

Children's rights indicators from theory to implementation: the Flemish case

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Overview

I. Introduction:

- Belgium and Flanders
- Flemish Action Plan for Children's Rights
- 'Indicators' as KeKi's 2012 theme

II. KeKi's study

III. KeKi's recommendations

IV. The Flemish Government's approach

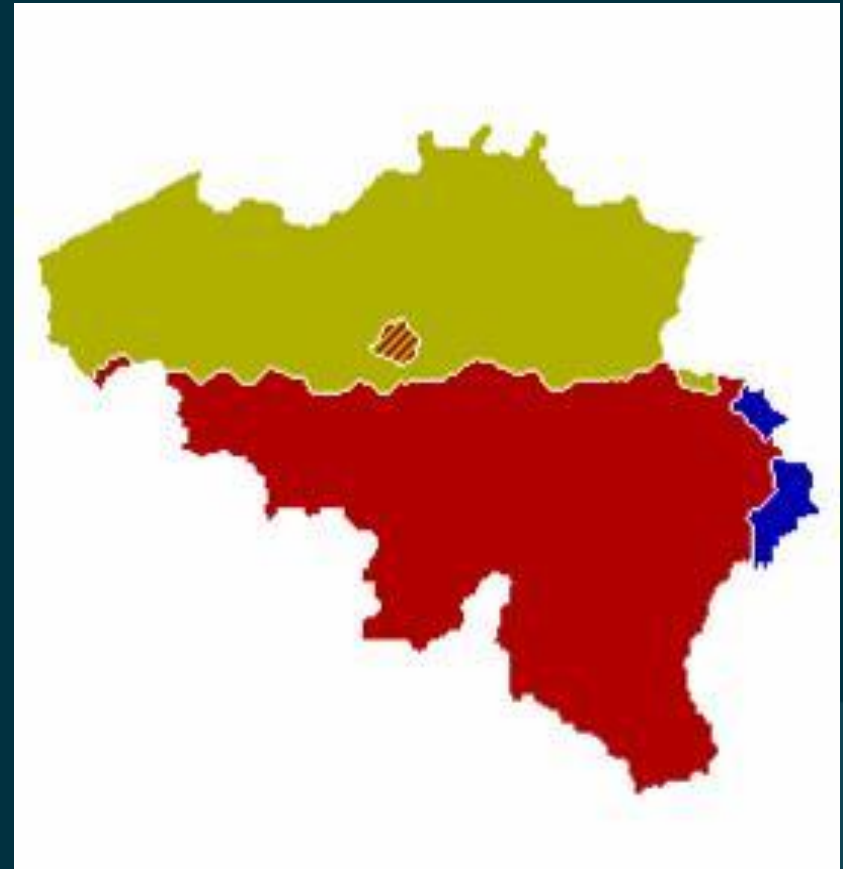
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Introduction

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Belgian Communities – Inhabitants of a Language Area

- Flemish Community
(+/- 6.000.000 people)
- French Community
(+/- 4.000.000 people)
- German-speaking Community
(+/- 75.000 people)



Flemish Action Plan on children's rights

- 2011 – 2014
- 1 of the priorities: Coordination and indicators
- *“The coordinating administration (youth) works, in cooperation with the research support service of the Flemish Government, on a basic set of core indicators regarding children's rights at the Flemish level (a ‘Flemish children's rights monitor’) by the end of 2013 [...]”* (Flemish Government, 2011: 20, own translation)
- KeKi 2012 theme: children's rights indicators
 - ! KeKi does not develop indicators

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KeKi's study

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What are children's rights indicators?

- Definition?
 - children's rights indicators vs. monitoring indicators
 - structure, process and outcome indicators
 - indicators versus data
 - => concept-driven vs. data-driven approach
 - => interpretation of data: not a task for researchers (?)

“a children's rights indicator is a specific indication, based on particular data, of the extent to which a well defined right of children is being realised, starting from an explicitly demarcated normative framework”

Critical reflections

- Fundamental critiques:
 - Technologization of social debate
 - => concern of civil society and policy
 - => indicators as food for social debate
 - => Attention for multidimensionality of children's rights
 - Role of the expert
 - Tokenism
 - => concern of civil society and policy
 - => what is the cost?

Critical reflections

- Methodological challenges:
 - Limitations of numbers
 - => official and self-report data
 - => centralize official data and broaden self-report data
 - Underrepresentation of qualitative research (E.g. Nairn, Duffy, Sweet & Swieckica, 2011 / Ipsos Mori institute)
 - Participation
 - => ownership of children and youth
 - => involvement of civil society
 - Interregional comparability

KeKi's recommendations

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KeKi's recommendations

- General
 1. Distinguish between indicators and data
 2. First develop the indicators, then gather the data
 3. Strengthen awareness about the limitations of indicators

- Development of indicators
 4. Distinguish between 'children's rights indicators' and 'monitoring indicators'
 5. Distinguish between 'structure', 'process' and 'outcome' indicators
 6. Pay attention to positive evolutions
 7. Create a participatory process
 8. Create long term stability in the indicators
 9. Pursue interregional comparability

KeKi's recommendations

- Filling in indicators (data)
 10. Use – as much as possible – existing data
 11. New research: involve children and youth from socially vulnerable groups
 12. New research: also invest in qualitative, interpretative research
 13. New research: also invest in projects that use a child-friendly methodology

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The Flemish Government's approach

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The Flemish Government's approach: description

- Project team (3 government members) develops methodology with a specific input from feedback group
- Feedback group consists of interested stakeholders from the children's rights field (practice/civil society)
- So far, the following steps have been taken
 1. First meeting of feedback group: open brainstorm. Which indicators should be included in the children's rights monitor?
 2. Second meeting of feedback group: discussion. Which indicators should be kept?
 3. Third meeting of feedback group: discussion of selection

The Flemish Government approach: evaluation

- Strong participation of civil society:
 - shows great concern for input from practice/civil society
 - is in line with recommendation nr. 7: ‘Create a participatory process’
 - voice of children & youth not directly involved
- Inspiration in Dutch children’s rights monitor and adjustment towards concluding observations allows this instrument to be shaped within an international framework

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The Flemish Government approach: evaluation

- ‘Bottom-up’ approach:
 - Strong participation from stakeholders
 - Lack of clear normative framework: ‘wish list’ of participants?
 - Non-representative: over-representation of professional domains of participants?
- No clear distinction between data and indicators (≠ recommendation 1)
- Data-driven approach
- No clarity about goal of monitor:
 - Broad view on children’s rights in Flanders?
 - or
 - Focus on ‘filling gaps’ in existing data?
- Methodology so far resulted in fragmented compilation of indicators

Conclusion

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Conclusion

- Positive intentions: - efforts to follow up children's rights implementation
- much attention for concerns and advice from civil society
- A more structured approach would have entailed a more comprehensive set of indicators

Developing indicators is difficult, but the indicator developing process can be valuable as well: it can start a dynamic towards a more evidence-based policy

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Thank you Questions?

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