



## CASE STUDY

# Children's Engagement in the CRC Reporting Cycle Webcast – An Opportunity for Children to Engage in the Session

### COUNTRY:

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Moldova

### ORGANISATION:

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Child Rights Information Centre (CRIC)

### ABSTRACT:

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A group of children in Moldova gathered to follow the review of Moldova by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (Committee) through the webcast of the session on the [UN Web TV](#). They observed the dialogue between their government and the Committee in Geneva and sent their live comments and questions to the Committee members through Child Rights Connect. The webcast was an opportunity for the children to follow the session while being in a friendly environment and without having to travel to Geneva.

### OBJECTIVE:

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To empower children in Moldova to monitor and advocate for their rights through the online engagement in the CRC session.

### TIMELINE:

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The CRC session took place in September 2017 (two ½ days, 6 hours in total).

### PROCESS:

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#### PHASE 1 – PREPARATION

- Sought information about the webcast and related opportunities from Child Rights Connect (both the Secretariat and its members).
- Informed the children who took part in the pre-session about this opportunity and discussed with them the possibility of organising a gathering around the session. Children agreed that watching the webcast altogether was an opportunity to collectively monitor and assess how the government would

present its efforts in implementing the CRC and if and how the issues raised by children in their alternative report would be discussed in the session.

- Planned and coordinated with the group of interested children and the NGO Alliance to organise the gathering and related activities, including a press club.
- Informed and invited all children members of the national monitoring group who took part in the preparation of the children's submission to the Committee to join the event. They became familiar with the technical language, content and procedures related to CRC reporting through this long-term process. In addition, the invitation to monitor the session included a refresher about the CRC reporting cycle and especially the session.
- Children set the rules of discussion during the event or at least in their group(s) - for example, they could freely discuss while watching the session in a relaxed atmosphere.

➔ **TIPS:**

- Use the [Working methods for the participation of children in the reporting process of the Committee on the Rights of the Child](#) for planning: they explain how children can engage in each step, including the session, and how the 9 basic requirements for children's participation apply to the CRC reporting.
- Plan this activity together with children who took part in the pre-session. The experience with the pre-session helps children to gain a better idea about the session/webcast beforehand. Clarify their expectations and concerns.

## **PHASE 2 – CRC SESSION WEBCAST & AWARENESS RAISING**

- Provided multiple and diverse opportunities/ways for children to engage with the session/webcast, to make this lengthy event more dynamic and maximize learning: the first day children opted to follow the session in their own groups (only with an adult facilitator, with whom they worked before), the second day they followed the session together with NGOs. Children also took part in a press club and some were interviewed by the journalists. 6 children, 10 NGO representatives, 1 representative of the Ombudsman Office and 6 journalists took part in this event. The venues were known by the children, and equipped with computers, internet access, a beamer, speakers.
- Kept in touch with Child Rights Connect Secretariat during the session so that they could convey comments and questions from children and NGOs to the Committee members in the room.
- Shared the link of the webcast via social media to inform and invite the wider public to follow the session online.

➔ **TIPS:**

- Provide children with the necessary and appropriate guidance and support during the session. Children in Moldova had many questions related to, for example, the context of the topics discussed or the laws and policies which were new to them. A lot of explanations were related to the technical language of the session.
- Conduct a risks assessment and develop mitigation strategies with children engaging with the media. The most serious risks for children in Moldova are potential negative consequences in their communities, if children's statements are perceived as critical and children's identities disclosed. To make sure they were informed on how to keep children safe, the journalists received a guide developed with children.

## **PHASE 3 – FOLLOW UP**

- Reviewed the process (how children felt during the webcast, what went well, what could be improved) and results with all children in this activity to learn from this experience and to support

children's learning. Analyse how were children's recommendations taken up by the Committee and the Government, as well as the NGOs and journalists.

- Shared the feedback with the wider national monitoring group of children, including those who could not follow the webcast to raise awareness of the main results of the session and the joint event with civil society organisations. Concluding Observations and media reports were discussed in this workshop.

→ **TIPS:** Support children to analyse the Concluding Observations to find out if their recommendations are reflected in this document.

## OUTCOME:

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### **Increased accessibility and transparency of the CRC reporting process**

The webcast of the session helped to make the CRC reporting process more accessible to children. It enabled the supporting adults to have more influence on the environment and plan the event with the children. As a result:

- Many children got together, including those who do not speak English, as opposed to the few that could have travelled to Geneva. They gathered at a place that was familiar to them.
- Children were surrounded by adults speaking their languages who could provide additional information and clarify the technical language of the session.
- The lengthy session was made more dynamic by offering diverse opportunities for children to engage, for example, meeting and discussing in their own groups or with civil society representatives.

### **Children's online engagement in the CRC Session has increased their confidence as well as understanding of the whole CRC reporting process and the role that children play in it**

Children reported being surprised and proud that the Committee took up some of the issues that they had prioritized. They understood this as a sign that the Committee wanted to know both sides and that it considers children's perspective as equally important as the Government's. Children realised that they can influence such high-level discussions about their rights.

Children's engagement with this key step added to children's understanding of the whole CRC reporting cycle.

### **Increased public awareness about issues related to the implementation of children's rights including from children's perspective**

Journalists were interested in the CRC reporting process, civil society views on the progress and gaps, as well as possible solutions in the implementation of children's rights. Many journalists wanted to interview children and find out more about the process and the main findings of children's monitoring of their rights. Some media reports highlighted children's concerns and priorities as well as their suggestions for improvement.

## CHALLENGES:

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The main challenge remains creating opportunities for more children to engage, including typically excluded children. Children who followed the webcast had long term experience with the CRC monitoring and reporting and this helped them to understand the relevance and follow the discussions of the session. A response would be to empower and to provide a systemic long-term support to children who do not have such experience in following a technical dialogue in order to enable more children to meaningfully participate in the CRC monitoring and reporting process. Based on the

experience gained so far, CRIC is advocating for Human Rights Education that promotes children's engagement in the CRC monitoring and reporting process.

In addition, children's initiatives for their rights are usually ignored, ridiculed and they are risking punishments when challenging violations in Moldova. The response to this includes working on an environment of trust and respect and this, in turn, requires time and building capacities of duty bearers for children's rights.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STEPS:**

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Produce more child-friendly information about the CRC reporting process, including on how children can engage at different opportunities.

#### **CONTACT INFORMATION:**

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