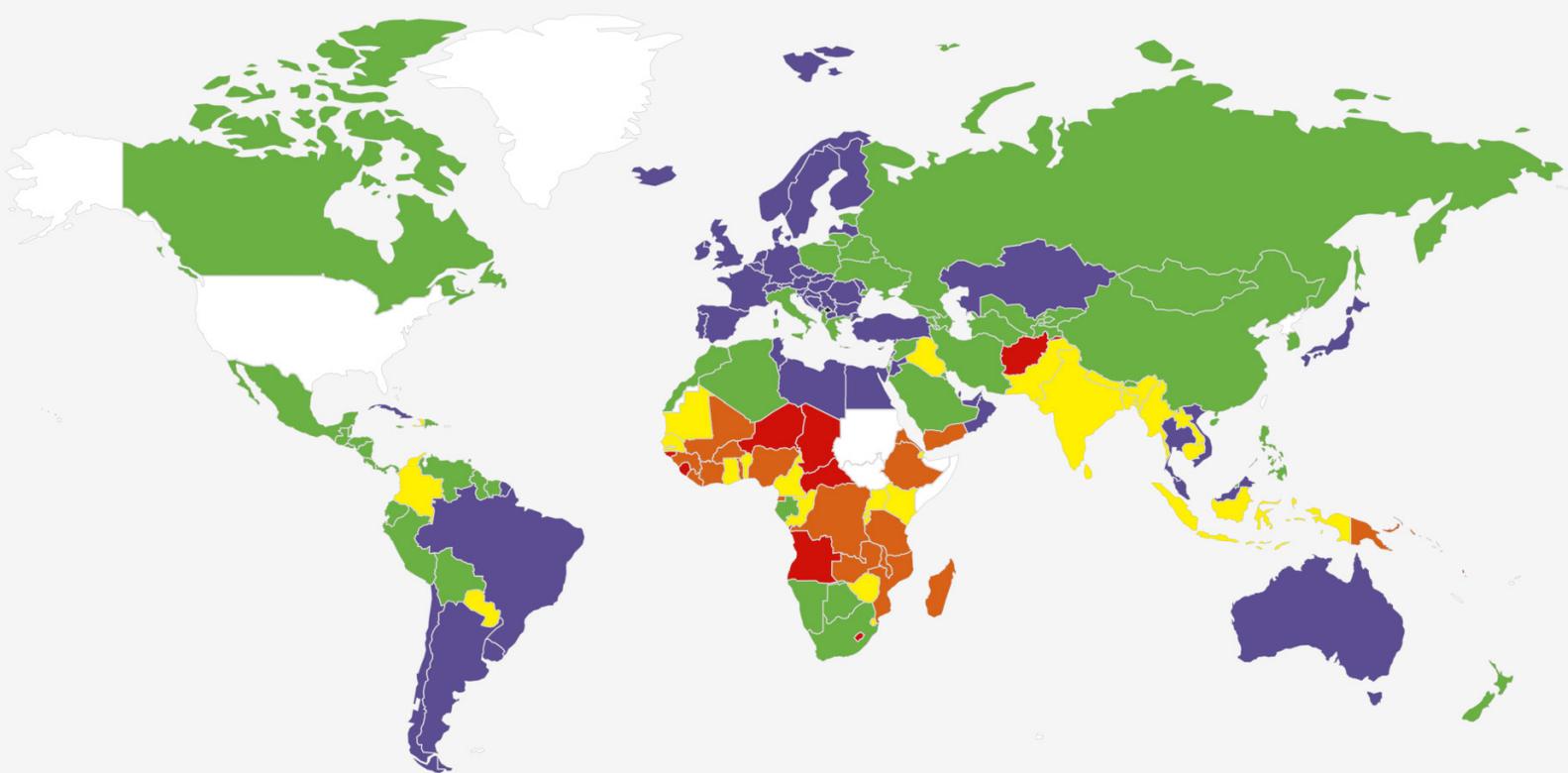


# The KidsRights Index 2015



The KidsRights Index and its domains are accessible on [www.kidsrightsindex.org](http://www.kidsrightsindex.org)

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# 1. General information on the KidsRights Index

## The KidsRights Index

The KidsRights Index is the annual global index published by the KidsRights Foundation which ranks 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. The KidsRights Index comprises a ranking for all UN member states that have ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and for which sufficient data is available, a total of 165 countries. The 25 year-old Convention on the Rights of the Child is ratified by all of the world's nations but one: the United States of America.

## KidsRights Index provides insight in gap between Sustainable Development Goals and practical implementation of children's rights

The UN General Assembly adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in September 2015. The scale and ambition of the SDG agenda presents an unprecedented opportunity to truly improve the daily lives of children and youths. However, there is still a considerable gap between the goals decided at the international level and the local day-to-day realities of children and youths worldwide. Although the Index is not a direct tool for monitoring countries' performances regarding the SDGs, it does provide crucial insights into what is being done and where countries need to do better. KidsRights concludes that in order to achieve the SDGs that affect children, all countries should at the very least fully implement the Convention of the Rights of the Child.

Marc Dullaert, founder of the KidsRights Foundation: *"The SDGs are a necessary list of ambitions regarding cross-border issues including poverty, hunger and global warming. It is important to have such a dot on the horizon, but in the end what matters most are the results. The finish line for these UN plans lies in 2030. Today's children will be vivacious young adults by 2030, so why wait with involving them? Children are so much more than mere recipients of aid; they have in them the power to bring about change."*

## Sources & Research method

The KidsRights Index pools data from two reputable sources: quantitative data published each year by UNICEF in the ['State of the World's Children'](#)  reports and qualitative data published by the [UN Committee on the Rights of the Child](#)  in its Concluding Observations for all states that participate in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The index is based on five domains that must be met to facilitate the implementation of children's rights:

1. The Right to Life
2. The Right to Health
3. The Right to Education
4. The Right to Protection
5. Enabling Environment for Child Rights

The KidsRights Index provides an overview of the countries' performance on each of the five domains and is the basis for concrete recommendations to countries on how to improve. The [KidsRights Index includes a total of 16 quantitative and 7 qualitative indicators](#)  which, where available, are systematically and similarly rated for all countries.

The fifth domain, i.e. Enabling Environment for Child Rights, is an important and unique domain within the KidsRights Index, as it reveals the extent to which countries have created the essential state infrastructure to realise children's rights. The domain 'child rights environment' includes measurable indicators such as non-discrimination, legislation, budget and availability of data.

## Countries that have presented themselves to the UN Children's Rights Committee in 2014

In the KidsRights Index 2015, 'the child rights environment' (domain 5) has been updated to include all *Concluding Observations* of the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) about member states that presented data to the committee in 2014. The following thirteen states that appear in the KidsRights Index 2015 were subject to the CRC state reporting procedure in 2014 and thus received a new score for the domain 'child rights environment': Congo, Croatia, Germany, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Jordan, Kyrgyzstan, Morocco, Portugal, Russian Federation, Venezuela and Yemen.

## About KidsRights

[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

## General information on the KidsRights Index

empowered to realise the great potential they carry within them. KidsRights sees children as *Changemakers* who have the power to move the world, and facilitates them in voicing their opinions and taking action in order 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. This advocacy is supported with research and action. The foundation also finances local projects aimed at directly improving the rights of vulnerable children and stimulating child participation and change-making by youths.

### About Erasmus School of Economics

Erasmus School of Economics 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.

### About International Institute of Social Studies

The International Institute of Social Studies is an international graduate school of policy-oriented critical social science. It does research, teaching and public service in the field of development studies and international cooperation.

## 2. The results of the KidsRights Index 2015

### 1. Overall ranking

Norway is this year's number one overall. Runners up in the top ten are the Netherlands, Portugal, Iceland, Slovakia, Spain, Ireland, Sweden, Tunisia and France. This year's overall worst performing countries are Vanuatu, the Central African Republic, Angola, Afghanistan, Chad, Niger, Sierra Leone, Lesotho, Guinea-Bissau and Equatorial Guinea.

Overall Rank	Country	Overall score
1	Norway	0,94
2	Netherlands	0,93
3	Portugal	0,93
4	Iceland	0,92
5	Slovakia	0,92
6	Spain	0,91
7	Ireland	0,91
8	Sweden	0,90
9	Tunisia	0,90
10	France	0,90

Thailand (25<sup>th</sup>) and Malaysia (27<sup>th</sup>) receive honourable mentions. These countries rank relatively high as they do exceptionally well in cultivating an enabling environment for child rights. Thailand scores well on the enabling legislation indicator (best score) and for the other indicators it scores average. Nowhere does it score the worst score. And only one indicator is missing (on state-civil society cooperation for child rights). Malaysia scores average on all indicators. And only one indicator is missing (on state-civil society cooperation for child rights).

### 2. Overall conclusions

#### Richer does not necessarily mean better

The Index highlights that economically better performing countries do not always perform well in honouring children's rights in practice. New Zealand (90<sup>th</sup>), Italy (69<sup>th</sup>), Canada (57<sup>th</sup>) and Australia (52<sup>th</sup>), for example, could do more to improve the infrastructure they have built for children's rights. These countries score especially poorly on ensuring that the best interests of the child are manifested in legislation and policy.

- New Zealand achieves the worst possible score on two indicators (respect for the views of the child and enabling legislation) and scores average with respect to the two remaining available indicators (non-discrimination and best available budget). There was no data available to measure the three other indicators.
- Italy in turn achieves the worst possible score on three indicators (i.e. non-discrimination, best interests of the child and best available budget) and achieves an average score on the two remaining available indicators (respect for the views of the child and collection and analysis of disaggregate data). There was no data available to measure Italy's score on two other indicators.
- Canada achieves the worst possible score on two indicators (best interests of the child and collection and analysis of disaggregate data) and scores averagely on the other four available indicators. Canada did not provide sufficient data to measure the country's performance with respect to the last remaining indicator (i.e. state-civil society cooperation for child rights).
- Australia achieves the lowest possible score on one indicator (best interests of the child) while scoring averagely on the remaining five indicators for which there was data available. There was insufficient data to measure the country's score on one indicator: state-civil society cooperation for child rights.

When taking a closer look at the domain 'Enabling Environment for Child Rights', we see some notable data if we zoom in on Africa and Asia. African countries, including Benin, Mauritania and Zambia stand out relatively positively. However, African countries still score relatively poorly on the overall Index as they fail to meet acceptable standards in other areas, including protection of children's rights and access to education and health. With eight out of ten of the countries that score the lowest overall in the Index, the continent still has a long way to go.

Asia, on the other hand, ranks quite poorly when it comes to the domain Enabling Environment for Child Rights. Asia is on average the worst performing continent when looking at this domain, as it achieves the worst possible scores in five out of seven indicators that determine the domain.

### Worst scores on 'non-discrimination'

All over the world groups of children are discriminated against and excluded from the means to development. The Index shows the framework of conditions which countries must create in order to adequately comply with children's rights (i.e. domain 5 or the Enabling Environment for Child Rights). Countries score most poorly on observing the principal of *non-discrimination*. In order for all children to fully enjoy their rights, it is absolutely crucial that countries ban discrimination of marginalised groups of children. Sustainable development starts with educated, safe and healthy children, who are able to grow up in inclusive, supportive and peaceful societies. It is truly offensive to human nature that still in all countries in the world, groups of children are being marginalised, disadvantaged because of their race, gender or religion. The only country scoring 'good' on non-discrimination is Liechtenstein. 63 (out of 165) countries score poorly on non-discrimination. 7 of these are members of the EU where refugees and their children from war-torn countries are desperate to find safety and refuge.

### MENA region worst on 'best interests of the child'

The best interests of the child should be a primary consideration in all actions concerning children. On taking the best interests of the child at heart, there is not a country in the world that scores well, 52 countries score poorly, including Australia, Canada, Italy, Japan, Switzerland and United Kingdom. Of all regions, the Middle Eastern and North African region scores worst on the best interests of the child.

### Insufficient budget allocation

Governments should allocate their best available budget to realize the rights of children. The only country scoring 'good' on best available budget is the Netherlands. 58 (out of 165) countries score poorly on *best available budget*. Surprisingly, this includes wealthy countries such as Denmark, Luxembourg and Sweden. Of all regions, the Asian region and the CEE/CIS region score worst on 'best available budget'.

### Improvement of legislation

States should devise enabling legislation and implement this legislation in all procedures. There are only 24 out of 165 countries that score 'good' on enabling legislation. 17 countries are scoring poorly on enabling legislation, including New Zealand.

### More data collection is crucial

In order to be effective in developing initiatives for the improvement of children's rights, these actions should be based on sound information about problems, gaps and achievements. Countries worldwide should do more to collect and analyse disaggregate data. The only 2 countries scoring 'good' on collection and analysis of disaggregated data are Libya and the United Arab Emirates. Of all regions, the Industrialised countries as a region scores worst on the collection and analysis of data.

### Participation of children

There is still a lot to achieve on respecting the views of the child. None of the countries in the KidsRights Index score the highest possible score. On child participation there is not a country in the world that scores good on child participation. This means that none of the 2.2 billion world's children have their views fully heard on matters that affect them directly. 29 countries score poorly on child participation including New Zealand. Of all regions, the Asian region scores worst on child participation.

Structurally engaging children and youth in decision-making processes affecting their lives, is an important children's right and should be implemented worldwide. Children are not mere beneficiaries, they can be agents of change. We need to get the views and ideas of children and youth and make them count. Only then shall they be able to hold their governments accountable.

### Cooperation between the state and civil society

For effective implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child states are encouraged to work together with civil society organisations, especially in situations where the state is not present.

33 countries score poorly on state – civil society cooperation. A lot of data is missing for this indicator in the KidsRights Index, as for 35 countries no information is available on state-civil society cooperation. Of all regions, the African region scores best on state – civil society cooperation.

### 3. Results CRC reporting

The KidsRights Index is updated annually with data from UNICEF's State of the World's Children and data of countries that are subject to the UN Children's Rights Committee (CRC) state reporting procedure. The recent data comes from the following countries: Congo, Croatia, Germany, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Jordan, Kyrgyzstan, Morocco, Portugal, Russian Federation, Venezuela and Yemen. Compared to last year's results, this year's ranking only led to significant Index shifts with two out of thirteen countries that presented data to the Committee on the Rights of the Child in 2014: Hungary (minus 35 positions) and the Russian Federation (minus 26 positions).

## 4. General explanations for the KidsRights Index rankings that potentially deviate from expectations

**The Scope for realizing the full spectrum of Children's Rights (as laid down in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child) is not only determined by income, or by level of economic or human development.**

In all instances of unexpected rankings in the KRI, the scores on the domain 'child rights environment' play a major role. These stem from in total 7 scores for the general equipment of a state for realizing the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, based on the Concluding Observations of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. These scores relate to:

- A. The extent to which the general principles of the CRC are operationalized (non-discrimination; best interests of the child; respect for the views of the child/participation)
- B. The extent to which there is a basic 'infrastructure' for child rights policy, in the form of: enabling national legislation; mobilization of the 'best available budget; collection and analysis of disaggregated data; and state-civil society cooperation.

### Availability of data

The (non-)availability of data plays a key role. For the unexpectedly high ranking countries in domain 5 only maximally 1 score out of the 7 scores in total is missing (for Thailand and Malaysia, for the Dominican Republic all are available). For two of the four unexpectedly low ranking countries in domain 5 two or more scores out of the 7 scores in total are missing (Italy misses 2 scores; New Zealand misses 3 scores; the other two (Australia and Canada) miss only 1 score.

The US have not ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child and have therefore not been included in the KidsRights Index. Neither has it been possible to assess countries/states for which insufficient data is available in the 'State of the World's Children' reports. These are Andorra, Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Barbados Cape Verde, Cook Islands, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Dominica, Fiji, Grenada, The Holy See, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Monaco, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, the Seychelles, Solomon Islands, Sudan, Tonga and Tuvalu. As soon as data for these countries/states becomes available, they can be included in the KidsRights Index.

### The Importance of Making All-Round Efforts

The unexpectedly high ranking countries on domain 5 perform well on almost all accounts. Of the 4 lower ranking countries, 4 (Canada, Australia, Italy and New Zealand) score poorly on the principle of the best interests of the child.

Interesting, too, is that 2 of the lower ranking countries are federal/decentral states (Canada and Australia). This is a well-known potential complication for the introduction of legislation (and quite often there are discrepancies between the legislation of the various parts of the federal state) and for the implementation of legislation and policy measures in all parts of the country.

## Appendix

### Domains & Indicators:

	<b>Domains:</b>	<b>Indicators:</b>
1	<b>Life</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Under 5 mortality</li> <li>• Life expectancy at birth</li> <li>• Maternal mortality ratio</li> </ul>
2	<b>Health</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % of under five year olds suffering from underweight</li> <li>• Immunization of 1 year old children</li> <li>• % of population using improved sanitation facilities (urban and rural)</li> <li>• % of population using improved drinking water sources (urban and rural)</li> </ul>
3	<b>Education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primary school participation</li> <li>• Secondary school participation</li> <li>• Primary school enrolment ratios (female as % of male)</li> <li>• Secondary school enrolment ratios (female as % of male)</li> <li>• Survival rate to last grade of primary (female as % of male)</li> <li>• Primary school net attendance ratio (rural)</li> </ul>
4	<b>Protection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child labour</li> <li>• Adolescent birth rate</li> <li>• Birth registration</li> </ul>
5	<b>Enabling Child Environment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non-discrimination</li> <li>• Best interests of the child</li> <li>• Respect for the views of the child/child participation</li> <li>• Enabling legislation</li> <li>• Best available budget</li> <li>• Collection and analysis of disaggregate data</li> <li>• State-civil society cooperation for child rights</li> </ul>

The KidsRights Index is the only annual global ranking on how countries worldwide are adhering to children's rights.

**165**  
COUNTRIES

**Unique:** domain Child Rights Environment provides insight into the extent to which a country is equipped to carry out the UN CRC.

**Online:** the KidsRights Index is accessible for everybody on [kidsrightsindex.org](http://kidsrightsindex.org)



**The goal of the KidsRights Index**

is to stimulate compliance with children's rights worldwide.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is the global framework for children's rights.



**1989**

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.



The KidsRights Index uses existing data from two reputable sources: the *State of the World's Children Report* by UNICEF and the *Concluding Observations* by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child.

The KidsRights Index: **23 indicators: 16 quantitative and 7 qualitative indicators**

### 1. Life

- Under 5 mortality rate
- Life expectancy at birth
- Maternal mortality ratio



### 2. Health

- % of under five year olds suffering from underweight
- Immunization of 1 year old children
- % of population using improved sanitation facilities (urban and rural)
- % of population using improved drinking water sources (urban and rural)



### 3. Education

- Primary school participation
- Secondary school participation
- Primary school enrolment ratios (female as % of male)
- Secondary school enrolment ratios (female as % of male)
- Survival rate to last grade of primary (female as % of male)
- Primary school net attendance ratio (rural)



### 4. Protection

- Child labour
- Adolescent birth rate
- Birth registration



### 5. Child Rights Environment

- Non-discrimination
- Best interests of the child
- Enabling legislation
- Best available budget
- Respect for the views of the child/child participation
- Collection and analysis of disaggregate data
- State-civil society cooperation for child rights



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