

Decisions and Views of the Committee on the Rights of the Child

Identity, Family Ties, and Children's Rights

The case of:
N.G.P. (on behalf of G.G.P.) vs. Paraguay



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The original version of this work has been prepared by Rosa Calles Contreras, Alexandra Hernandez, Matheus Mendes, and Linnete J. Muñoz as part of their studies in the Master of Laws: Advanced Studies in International Children's Rights of Leiden University, Academic Year 2023/2024. The published version concerns an edited version published by the Leiden Children's Rights Observatory.



A Child-Friendly Version of Communication No. 119/2020 N.G.P. (G.G.P.) vs. Paraguay

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Summary

G.G.P. (the child) was born in 2014 and is from Paraguay. When he was born, his father refused to sign the formal papers confirming that they were father and son. Because of this, the boy could not use his father's last name, and his name was incomplete. We can say that he did not have an identity. He was also left without the help of his father to take care of his needs, like food, clothes, and school stuff. N.G.P., the mother of G.G.P., asked the Committee on the Rights of the Child for help, presenting a complaint in 2020. The Committee found that Paraguay did not respect:

- G.G.P.'s best interests as a child
- G.G.P.'s right to identity
- G.G.P.'s rights related to the responsibility of parents
- G.G.P.'s rights to food, clothing, and a safe home

The Committee asked the government of Paraguay to fix this situation of G.G.P. by confirming the family connection. The Committee also asked Paraguay to make sure this situation doesn't happen to other children in the country.

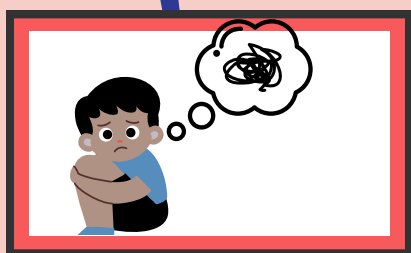
This document includes a child-friendly version of the case of *N.G.P. (G.G.P.) v. Paraguay* which was brought before the U.N. Committee on the Rights of the Child on 27 May 2020. The full document also includes three annexes with further explanation on Children's Rights and the work of the Committee on the Rights of the Child. For a full version of the case, click [here](#).



Hey... there... 🌿 Today I am taking a break from my lazy routine to talk about your rights as a child! Sometimes children are not allowed to have a full name or to know who their mom or dad are. This is not fair, right? Children should have the right to an identity and to know their parents.

N.G.P. (G.G.P.) vs. PARAGUAY

Let's talk about the case from a little boy who was born in Paraguay in 2014. When he was born, his dad refused to sign the "paternity papers"* that would confirm they were father and son. Because of this, the boy could not use his father's last name and his name was incomplete. The boy's mom went to court to solve this. But even though she tried really hard, the court didn't help them fast enough.



Because the government took too long to say there was a family connection between them, the boy did not receive things that he needed from his dad, like food, clothes, and school stuff. Also, the boy did not have an "identity".



The mother tried to talk to the government and even went to court many times, but nothing changed. She wrote a "communication" letter to a special group called the Committee on the Rights of the Child. The Committee is formed by people from different countries who come together to talk about important things that affect children.



In this "communication", the mom asked the Committee to help her son get his dad's last name and ask the dad to help take care of him, too. She also told the Committee that the government of Paraguay took too long to help her son, and asked that they should make things fair by admitting they were wrong and giving something back, like money.



After receiving the "communication", the Committee asked the government of Paraguay why they did not help. The government said that they had done everything to help the boy and his mom. They also told the Committee that the boy and his mom should have made more effort to solve the problem with the dad. They also said that it wasn't their fault that the father did not show up to help: the boy's dad was in France and the government of Paraguay did their job by trying to look for him. Finally, the government said that they would not give anything to the boy and his mom to make up for their troubles.

Oh no! I wonder what the Committee did next...



*If you see words between "quotation" marks, you can find their definition in Annex II



Before the Committee can look at the problem, it has to decide if it's okay to do so. This is called "admissibility". For example, if the children or the people taking care of them have not tried to find a solution in their country, the Committee cannot accept the letter and talk about the issues.

Admissibility

The Committee understands that it's important for people to try to solve their problems in their own country first. But they also say that sometimes, like in this case, it's clear that the problem is so big or serious that it's okay to ask for help from outside.

The Mother did try to fix the problem in her own country first, but the government of Paraguay took too long to help. So, the Committee decided that the letter was "admissible" and decided to talk about the issue.

Were the mom and the child right?

Finally, the Committee decided that the boy and his mom were right and that the government of Paraguay did not do enough!

The Committee said the following things:

- The government did not act fast enough to help the boy get a full name, and this hurts his right to an identity;
- Because it took too long to say there was a connection between the boy and the father, the government was not doing what was best for him;
- Since the government took too long to say that there was a family connection between the boy and his father, the boy grew up without the help that he needed from his father, like money for food, clothes, and school stuff.

Let me tell you what the Committee did to help G.G.P.!



Remedies



Brrr... Hello! ❄️ When the Committee decides that the rights of the child were not respected in a country, it can ask the government of the country to take actions to fix this. This is called "remedies". These were the remedies that the Committee asked Paraguay to do:



Give G.G.P. the help he needs to make up for what was done to him, including something fair — like money — to help make things better.



Make sure the court's decision that says there is a family connection between the boy and his father is followed quickly, so G.G.P. can get the support he needs from his parent on time.



Pay back the boy and his mother for all the money they spent on lawyers and experts while trying to prove they were right.



But the Committee didn't stop there! It also asked the government to take actions to make sure this doesn't happen to any other children in the future!

To make sure this doesn't happen to other children, the Committee told the government of Paraguay to:

- Make it easier for kids to prove who their parents are by making special rules, like faster tests and making the tests free;
- Do a better job at working with other countries and helping them when legal help is needed;
- Make sure that the courts work quickly and do not take too much time;
- Train the people who work in the courts to make sure that they understand how the decisions affect children.



Annex I - Do you know the Convention on the Rights of the Child?

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is an important agreement by countries who have promised to protect children's rights. The UNCRC explains who children are, all their rights, and the responsibilities of governments. The convention is divided in Articles. There are 53 Articles in total, each of them talking about different Rights of the Child or responsibilities of governments.

Here are 4 example of Rights of the Child that were also important in the case of G.G.P.:



3 When adults make decisions, they should think about how their decisions will affect children. All adults should do what is best for children. Governments should make sure children are protected and looked after

Parents are the main people responsible for raising a child. When the child does not have any parents, another adult will have this responsibility and they are called a "guardian". Parents and guardians should always consider what is best for the child



18
RESPONSIBILITY OF PARENTS



IDENTITY

8 Children have the right to their own identity - an official record of who they are which includes their name, nationality and family relations.

Children have the right to food, clothing and a safe place to live so they can develop in the best possible way. The government should help families and children who cannot afford this.



27
FOOD, CLOTHING, A SAFE HOME

Check out the full list of rights here: [Convention on the Rights of the Child: The children's version](#)

Annex II - Glossary



During this reading you might have seen some confusing words. To make sure everything is clear, here are some important words and their meaning!

"paternity papers" - documents that show who a child's father is.

"identity" - the official document that includes basic information about someone, such as their name, nationality and family relations.

"communication" - the letters that the Committee receive from children (or adults representing them), telling that a right has been violated and asking for help.

"admissibility" - before the Committee can look at the "communication", it has to check if some rules were followed. This stage is called "admissibility" and the documents can be considered "admissible" (if they follow the rules) or "inadmissible" (if they don't follow the rules).

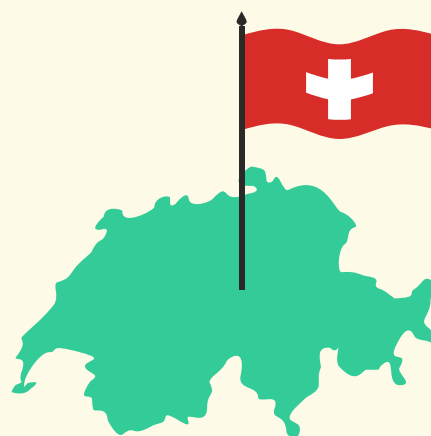
"remedies" - the things that can be done to make things better or fair again. For example, if someone did something wrong, a remedy could be saying sorry or fixing the problem.

Annex III - Meet the Committee on the Rights of the Child



The Committee on the Rights of the Child is a group of 18 independent experts in children's rights who come from all over the world: Africa, Asia, Europe, North America and South America!

The Committee meets three times per year in Geneva, Switzerland, to discuss how children's rights are being promoted and respected in each country that has signed the Convention. The Committee tells the people working for your government how they can improve children's rights.



If my rights have been violated, can I send a communication to the Committee?



Yes, in some cases! Children and teenagers can contact the Committee when they feel like one or some of their rights have been violated, if their country has signed the Optional Protocol on a Communications Procedure (OPIC) and some conditions have been met.

- [Here](#) you can get to know the 18 members of the Committee
- [Here](#) you can find an explanation of the OPIC
- [Here](#) you can find additional information
- You may also contact the Office that supports the Committee if you have a question: ohchr-crc@un.org

Where can I find more information on my rights and the work of the Committee?



Annex IV - Let's play!

Now that you have read about Children's Rights, the story of G.G.P. and the work of the Committee on the Rights of the Child to help him, let's do this fun activities to remember all we have learned!

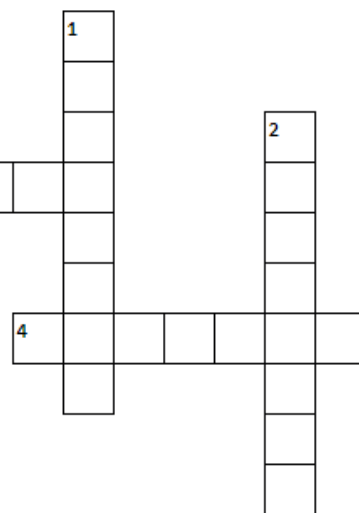
Let's solve this crossword together!

Down

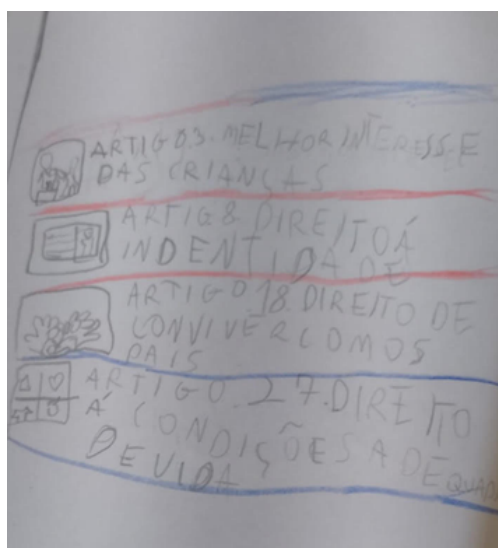
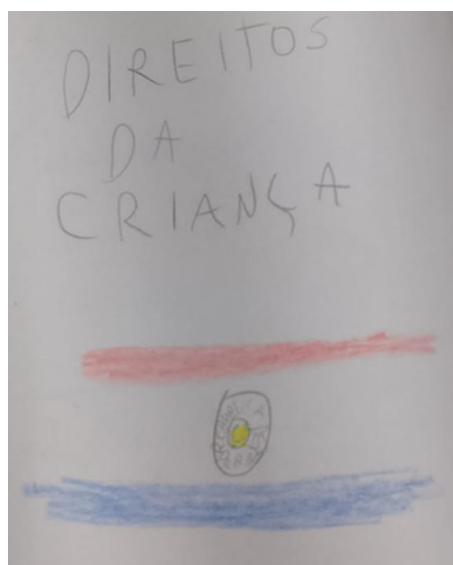
1. The name of the country where G.G.P. (the child) is from
2. The name of the official record that every child has right to have, it includes basic information about them

Across

3. The city where the Committee on the Rights of the Child meet
4. The main people responsible for raising a child, according to the Convention



Now use your creativity to draw a picture that shows what you learned from G.G.P.'s story. You can draw: G.G.P. and his mom, G.G.P. learning about his rights, the Committee helping G.G.P. Or anything else you learned from the story! Have fun!



Drawings submitted by Marcelle (9) from Brazil

This child-friendly version was developed using the model outlined in Child Rights Connect's template, "[How to Draft a Child-Friendly Version of an OPIC Case.](#)"

This is an edited version of the original student work, for which the Leiden Children's Rights Observatory assumes full editorial responsibility. This version does not reflect the views of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child or any of its members, nor does it represent the views of Leiden University or any other entities with which the Leiden Children's Rights Observatory is currently or has previously been affiliated.

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