

Terms of Reference of Child Rights Connect's Children's Advisory Team



What and Why?

Child Rights Connect is setting up a new global Children's Advisory Team, which will become a permanent group within the organisation and **central to advancing our efforts on children's empowerment globally.**

The new Team will be key to our goal of advancing the recognition, protection and empowerment of **children human rights defenders**, including through child participation at national, regional and international levels (you can see this in our [new Strategy](#) until 2024!). Our Child Rights Connect Strategy is clear that by supporting and working closely with a permanent Children's Advisory Team, we can best achieve our goals and become an effective organisation.

The process of setting up the Team and its activities throughout 2020/2021 will **build on the lessons** learned throughout the Network, and particularly the experiences of the 2018/2019 Children's Advisory Team as part of the Day of General Discussion 2018 on Protecting and Empowering Children Human Rights Defenders. Crucially, it will build on the **advice from the child advisors** who have been part of Child Rights Connect Children's Advisory Teams until now.

The roles of the Team will be to:

- 1) Guide us in the implementation of the new Strategy (as above);**
- 2) Help to ensure a stronger connection between the UN and the ground to ensure better positive impact, including by taking part in advocacy on children's rights at the national, regional and international level; (this includes representing broader groups of children and feeding back to children at the local and national level);**
- 3) Reach out to, and mobilising, child-led initiatives, to become part of the Child Rights Connect's work and network;**
- 4) Act like a solid global platform for children to speak with one voice in front of the UN.**

The specific tasks of the Team will be developed through discussions with the children.

Two main benefits for child advisors being part of the Team:

- 1) Being empowered as human rights defenders through human rights education and training, including learning how to empower other children to expand our positive impact at local and national level;**
- 2) Connecting and exchanging closely with other children on a global scale to develop knowledge and understanding of different challenges and good practices on children's rights in different contexts and taking their existing actions to an international stage.**

Benefits of the supporting organisations include capacity-building and technical assistance on child safeguarding and children's empowerment, developing stronger connections with Child Rights Connect and UN advocacy activities and being part visible as part of a unique activity to put children at the central of child rights implementation.

The more specific activities and roles of the child advisors will be detailed in the application call (see more on this below).

Who?

There will be **12 child advisors**¹ selected using an application process circulated across Child Rights Connect members and partners, for them to reach out to children locally, nationally and regionally. The application process will ask for some basic details from the children as well as their interest in being part of the Team. Child Rights Connect will encourage for the children to be selected to apply by their peers at national level.

There will then be a **selection process** carried out by Child Rights Connect with the support of the 2018/2019 Children's Advisory Team. The selection process will try to make sure that the child advisors are based across regions, speak different languages, have an age and gender balance, are from different backgrounds and have some experience in engaging in local and/or national activities on children's rights. They should not turn 18 before December 31st, 2021.

How?

As per other Children's Advisory Teams of Child Rights Connect, we will use **Basecamp** as the main way to communicate key messages and materials, along with emails when needed. We will use **WebEx** for online calls, which is an online tool to be able to have group calls and record them.

We will have one in-person meeting with the whole Team near the start of 2020 (the date will be confirmed).

Guided by?

The **child advisors themselves!** Once selected, the Team will have a central role in developing their workplan throughout 2020 and deciding on the ways they wish to communicate and when.

There will also be a hand-over and capacity-building from an outgoing Children's Advisory Team, in order to share experiences and advice and provide mentoring to the new child advisors.

Child Rights Connect will continue to be supported by an adult group of **child participation experts** from across and beyond its Network, in order to receive advice and assistance on the process and activities of the Team (a separate Terms of Reference will be created for this group).

Each child advisor will apply alongside **a supporting organisation**, which is a member or partner of Child Rights Connect committed to supporting and advising the child in his/her activities as part of the Team (a separate Terms of Reference will be created for this group). If a child does not have an existing organisation supporting them, it will still be possible for them to apply and to seek Child Rights Connect's support in trying to identify a possible supporting organisation for them.

The processes and activities of the Children's Advisory Team 2020 will follow the **standards of the Committee on the Rights of the Child**. They have outlined 9 basic requirements for child participation which we will be at the core of the Team. They are:

1. You will be able to access information all about the project and about your right to be listened to and for your views to be acted on.
2. It is your choice to participate and you can decide not to take part at any point.

¹ We thought that 12 children is a manageable number to coordinate with a small team in Geneva and to cover budget costs linked to their activities.

3. All activities will be planned together with the Children's Advisory Team and your views and ideas will be respected by adults.
4. The activities will be interesting and familiar to your life, and there will be space for you to put forward any issues that are important to you.
5. Friendly space: there will be preparations so that all children will feel happy to participate in the activities, within comfortable and friendly spaces.
6. Child Rights Connect will strive to organise activities in a way that is open equally to all children to take part from all communities and backgrounds, including children with disabilities.
7. Child Rights Connect team and partners will be prepared for the different activities so that all children are comfortable and feel supported and listened to.
8. Child Rights Connect will make sure that children are safe and know who to talk to if they feel unsafe.
9. Follow-up: you will get feedback on how your views have been acted on by adults, and the chance to give your opinion on the results of this project and the activities you took part in.

The 2020/2021 Children's Advisory Team will also be guided by the [Child Rights Connect Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedure](#), making sure that all children have a meaningful, empowering and safe experience free from any harm.

Where?

The Children's Advisory Team 2020 will be set up and managed by the Child Rights Connect Secretariat in Geneva, but the child advisors will be based all around the world. There will be an opportunity for the child advisors to meet in-person in Geneva during the first half of 2020. This will take place alongside a key activity of our strategy with our members. (date to be confirmed).

When?

The application call for the child advisors will be sent out in early December 2019.

The selection process for the Team will be early in the New Year and the new Team will be set up by February 2020.

The child advisors will be part of the Team until December 2021. We will explore with the child advisors the idea of becoming a child rights delegate at the end of the mandate, possibly to continue sharing and exchanging, creating new initiatives and supporting future child advisors.