploitation, harsh conditions and risks, and allow children to do suitable dignified work

- We all want our right to be protected from exploitation to be respected. We do not want to do work that is too heavy, underpaid, harmful, in harsh or risky conditions or linked to trafficking and bonded labour, which is a crime. Boys face increased risks of heavy work, and girls face increased risks of doing unpaid household work for long hours, taking them away from proper and dignified work.
- However, we do not want to stop all forms of child work. We want to do work that is suitable to our age and capacity to support our families, to learn skills, to earn money, to meet our basic needs and to respect our traditional cultures. This work needs to be safe, fairly paid, and allow for sufficient time to study, rest, and play.
- Many of us feel proud to contribute to our families and want our work to be valued. Our work gives us the opportunity to lead our lives with dignity, provide for our families, and to continue our education as it is also our cultural practice, not just the effect of poverty and exploitation.
- Existing laws on protection from child labour and exploitation must be adequately enforced and monitored everywhere. Plus, policies should support safe work, earn and learn education opportunities, and inclusive skill-based training. Work conditions should be improved, including for working children with disabilities.





4. Listen to us, understand us and implement laws that respect our rights

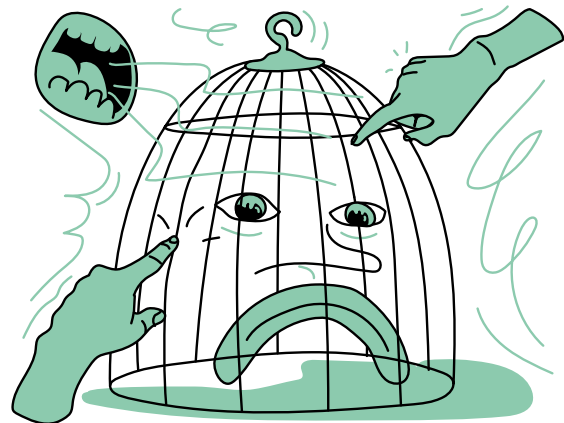
- We have the right to be heard and need to be seen, heard and engaged in all matters that affect our lives. We want to participate in decisions at all levels and be taken seriously by parents, caregivers, teachers, employers, police, practitioners, religious, traditional and community leaders and policy makers – including government authorities, and other national and international agencies, such as UNICEF, ILO or regional bodies.
- Listening is not enough; we want adults to act on what we say.
- Working children's committees, associations, networks and movements should be supported. We want to be informed about policies and laws affecting us. In addition, we want to play a role in shaping and monitoring laws, policies and programmes to increase proper implementation so they become sensitive to our realities, situations, needs and aspirations.
- Adults should see us as citizens and as important social actors in the care and protection of our planet and its inhabitants.

Closing Remarks

We call on all stakeholders from local to global level whose decisions influence our lives to take these views and demands into account and to collaborate with us on their implementation. The prevention of child labour exploitation and the promotion of children's rights, at its roots, requires recognition of a deeply intertwined relationship between children's rights and environmental protection and development.

5. Prevent and protect working children from violence and discrimination

- We want our right to protection from all forms of violence and discrimination, to be respected and to be treated fairly in all occasions.
- We experience different forms of violence (physical, emotional and sexual) and bullying in our homes, schools, on the street, and in the workplace. All working children are at risk of sexual and physical harassment; and in many regions, children with different abilities and girls face greater risks due to lack of protection and public care.
- We also experience violence and discrimination from police and other adults who are supposed to protect us. Police should respect and protect our rights. We need child friendly juvenile justice systems for all, including children with disabilities.
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, parents experienced higher levels of stress that increased risks of domestic violence in the home. Thus, governments should provide psychosocial support services for children and caregivers.



More information online: www.dialogue-works.com