



Project: Global Consultations on Children's Right to Play

Summary, August, 2009

IPA is a non-governmental, voluntary organization founded in 1961. It has members in close to 50 countries and active groups around the world. IPA is an interdisciplinary organization bringing together people from all professions working for and with children. For many decades the International Play Association has been actively promoting the importance of children's play and in the 1980s played a significant role in ensuring that the child's right to play was included in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. IPA has consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

Background:

Early in 2008 the International Play Association: Promoting the Child's Right to Play (IPA) entered a partnership with seven other international organizations to propose that the Committee on the Rights of the Child organize a *Day of Discussion* and/or develop a *General Comment* on article 31 of the UNCRC - for the purpose of elaborating on its meaning and increasing state accountability with regard to compliance. Supporting organizations are:

International Pediatrics Association

World Leisure Association

Right to Play International

International Council on Children's Play

World Organization for Early Childhood Educ. (OMEP)

International Toy Library Association

European Child Friendly Cities Network

The letter of request was sent in May 2008. Copies have been circulated to each member of the UN Committee but heavy agendas have thus far not allowed formal discussion of the proposal. In the meantime, to maintain the momentum, IPA and partners are launching a series of Consultations on article 31 worldwide.

Description of Project:

In conjunction with regional or national partners, eight Consultations are being organized worldwide through the first half of 2010. The proposed sites are Johannesburg, Nairobi, Mumbai, Bangkok, Beirut, Tokyo, Sofia and Mexico City.

The overall purpose of the project is to raise awareness of the importance of article 31 within the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Goals of the project are:

- to *mobilize a worldwide network* of article 31 advocates and to harness expertise to raise awareness of the importance of play in the lives of children.
- to *gather specific material* demonstrating the infringement of the child's right to play.
- to *formulate practical recommendations* for governments with regard to compliance with article 31.

Representatives of the eight proposed sites (those invited to undertake the facilitator/reporter role) will participate in an *Orientation* session and the *Consultation Pilot* in Johannesburg, South Africa in January 2010. These delegates will then lead Consultations in their own countries.

Website Page A section of the IPA website will be devoted to the Global Consultation project and information will be updated regularly, beginning in September 2009. www.ipaworld.org



Orientation Session/Pilot Consultation

These will be held during a three-day event in January. The Orientation will ensure that delegates from the eight sites are familiar with the purpose of the project and its expectations and provide an opportunity for individual concerns to be addressed. The longer range goal of building and supporting ‘article 31 networks’ and mutual support strategies will also be discussed.

The eight Global Consultations will each involve approximately 15 people. Participants will be drawn from a range of agencies, interest groups and experience. Emphasis is being placed on this ‘range of experience’ and on the quality of the facilitation and recording.

Consultation Materials:

A Consultation Kit of Material is being prepared for use by facilitators in the eight sites. The Kit will include a variety of background material, a program and guide for the Consultation itself, various presentation resources, including handouts, and reporting and evaluation tools.

Delegates to the inaugural meeting will be asked to review this material with their colleagues in advance of the Pilot Event so that culturally-based feedback can be incorporated into the Consultation Kit prior to the Pilot.

Paper on Play: As an adjunct to the Global Consultation project, an authoritative paper on the importance of children’s play has been produced and will soon be available on line in English and Spanish. This 50 page paper was commissioned by IPA and prepared by Wendy Russell and Stuart Lester (University of Gloucester ,UK).

Regional Partner Model:

The project is based on partnerships between IPA and national/regional organizations, or groups, which will contribute practical assistance at the local site. Such assistance would include helping to identify Consultation participants, sending invitations, providing meeting accommodation and ensuring competent facilitators and recorders. A desired outcome is to build regional/international networks to support article 31 advocacy. A number of organizations have already agreed to participate in the project, including Childwatch International.

Potential Spin-off Events: There are already a number of organizations and groups around the world who have expressed interest in participating in the ‘article 31 campaign’. As a result, IPA is seriously considering a second, or satellite, phase. While this is outside the scope of the current project, the material is being prepared with this possibility in mind.

Conclusion:

IPA is well aware of the challenges in the realization of State compliance with the CRC generally and is particularly concerned with the lack of attention paid to article 31. The new *Paper on Play* referred to above is a compelling statement on the importance of play and will provide a sound base for IPA and its partners as we press forward with our article 31 campaign.

IPA is very serious about focusing attention on this most important right of children. The relationship between play and resilience and play and children’s well-being is clear. It is also clear that there are growing barriers to children’s play all over the world. IPA intends to harness its own resources and to welcome other like-minded organizations so that together we can mount a concerted effort to gain the attention of States Parties worldwide.

IPA acknowledges with gratitude the financial support of the Bernard van Leer Foundation for both the Global Consultation project and the ‘ <i>Paper on Play</i> ’.
