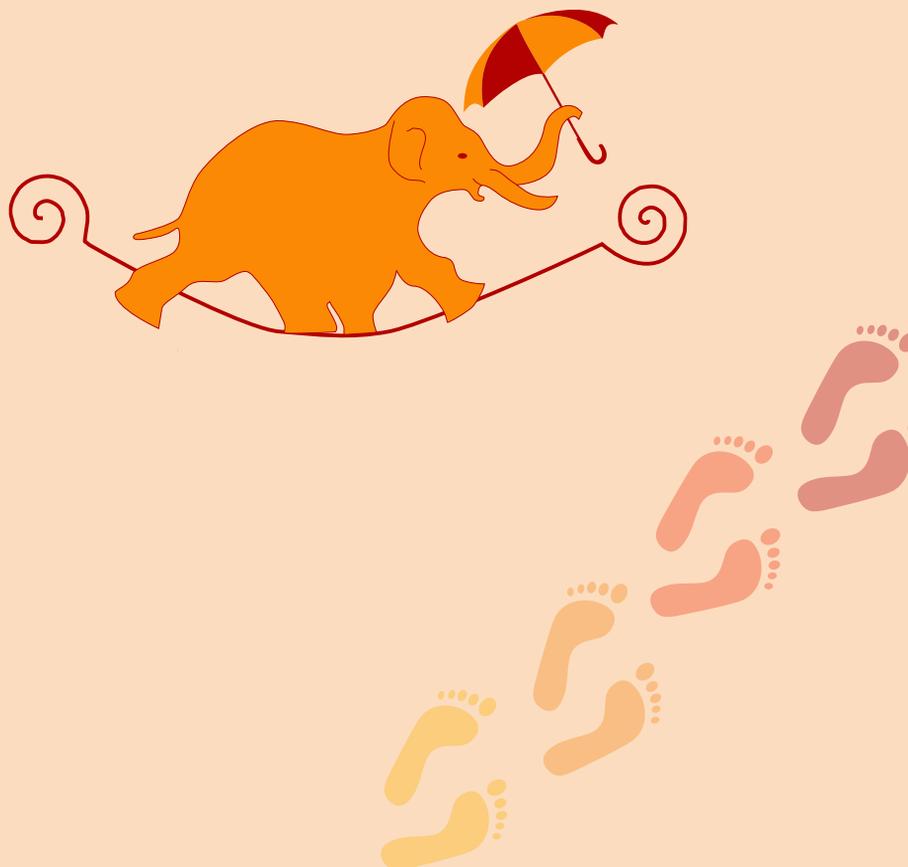


Staying the Course

The Library Director's Strategic Model for the Implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child



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FOREWORD

“Staying the Course” is an excellent title for a publication about the implementation of the rights of the child in an operation, activity, or organization. Accomplishing this requires a concerted effort at all levels, and it is important to be both strategic and systematic in one’s thinking and work.

Directors play a crucial role in the implementation, and directors – specifically, library directors – are the target group for this publication. At the strategic level, management plays a central role in creating good conditions for employees in the application of the rights of the child. The authors outline a clear and feasible work process.

Although this publication is intended for library directors, the model described is applicable to a wider range of organizations than just public libraries. It is so clear and easy to understand that anyone involved in any activity can read the content and understand how it works.

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THE LIBRARIES' WORK WITH THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

Why should public libraries work with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)? As a director or manager, why should you prioritize a focus on the rights of the child when there are so many other areas that cry out for attention?

To begin with, there is already a mission to do so. Sweden ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1990. On June 13, 2018 the Swedish Government moved to incorporate the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child into Swedish law. The law will enter into force on January 1, 2020.

The Library Act provides us with additional reasons to work in accordance with the UNCRC. Through the UNCRC, our country has committed itself to convey knowledge about the convention's content to children and adults. This is fully in line with § 2 of the Library Act (SFS no: 2013:801), which states that libraries must “work to promote democratic social development by contributing to knowledge sharing and the free formation of opinions.”

Children are a priority target group for public libraries. According to § 8 of the Library Act, libraries must “pay special attention to children and young people, in order to promote their language development and stimulate reading.” Working with the UNCRC is a great way to give children and young people attention.

It is important to point out that the convention is not a “children’s issue.” It is not a matter that can merely be handed off to employees who work directly with children as a target group. It is a matter of international law, and an issue for organization managers. As a library director, you are

ultimately responsible for ensuring that resources are assigned and allocated, and that they increase in accordance with the mission. You lead and plan work and skills development initiatives. Due to your position, you play a key role in the development of your library's organization.

It is your job – not the children's librarian's – to implement the UNCRC. By ensuring the quality of your organizations based on the UNCRC, you help to ensure that human rights are being fulfilled.

Most libraries already conduct rights-based activities, though they may not think about it or work consciously with the issue. Equally important to determining what is not being done is to gain perspective on what is actually already being done in the library's activities, in the form of targeted activities and human rights work. It is important that one begin to see oneself as an active participant in this process, and that one develop a sense of ownership with regard to the issue.



As early as the early 1990s, shortly after Sweden's ratification of the UNCRC, the researcher and teacher Kerstin Rydsjö incorporated the UNCRC into her teaching at the Swedish School of Library and Information Science at the University of Borås. Development Manager Lena Lundgren talks about this in an article about the UNCRC at libraries. Individual initiatives and training activities were conducted during the 1990s at both public and county libraries.¹

In 2003 the Swedish Library Association published "På barn och ungdomars villkor" ("On Children and Young People's Terms"), which contained recommendations and guidelines for how public libraries can work to live up to the UNCRC. But as Lena Lundgren writes, guidelines are one thing – but effects in daily practice are another.²

During the 2000s, awareness of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child have grown in the superficial sense, and have impacted library plans and other documents. Yet a considerable lack of knowledge persists among library employees. It is not enough that children's library staff work devotedly with the convention and the rights of the child. Management and other employees must also possess a deeper understanding of what this actually involves.³

If the municipality and/or library services state in their governing documents that their activities should be based on the UNCRC, or that children should be given priority, then this should also be reflected in the allocation of resources (premises, number of employees, budget), in the physical premises, and in operations, including the digital library, says Lena Lundgren.⁴

¹ Lundgren. *Barnen, Barnkonventionen och barnbiblioteken*, 7-11.

² The guidelines had been developed by the county libraries of central Sweden and remitted to library consultants and children's librarians from the other parts of the country. Lundgren. *Barnen, Barnkonventionen och barnbiblioteken*, 7-11.

³ Lundgren. *Barnen, Barnkonventionen och barnbiblioteken*, 7-11.

⁴ Ibid.

STAYING THE COURSE - THE PATH OF THE DIRECTOR

In 2011 a questionnaire survey was carried out among all county and public library directors in Värmland, Västmanland, Örebro County and Östergötland as part of a thesis project at the University of Borås entitled *The Convention on the Rights of the Child – Paying Lip Service*.⁵ The results showed that there was a lack of knowledge at the management level. A high proportion of directors at both county and public libraries had not understood that they already had a mission. There were also gaps in knowledge regarding what work to promote the rights of the child actually entails.

The insights from the survey provided impetus, and a request was issued by the regional library services in Örebro and Östergötland to the county libraries of central Sweden, inquiring whether anyone wished to participate in a development effort relating to the UNCRC.

Sörmland, Gävleborg and Stockholm expressed their interest. The Stockholm Regional Library was involved from the start, but for various reasons it was unable to finish its work.

The development project *Staying the Course – The Path of the Director* was a response to the thesis title *Paying Lip Service*. The title “Staying the Course” was chosen in order to emphasize the fact that statements about prioritizing children can end up being nothing more than rhetorical lip service. It was time to stay the course and take vigorous action to promote the rights of the child at libraries.

⁵ Blomberg, Holmén & Marberg. *Barnkonventionen - läpparnas bekännelse?* [The Convention on the Rights of the Child – Paying Lip Service]

The four county and regional libraries chose to work with model libraries for an extended period of time. They realized that in order to achieve change, they had to start by reaching out to library directors.

In order to bring about change, achieve an impact that permeates the entire public library system, and reach their target groups, the county and regional libraries chose to collaborate with a number of public library directors. The goal of the collaboration was to develop a strategic model that helps directors of public libraries to plan and implement the intentions of the UNCRC at all levels of their organizations.



ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION

This publication contains a strategic model for the implementation of the UNCRC at public libraries. The model is based on knowledge and experiences from *Staying the Course – The Path of the Director*, which is described in the previous chapter. The main sources of this publication and the model are documentation from joint training days with expert lectures, workshops, discussions, homework and coaching conducted between 2015 and 2017.

The model is not based on any scientific evidence, nor has it been tested in its entirety by any public library, although the directors who participated to varying degrees in *Staying the Course – The Path of the Director* have undergone different steps in the model and implemented it to varying extents in their respective organizations.

CONCEPT LIST

This list defines various concepts used in the text, as an aid to the reader. More concepts are described in the chapter “Materials, Methods, Exercises and Tools.

Child – According to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, people are children from birth until they reach 18 years of age.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child – Always refers to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

Implementation – The implementation of the UNCRC refers to the implementation or introduction of the UNCRC in different contexts. In this publication, implementation means working on, introducing, and implementing the content of the UNCRC’s 54 articles in public library activities.

Strategic – In this context, “strategic” means that the model is intended to be used as a comprehensive plan and structure at the management level in library organizations.

Transformation - Transformation is a method for adapting Swedish law to the UNCRC. It involves the introduction or amendment of provisions in Swedish laws so that they conform to the provisions of the convention.

Incorporation – The incorporation of a convention means that legislation is passed which stipulates that the convention in question shall apply as law in Sweden.

Taxonomy – The strategic model for the implementation of the UNCRC is a taxonomy. In the context of public library organizations, taxonomies were introduced by the Stockholm Regional Library in the book *Mäta och väga - om statistik och effektivitet på folkbibliotek (Measuring and Weighing – On Statistics and Efficiency at Public Libraries)*.⁶ According to the American researcher and psychologist Benjamin Bloom, a taxonomy is a hierarchical grouping in which knowledge is defined from the higher to the lower level according to: factual knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation.⁷



⁶ Ögland, Lundgren & Wockatz. *Mäta och väga - om statistik och effektivitet på folkbibliotek*.

⁷ Ögland. *Taxonomier - verktyg för biblioteksutveckling*, 9.

STRATEGIC MODEL

This chapter presents a strategic model that helps you, the library manager, to implement the Convention on the Rights of the Child in your organizations. The model consists of eight steps and is a taxonomy that can be seen as a staircase which you ascend from the bottom up.

You start at the lowest level, Step One, which is where the work begins. Step Eight is the highest level, where the work is completed. Each step describes what you are expected to know and do in your capacity as a director. The different steps build on each other, and you take one step at a time.

Certain steps include references to an appropriate methodology, material or exercises well suited to the step in question. All methods, materials and exercises are described collectively at the back of the publication.

Remember that you take one step at a time. Going through all the steps in the model can take a number of years. But do not be discouraged! Everything doesn't have to be done at once. Taking a single step is one hundred percent more than taking no steps at all. Feel free to contact your colleagues at other libraries. Perhaps you can carry out parts of the implementation together and support each other? Remember that it takes time to work according to a strategic model of this kind. As with all long-term development work, it is all about holding on and holding out.



1

You know that the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

When you are standing on the model's first step, you know that the UNCRC exists, that Sweden has ratified it, and that as a director/manager it is your mission and responsibility to ensure its implementation in the organization for which you are responsible.

About the Convention on the Rights of the Child

The Convention on the Rights of the Child is the convention to which the most countries in the world adhere. A ratification means a decision that the convention commits the ratifying state to an international agreement. All countries voted in favor of the adoption of the UNCRC at the UN General Assembly of 1989.

When a country ratifies a convention, it commits itself to putting said convention into practice in international law. Sweden ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1990, making it one of the first countries in the world to do so. Today, only the United States has failed to ratify the UNCRC.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child is not about children; rather, it is about working to promote human rights. "Children" are considered to be every person under the age of 18, unless the child reaches the age of majority earlier, pursuant to applicable legislation in the country in which the child is living or staying. In the UNCRC, the term "children" encompasses all children and young people.

2

You ensure that a survey of the current status of your organization and municipality is conducted

Step two involves surveying the current status of your municipality and organization. On the following pages, there are a number of points and questions which should be included in your survey.

You conduct the survey in order to obtain knowledge of the target group (children in your municipality) and about the current state of the mission of working with the rights of the child. The survey also gives you a picture of your organization's conditions, opportunities and obstacles, and an overview of how resources are currently allocated.

You start by making an inventory of the governing documents that regulate the library services. You then answer questions about the municipality and the library organizations.

As library director, it is up to you to decide who performs the survey and how it is conducted. You must answer certain parts and questions yourself; other questions may be answered by one or more employees or other people in the municipality. When possible, get others involved in the work.

Use the results of the survey as a basis for planning your ongoing implementation efforts and to identify any necessary changes to your prioritizations. You can use the results from the survey in your monitoring, in order to measure the effects of your efforts in the field of children's rights in library services.

Before the survey

You can divide the survey into two stages, where the factual part is conducted first and the part comprised of descriptions and estimates is left for later, to be performed by the employees as part of the implementation process. A number of the questions in the survey can also be used to spark discussion in the working group, for example, regarding what child competence is, what children's rights competence is, etc.

Challenge yourself by asking yourself what perspectives you believe you will gain, before you answer the questions. Perhaps you will "gain perspectives on unpleasant things, like where the library is located and where the children live," as one of the directors in *Staying the Course - The Path of the Director* put it. Or perhaps you will discover more pleasant things – like the fact that the Municipal Council has actually issued a formal decision regarding efforts to implement the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

After the survey

Reflect on the results of the survey. What surprises you? What confirms what you already knew? How should you react to what you see so that children's rights will be provided for to a greater degree?

Inventory of governing documents that regulate library organizations

Start by finding out everything that has been written about children and their rights in the national, regional and local governing documents which regulates the activities of the municipality and the library. What is in the Library Act, the culture plan, the library plan, the business plan? Has a formal decision been made by the Municipal Council or Municipal Board in your municipality about conducting work based on the Convention on the Rights of the Child?

Find out who in the municipality is responsible for children's rights issues, equality issues, public health matters, or the like. Write down everything you find out in the course of your inventory. You will use this information in Step Five.

Questions about the municipality and its library organizations

The questionnaire part of the survey consists of two sections. One section comprises "hard" objective facts such as statistics. These data are relatively easy to obtain.⁸ The second section consists of "softer," more subjective estimates and descriptions of the library services. You can use various methods to answer the questions.⁹ Ideally, these questions can be answered in collaboration with children of various ages; perhaps the children can be asked to take photos of different places they consider or experience to be problematic.

⁸ Suggestions on sources for answering the facts: Use statistics from the Royal Library, the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions, the municipality (such as the Statistics Unit, which has GIS, the Geographical Information System), the County Council, the Regional Federation, the County Council's health center, the Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs, and so on.

⁹ Suggestions for sources and further reading in order to describe, observe, and document in words and images: Ögland, *Från Kalix till Ystad - om observationer på folkbibliotek & Landstinget Sörmland*, *Våra miljöer med barns ögon – Vägledning för dig som trygghetsvandring i landstingets lokaler*.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE MUNICIPALITY

Specify sources, such as “Statistics Sweden data from November 2016.” This will make things easier for you when you conduct your next survey as part of monitoring the effects of the children’s rights work. Find out as much as possible about the municipality, such as the aspects listed below. If it is difficult to obtain exact numbers, provide descriptions instead.

Inhabitants

- Total number in the municipality?
- The number of children in the municipality, broken down by age groups?
 - o 0-5 years (preschool)
 - o 6-12 years (primary school)
 - o 13-18 years (secondary school)
- Which areas have the most children?
- Proportion of children with different native languages (and which native languages)?
- Proportion of foreign-born children?
- Proportion of children with parents who are foreign-born?
- Number of unaccompanied refugee children?
- Number of asylum seeking children/children who have been granted asylum?
- Is the municipality an administrative area for minority languages? Which ones?
- Are there groups of children with special needs? Which ones?

Socio-economic factors

- What is the level of education among adults?
- How prevalent is child poverty?
- What are the parameters of segregation?

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE LIBRARY ORGANIZATIONS

Geography

- Where in the municipality are library branches located?
 - o What is the density of children in these areas (do few or many children live there, how old are they, etc)? It is recommended that you compare this answer with the answer to the previous question about which areas of the municipality are home to the largest numbers of children.

Resources

- Total number of services, and the proportion of these which work directly with children?
- Total funding for skills development, and the proportion of such funds which is set aside for children's library staff?
- Total budget, and the proportion allocated for children's activities?
- Funding for media resources, broken down by children/adults?
- Funding for activities and events, broken down by children/adults?
- Investments, broken down by children/adults?

The library space

- Total number of visits, broken down by children/adults?
- Total area of which is children's space and adults' space?
- How are the spaces in the children's section divided between the different age groups?
- Where on the premises are the children's library spaces?
- Is there a separate entrance to the children's section?
- Is there a separate information desk or service point for children?
- If yes, is it always staffed?
- What skills do the staff possess?
- Are there children's web pages on the library's website?
- Does the library work with social media targeting children?

Media

- Number of loans, broken down by children/adults?
- Number of media resources, broken down by children/adults?

Activities and events

- Total number of activities, broken down by children/adults?
- Proportion of activities for children that incorporate an accessibility and multilingual perspective?

DESCRIBE THE LIBRARY ORGANIZATIONS

Answer the following questions by observing and documenting in words or images.

Media

- How does the classification system and shelving system look from a child perspective?
- Where are the children's media in languages other than Swedish and easy Swedish located?

The library space

- How do children find their way to the library?
- What is the outdoor environment adjacent to the library like?
- From the entrance, how do children make their way to the children's section?
- If you get down on your knees, what does the library look like from the eye level of a small child?
- How high are the book browsers and the displays for books for small children?
- At what height are signs for media and other signs posted?
- Are the signs directed at children?
- Where are the children? In the children's section or the adults' section?
- How do the children move around the space?
- What do they do?
- Is the space accessible to all children?
- Who uses various areas for different age groups, and how?

- Is the space accessible to all children?
- Are the opening hours adapted to children's needs (in relation to the working hours of adults, school time and free time)?

Participation

- How can children express their wishes and influence the library services?
- Is there a structure and policy for collecting wishes and comments from children?
- Does the library actively work to encourage the participation of children through, e.g., a library council, focus groups or similar?
- Does the library conduct user surveys aimed at children? What do the results indicate?

Expertise

- What proportion of all employees have children's library expertise?
- Assess the level of competence at the library with regard to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. What proportion of all employees and management possess competence at the basic level and expert level?

Collaborations

- With whom does the library currently collaborate (within and beyond the municipality) on matters related to children?
- With whom does the library not collaborate?

3

You learn about the articles of the UNCRC

In Step Three, you learn about what is stated in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. In order to be able to work with the implementation of the rights of the child, you must have knowledge of the articles that comprise the UNCRC. By reading the articles, you gain a comprehensive perspective.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child applies to all children who are living or staying in Sweden. The convention is about individuals. It includes all human rights – economic, social, and cultural rights as well as political and civil rights.

The UNCRC contains 54 articles; 41 are defining articles which set forth the rights to which every child is entitled. Articles 42-54 pertain to how countries should implement the convention and to the UN Committee's internal work with oversight and guidance.

The UNCRC should guide all public activities. Therefore, it is important that the decisions and activities of the municipalities, county councils and regions be based on the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

All articles in the UNCRC are interrelated. Therefore, it is not possible to pick out one article and read it completely separately from the others. The Convention on the Rights of the Child is whole and indivisible, just as the child is whole and indivisible. Read more about the UNCRC in its entirety on the website of the Children's Ombudsman.¹⁰ Here we highlight a few articles that are indicative and of particular interest for libraries.

¹⁰ Barnombudsmannen [The Ombudsman for Children]. *Barnkonventionen*.

Indicative articles

Certain articles are indicative and guide how UNCRC should be interpreted as a whole. There are articles 2, 3, 6 and 12, the four guiding principles. When you read all the other articles, you should keep these guiding principles in mind.

Article 2

1. States Parties shall respect and ensure the rights set forth in the present Convention to each child within their jurisdiction without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child's or his or her parent's or legal guardian's race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status.

2. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that the child is protected against all forms of discrimination or punishment on the basis of the status, activities, expressed opinions, or beliefs of the child's parents, legal guardians, or family members.

Article 3

1. In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration.

Article 6

1. States Parties recognize that every child has the inherent right to life.

2. States Parties shall ensure to the maximum extent possible the survival and development of the child.

Article 12

1. States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.

2. For this purpose, the child shall in particular be provided the opportunity to be heard in any judicial and administrative proceedings affecting the child, either directly, or through a representative or an appropriate body, in a manner consistent with the procedural rules of national law.

Additional articles especially relevant to public libraries

Other articles that can provide good support in your efforts to plan and implement the Convention on the Rights of the Child in your organizations are Articles 4, 13, 16, 17, 23, 30, 31 and 42.

Article 4

States Parties shall undertake all appropriate legislative, administrative, and other measures for the implementation of the rights recognized in the present Convention. With regard to economic, social and cultural rights, States Parties shall undertake such measures to the maximum extent of their available resources and, where needed, within the framework of international co-operation.

Article 13

1. The child shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of the child's choice.

Article 16

1. No child shall be subjected to arbitrary or unlawful interference with his or her privacy, family, or correspondence, nor to unlawful attacks on his or her honor and reputation.

2. The child has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.

Artikel 17

States Parties recognize the important function performed by the mass media and shall ensure that the child has access to information and

material from a diversity of national and international sources, especially those aimed at the promotion of his or her social, spiritual and moral well-being and physical and mental health. To this end, States Parties shall:

- Encourage the mass media to disseminate information and material of social and cultural benefit to the child and in accordance with the spirit of Article 29;
- Encourage international co-operation in the production, exchange and dissemination of such information and material from a diversity of cultural, national and international sources;
- Encourage the production and dissemination of children's books;
- Encourage the mass media to have particular regard to the linguistic needs of the child who belongs to a minority group or who is indigenous;
- Encourage the development of appropriate guidelines for the protection of the child from information and material injurious to his or her well-being, bearing in mind the provisions of Articles 13 and 18.

Article 23

1. States Parties recognize that a mentally or physically disabled child should enjoy a full and decent life, in conditions which ensure dignity, promote self-reliance and facilitate the child's active participation in the community.

Article 30

In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities or persons of indigenous origin exist, a child belonging to such a minority or who is indigenous shall not be denied the right, in community with other members of his or her group, to enjoy his or her own culture, to profess and practice his or her own religion, or to use his or her own language.

Article 31

1. States Parties recognize the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.

2. States Parties shall respect and promote the right of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and shall encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activity.

Article 42

States Parties undertake to make the principles and provisions of the Convention widely known, by appropriate and active means, to adults and children alike.

The Riksdag's strategy for strengthening the rights of the child in Sweden

On December 10, 2010 the Riksdag decided on a strategy for strengthening the rights of the child in Sweden.¹¹ The strategy pertains to public organizations such as the Riksdag, the government, state agencies, county councils, regional governments, and municipalities. It highlights nine principles that express basic conditions for strengthening the rights of the child.

¹¹ Regeringskansliet. *Strategi för att stärka barnets rättigheter i Sverige* [Strategy for Strengthening the Rights of the Child in Sweden]

To strengthen the rights of the child in Sweden, the following strategy shall apply: ¹²

- All legislation relating to children shall be drafted in agreement with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- The child's physical and psychological integrity is to be respected in all contexts.
- Children shall be given opportunities to express their views in issues related to them.
- Children shall gain knowledge about their rights and what these mean in practice.
- Parents shall gain knowledge about the rights of the child and be offered support in their parenting.
- Policymakers and relevant professional groups shall have knowledge of the rights of the child and incorporate this knowledge in their relevant activities.
- Actors in various activities relating to children shall strengthen the rights of the child through co-operation.
- Current knowledge of children's living conditions shall constitute the basis for decisions and priorities relating to children.
- Decisions and actions concerning children shall be monitored and evaluated based on a child rights perspective.

¹² Regeringskansliet. *Strategi för att stärka barnets rättigheter i Sverige* [Strategy for Strengthening the Rights of the Child in Sweden]

4

You learn how you can make an assessment of the best interests of the child

In Step Four, you learn a model for assessing what is in the best interests of the child, so that you can make decisions which cater to what is best for the child.

An assessment of the best interests of the child is a simplified variant of a child impact analysis.¹³ This is a tool for translating the Convention on the Rights of the Child into action, and for visualizing the best interests of the child in the organization in question. For example, you can use it when making organizational changes, budget allocations, and staff appointments.

Assessing the best interests of the child

Ideally, the assessment should be made before a decision is adopted. By assessing various questions of consequence to children, you ensure that the rights of the child are met. You broaden the decision-making basis, gain the ability to justify your choice, and can influence the decision.

The assessment can also be used to evaluate decisions that have already been made. As a director, it will be helpful if you work systematically and make sure that a child perspective is incorporated in the decisions.

Two trade-offs must be made if you do not choose the best interests of the child in an assessment. How can you justify or compensate for the fact that you cannot fulfill the best interests of the child in this decision? And how important is the reason you cannot do so, in relation to other interests?

¹³ Read more about what a child impact analysis is in the chapter "*Methods, Materials, Exercises and Tools.*"

The Assessment of the Best Interests of the Child in a Library Context



Here's what to do

Use this thought model to make an assessment of the best interests of the child, based on the articles of the UNCRC.

1. Formulate your question in the middle of the model, and describe the issue about which you must make a decision.
2. Use the various articles to illuminate your issue. Start with the four guiding principles in Articles 2, 3, 6 and 12.¹⁴ Then continue with the other articles.
3. You can use example questions (see below) that relates to the different articles.
4. Once you have analyzed your question through the different articles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, you will have gained a knowledge base that will help you make a decision that meets the best interests of the child or children.

EXAMPLE QUESTIONS

Guiding principles

Article 2 - The child's right not to be discriminated against

- Which children visit the library?
- Which children do not visit the library?
- When, where and how do we encounter the children?
- Which child perspective do we apply in our organizations?

Article 3 - The best interests of the child

- What are the best interests of the child?
- Do we think in terms of individual children or children as a group?

¹⁴ Read more about the articles in chapter *Step 3 - You learn about the articles of the UNCRC*

- How and when do we discuss the best interests of the child in our operational planning?
- Are the best interests of the child taken into account in decisions relating to children?
- Are there procedures for the consideration of the best interests of the child, and how are decisions documented and evaluated?
- What do the children themselves have to say?

Article 6 - The child's right to life, survival and development

- What knowledge do we have about the lives and living conditions of children in our municipality?
- With whom do we need to collaborate in order to ensure that all children can be developed?
- How do we work with the child's right to rest, play and leisure?
- How we work with vulnerable children?

Article 12 - The child's right to voice his/her opinions and have them respected

- What procedures are in place to allow children to participate and assert influence? Here you can make use of Shier's ladder, for example.¹⁵
- Do all children have the opportunity to express their views?
- What importance do we attach to the views of children?

INDICATIVE ARTICLES

Article 1 - A child is every person under the age of 18

- Do we view children as a homogeneous group divided into age categories, or as individuals?

¹⁵ Read more about Shier's Ladder in the chapter *Methods, Materials, Exercises and Tools*.

- Which children do we encounter in our activities?
- What age limits do we set for children?

Article 13 - The right of the child to information and freedom of expression

- How do we cater to children's right to receive and impart information of various kinds and freely express their thoughts?

Article 19 - The child's right to protection

- How do we deal with our reporting obligation?
- What rules and policies do we have for protecting children at the library?

Article 23 - Children with special needs

- Do we see children with special needs as a homogeneous group divided into age categories, or as individuals?
- What activities does the library offer for children with special needs?

Article 27 - The child's financial resources

- The gratis principle – are all services free for children?
- The proximity principle – are library activities conducted in places where children are located?

Article 30 – Children belonging to an ethnic, religious or linguistic minority or an indigenous people are entitled to their own cultural life, to profess and practice their own religion, or to use their own language.

- How do we cater to the right of children belonging to a minority or an indigenous people (and others) to practice their own culture, religion and language?

Article 31 - The child's right to rest, leisure, play and recreation, and to participate freely in cultural and artistic life

- In what ways do we enable children's own creation and participation in cultural activities?
- Where in the library space is the child given the room to rest, play, and engage in recreation?

IMPLEMENTING ARTICLES

Article 4 - Implementing the convention

- How are children prioritized?
- How visible is the Convention on the Rights of the Child in the library's governing documents?
- What is the library's strategy for implementing the UNCRC?
- How should the work with the Convention on the Rights of the Child be evaluated and monitored?

Article 42 Disseminate knowledge about the UNCRC

- Whom do we inform about the UNCRC, and how?
- Who in our organization is familiar with the UNCRC and its contents?

Depending on the question you might also need to conduct a more comprehensive child impact analysis in order to be able to make an informed decision. Remember to document your positions leading up to the decision. After a while you evaluate whether the decision met the best interests of the child or children.

METHOD:

- Children's checklist
- Shier's Ladder
- Child impact analysis or consideration of the child's best interests

5

You write an action plan for the implementation

In Step Five, you create an action plan that describes how the implementation process will be carried out in the whole organization.

The implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child is a long-term process that takes time. The action plan is the tool you need to make sure that the work proceeds and doesn't run out of steam. In the action plan you describe the different activities that must be carried out, and which will advance your organization towards its goals, in both the short and long term.

In the action plan, you answers the following questions

- What needs to be done?
- How should it be done?
- When should it be done?
- Who is affected?
- Who is responsible for ensuring that it is done?
- How are the activities monitored?

Also consider what additional knowledge you need for the process of implementation. One tip may be to use SALAR's implementation keys and application keys.¹⁶

¹⁶ Sveriges Kommuner och Landsting [The Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions]. *Förberedelser inför att barnkonventionen blir lag.*

The different areas of the action plan

Start by identifying which areas you need to work with in your organization. It may be relevant to include these six areas in your action plan:

- Governing documents
- Finances
- The Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Collaboration and co-operation
- Participation and influence
- The dissemination of information

Template for an action plan with support questions within the various areas

Feel free to use the following sample template to structure your action plan. The template contains examples of how you can work with the various areas. Each area may have multiple goals. In each area you follow the setup of the action plan and describe what should be done, how and when it should be done, who is affected, who is responsible, and who will follow up.

Action Plan Template - <i>Examples</i>	
Goal	Knowledge about the UNCRC
Activity	Basic web training from SALAR
Person	Responsible Director
Schedule	Start date and end date
Follow-up	Director

SUPPORT QUESTIONS

Area: Governing documents

What do all employees need to know about applicable governing documents?

Area: Finances

What knowledge do I need in order to incorporate a child rights perspective in the budget?

What knowledge do my coworkers need in order to do so?

Area: The Convention on the Rights of the Child

What basic knowledge do all employees require about children, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and its articles? Who in the organization requires in-depth knowledge about children, the Convention and its articles?

Area: Collaboration and co-operation

How should the work be organized?

With whom should the organization collaborate and cooperate?

Area: Participation and influence

What do all employees need to know about participation and influence processes?

Area: The dissemination of information

How should the library educate children and adults about the Convention on the Rights of the Child?

6

You ensure continuing professional training for all employees

In Step Six, you take the first step in the practical implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. It's time to get started!

Now you'll begin to build your knowledge together with all your co-workers. The entire organization and people in every professional category require knowledge about the rights of the child. All employees must be involved in the continuing professional training efforts. Continuing professional training takes place in several stages and on different occasions, in order to create the opportunity for reflection and independent work in between sessions.

Start by presenting the contents of various governing documents and the results of the survey you conducted in Step Two. Then go through the articles of the UNCRC. Use the chapter "Methods, Materials, Exercises and Tools" in this publication when planning the continuing professional training program.

Feel free to seek the support of others when planning continuing professional training. Perhaps there is staff at your library that can participate in the planning and lead parts of the process? Contact the municipality's children's rights strategist, if there is such a position. You can also contact the regional library for support.

In-depth training on methods and tools

In addition to ensuring that all employees receive basic continuing professional training, it may also be advantageous to designate colleagues who are assigned a special responsibility for children's rights. These people need to dig deeper into the issues surrounding the rights of the child, gain a deeper understanding and gain access to more methods and tools in order to drive the issue of children's rights and inform and educate others. One useful tool that can also be used by your coworkers is the model for assessing the best interests of the child, which you learned about in Step Four.

Different approaches

As with all types of development processes, people approach new directives in different ways. When it comes to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Elizabeth Englundh opines in her thesis that in a working group, one often encounters four different approaches or attitudes regarding work with the UNCRC.¹⁷

- **"Finally, a mandate!"** say the people who are driven by an inner motivation. They immediately see opportunities to change and improve things. However, these people should not lead the implementation process.
- **"There's no demand for this, so we don't need to do anything."** These people take a bureaucratic approach and have a stand-offish attitude. Getting them started requires an external motivation. In Sweden, the entrance into legal force of the Convention on the Rights of the Child may motivate these people.

Cont. next page

¹⁷ Englundh. *Folkrådet för barn som pedagogiskt åtagande: Statligt ansvar - regionalt lärande?*

- **“We already do this. No action is needed.”** This is the most difficult group. It may include people who work directly with the target group (children). With them, it is important to emphasize the rights perspective. Working with children and children’s activities need not automatically be synonymous with working with the human rights of people under 18 years of age.
- **“It has no bearing on us. There are no children in this organization.”** In this group, skills development is needed which, for example, makes it clear that decisions made in the organization may have implications for children, even if there are no visible children involved in its organizations.

It can be useful to keep these different approaches in mind when introducing and securing support for the implementation work in the working group.

METHOD:

- Card game
- Presentations
- Web training
- Shier’s Ladder
- Newspaper club
- Quiz
- Values-driven or rules-based?

7

You ensure quality and sustainability

In Step Seven, the implementation process progresses according to your action plan. You find your own ways to ensure that the UNCRC is incorporated as a vital part of your organizations.

You review and revise the action plan on an ongoing basis. You include the Convention on the Rights of the Child in all new plans. You return to the survey that you conducted in Step One and revise it so that it remains up-to-date. You conduct external environment monitoring, replenish knowledge and ensure that new employees receive information and continuing professional training. You monitor and evaluate and ensure that all goals are measurable.

Remember that the process of handing over work responsibilities to a successor is important. This applies to both managers and employees. Your work with the Convention on the Rights of the Child must not be person-dependent. It is important that you make sure that the work with the UNCRC does not become an issue that is only incorporated into the children's library organizations.

Support structures are important for the long-term sustainability of the implementation. Ask for support from your regional library in following up and suggestions for development. Set realistic goals and do what is possible. Alt do the possible.

METHOD: Children's Annex Children's Account

8

You have implemented the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

Congratulations! You've done such a great job! It is time to celebrate!

You have reached Step Eight – the final step. You and your coworkers have knowledge and tools. You've created a library organization that provides for the human rights of the child. You have a clear idea of how your organization should continue to be developed for the benefit of the best interests of the child. You have a plan for monitoring and a strategy for the future. Now you need to stay the course – the implementation of the UNCRC won't happen overnight, it is a day to day process.



Success factors

The experiences of the library directors who worked according to the strategic model for the implementation of the UNCRC in public libraries within the context of *Staying the Course – The Path of the Director* point to a few success factors. Their advice to you is to:

- Begin to dig where you are standing. Find someone in your own management team or municipality with whom you can collaborate when you initiate an implementation process.
- Seek out a sounding board. A fellow director who faces the same challenges is valuable as a sounding board. Use the regional library for services for guidance and support. Create time for self-reflection.
- Make sure that you have the time and resources for the work from the very beginning. Create a realistic, clear and time-sensitive plan for implementation, for yourself or together with other responsible persons.
- Dare to prioritize. Everyday problems demand time and attention. Think about how you can overcome any obstacles to daring to make clear priorities that benefit children, and take action.
- Be stubborn, but be patient. It takes time to implement the Convention on the Rights of the Child! It is important to maintain motivation on the home front – both your own and that of your coworkers.

METHODS, MATERIALS, EXERCISES AND TOOLS

You will find a lot of materials, methods, exercises and tools that may be useful in the implementation process of your organization. A selection of these resources is presented below.

Some methods are tried and true approaches long used in children's rights work and library activities. Some are examples of exercises that have been tested and used together with public library directors in the development project *Staying the Course - The Path of the Director*.

Children's annex

A children's annex is an appendix to the regular budget. It delineates the prioritizations that ought to be made in the coming year with regard to children. It may be appropriate to draft a children's annex in connection with Step Seven of the strategic model.

The following items may be included in a children's annex

- The goals of the organization, from a child perspective.
- An explanation of how knowledge should be shared and discussions conducted.
- An explanation of how the organization ensures that children can be heard and exert their influence.
- A survey and description of the current situation.
- A completed impact assessment.
- A statement of financial initiatives and priorities being undertaken; what, for whom, costs, outcomes and effects.
- A follow-up.¹⁸

¹⁸ Barnombudsmannen [The Ombudsman for Children]. *Barnbilaga*.

Children's account

A children's account is a compilation of an organization's results that directly affect children. This means that in connection with its annual financial accounting, each administration conducts a specific evaluation of how decisions have affected the terms and conditions for children and young people within the field, or in an organization.¹⁹ It may be appropriate to draft a children's account in connection with Step Seven of the strategic model, in which you monitor and ensure quality and sustainability.

Children's budget

The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child attaches great importance to the existence of a children's rights perspective in budget work – that activities for children are not being cut disproportionately in relation to other activities. The budget work should make visible the best interests of the child, not only at the national level but (even more so) at the local level, i.e., in library organizations within the municipality.

The budget is the most important tool for accomplishing compliance with Article 4 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which requires that the state, public authorities and municipalities prioritize enough resources for children so that the goal that has been set can be achieved. By looking at the budget, one can see whether this is happening. The budget shows how policymakers prioritize and balance different needs and whether measures are being taken, as well as the ways in which they monitor and report the results.²⁰

It may be appropriate to draft a children's budget in connection with Step 5 of the strategic model, as part of your action plan for the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Children's checklist

A children's checklist is used to easily make it clear that all decisions will be subjected to impact analysis based on how they affect children. The aim

¹⁹ Barnombudsmannen [The Ombudsman for Children]. *Barnbokslut*.

²⁰ Barnombudsmannen [The Ombudsman for Children]. *Barnbudget*

is that the child perspective should receive more attention on all levels. The checklist should follow the matter at hand from beginning to end.²¹

The children's checklist contains a series of questions that should be asked before each decision is made. Examples of questions include: How does this proposal affect children's situation? Have children had the opportunity to influence the proposal or provide feedback? When you are on Step Four of the strategic model, you can try to make a children's checklist based on a specific matter.

Child impact analysis or assessment of the best interests of the child

When is it appropriate to make a child impact analysis? According to the Children's Ombudsman, "the degree to which a decision affects children should be the guiding principle when determining whether a child impact assessment should be conducted at all, and how comprehensive the assessment and the documentation should be. Before every decision, the organization should therefore ask itself whether the decision will have a direct and tangible impact on children."²²

Based on the subject of investigation, the assessment should contain current legislation, research and current practices. Which articles of the UNCRC should be taken into account? What does proven experience, the child's network, or the child/children themselves have to say in the matter?²³

What is the difference between an assessment of the best interests of the child and a child impact analysis? The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child recommends that child impact assessments should be made in the event of major changes relating to children.²⁴ In addition to that

²¹ Barnombudsmannen [The Ombudsman for Children]. *Barnchecklista*.

²² Rasmusson & Andersson. *Med barnkonventionen som karta och kompass i kommuner och landsting*.

²³ Sveriges Kommuner och Landsting [The Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions]. *Prövning av barnets bästa - Ett verktyg för styrning och ledning*.

²⁴ Ibid.

what is included in the assessment, it should also contain “a broader reasoning about, e.g., financial aspects, and what the long and short term consequences could be for different groups of children.” A child impact assessment should always be documented and followed up.

In Step Four of the strategic model, you try out a thought model for assessing the best interests of the child.

The Four Phases of Dialogue

The Four Phases of Dialogue is a method that indicates which assets are available in the organization, provides a gross list of possible areas of development and helps to create a realistic plan of action for the organization. The Four Phases of Dialogue is useful in Step Five, in which you write an action plan for the implementation.

It is wise to conduct the method along with other people, the management group or a group with special responsibility for children’s rights in the organization, so that many perspectives are covered and knowledge is shared.

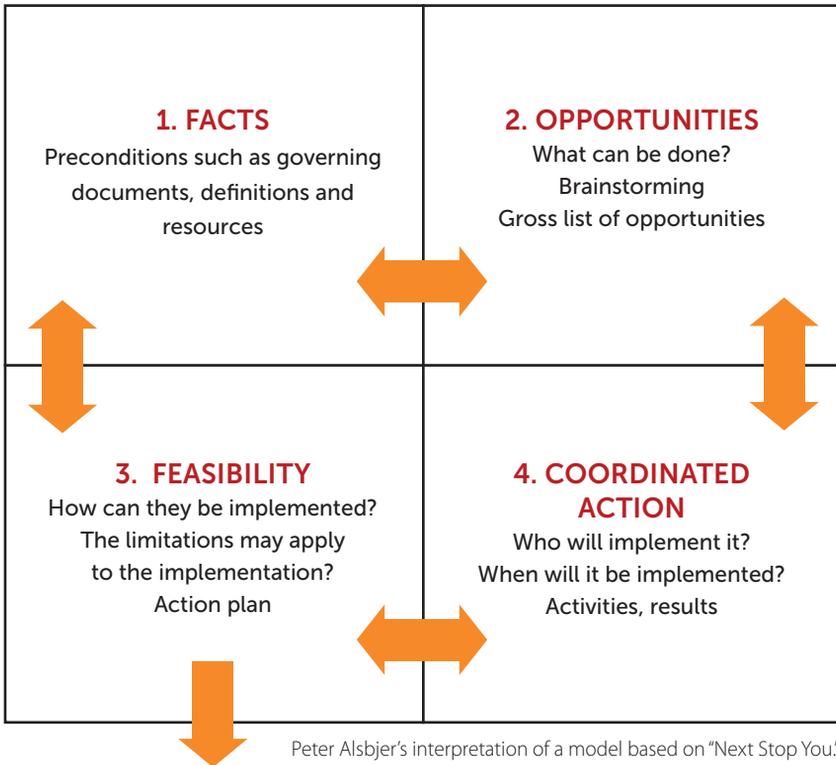
The Four Phases of Dialogue method is based on the following elements:

Facts – Looking at which activities are currently available today, what the governing documents say, whether there are external factors that affect organizations, etc.

Opportunities – Brainstorming about what can be done, with an open mind and without regard for limitations. This involves creating a gross list of opportunities and not allowing oneself to be limited by things such as finances and available resources. Here you “think big” and come up with innovative ideas.

Feasibility – Going through the list of opportunities and examining their feasibility. How could the different ideas be implemented in practice? What limitations are there? Realistically, what can be accomplished?

Coordinated action – Going one step further and making an activity plan. What must be accomplished? When will it be implemented? Who is responsible for ensuring that it is done? What activities are involved? In what manner do they respond to the priorities of the governing documents? What results can one expect?



Check In and Check Out

The Check In and Check Out exercise can be used in Step Six, in which you ensure continuing professional training for all employees. At the start of every learning opportunity with the working group, you gather the participants through a check-in, where everyone is asked to think about a question you pose. It may be about expectations for the day or how the morning has been. In order to get people thinking about the UNCRC, ask the group reflect individually over the question “What is a child to you?”

When you finish, you can ask about how this went, whether the participants’ expectations have been met, issues which have emerged, or how they intend to proceed. By checking in and checking out, you all contribute to the group’s learning, and the learning opportunity receives a clear beginning and end. Try to alternate between asking everyone to think for a few minutes and write down their answers on a piece of paper which is then read aloud, giving the participants time to think before they answer.

Card game

You can order a card game from the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions which is suitable for discussions regarding the rights of the child as they relate to your own organizations.²⁵ Each card is about an article in the convention. The card game can be used in many different ways to inspire engagement and conversation, and to learn the articles in the convention. The card game can be used in Step Six of the strategic model, in which you ensure continuing professional training for all employees.

²⁵ Sveriges Kommuner och Landsting [The Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions]. *Barnets rättigheter*.

How to use SALAR's card game about the rights of the child:

In this exercise, participants sit in groups of 3-4 participants. Each group has a deck of cards. The participants each choose the three most important articles in the convention (Articles 1-45). Everyone tells each other about the cards/articles they chose and why. Now it's time to prioritize! In the space of five minutes, the group determines which four articles/cards are the most important. The group must be in complete agreement about which four articles/cards are most important and should be kept. Then all the groups convene and talk about which articles/cards were selected and why.

Quiz

A wealth of useful training educational material is available on the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions' children's rights website. Here you will find a knowledge test in the form of a web-based quiz. It is a great icebreaker tool for getting the group started gaining an indication of knowledge and attitudes.²⁶ The quiz can be carried out quickly and provides a good basis for discussions. The quiz works well as a first introduction to the Convention on the Rights of the Child as part of Step Six, in which you ensure continuing professional training for all employees.

²⁶ Sveriges Kommuner och Landsting [The Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions]. *Barnets rättigheter*.

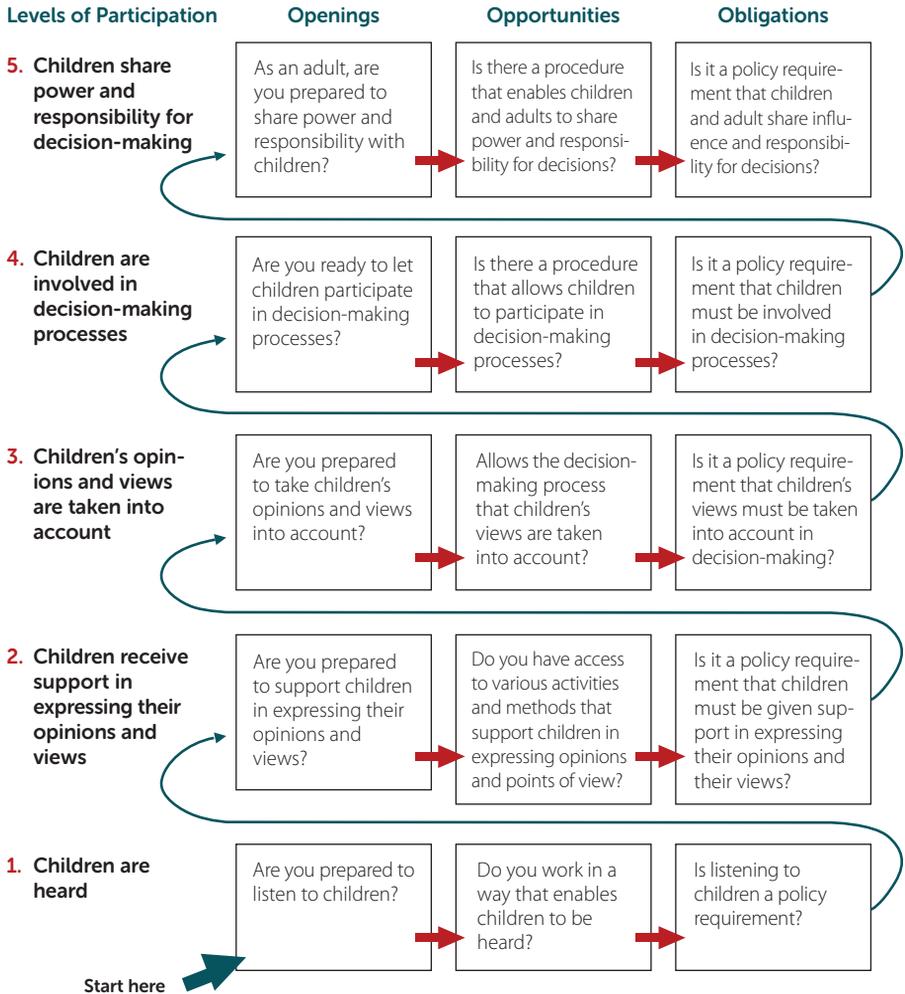
Shier's Ladder

To increase children's participation and influence in different issues regarding library services, it is important that there are structures that make it possible to ensure that children will be heard. It is also important that the views of the children are taken seriously.

A useful tool for facilitating children's influence is Harry Shier's "ladder of participation." Read more about Shier's Ladder in "Pathways to Participation ...".²⁷ Shier's ladder is based on five levels of participation, and should be read from the bottom up. Shier's ladder is useful in Step Four, in which you learn to make an assessment of the best interests of the child. It is also useful in Step Six, in conversations about participation as part of the continuing professional training of employees.

²⁷ Harry Shier. *Pathways to Participation: Openings, Opportunities and Obligations.*

Pathways to Participation for children and adolescents



The model is retrieved from Shier, H. (2001). "Pathways to Participation: Openings, Opportunities and Obligations. A New Model for Enhancing Children's Participation in Decision-making, in line with Article 12.1 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child." Children & Society Vol 15 pp 107 –117. (Trans. Sverre Nyborg Warner for the project "Egen Växtkraft")²⁷

Newspaper club

A newspaper club is a useful method that involves the close reading of articles and research in preparation for a discussion. This method is useful in Step Six, in which you ensure continuing professional training for all employees. One person chooses an article that highlights the question that the group has chosen to discuss. The person who leads the newspaper club presents the article's author and context.

Participants read through the article before or at the meeting, and a few issues related to the piece are discussed in the group. Read more about the method in its entirety in *Ett steg till! En metodbok för biblioteksutveckling (One More Step! A Method Book for Library Development)*.²⁸

One appropriate text to use in a newspaper club is Elizabeth Englundh's *Barnkonsekvensanalys – ett verktyg för underbyggt beslutsfattande... (Child Impact Analysis – A Tool for Informed Decision-making...)*.²⁹ Another suggestion for a text that can spark an interesting discussion is Hassan Alavi's text "Ensamma barn på ett stort bibliotek" ("Lonely Children in a Large Library"), which is included in the book *Bibliotekariens praktiska kunskap - om kunskap, etik och yrkesrollen. (The Practical Knowledge of the Librarian - On Knowledge, Ethics and the Professional Role)*.³⁰

Values-Driven or Rules-Based?

This is a valuation exercise used by Bibliotek Botkyrka. The exercise can be used in Step Six, in which you ensure continuing professional training for all employees. You can use this exercise to initiate conversation about whether your working group acts in a values-driven manner or a rules-based manner in different situations. You base the exercise on a common dilemma, be it real or fictitious.

²⁸ Aleman et.al., *Ett steg till! En metodbok för biblioteksutveckling*.

²⁹ Englundh. *Barnkonsekvensanalys – ett verktyg för underbyggt beslutsfattande eller omöjlig att genomföra? Resultat från en forskningscirkel*.

³⁰ Schwarz. *Bibliotekariens praktiska kunskap - om kunskap, etik och yrkesrollen*, 127-134.

A dilemma from a fictitious library environment could look like this:

The library is mounting a theater production. A parent has collected a ticket for his/her five-year-old. The target audience is children aged three to five years. When they come to the show, the family has also brought along their one-year-old. The parents say that they don't have a babysitter for the one-year-old, and the five-year-old didn't want to go to the show alone. They have to choose between taking both the kids to the show or skipping it altogether. How do you regard this on the basis of the various articles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child?

You need a rope to carry out the exercise, and every person needs a pen or other object. The participants will reflect on which solution they believe to be best. The participants then place a mark somewhere along a line (for example, a rope), each end of which represents the opposite extreme (solution to the dilemma). These marks represent each participant's thoughts on the matter.

Each participant must say why he/she placed his/her mark where it is, and argue for this decision. Once everyone has had the opportunity to speak, the participants are given the option of moving their marks in one direction or the other, if anyone has changed his/her mind. This exercise can provide an opportunity for discussion and allow participants to practice changing their opinions as a result of a good argument.

Walk and talk

When we move our bodies, our thoughts flow more freely. A "walk and talk" is a walk carried out in pairs. The mission of each duo is to think creatively together. For example, each participant may have thought of a dilemma from his/her everyday life, which the pair will explore together according to the model for assessing the best interests of the child (which is described in Step Four). During the walk, each participant presents his/her dilemma to each other and uses the other person as a sounding board. Together, they use their critical thinking skills to unravel the issue.

One example of a real dilemma from a municipal public library may serve as an example:

A 15-year-old regular library visitor with a troubled look on his/her face seeks out a member of the library staff. They go together into the office behind the counter, where the fifteen-year-old shares that he/she is supposed to be going on a date, but is being watched by his/her friends, who report everything he/she does to his/her parents. In the end, the staff member lets him/her out through the back door of the library so that he/she can avoid being confronted by the friends who are watching him/her. When the friends then come into the library and ask after him/her, the staff member denies having seen him/her. Based on the various articles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, what do you think of the staff member's actions?



Web training

A basic online training program about the UNCRC has been produced by SALAR and the Västra Götaland Region. The training consists of seven parts and is called "The Convention on the Rights of the Child – from Theory to Practice." It is accessed via SALAR's website.³¹ The web training is useful in Step Six, in which you ensure continuing professional training for all employees.

³¹ Sveriges Kommuner och Landsting [The Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions]. *Barnets rättigheter*.

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We now pass the baton to directors and managers such as yourself, with the hope that our model will be helpful in your important work to strengthen the rights of the child in the organization for which you are responsible. We wish you the best of luck!

Ann Catrine Eriksson, Library Developer, Library Development Sörmland

Annika Holmén, former Development Director, Läslust (the Love of Reading program), Östergötland Regional Library

Christine Wennerholm, Library Developer, Culture Gävleborg, Region Gävleborg

Sylvia Blomberg, Coordinator, Children's Rights and LGBTQ Issues, Library Development, Region Örebro County

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This publication is intended for directors of public libraries. It supports you in the process of implementing the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in your organizations. The publication provides a strategic model in eight steps that will help you throughout the entire implementation process.

