

UN Committee on the Rights of the Child Day of General Discussion 2021 – Children’s Rights and Alternative Care

Preparation and Information Document



About this Document

Hello, and welcome to this DGD Preparation Document!

The purpose of this document is to help you prepare for participating in the 2021 Day of General Discussion (DGD). This document contains information about the DGD, its agenda, how to join, and the measures in place to help make sure you are comfortable and safe when participating.

As well as this document, we will be holding DGD Preparation Meetings, which will be taking place on Thursday 9 September and Friday 10 September. There will be more information about these on the online registration platform where you signed up to attend the DGD. We encourage you to attend these if you can, but if you can't, a lot of the most important information is contained in this document.

You can also always ask us if you have any questions, by emailing Aisling Ledwith (aisling.ledwith@wearelumos.org) or Caroline Rose (caroline.rose@wearelumos.org).

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What is the DGD?

Recap Overview

The **United Nations (UN) Committee on the Rights of the Child** holds a Day of General Discussion (DGD) every two years.

The Day of General Discussion is an opportunity for experts including children, youth, policy makers and practitioners to come together with the Committee on the Rights of the Child and talk about a specific issue related to children's rights. The theme of the upcoming DGD is Children in Alternative Care. The DGD 2021 will take place online on 16 and 17 September 2021.



What You Have Achieved So Far

The DGD could not be happening without children and young people. There are several ways that children and young people have helped to shape the event.

Back in 2020, a Child and Youth Advisory Team, known as the CAT and YAT, was formed. This team is made up of about 25 children and young people from all around the world, with different types of experience of care. Many of you reading this document will be members of the CAT or YAT!

To our CAT and YAT members, we would like to thank you all for your hard work so far in preparing for the DGD. You have all done such amazing work, and it will soon be time to see the results of your efforts!



As a member of the CAT or YAT, you may have done some, or all, of the following:

- Contributed to the global consultation with care-experienced children and young people and the report from this, that is currently being finalised. There were almost 1,200 responses to this survey, which is amazing!
- Contributed to the call for submissions to the Committee on the Rights of the Child, which has received over 200 submissions!
- Participated in activities relating to the DGD in your region.
- Found creative ways to communicate the message of the DGD globally.
- Helped to shape the format of the DGD, and decide what topics we should discuss at the event.
- Helped us to make the DGD as child-friendly as possible.
- Volunteered and prepared to participate or speak in the DGD itself.

If you are NOT a member of the CAT or YAT, you still play an incredibly important role in the DGD. You may have done one of the following activities:

- Contributed to the call for submissions to the Committee on the Rights of the Child, which has received over 200 submissions!
- Contributed to the global consultation with care-experienced children and young people and the report from this, that is currently being finalised. There were almost 1,200 responses to this survey, which is amazing!
- Volunteered and prepared to participate or speak in the DGD itself.
- Be attending the DGD as a participant, to learn and share about alternative care around the world.

The DGD is all about children, so all of you are the most important people attending. No matter whether you have been involved in the preparations for the DGD until now, we hope that you are as excited as we are for the main event!



How do I join the DGD?

The DGD is taking place **online, using the virtual platform Zoom.**

If you are reading this document, you have probably already registered to attend the DGD using the DGD registration platform.

Closer to the time, the Zoom links to attend each session will be available in your personal space in the registration platform.

You (or the person whose email address you used to sign up) will also receive an email with all the links you need closer to the day.

In addition, lots of information for children and young people, including

- this briefing,
- the Child-Friendly Safeguarding Policy for the DGD, and
- information about preparation and debrief sessions for children and young people before and after the DGD

is available in the section of the registration platform entitled “documents for children and young people,” [here](#).

If you have not already registered to attend the DGD, please do this as soon as possible using this link: <https://myevent.network/2021DGD/>.

The DGD Agenda (Short Version)

On the next two pages you will see a short version of the DGD agenda. When you registered to participate in the DGD, you will have seen a full version of the agenda. The agenda is also available [HERE](#).

Timings

All times in the agenda are in **Central European Time**, or **CET**. This is the time zone that is used in Geneva. For some of you this will be same time zone you use in your country! But for most of you, these times won't reflect the correct time you will use in your country. To figure out what time each session will be in your country, you can use this website:

<https://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/converter.html?iso=20210828T130000&p1=87>.

You can use this website to compare the time in Geneva with the time in your country and figure out what time you should join the different DGD sessions.

DGD DAY 1: Thursday 16th September 2021, 13.00-17.00 CEST

12.30-13.00: (Before the start of the DGD): participants joining the platform, online welcome

13.00-13:30 – Opening Remarks (Session for everybody)

In this session speakers will welcome you to the DGD, talk about why this event is important, and about some of the things which will be happening over the next two days.

13:30-14:30 – Opening plenary presentations: Children’s Rights and Alternative Care- What are the messages of the DGD (Session for everybody)

This is a very important session, because it will be an opportunity for speakers to discuss some of the findings of the consultations which happened in the run up to the DGD.

14.30-14.45 Short break

14.45-16.15: Three Parallel Working Groups (these all happen at the same time, and participants choose which one to attend)

You could attend **one** of these sessions:

14.45-16.15 - Working Group 1 - Ensuring all children grow up in safe and nurturing families: Strengthening families and communities to prevent separation (with lessons from the pandemic)

This session will be all about families, and how we can prevent families from being separated. The speakers will also talk a little about how COVID-19 impacted families.

OR

14.45-16.15 - Working Group 2 - Addressing the care needs and rights of children who are separated, unaccompanied or without care

This session will focus on children who are separated from their families for various different reasons. For example, migrant and refugee children, children who have been trafficked, and children in street situations.

OR

14.45-16.15 - Working Group 3 - Access to Justice and accountability for children and young people in alternative care, their families, and adults who grew up in care

This session is about situations where children's rights have been violated in alternative care, and how states can be held accountable for this.

These Working Groups will also be recorded, so if you are interested in more than one, there will be an opportunity to watch the one you couldn't attend another day!

16.15-16.45 - Break

16:45 - 17:15 – Presentation by rapporteurs of the Working Groups' conclusions (Session for everybody)

This session is a chance for each working group to report back on the discussions that they had during their sessions.

17:15-17:30 Closing Remarks for Day 1 (Session for everybody)

This is the final session of the day, and will be an opportunity for speakers to thank everyone for attending, and reflect on the day.

DGD DAY 2: Friday 17th September 2021, 9.00 – 13.00 CEST

8.30-9.00: (Before the start of the day): participants joining the platform, online welcome

9.00-9.30: Opening Remarks (Session for everybody)

In this session speakers will welcome you to the final day of the DGD, talk a little bit about what happened yesterday, and what will happen today.

9.30-11.00: Two Parallel Working Groups (these all happen at the same time, and participants choose which one to attend)

You could attend **one** of these sessions:

9.30-11.00 - Working Group 4: Delivering appropriate quality alternative care services

This session will talk about what good alternative care looks like, what are some good examples of this, and what problems need to be overcome.

OR

9.30-11.00 - Working Group 5: Transforming the system towards family and community-based care

This session will be about the change from institutional care for children, towards family and community-based care systems.

These Working Groups will also be recorded, so if you are interested in more than one, there will be an opportunity to watch the one you couldn't attend another day!

11.00-11.30: Break

11:30 – 11:50 – Presentation by rapporteurs of the working group's conclusions (Session for everybody)

This session is a chance for each working group to report back on the discussions that they had during their sessions.

11:50 – 12:45 – Plenary – Future Looking (Session for everybody)

In this session speakers will be talking about the future – what changes do we want to see as a result of the DGD.

12:45 – 13:00: DGD Closing Remarks (Session for everybody)

In the final session of the DGD, speakers will wrap up everything that has happened, and thank you for your attendance.

Consultation before the DGD

As we prepared for the DGD, the Committee on the Rights of the Child wanted to learn about the situation of children in alternative care all around the world. To do this, we reached out to experts on this subject. That includes children and young people with care experience, as well as practitioners, policy makers, and anyone else with any experience or expertise on topics relating to alternative care, family strengthening, or reform of care systems.

How were experts consulted?

Experts, including children and young people from all around the world fed into this consultation process by:

- **Writing a submission to the Committee on the Rights of the Child**
 - Children and adults were also able to send in “submissions” to the Committee on the Rights of the Child. These were pieces of writing, drawings, or videos containing any messages these children and young people wanted to share with the committee. We received over 200 of these submissions.

- **Completing the Global Survey for children and young people**
 - This survey was aimed specifically at reaching children and young people with experience of care or the child protection system, to collect their views on alternative care. It was designed by a group of researchers, with advice from the DGD CAT and YAT, and shared all over the world.
 - It contained lots of questions about that problems children in alternative care or at risk of family separation face, what things were most important to children in care, and how care could be improved.
 - Almost 1,200 children with experience of living in alternative care filled out the survey. We received responses from every continent in the world, except for Antarctica!

- **Taking part in a Regional Consultation/hub**

- These were consultation processes which focused on particular parts of the world. They took place in Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, and Asia. Young people had a role in some of these consultations. The results of these processes will be presented at the DGD.

If you took part in any of these activities, **THANK YOU!** You have played such an important role in making children's voices heard.



The CAT and YAT played a really big part in these consultations, not only filling them in and sharing them in their communities, but also in actually helping to decide what questions were asked and making sure the consultations were child-friendly!

Where can I see the results of these consultations?

There is also a report being prepared called the **DGD Background Document**, which will bring together the findings from all of the child and adult submissions to the Committee on the Rights of the Child, as well as the results of the survey. This will be published before the DGD.

The results of the **Global survey with children and young people** have been written into a separate report which is being published shortly before the DGD.

You can find that **report about the survey**, as well as a **child-friendly summary** of it and an **easy-read version**, at the [Committee on the Rights of the Child's webpage for the DGD](#) and the section of the registration platform entitled "documents for children and young people," [here](#).

There are also some reports which were published as a result of the different **regional hubs**. You can ask your supporting organisations about any publications about the situation in your region.

You will also hear **people discussing the results of all these consultations** during the second opening plenary session of the DGD, which is taking place on Thursday 16 September at 13:30-14.30 CET.

Finally, towards the end of the year, a new report will be published and shared called the "Outcomes Document." This will take into account all of the consultations mentioned above, as well as the things that are said during the DGD itself.

Safeguarding at the DGD

The organisations involved in organising the Day of General Discussion 2021 on children's rights and alternative care are committed to making sure that **all children and young people are kept safe from harm** throughout the event.

A **Child Friendly Safeguarding Policy** for the DGD will be available on the "documents for children and young people" section of the DGD registration platform. You should try to read this before the DGD itself.

If you feel uncomfortable, unhappy, or overwhelmed during the DGD, there are a few different things that you can do.

Speak to your supporting organisation - Most children and young people attending the DGD will be supported by an organisation that you already know. Your supporting organisation knows you best and is the main organisation responsible for your safety. They are responsible for ensuring children and young people are kept safe when they are working on and preparing for the DGD. They should be able to help you if you are feeling uncomfortable at the DGD, and they should be able to support you in your own country.

Speak to the DGD Safeguarding Focal Points - If you are upset about anything during the DGD and you aren't able to talk to your supporting organisation or you don't feel comfortable doing that, you can contact the DGD safeguarding focal point, Nancy Maguire. More information about how to get in touch with her is below.

Speak to the safeguarding focal point for your session – Every session of the DGD will also have a *Safeguarding Focal Point*. This is a person who is joining the call to help any child or young person who becomes uncomfortable during the session. Details of the different safeguarding focal points for each session will be provided at the beginning of each session, and the safeguarding focal points. You can send them a message at any time during the session if you need.

Check the Child Friendly Safeguarding Policy – this will help you to understand how to stay safe during the DGD, and what you can do if you are unhappy or uncomfortable. You can find that in the section of the registration platform entitled “documents for children and young people,” [here](#).

Look at our tips on page 19 of this document for what to do if you feel overwhelmed – sometimes we all need a little break.

The Safeguarding Team at the DGD

You can find here information about the people working on safeguarding at the DGD. If you have any problems or concerns, they will be happy to help you out.

Nancy Maguire – Child Participation Manager at Lumos

Nancy is the main **Child Safeguarding Focal Point** who oversees all aspects related to safeguarding for children and young people involved in the DGD.



If you are feeling unsafe or uncomfortable at the DGD, or if you are worried that you or another child or young person might come to harm during the DGD, and your supporting organisation is not able to help you or you don't feel comfortable talking to them, you can email or call Nancy. Her email address is Nancy.maguire@wearelumos.org and her number is +447426475100.

If Nancy is very busy, she might put you in touch with the **Backup Safeguarding Focal Point**.

Angelique Robold – Senior Safeguarding Manager at Lumos



Both Nancy and Angelique are really experienced when it comes to safeguarding. They are very friendly and will always be happy to help you.

We should note that Nancy and Angelique are both English speakers. If you are a French or Spanish speaker, they will be able to get help from a professional translator to assist with your concern.

In some of the sessions, there will be other people working as **safeguarding focal points**. They will be introduced at the beginning of the session and will be there to point you in the right direction if you have any concerns. If they need to, they will put you in touch with Nancy or Angelique.

After your supporting organisation, Nancy (and Angelique if Nancy is busy), are the main people to contact if you have any concerns that you or another child or young person might come to harm during the DGD.

However, if you can't contact your supporting organisation and you have any concerns **about** Nancy or Angelique that would stop you sharing information with them, it is still important to share those concerns, and you can share them with Emma Grindulis from Child Rights Connect: grindulis@childrightsconnect.org.

If you feel overwhelmed at the DGD

We have tried to make the DGD as child-friendly as we can, but as it is a formal event being hosted by the United Nations, at times it may still feel quite confusing or alienating.

Some of the topics that are discussed at the DGD might also be quite serious, and even sad.

The DGD is also going to be quite a long event, especially when you are watching it all through a screen.

For these reasons, we are conscious that there might be times when the DGD feels a little bit overwhelming. Here are some tips for things to do if you're feeling overwhelmed.

- **Take a break!**
 - You can always log out of the call for a little while, and go and do something else. It's always a good idea to take regular breaks from screens.
- **Have a walk**
 - A little bit of fresh air can be a huge help. If you can, you could go outside and have a little walk, or just sit down somewhere and have a little rest.
- **Take some deep breaths**
 - Taking a few moments to just breath can really help when you're feeling stressed out. [Here you can find a couple of breathing exercises which you might want to try.](#)
- **Speak to someone**
 - You can always speak to someone if you're feeling anxious at the DGD. We recommend speaking to someone at your supporting organisation, as they know you best. But you can also speak to a member of the safeguarding team, who will be happy to help out.
 - If you don't have anyone you can speak to in your supporting organisation, you may prefer to speak to a professional in your own country. For contact details of child helplines in your country, please see here: <https://www.childhelplineinternational.org/child-helplines/child-helpline-network/>

Who will be there to support?

At the DGD, Aisling, Caroline, and Amy will be coordinating the involvement of children and young people.

If you have any questions or concerns, you can always send us an email, or send us a Whatsapp message at: +447736 911018

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COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

There will also be many members of the Committee on the Rights of the Child present at the DGD. [You can learn a little bit about each of the members here.](#)

Below, you can see the names and photographs of each member.

