



Civil Society Call for Nominations:

Child participation in the open-ended intergovernmental working group on an optional protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the rights to early childhood education, free pre-primary education and free secondary education

On 10 July 2024, the Human Rights Council adopted [resolution 56/5](#), establishing an open-ended intergovernmental working group (IGWG) to explore the possibility of drafting an Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). The proposed protocol aims to strengthen the right to education by:

- Recognizing early childhood care and education as part of the right to education;
- Mandating States to provide at least one year of free public pre-primary education and to make public secondary education free for all;
- Reaffirming the duty of States to promote and encourage international cooperation in education;
- Considering a reporting provision that allows States parties to integrate their obligations under the Optional Protocol into their existing CRC reports, thus avoiding the need for separate submissions.

The Human Rights Council invited all relevant stakeholders and experts—including States, civil society, the Committee on the Rights of the Child, relevant special procedures, and independent experts—to contribute to the work of the intergovernmental working group. **Children, as experts in their own lives, are essential participants in this process.** The Council stressed that their **meaningful, ethical, safe, and inclusive participation** must be at the core of the working group's deliberations, ensuring that children have genuine opportunities to express their views on both the topic and substance of the proposed Optional Protocol.

The first session of the IGWG will be held from 1 to 4 September 2025 in Room III, A Building, Palais des Nations, Geneva.

A total of **5 children - one from each region** - will be selected to participate through this opportunity. We call on civil society **to nominate up to 2 children** per NGO to participate in this session.

Please note that the selection process will take into account factors such as age, gender, disability status, country and regional representation, as well as lived experience, in order to ensure an inclusive and diverse group of participants.

Who can be nominated?

Children who meet the following criteria:

- Demonstrated experience in advocating for the right to education;
- Availability to prepare for and participate in the IGWG session;
- Comfortable and willing to share their experiences with other children and adults;
- Affiliated with a child rights organization or network;
- Supported by an organization that can assist with preparation, safeguarding, and, if necessary, financial sponsorship;
- Available to travel to Geneva on the dates of the session;
- Proficient in English, French, or Spanish;
- Aged under 18 as of December 2026.

Safeguarding and Support

All organisations supporting children's participation in the IGWG session are expected to follow [Child Rights Connect's Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedure](#). A child-friendly version is available [here](#).

NGOs must also ensure that children are accompanied and supported throughout the process, including during travel, and that child protection and well-being are prioritised at all times.

Funding

Nominating organisations will be expected to **provide financial support for the children for all expenses** related to this opportunity such as, but not limited to, travel, visa, accommodation, food costs and insurance.

How to nominate

Please submit the following information via the attached [Microsoft forms](#):

1. The child's **name (only first name, no surname please)**, **age**, **country of nationality**, **country of residence**, and **language proficiency** (English, French, or Spanish);
2. The **name and contact details of the supporting NGO and dedicated focal point**;
3. A brief outline of the child's **experience in advocating for the right to education** (max. 200 words);
4. A **short motivation statement** from the child (100–150 words), explaining why they want to participate and what they would like to contribute.

Deadline for nominations: 19 June 2025, 23:45 (CEST / Geneva time)

For any questions, please contact Samira Mouaci (mouaci@un.org)

We look forward to receiving your nominations and to ensuring that children's voices are meaningfully included at the center of all discussions concerning their rights.