



The International  
Children's  
Peace Prize

20<sup>th</sup>  
jubilee

# KIDSRIGHTS NEWS

NEWSLETTER FOR DONORS AND RELATIONS OF THE KIDSRIGHTS FOUNDATION | DECEMBER 2024

# Thank you very much!

On November 19, the International Children's Peace Prize was awarded for the 20th time. 16 former winners were present to celebrate this milestone. They are young leaders who set the world in motion, as the International Children's Peace Prize statuette 'Nkosi' shows us. They are all active in improving children's rights for other children and future generations.

They work on access to education, shelter for refugee children, a clean environment, anti-discrimination and many other topics. We have put the impressive stories on paper in a beautiful anniversary book "CHANGEMAKERS, 20 stories that changed the world". We now let these stories travel around the world to inspire others.

The International Children's Peace Prize winners show that positive change comes from the bottom up, that it starts with you in your street, neighbourhood, at school or in your city. We can all be "Changemakers" by making a difference ourselves or by supporting these children and young people.

With your donation, KidsRights helps not only the International Children's Peace Prize winners and their mission, but also many other children, with their small projects in their communities

through our "State of Youth" and ensures that they are heard.

This anniversary year, Nila (17) from Afghanistan received the International Children's Peace Prize. She stands up for the rights of girls in Afghanistan because they are not allowed to go to school, speak or even sing in public. Her message and her protest song during the awards ceremony went around the world and touched many people. Nila gives the girls in Afghanistan hope and lets them know that they are not forgotten.

I would like to thank you very much for supporting our movement of young changemakers. This allows us to create positive change with and for children. This hope and compassion is desperately needed for current and future generations.

On behalf of the entire KidsRights team, I wish you and all those you love a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Kind regards,

Marc Dullaert





KIDS RIGHTS  
The International  
Children's  
Peace Prize  
20  
th Anniversary



# Nila winner of the International Children's Peace Prize 2024

The 20th International Children's Peace Prize, now the world's most important youth prize, was awarded to the Afghan teenager Nila Ibrahimi (17 years old).

Nila discovered the power of her voice when the Ministry of Education in Afghanistan banned schoolgirls from singing in public. As a 13-year-old girl who loved to sing, she refused to be silenced. She decided to record a video of herself singing her own protest song and posted it online. The video went viral and inspired thousands of Afghan girls to also stand up against discrimination. This is how Nila led a singing movement that, within three weeks, forced the then Afghan government to withdraw the discriminatory decision.

Not long after, Nila's life changed drastically when the Taliban came to power in Afghanistan.

It isn't only singing that is forbidden, girls and women are also not allowed to follow education past primary school, not allowed to work, and hear each other's voices in public.

Nila fled to Canada with her family. Since then, she has been actively committed to protecting the rights of girls from Afghanistan. She has advocated for equal access to education to several influential people and has represented the voice of Afghan girls at various events, including the Geneva Summit for Human Rights and Democracy. Nila is also the co-founder of Her Story, an online platform that fights for the rights of all Afghan girls and women.

The KidsRights Expert Committee unanimously selected Nila as the winner from 165 nominated young changemakers. Entries came from 27 different countries across the world.

Nila's courageous and vocal commitment to the rights of girls from Afghanistan makes her a very worthy winner of the twentieth International Children's Peace Prize.

Nila's message to the world after receiving the award: *"Winning the International Children's Peace Prize means that the voices of Afghan women and girls will resonate around the world. We must continue to give them strength and hope in the darkest of times."*





Scan the QR-code  
and listen to Nila's  
song 'Go To School'  
on Spotify

# Finalists International Children's Peace Prize 2024

## Sarah Shelke, USA

Sarah Shelke is a 16-year-old girl from the United States who is on a mission to solve the youth mental health crisis in her country. She was only 12 years old when she became aware of the inequalities in access to mental health help for young people. After losing someone close to her to suicide, she decided to dedicate herself to the mental health of marginalized children. She founded Mind4Youth, a nonprofit organization that provides accessible mental health support and resources.

Under Sarah's leadership, Mind4Youth has grown into one of the largest youth-led mental health organizations, with more than 9,800 members and 15 chapters worldwide.

The organization has now reached more than 1.6 million young people in more than 40 countries. Sarah has also written the book "A Guide to Teen Mental Health". She works with local libraries to raise awareness around mental health and remains committed to creating systemic change.

Sarah's message to the world: *"Young people are the future. We must take action and fight against injustice and inequality. My goal is to help others to create a lasting social impact."*



## Adhi Daiv, INDIA

Adhi is an 18-year-old boy from India who is transforming the arid deserts of Rajasthan to address water scarcity for children in his country. He grew up hearing the stories of his mother and other women from the neighborhood who had to walk miles to get water. He realized that the lack of access to water had serious consequences for children's development. This inspired Adhi to find a sustainable solution.

His first step was to raise funds to provide rural women with water wheels, which helps transport water over long distances. He soon discovered that this was only a temporary solution to the larger problems of water scarcity and desertification in the region.

With his Urvara initiative, Adhi is now focused on mobilizing communities to plant trees using the innovative one-litre water technology. To date, Urvara has transformed 25 hectares of desert into fertile land and saved 1.65 million liters of water. The project has directly helped 50,000 villagers and 10,000 children, improved soil fertility and created employment. Adhi hopes to expand Urvara to 100 hectares and to more villages, benefiting thousands of people from a sustainable future.

Adhi's message to the world is: *"No deed is too small! After all, it is up to us to create a better future, not only for ourselves, but also for generations to come."*



# Summary 20th jubilee of the International Children's Peace Prize

The presentation of the International Children's Peace Prize 2024 was held in the Nieuwe Kerk in Amsterdam. In honor of the 20th anniversary, numerous dignitaries from all over the world attended the ceremony.

The ceremony was opened by Princess Laurentien of the Netherlands. She emphasized the importance of young changemakers who lead from hope, not fear. She ended her speech with a call to all of us: *"If you are in a position of power, share it with young people."*

During the ceremony, the laureates of the International Children's Peace Prize were honoured, 16 of whom were present in Amsterdam. Abraham Keita, laureate of the 2015 International Children's

Peace Prize, spoke on behalf of all International Children's Peace Prize Winners. He reflected on the dark sides of our current society, in which we experience the consequences of climate change, extreme poverty and multiple genocides. *"The world is currently letting children down,"* he said. Keita's message was therefore: *"Join us as we work towards a more just and peaceful world for children."*

After this, the three finalists, Adhi, Sarah and Nila, were introduced. In a moving speech about the mental health crisis, Sarah advocated that it should not be grief that brings change, but love. Ann Skelton, chair of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, spoke about the creativity in children's thoughts,

which is so desperately needed right now.

Marc Dullaert then presented the anniversary book "Changemakers" on behalf of KidsRights and called on the guests and viewers to help the young generation to move the world for the better. He ended with a tribute to the late first winner Nkosi Johnson and former patron Desmond Tutu. The South African national anthem was sung for them live from Johannesburg by the Soweto gospel choir.

In line with our tradition, the International Children's Peace Prize 2024 was awarded by a Nobel Peace Prize winner, this year by Tawakkol Karman. After Nila received the International Children's Peace Prize, she sang her protest song Go To School.

The beautiful song was started by Nila and accompanied live by girls from four different continents and a large choir from the Nieuwe Kerk. The 20th ceremony could also be followed on big screens in London, Stockholm, Tokyo and New York. After the award ceremony, Nila was interviewed by CNN, BBC and many other international media. Her call for the rights of Afghan girls went around the world.



Scan the QR-code for a short impression of the ceremony



**The ceremony took place in the Nieuwe Kerk**



**Princess Laurentien opened the ceremony**



**Ann Skelton, Chair of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, gave a speech**

# Changemakers: 20 stories that changed the world

To mark the 20th anniversary of the International Children's Peace Prize, KidsRights published the book **Changemakers: 20 stories that changed the world**.

20 compelling stories from International Children's Peace Prize winners that will inspire young and old in a beautifully illustrated edition.

Are you looking for a valuable gift? The book is now available in bookstores in the Netherlands. You can also order the book via [www.changemakersbook.org/en/](http://www.changemakersbook.org/en/) or by scanning the QR code.

Proceeds from the book go to projects of the International Children's Peace Prize winners.



# International Youth Summit 2024 in Amsterdam

On 20 November, in honour of the 20th anniversary ceremony of the International Children's Peace Prize, KidsRights organised the first-ever State of Youth International Youth Summit. 350 young people gathered at KIT Amsterdam to learn and brainstorm about youth participation.

The Youth Summit was attended by young changemakers, Dutch students from VMBO, HAVO and VWO schools, children from asylum centres and from an international school. Young people from all over the world also joined online. Participants had the chance to attend interactive workshops led by International Children's Peace Prize winners and the State of Youth Youth Board.

The day highlighted the power of cooperation and the importance of youth participation worldwide. A poll among participants revealed that young people are not listened to enough on issues important to them. On a scale of 0 to 100, young people gave an average score of 39 for how their views are listened to. Their message to the world was therefore loud and clear: *"Listen to us!"*.



**The laureates of the International Children's Peace Prize hosted workshops at the Summit**



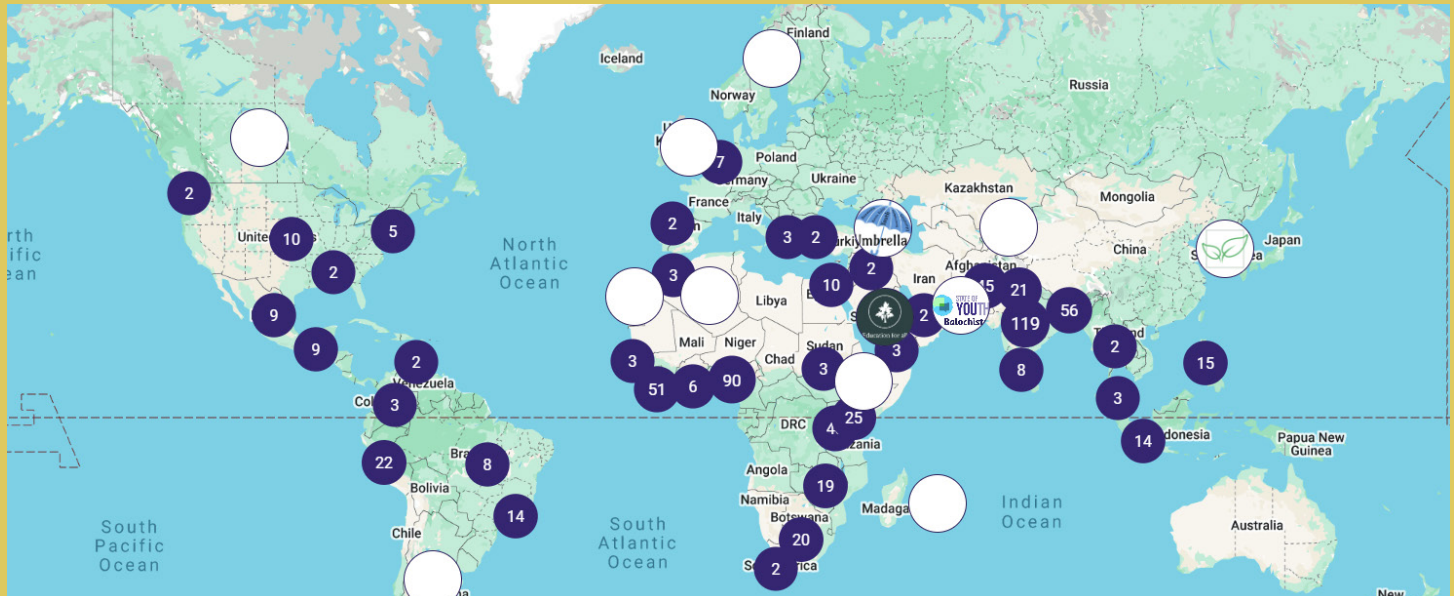
**After the workshops there was a plenary session on Participation, Democracy and Polarisation**

# STATE OF YOUTH



State of Youth, the world's first borderless 'digital state', focuses on youth participation. Through local Chapters, young people take action in their own communities to bring about positive change. Through our digital platform, they mobilise and support each other in improving children's rights.

State of Youth has been active for five years already, forming a global network of thousands of young Changemakers. As of 2024, there are 294 Chapters in 42 different countries.



# Examples of recent State of Youth projects



**Ryan Usman**

Led by 18-year-old Ryan, State of Youth BARMM\* organised a successful training for young people on 'Peacebuilding and Harmony among Youth'. Through their initiative, 154 children were trained as 'Peace Leaders' and three 'Peace Clubs' were established. Led by young role models, these Peace Clubs are committed to bringing peace and security to the local community.

\*BARMM is the abbreviation for Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, Philippines



**Nicole Solomon**

Nicole, 10, from Romania, has noticed an important problem: many children in her neighbourhood are not heard. Especially in rural areas, children who share their opinions often do not receive the respectful attention they deserve. With her creative play workshops, Solomon teaches other children about their rights to information and participation so that they can actively contribute in their neighbourhood.



**Mara Serban**

Mara Serban, 11, from Romania was fuelled by the bullying she saw happening around her at her school. She therefore took the initiative to organise a workshop on respect and non-violence. At the end of the workshop, a youth debate was held to jointly discuss ideas on how to stop bullying.



**Muhammad Usma**

Muhammad Usma, 20, from Nigeria, is passionate about the right to education. He organised workshops with his team at two secondary schools in his neighbourhood. The trainings were designed to raise awareness about the importance of education among local youth. Muhammad gave participants the skills and knowledge to further engage themselves in the 'Education for All' movement.

# State of Youth NL

In May 2024, we launched State of Youth Netherlands. Together with our partners, the Nationale Jeugdraad (National Youth Council), Maatschappelijke Diensttijd (Social Service) and Stichting Augeo (Augeo Foundation), we hold online panels where young people give their opinions on issues that are important to them. We combine young people's voices into one loud voice, a megaphone for youth participation.

## Everyone Checked In!

In the first campaign, Everyone Checked In!, we asked for young people's opinions on public transport. Some results:

- 74% of young people who use public transport experience problems.
- 56% of young people find public transport too expensive.
- 34% of young people have (almost) no night public transport.
- 22% of young people do not have enough public transport in their region of residence.

High costs and limited supply restrict young people's freedom: they visit friends and family less often, take

fewer trips, and it sometimes even affects choices around study, work and internships.

All the results were compiled into a report and young people handed it to Dutch travellers' association Rover. They also sent it to the Infrastructure and Water Management Committee and the results were mentioned in the national and regional AD (newspaper).



*Youth handed over the report to travellers' association Rover*

## Een (t)huis, een toekomst (A house, a future)

In October, we launched our second survey: A house, a future. Many young people experience problems finding housing - high prices and little availability. If it is difficult to find a house, apartment or room, building your future also becomes difficult.

State of Youth Netherlands visited events across the country in recent months to get the insights

from young people regarding the housing crisis. In January 2025, we will publish the results of the second panel.

New themes, such as mental health and climate, will follow later in 2025. Our partner network continues to expand and more and more young people know us as the megaphone for the new generation!



# KidsRights Index

This year, the 12th edition of the KidsRights Index (KRI) was launched. The KRI is the first and only global ranking that systematically measures how children's rights are respected in countries every year. For the research, KidsRights collaborates with Erasmus University Rotterdam. In 2024, as many as 194 countries were scrutinised, one more than the 2023 KRI.

The KidsRights Index 2024 highlights the violation of children's rights due to multiple violent conflicts worldwide and the ongoing climate change crisis. Child vaccination coverage also remains a crucial problem.

After being on top in the KRI 2023, Sweden dropped sharply to 78th rank in 2024. Luxembourg has risen 3 places to top the KRI this year. The Netherlands has risen 1 rank to 19th rank in the KRI 2024, although we have dropped considerably in the 'healthcare' domain, partly due to declining vaccination coverage.

## Global impact

Increasingly, findings from the KRI research form the basis for discussions on children's rights worldwide. Not only parliaments, but also (scientific) researchers, NGOs and companies use the results to ask critical questions in their own countries or to conduct further research to improve children's rights.

- The German KinderZukunftsFonds uses KRI's data to make child rights-centered investment decisions.
- Saudi Arabia has approached KidsRights asking how they can score better on children's rights.
- Unicef has used the KRI's findings as the basis for its 2024 'Empowering Children to Empower the Future' report.
- Reports from the Swedish embassy elaborate on the KRI results.

# Impact KidsRights Index 2024

Global reach: 1.143 bn

Media coverage: 226 news articles

Academic research: 22 citations

Recommendations to: 19 countries

Recent advancements like the European Child Guarantee and the 2021 EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child reflect progress, yet challenges such as an emerging digital divide, child poverty and climate change, and their impact on children - underscore the need for a thorough reevaluation of the existing governance structures.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, a recent Eurochild report paints out the growing threat of anti-children's rights movements in some EU member States (MSs), where children's rights are being marginalised or ignored.<sup>2</sup> Ultimately, prioritising children's rights and integrating children's perspectives in

legislative and policy-making processes is crucial for ensuring that our laws and policies are oriented towards long-term, sustainable outcomes rather than short-term gains.

With the upcoming elections, there is an opportunity to address these challenges and advance the EU framework for children's rights. This study seeks to critically assess the current landscape, identify key gaps, and provide concrete recommendations for strengthening the EU's capacity to uphold and advance the rights of its youngest citizens.

## CHAPTER 2

# The EU framework for children's rights: a review

### 1.2 Study questions

The primary focus of this study is to undertake a comprehensive assessment of the existing EU governance of children's rights and to develop ideas for strengthening it across its institutions. To this end, the study intends to answer the following questions:

- What are the current gaps in the EU framework for children's rights? (Section 2)

### 1.3 Methodology and scope of the study

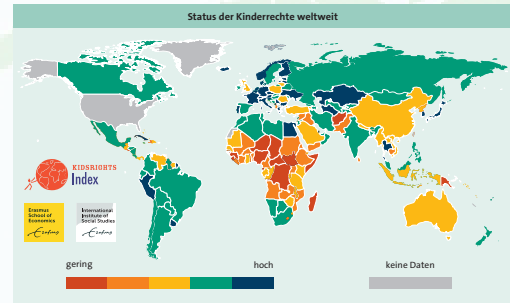
This study employs a qualitative approach, blending desk research (EU laws, policy reports, and academic literature with peer-reviewed interviews with experts and practitioners in children's rights. It aims to assess the EU legal, political, and professional

frameworks for children's rights, alongside a comparison of best practices in selected OECD countries using the KidsRights Index. The Index's 8th domain, focusing on creating an enabling environment for child rights, guides this assessment.<sup>3</sup>



KRI in a UNICEF report

## M5 Wie steht es um die Kinderrechte weltweit?



Nach: KidsRights Index 2024, <https://www.kidsrights.org/research/kidsrights-index/>

### Aufgaben

1. Erkläre mit eigenen Worten, was Kinderrechte sind (M2).
2. Ordne die Bilder aus M1 den Kinderrechten aus M3 zu. Beschreibe, welches Recht jeweils verletzt wird.
3. Wähle drei Rechte aus M3, die du für besonders wichtig erachtest. Begründe deine Wahl.
4. Beurteile zu zweit die Situation der Kinderrechte weltweit anhand der Karte (M5).
5. Viele Kinder kennen die Kinderrechtskonvention nicht. Gestalte ein Plakat, auf dem ihr die von euch ausgewählten Kinderrechte grafisch darstellst. Präsentiert die Plakate in einem Galerienag (M3).
6. Führe eine Umfrage mit deinen Eltern und/oder Großeltern durch: Inwie-

**Galerienag**  
→ Methoden glossar S. 313, digitaler Aufgabenkasten

**Hilfe zu Aufgabe 3**  
Begründe deine Auswahl mit Dingen, die Kinder unbedingt zum Leben brauchen.

## Schools in Germany use the KRI in textbooks



# Support young changemakers with a donation

Children are changemakers. When they feel empowered and are given a platform, they can make a big impact in their communities and the world.

KidsRights works hard every day to empower young people around the world and improve children's rights. With your donation to KidsRights, you contribute directly to our mission.

Scan the QR code or go to [donate.kidsrights.org](https://donate.kidsrights.org) to support KidsRights with a donation! You can choose between a periodic, one-time or monthly donation. A periodic donation is tax deductible.



[donate.kidsrights.org/en](https://donate.kidsrights.org/en)

**Did you know that it is also possible to include KidsRights in your inheritance?**

**If you would like more information about this, we would be happy to make a personal appointment.**

**Please feel free to contact us to discuss this further.**

**Contact us via  
[rob@kidsrights.org](mailto:rob@kidsrights.org)**





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