



Barbados' NGO Report 1998

***BARBADOS' NGO REPORT***  
on the  
***Implementation of the Convention***  
on the  
***Rights of the Child***

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## **Barbados' NGO Report on Implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child**

**Submitted by: PAREDOS**

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### **Background to the Report**

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> October 1997, the Liaison Unit for NGO Group for the Convention on the Rights of the Child invited PAREDOS (Parent Education for Development in Barbados) to submit **concrete** information on the situation of children in Barbados not adequately covered in the Government report.

### **Methodology**

PAREDOS sought the assistance of NGOs and professionals who work with families, to submit factual information on the situation of children in Barbados, and to comment on the situation as identified in the Government's Report.

The inquiry lasted three months, during this period PAREDOS conducted its own research, processed the information submitted and sought legal clarification where necessary.

This report reflects the comments and recommendations of those agencies and individuals. However, the report remains the sole responsibility of PAREDOS.

### **I. GENERAL MEASURES OF IMPLEMENTATION**

- A. Measures taken to harmonize national laws and policies with provisions of the Convention.

Government of Barbados recognising the need for the special protection for developing minds and bodies of children has enacted legislation to protect the child (see Barbados Report for details).

- B. Coordinating children's policies and monitoring the implementation of the Convention.

Investigations revealed that there is some collaboration between Government and NGOs to ensure that the legislation and policies enacted are upheld (See Barbados Report for details)

What is missing is knowledge on the Convention to the general public; a structured system of reporting information to Government and NGOs; and clear guidelines from the administrative agencies set up by Government to monitor the Convention.

C. Publicizing the provisions of the Convention

A series of activities were held to publicize the Convention. The activities included national and regional symposiums, and conferences (See Barbados Report for details).

PAREDOS is committed to raising the level of awareness to the general public on the Convention. Its pro-active approach reaches a wide cross section of the general public through print/electronic media, group lecture/discussion, training workshops and focus group discussions. Churches and service clubs also make an effort to address this issue. Despite these efforts, not enough is being done on a macro level to: (1) reach a wider cross section of the general public; (2) encourage families to familiarise themselves with the various articles outlined in the Convention and (3) allow individuals/families to offer feedback regarding their understanding of the Convention and their willingness to support the Convention. We recommend that Government agencies take their responsibility seriously and involve all sectors of the community in a national fight against all forms of child abuse and exploitation.

D. Publicizing the report

The report should be readily accessible to the public, for example the media, community centres, schools, day care centres and in particular NGOs.

II. DEFINITION OF THE CHILD

No amendment to this Act (See Barbados Report for details)

III. GENERAL PRINCIPALS

A. Article 2 - Non-discrimination

The constitution of Barbados recognises and protects the fundamental rights and freedoms of all persons.

B. Article 3 - Best interest of the child

No amendment to this Act

C. Article 6 - The right to life, survival and development

No amendment to this Act

D. Article 12 - Respect for the view of the child

No amendment to this Act

IV. CIVIL RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS

A. Articles 7 and 8 - Name , nationality and identity

An issue has arisen where a child born out of wedlock to a Barbadian Mother who at the time of birth is a Barbadian Diplomat serving in another should not be entitled to Barbadian citizenship by birth. The child at present is a citizen by descent and not by birth.

Citizenship by descent cannot be passed on to one's children under the present the law. A change of the law to allow this has been requested and is being considered.

B. Article 13 - Freedom of expression

No amendment to this Act

C. Article 17 - Access to appropriate information

No amendment to this Act

D. Article 14 - Freedom of thought, conscience and religion

No amendment to this Act

E. Article 15 - Freedom of association and peaceful assembly

No amendment to this Act

F. Article 16 - Protection of privacy

No amendment to this Act

G. Article 37 - Protection from inhuman treatment, torture or degrading punishment

No documented research to show the long term psychological effects of the corporal punishment administered in schools (See Barbados Report for details).

V. **FAMILY ENVIRONMENT AND ALTERNATIVE CARE**

A. Articles 5 and 18, para. 1 and 2- Parental guidance and responsibility

National and international NGOs work closely together to enhance family life Below is a list of services done by some national NGOs.

- (a) PAREDOS, National Parenting Organisation
- (b) Barbados Family Planning Organisation
- (c) Churches
- (d) Community Groups
- (e) Service Clubs

(a) PAREDOS - (Parent Education for Development in Barbados), a non profit organisation, was officially launched in 1972. PAREDOS is governed by an Executive Committee and managed by a Director and a modest size staff. Technical assistance is provided by professional resource persons and trained volunteers.

Through PAREDOS' programmes families and children have access to the latest information and resources on parenting, youth and gender issues, conflict resolution, child development and other family related matters.

In order to improve its services to families, and to enhance their parenting skills, PAREDOS has integrated the "Family Support" perspective into its existing programme. The family support premise states that since parents have skills and competencies in raising their own children, they should be encouraged to be active, rather than passive recipients of "expert" information. This method of recognising parents' worth, while offering them information and support has been extremely empowering for those families who participate in PAREDOS' programme.

(b) Barbados Family Planning - dedicates itself to the achievement of a better quality of life for Barbadians, through the provision of family planning, family life education and related services.



(c) Churches - offer family counselling, marital counselling and spiritual guidance to families.

(d) Community Groups/Service Clubs - offer information and education to families and children and provide assistance to families in need of household items, repairs to homes, vocational and educational skills.

B. Article 9 - Separation from parents

The legislation enacted by Government is designed to protect the interest of the child.

C. Article 10 - Family reunification

No amendment to this Act

D. Article 27, para. 4 - Recovery of maintenance for the child

No amendment this Act

E. Article 20 - Children deprived of a family environment

No amendment to this Act.

F. Article 21 -Adoption

No amendment to this Act

G. Article 11 - Illicit transfer and non-return

No amendment to this Act

H. Article 19 - Abuse and neglect

NGOs make a conscious effort to inform and educate families and children on the adverse long term effects of abuse and neglect of children. They also encourage the general public to report all suspected incidents of abuse to the Child Care Board.

I. Article 25 - Periodic review of placements

No amendment to this Act

## VI. BASIC HEALTH AND WELFARE

### A. Article 6, para. 2 - Survival and development

No amendment to this Act.

### B. Article 23 - Disabled children

A significant number of NGOs monitor the needs of disabled children, and are extremely vigilant in ensuring that these needs are met.

### C. Article 24 - Health and health services

No amendment to this Act

### D. Article 26 and 18, para. 3 - Social Security and child-care services and facilities

No amendment to this Act

## VII. EDUCATION, LEISURE AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

No amendment to this Act

## VIII. SPECIAL PROTECTION MEASURES

### A. Children in situations of emergency

No amendment to the Act

### B. Children in conflict with the law

#### 1. Article 40- Administration of juvenile justice

No amendment to this Act

The media can be fined or sentenced for advertising the name or any other identifying information of a juvenile offender.

2. Article 37 (b), (c), (d) - Deprivation of liberty

1. Juveniles are remanded at the same institution they are committed to. This is presently being investigated by the Government.
2. During remand the juvenile is exposed to psychological, psychiatric, medical and drug testing before sentencing.

3. Article 37 (a) - The sentencing of juveniles

1. All juveniles who are found guilty or plead guilty have the benefit of a Pre-Sentence Investigation (PSI) or Social Inventory Report (SIR).
2. Any juvenile can be sent to the institution from the age of 10 years, but must be discharged before his/her 19<sup>th</sup> birthday. The age of criminal responsibility is 7 years. A child who commits an offence while under the age of 16 years, but attains the age of 16 before the trial is completed, he/she can still be tried in the juvenile court. However, a child is considered an adult for criminal matters at the age of 16 years. This section of the law is being reviewed.

C. Article 39 - Physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration

1. There needs to be a structured re-entry programme (at the juvenile facilities) to enhance the union of the juvenile and the family environment.
2. The juvenile facilities need additional trained staff.

**XI. CHILDREN IN SITUATIONS OF EXPLOITATION**

A. Article 32 - Economic exploitation

Barbados has no reported incidents of child labour. The Government of Barbados has implemented adequate legislation to address this concern.

B. Article 33 - Drug abuse

The increase in the use of illicit drugs and drug trafficking remains a concern in Barbados. The Government's National plan of action against drug abuse is strongly supported by NGO's and other organisations, including churches, service clubs, and community groups.

The support extends beyond information, education and counselling (IE&C) at the community level and through the print and electronic media, to the establishment of a private Drug

Rehabilitation Centre referred to as "Teen Challenge," which offers a one year residential treatment programme and community/family services including crisis counselling, outpatient treatment, and school education programmes.

C. Article 34 - Sexual exploitation

1. The Government of Barbados has affirmed its commitment to reduce sexual exploitation of children in Barbados, by implementing legislation which make all forms of sexual exploitation illegal in Barbados. The Government has also identified The Child Care Board and the Royal Barbados Police Force as the administrative agencies with responsibility for ensuring the care and protection of children in matters relating to sexual abuse.

2. Despite Government's efforts, sexual exploitation of children is still a matter of concern, and will remain a priority concern until it is totally eradicated.

In addition to the difficulties associated with prosecuting offenders as outlined in the Government's report under caption 218., we believe that there is:

(a) insufficient public knowledge of the serious nature of the abuse, especially the long term emotional and psychological damage to the child;

(b) an absence of a Family Court designed to expedite such cases efficiently;

(c) inadequate resources to provide long term counselling for the child and the perpetrator;

(d) the need for closer partnership with government, NGOs, community leaders and families to strengthen the preventative and protective aspect of child abuse.

3. We are of the view that many NGO's including PAREDOS and the PTA's (Parent Teachers Association) have made some progress in sensitising the public and educating parents and children on the issue of sexual abuse. PAREDOS in collaboration with the KIWANIS Club of Barbados, Central, conducts a Safe Touch and Conflict Resolution Training Programme for Children between the ages of 3-6 years and their parents. PAREDOS also conducts a programme on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child for children under the age of 12 years.

D. Article 36 - Other forms of exploitation

No amendment to this Act

E. Article 35 - Sale, trafficking and abduction

There are cases of children being abducted by their fathers where the relationship between mother and father has eroded and a stepfather has come on the scene, or where the father has not been maintaining the child and the mother has refused access for that reason; where the father is not regarded as a responsible parent due to drug use, etc.

There is no statical data available on this issue.

#### **X. CHILDREN OF MINORITY OR INDIGENOUS GROUPS**

An issue of Muslim children in local schools regarding dress and education beyond 'O' Level has arisen.

#### **XI. REPORTS OR STUDIES CONDUCTED BY NGOs ON ANY ASPECT OF THE CONVENTION**

To date no reports, studies or concrete information exist in Barbados to determine the level of implementation on any aspect of the Convention. However, the Government of Barbados conducted a Rationalization Study on the Social Service Agencies (Ministry of Labour Community Development and Sports, 1997). The study showed that there is need for greater collaboration within government agencies, and among governmental agencies and NGOs to effectively meet the needs of families.

#### **XII. CONCLUSION**

The preparation of this document provided NGOs an opportunity to review the services offered to children and families, and to re-think their position - in terms advocacy and ongoing programme implementation.

#### **REFERENCE LIST OF LEGISLATION**

See Barbados Report

#### **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

See Barbados Report

#### **APPENDICES**

None