

Fact sheet // Alcohol and children's rights

Alcohol can restrict children's rights. The rights that are most likely to not be fulfilled are the right to health, life and survival, protection against abuse and the right to education.

Right to health, life and survival

Articles 6 and 24 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child concern the right to health, life and survival. These rights can be affected by a parent's alcohol consumption both before and after birth in a number of ways, including the risk of underweight, foetal alcohol syndrome and psychological ill health. Children of parents with addiction are also at a higher risk of suicide. The higher the parent's alcohol consumption, the higher the risk that the child's alcohol consumption may later in life become problematic and affect the child's health negatively.¹

Studies show that children and young people are exposed to much alcohol marketing, despite it being illegal in many countries. The more alcohol marketing children and young people are exposed to, the earlier they start drinking and the more they drink.

From a child rights perspective, states that have ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the ICESCR, both of which state the right to health, should restrict and ban alcohol marketing.²

Protection against abuse

Children whose parents abuse alcohol are exposed to a greater extent of abuse such as

In brief:

// The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child clarifies the specific rights that relate to children. In terms of the impact of alcohol on these rights, Articles 6 and 24 are relevant, which state that all children have the right to health, life and survival.

// Article 19 establishes that all children are entitled to **protection against all forms of abuse**. Studies show that alcohol may increase the risk of children being subjected to various forms of abuse.

// According to Article 28, all children are entitled to education. The IOGT-NTO Movement's own experiences testify to the **negative impact of alcohol on children's schooling**.

physical and psychological violence, neglect or sexual abuse, compared to other children.³

Article 19 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child establishes that it is a human right for children to be protected from all forms of abuse. A number of studies show that alcohol contributes to violations such as violence and sexual exploitation of children. A European study shows that 16 percent of all children have at some point been subjected to violence or neglect due to alcohol.⁴

Right to education

According to Article 28 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, all children have the

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right to education. Risk consumption and abuse often have a negative impact on children's ability to go to school and on the study environment at home.⁵ Experiences from the IOGT-NTO Movement's international work show that when preventive efforts have enabled a reduction in alcohol consumption, the proportion of children in school increases as well as the children's school results.

Problematic consumption of alcohol often affects the ability to create a stable and safe environment for children, which may adversely affect children's sleep. Not enough sleep and poor sleep quality can lead to an impaired process of emotional and educational development in school-age children.⁶

Recommendations

// Aid projects and other efforts to improve the rights of children should always **analyze the role alcohol plays** in a given context.

// Effective preventative efforts that reduce alcohol consumption **will reduce the risk of children's right being violated** in various ways. We advocate a model with three components: education, mobilization and regulation.

// According to the WHO, the **three most cost-effective measures** to prevent problems related to alcohol are high prices (via taxes), limited availability (number of outlets, age limits, opening hours) and restricted or prohibited alcohol marketing.

References

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About us

The international work of the IOGT-NTO Movement takes place in 14 countries in East Africa, Southeast Asia, Sri Lanka and the Balkans. Our focus is on alcohol as an obstacle to development.

Read more at www.iogtntororelsen.se/internationellt/ or contact us at info@iogtntororelsen.se.

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