

Example from Bhutan

The child is at the heart of Bhutan’s development. UNICEF Bhutan has translated the guiding principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child into a Mandala – blending the Buddhist approach to life with the basic framework of the UNCRC. “Developing a child is like building a healthy nation” said Chief Justice Lyonpo Sonam Tobgye. The three pillars of the UNCRC – non-discrimination, the best interest rule and participation – are inherent in Bhutan’s Buddhist values. These social values protect the dignity, the equality and the fundamental rights of the child.” Source UNICEF

In Sanskrit ‘mandala’ means circle or centre. The centre is the abode of the deity, and in this case the child is placed in the centre surrounded by a series of circles and squares symbolising the provisions and principles of the Convention. The mandala is traditionally a symbol used for concentrating the mind so that it can pass beyond superficial thoughts and focus more precisely on valued concepts progressing toward enlightening the mind. Using the mandala in this context helps to promote greater understanding of the Convention of the Rights of the Child.

