Principles on Collaboration between Lawyers and Non-Governmental Organisations

These Principles set out how lawyers and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) should work together to ensure implementation of the General Comment on Children in Street Situations.

Taking a child rights approach

1. **Lawyers and NGOs shall take a child rights approach to their work.**
   This entails involving children in street situations through meaningful engagement, in particular by respecting children in street situations as rights holders, giving serious consideration to their views and making decisions with the child.

Collaborating to share technical expertise

2. **Lawyers and NGOs shall commit to sharing their respective technical expertise with each other in order to facilitate effective collaboration.**

Strategy building

3. **Lawyers and NGOs should use their collective experience and expertise to build a strategy to promote implementation of the General Comment.**
   This could include, but is not limited to: making submissions to law reform/revision commissions; provide briefings or reports to working groups, committees and State authorities; engaging with the legislative process; strategic litigation and advocacy through regional and international intergovernmental organisations; and conducting a public awareness or education campaign. Strategies should be set within realistic timescales and should contain indicators and means of verification so that lawyers and NGOs can properly monitor progress.

Evidence gathering

4. **Lawyers and NGOs should cooperate to foster research in relation to quality, evidence-based interventions for prevention and response.**

5. **Lawyers and NGOs should analyse the evidence gathered and share their findings within their sphere of influence.**
   These analyses will contribute to sector-wide learning that will help improve interventions and outcomes for children in street situations.

6. **Where confidential, sensitive and/or personal data is obtained, lawyers and NGOs should ensure that all participants have given informed consent to their data being shared. Additional safeguards must be in place for persons who, due to their capacity or vulnerability, may not fully understand the implications of their data being used. Data should not be shared where it is not in a child’s best interests for this to occur.**
Advocating on behalf of individuals

7. **Lawyers should assist NGOs to address the immediate needs of individual children in street situations and their families through legal advice and assistance.**
   NGOs may be well placed to identify children in need of legal assistance and signpost them to relevant advisors. Relevant legal assistance includes but is not limited to: preparing legal opinions or letters of advice; assisting or representing street-connected children before courts, tribunals or administrative authorities; performing mediation services, such as within families; and performing other professional duties as appropriate.

Advocating to bring about legal and social change

8. **Lawyers and NGOs should collaborate to contribute their evidence and expertise to law and policy dialogues.**
   Evidence gathered and analyses produced throughout the course of the collaboration should be fed into dialogue at the national level. This evidence can be contributed to law and policy-making bodies, independent Executive oversight bodies, adjudicators and regional and international human rights oversight bodies. Lawyers and NGOs should ensure that this evidence is conveyed in a way which is accessible to a non-expert audience.

9. **Lawyers and NGOs may engage in strategic litigation to achieve wider change, where appropriate.**
   It must be taken into account that strategic litigation is a lengthy and complex process which may not always be in the best interests of the claimant/plaintiff.

10. **Lawyers and NGOs may collaborate to deliver training to lawyers, judges and legal aid providers on the application of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.**

Monitoring and evaluation

11. **Lawyers and NGOs should monitor and evaluate States’ progress in implementing the General Comment and enforcing Convention-compliant law and policy.**
    Lawyers and NGOs should take steps to measure how well States are meeting their obligations under the General Comment using measurable indicators. The Consortium for Street Children is developing a set of indicators to track States’ progress in their implementation of the General Comment which will be made available for public use.