



ANNUAL REPORT 2019



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Introduction



Foreword by Child Rights Connect President



When I was in Geneva in 2005, I was invited to present the first ever alternative report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in its review of Hungary. I did so as a representative of a Hungarian NGO with the support and assistance of Child Rights Connect. I would have not thought that,

14 years later, I would become President of the same organisation. In the meantime, I was a member for eight years of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child and could experience the complexities of the approaches, understanding and the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Becoming President of the strategic partner of the Committee in the year of the 30th anniversary of the Convention and the 5th anniversary of the entry into force of its third Optional Protocol was a unique opportunity to contribute to the global reflection on progress and challenges related to the realization of children's rights.

2019 was a very special year not only for the external context, but also for many institutional changes within Child Rights Connect. A new Executive Director, Alex Conte, came on board in July 2019 bringing a lot of new energy, in addition to extensive expertise and experience in the field of human rights and access to justice. In addition to Alex, three new staff members joined the Secretariat to make it a stronger team, better equipped to empower children's rights defenders to engage with the UN human rights mechanisms. It was also the year that a new five-year strategy was adopted by the General Assembly of Child Rights Connect, in May 2019.

The new Strategic Plan 2020-2024 was the result of a long consultative process with Child Rights Connect members and key partners, such as the Committee on the Rights of the Child and UNICEF. The strategy brings a stronger focus on child participation and a new focus on children human rights defenders, building on the

achievements of the 2018 Day of General Discussion of the Committee on "Protecting and empowering children as human rights defenders". The strategy also highlights the need for strengthened coordination with members and partners at the regional level, in particular in Asia-Pacific, Africa and the Middle East and North Africa. These are under-represented regions of the Network where civil society struggle the most to engage with the Committee, as was pointed out by the global study on CRC engagement, published by Child Rights Connect in July 2019 in the context of the 30th anniversary of the Convention.

The reflections nurtured by activities around the 30th anniversary helped us to develop a strategy which addresses the challenges that we believe are the most relevant for Child Rights Connect for the coming years. Based on the 2020-2024 strategy, on 20 November 2019 Child Rights Connect pledged in front to the international community to:

- 1. Focus the vast diversity of expertise, experiences and approaches of its members to ensure the protection, promotion and fulfilment of the rights of all children as enshrined in the Convention and its Optional Protocols.*
- 2. Advance the recognition, protection and empowerment of all children human rights defenders, including through child participation at all levels.*
- 3. Empower children's rights defenders in reporting to, and other forms of engagement with, the Committee on the Rights of the Child.*
- 4. Strengthen accountability to children by building synergies between the Committee, other Treaty Bodies, the Human Rights Council and its mechanisms, the Sustainable Development Goals and the youth agenda.*
- 5. Advance the ratification of the third Optional Protocol on an Individual Communications procedure and its strategic use by children's rights defenders to contribute to the realization of children's rights.*

Maria Herzog, President of Child Rights Connect



Words from a Child Advisor

Being a member of the Children's Advisory Team has been a very empowering fulfilling experience. I met wonderful people and most importantly I learnt a lot and I know I created positive change somewhere in the world.

I appreciate how truly what I had to say was taken into consideration and I was not a mere decoration. Being a child advisor has strengthened my passion for children's rights and made me realise that this is possibly something I want to do for the rest of my life. Even though I won't be a child anymore soon (only legally speaking. I'm forever a child), I will always do my best to act in the way I did as a child advisor. I look forward to working with this team and everyone else that was able to make this a reality in future in whatever capacity I can.

This experience has been an amazing one and I'm forever grateful.

Warm and fuzzy regards.

Maxwell, 2019 child advisor, Zambia

The Children's Advisory Team has provided many children like myself with a platform where their voices are held to the same importance as adults, a platform through which children can be the leaders of today and for that I am very privileged and thankful.

Akanksha, 2019 child advisor, Canada

The Children's Advisory Team broadened my horizons and changed me as an individual, in fact, I learned a lot about the situation in the world and witnessed the importance of empowering children in order to become changemakers. I am very thankful for being selected as a member of the team, a group of children that changed my life forever and made me realize the transformative power of young people.

Konstantinos, 2019 child advisor, Greece

About us

Child Rights Connect is a non-governmental organisation founded in 1983 as the Ad Hoc Group for the drafting of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. With its network of around 85 member organisations, it has a worldwide reach spanning all regions and benefits from the diversity of approaches and experiences in realising the rights of the child under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols. Through Child Rights Connect, children's rights defenders, including children, can address the international community with one global voice and have a stronger influence on political decisions.



Vision:

We envision a world in which all children have their human rights respected, protected, promoted and fulfilled, as enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols.

What added value does Child Rights Connect bring?

- The expert organisation on, and strategic partner of, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, empowering children's rights defenders, including children, from around the world for more than 30 years.
- The largest child rights network in Geneva and platform for joint civil society advocacy at the Human Rights Council and its mechanisms, as well as with human rights treaty bodies.
- The leading organisation bringing global attention to child participation and the rights and empowerment of children as human rights defenders.
- The global child rights network advocating for children's access to justice through the universal ratification and strategic use of the third Optional Protocol on a Communications Procedure (OPIC).

Strengthening our Network

Broadening our reach: Three new members joined the network

Child Rights Connect members are national, regional and international organisations and coalitions working with and for children in various contexts. This broad and diverse membership brings together a wide array of expertise in children's rights and a vast diversity of experiences and approaches for realising children's human rights worldwide.

In 2019, three new members joined the network: **ChildPact in Romania**, a network organisation that counted eight full members in 2019 (from Albania, Armenia, Bulgaria, Georgia, Kosovo, Moldova, Romania and Serbia) and two associate members (Azerbaijan and Bosnia and Herzegovina); the **Institute on Statelessness and Inclusion in the Netherlands**, and **Lumos in the United Kingdom**. These new members are enriching our network by contributing their expertise on important topics such as childhood statelessness, children's right to a nationality, child protection, child participation, and children in institutions.

Embedding child participation within Child Rights Connect: The Children's Advisory Teams

In 2019 we extended the mandate of our first Children's Advisory Team, which worked closely with the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC Committee) in the development and convening of its 2018 Day of General Discussion (DGD), in order to ensure effective and meaningful child participation in celebrations of the 30th anniversary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). In 2019 the Children's Advisory Team was composed of ten children (including four girls) aged between 13 and 18 years and from diverse geographical backgrounds. The child advisors contributed to the preparations for and conduct of, as speakers and moderators, a series of international events to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the UNCRC.

In addition, we established through a partnership with UNICEF **another Children's Advisory Team to develop the first ever official UN child-friendly version of the UNCRC**. This Children's Advisory Team was composed of nine children (including four girls) aged between 11 and 17 years old from all five regions of the world. The child advisors were actively involved in the design and launch of the child-friendly UNCRC poster leaflet and booklet, along with UNCRC child-friendly icons, to raise awareness and understanding amongst children and adults globally of children's rights, the Convention and the Committee.

At the end of 2019, Child Rights Connect called for applications for a new Children's Advisory Team with a two-year mandate, which will become a permanent body of the Network.

Meet with our two Children's Advisory Teams



MEET WITH CHILD RIGHTS
CONNECT'S 2019
CHILDREN'S ADVISORY TEAM
INVOLVED IN THE DESIGN OF THE
CHILD-FRIENDLY CRC

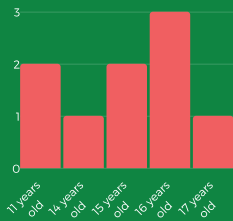
9

CHILDREN ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN THE DESIGN
OF THE CHILD-FRIENDLY VERSION
OF THE CRC



4 girls & 5 boys

FROM DIVERSE
BACKGROUNDS,
SUPPORTED BY A MEMBER
OR PARTNER OF
CHILD RIGHTS CONNECT



AGE OF CHILD
ADVISORS

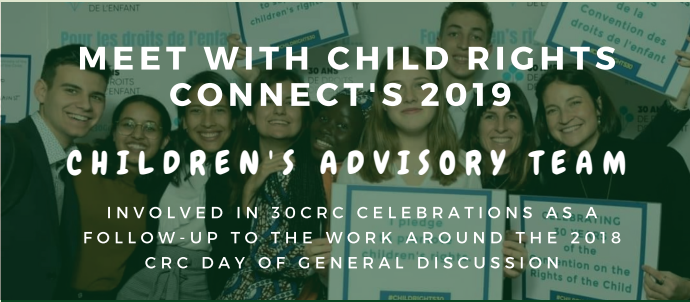
WHERE THE CHILD ADVISORS ARE FROM
ALL FIVE REGIONS OF THE WORLD



WHAT CHILD ADVISORS SAY
OF THEIR PARTICIPATION IN THE PROJECT

"Thank you for being part of history, being a
member who helped draft the child friendly CRC"

AMY, 17 YEARS-OLD, CANADA



MEET WITH CHILD RIGHTS
CONNECT'S 2019
CHILDREN'S ADVISORY TEAM
INVOLVED IN 30CRC CELEBRATIONS AS A
FOLLOW-UP TO THE WORK AROUND THE 2018
CRC DAY OF GENERAL DISCUSSION

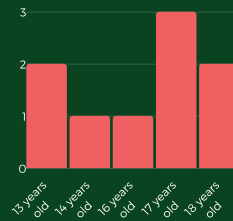
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CHILDREN ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN
INTERNATIONAL CELEBRATIONS
AROUND 30CRC



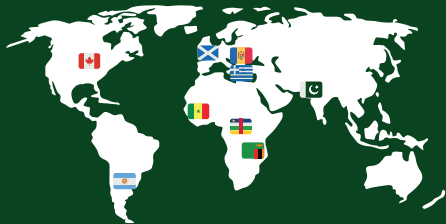
4 girls & 6 boys

FROM DIVERSE
BACKGROUNDS,
SUPPORTED BY A MEMBER
OR PARTNER OF
CHILD RIGHTS CONNECT



AGE OF CHILD
ADVISORS

WHERE THE CHILD ADVISORS ARE FROM
ALL FIVE REGIONS OF THE WORLD



WHAT CHILD ADVISORS SAY
THEY VALUED FROM THEIR PARTICIPATION IN THE PROJECT

"Being part of Child Rights Connect's Children's Advisory Team has been
amazing. We've had endless opportunities and
we couldn't be more grateful!"

"IT MADE ME FEEL
important"

"It gave children the chance to speak for themselves and their focuses"

Programmes

From mission to realisation

Children's rights can only become a reality for every child, if all States fulfil their obligations under the UNCRC and its Optional Protocols, and if children are empowered to claim and exercise their rights. This represents the impact goal of Child Rights Connect and its partners. Children's enjoyment of their rights is made possible – and is largely determined – by the actions of States, civil society and the UN human rights system.

Mission:

Child Rights Connect advocates for and supports the universal adoption and full implementation of the UNCRC and its Optional Protocols, for the realisation of children's rights worldwide.

We do this by convening and engaging with civil society and other relevant actors, by fostering cooperation and collaboration, and by empowering children's rights defenders, including children, to meaningfully participate in global advocacy for children's rights at different levels.



How change happens: our Theory of Change





What the 30th anniversary of the UNCRC meant for child rights

A reflection from Child Rights Connect's Executive Director



As new Executive Director of Child Rights Connect, I had the pleasure to join the Network in a very special year, 2019, the 30th birthday of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. This year, we applauded the progress made in the recognition and protection of children's rights. But we also recalled that

progress has been uneven. Many of the world's children still live in situations in which their rights are violated and in which they may have little hope to grow, learn, play, develop and flourish with dignity. In all regions of the world, national laws, policies and practices remain out of step with the Convention and its Optional Protocols. The protection and fulfilment of children's rights is not a favour nor a matter of charity, yet many continue to view children as objects of protection rather than as full rights-holders. Children and their representatives continue to face barriers in accessing justice for the violation of children's rights. And those seeking to promote and protect the rights of children, including children themselves, face a shrinking space in which to safely and effectively do so.

Thirty years since the adoption of the Convention, we should be self-critical. We should recognize that there are diverging interests at all levels. Diverging interests are natural, but we have allowed these to become competing interests that have given rise to opposing agendas. Civil society has become increasingly split along the lines of the different actors we represent: human rights versus child rights; elderly versus children; or parents versus the child. Tensions are present between different mechanisms and agencies of the UN; sometimes also leading to those mechanisms and agencies working at cross purposes or in parallel without sufficient, or any, co-operation.

Yet the communities we serve do not care for those divisions. The view of children is that we just need to get on with making the world a better place, together

with them. Guided by children, and recognising that child participation lies at the heart of what the Convention is about, we need to overcome the divisions we have put in place; we must mainstream child rights within all spheres; we must do more than use the Sustainable Development Goals, the youth agenda and other concepts as proxies for child rights. We must address child rights as child rights and treat them as everyone's priority. We must put child rights at the highest level of our common agenda.

In 2019, Child Rights Connect used the opportunity provided by the 30th anniversary to advocate for this loudly and globally, together with our members and partners, and most importantly with and for children. The Child Rights Connect network has an unparalleled diversity of expertise, experiences and approaches for realising children's rights worldwide and an enormous potential to achieve our shared vision. The Secretariat team and I are very much committed to working with children, members and partners to those ends.

Alex Conte, Executive Director



The 30th anniversary CRC conference

Child Rights Connect contributed to raising global awareness and understanding of children's rights, and inspired others to take action for their realisation

- To mark the year of the 30th anniversary of the UNCRC and empower children to engage with the CRC Committee and other human rights mechanisms, we collaborated with UNICEF to develop the **official UN child-friendly version of the Convention**, endorsed by the Committee. We worked with a global Children's Advisory Team that we established with the support of some of our members and partners. This is the first time a child-friendly version of the Convention, in multiple languages and accessible formats, has been developed with a global team of child advisors. **Children from around the world now have a single child-friendly version of the Convention to refer to**, while many different versions existing previously were often not developed in consultation with children.



Thank you for being part of history, being a member who helped draft the child friendly CRC."

17-year old girl, Child Advisor from Canada

- Additionally, a Guide for adapting the child-friendly Convention from the English original version to national languages and in different regional contexts was developed jointly with Queens University Belfast Centre for Children's Rights. This tool provides **unique guidance on how adults should work with children to make legal child rights language accessible** to them. It can be used for child-friendly versions of CRC Committee standards, such as the Committee's Concluding Observations and General Comments.
- The child-friendly version of the UNCRC and the active role that children played in its development have **inspired duty-bearers to take action towards its increased implementation**, including through awareness-raising. For instance, in the Philippines, authorities took the initiative to translate selected articles of the child-friendly version of the UNCRC into multiple dialects with an aim to encourage local municipalities to translate and disseminate all UNCRC articles in each dialect, as well as in braille.

- **It equally inspired children**, such as a girl from the Philippines who was a member of our Children's Advisory Team and who was involved in designing the child-friendly version of the UNCRC. She took a very active role at the national level celebration of the 30th anniversary of the UNCRC, sharing her experience, engaging duty-bearers on their responsibility to promote, protect and fulfil children's rights, as well as rallying other children in her movement.

Child Rights Connect engaged with and empowered children in the official celebrations of the 30th anniversary of the UNCRC

- The CRC Committee's celebration event, took place in Geneva on 16 September 2019 and included a panel discussion on 30 Years of the Convention, held in the form of a 'talk show' run by two child reporters from the Geneva 30th anniversary project, Association 30 Ans. During this event, we supported two child advisors to the UNICEF child-friendly UNCRC to present and launch it, on behalf of the broader group of children in the Children's Advisory Team.
- To ensure child participation in all the official 30th anniversary celebrations, we extended by a year the mandate of our 2018 DGD Children's Advisory Team. Ten child advisors, including four girls, aged from 13 to 18 years old and from diverse geographical backgrounds, participated in preparations for and the conduct of a series of celebratory events in Geneva. The Children's Advisory Team was mobilised to engage in the 30th anniversary three-day conference held in Geneva from 18 to 20 November 2019. The conference was organized by the Association 30 Ans, the Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the UN in Geneva, the University of Geneva, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), and the CRC Committee. Child Rights Connect and its members were instrumental in enabling children to inform the development of child-friendly materials, define roles and interventions, and share their views on the achievements and challenges related to further implementation of the UNCRC in several panel discussions during the conference, including a roundtable with the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet. Together with Joining Forces/Child Rights Now, we coordinated the organization of the only two thematic plenary sessions of the conference, which focused on child participation and children human rights defenders.

- Overall, we **directly empowered 53 children as part of our Children's Advisory Teams** and the children that our network members supported to participate in the celebrations in Geneva. A much larger number of children were indirectly empowered since the events were public.



The view of children, including those we have heard from over the past three days, is that we just need to get on with making the world a better place together with them. This is frank and perhaps not always pleasant, but it is not naive nor unachievable."

Mária Herczog, President of Child Rights Connect, at the closing of the ceremony to celebrate 30 years since the adoption of the UNCRC.



Being part of Child Rights Connect's Children's Advisory Team has been amazing. We've had endless opportunities and we couldn't be more grateful!"

Reflecting on their experience, the two child advisors from Scotland



30th anniversary conference pledges

Child Rights Connect supported worldwide advocacy to improve implementation of the UNCRC and its Optional Protocols towards the realisation of children's rights

- In support of the 30th anniversary campaign led by the CRC Committee – calling for States to renew their commitment to the UNCRC by pledging to take specific and measurable actions – **we widely mobilized our network and partners in taking forward advocacy with their governments.** We used regional opportunities created by our members and partners to provide information and calls to action, such as during the Eurochild annual meeting of child rights coalitions in Europe, the annual Partnership Meeting of Child Rights Coalitions and Networks in Asia and the NGO Forum convened prior to the Pan-American Congress on the Rights of the Child.
- As at the end of 2019, 192 pledges from 47 countries were made in response to the CRC Committee's call for pledges. The Committee continued to receive pledges from States until March 2020, reaching the total number of 65 countries who expressed public commitments to child rights, on which the Committee will follow-up in the framework of State reporting. We will continue to empower children's rights defenders, including children, to monitor and follow-up on these pledges at national, regional and international levels, including as part of civil society engagement with the Committee.



The Globe with pledges from the CRC@30



The Convention turns 30. As Chair of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, I pledge to transform children's participation from a beautiful declaration of intent to a specific experience that enriches human communities."

Luis Ernesto Pedernera Reyna, Chair of the CRC Committee

- During the 30th anniversary conference in Geneva, we organised a panel discussion on the OPIC together with the CRC Committee, the OHCHR and Amnesty International UK's Children's Human Rights Network. This panel was key to ensure that the OPIC was part of the 30th anniversary discussions and related advocacy, and that the many different stakeholders engaging in the conference could better understand the inextricable links between implementation of the OPIC and the UNCRC as well as increase their **commitments to make OPIC accessible to children.**

Child Rights Connect fed the global reflection on remaining gaps and priorities 30 years after adoption of the UNCRC



It is important to pause for a moment and reflect on what has been done so far for children and what more can be done. On your last day of General Discussion back in September (2018), Kurt a 16-year-old child human rights defender from Argentina, reminded us, and I quote: *"We, the youth, are not the future; we are the present. What we are looking for is [to be] listened to."*

Representative of the Secretary-General, Director of the Treaty Mechanisms Division, May 2019)

- In the context of the 30th anniversary of the UNCRC, we contributed to the global reflection on achievements and challenges related to further implementation of the UNCRC by publishing a **Global Study on engagement in reporting to the CRC Committee** in July 2019. The report traces progress and challenges in relation to the engagement of States and civil society in CRC reporting, which impacts the realisation of child rights around the world. Key findings highlight an increase in the quantity and quality of child participation, while also identifying gaps at the national and international levels, such as lack of engagement by States and civil society in small island States in the Pacific and the Caribbean, as well as limited engagement in countries where civil society space is restricted. The report constitutes an important stock-taking and record of institutional knowledge, as it also includes an overview of the key changes in the working methods of the Committee from its establishment until today.
- The report was officially launched on 16 September 2019 in an address by Jean Zermatten (former CRC Chair and Child Rights Connect Patron) during the event held by the Committee to mark the 30th anniversary of the UNCRC. Committee members reported to us having used data from the report in their own initiatives around the celebration of the 30th anniversary of the UNCRC, as well as in their last annual public meeting with States.
- We have used the report preliminary findings to inform the development of our new organisational Strategic Plan for 2020-2024, particularly to identify some priority outcomes and regions. We are also using the report to inform our engagement with the Committee and associated capacity building of and technical assistance to children's rights defenders.
- The 30th anniversary was also a unique opportunity **to take stock of the history of children's rights and Child Rights Connect**, as the former NGO Group for the Convention on the Rights of the Child, in order to better reflect on achievements and ways forward. We published a timeline with key milestones in relation to the UN and the CRC Committee's work, child participation and Child Rights Connect. We also contributed to the 30th anniversary book coordinated and published by the Association 30 Ans, which was launched on 20 November in Geneva, in a chapter focused on the origins of the NGO Group and its evolution into the Child Rights Connect through to today, which includes unique testimonials and reflections on future challenges.



**CONVENTION
ON THE
RIGHTS OF
THE CHILD**

Three key achievements in 2019

1. Child Rights Connect gave effect to children's right to participate in decisions affecting their lives

- Through our capacity-building, technical assistance and knowledge-sharing, we contributed to increasing the engagement of children in CRC reporting. After years of decreasing child-led engagement, as highlighted by our Global Study, the **number of children's reports has doubled** between 2018 and 2019. One of these, a children's report on Hungary, was the **first ever children's report under the Simplified Reporting Procedure (SRP)** of the CRC Committee (an optional mechanism offered to States parties in reporting to the UN Treaty Bodies). Children used CRC reporting as an opportunity to undertake an awareness raising campaign on the right to be heard and a research project on children's rights. This resulted in children developing an alternative report, presenting it to the Committee in Geneva, and engaging with their government at the national level. We have worked closely with our civil society partner Hintalovon Child Rights Foundation from Hungary to make this happen and to ensure that this experience will provide a strong precedent for future child participation in the Simplified Reporting Procedure.
- We further expanded the space for children at the Human rights Council (HRC). Thirty years since the adoption of the UNCRC, we are at a point where negative assumptions about children's capacity to engage with the HRC are considered by many to be perfectly legitimate. The Council is seen as too formal, too intimidating, too technical, too risky, too political for children. On 4 March 2019, Dumitrița, a child advocate from Moldova, demonstrated that this is not fair and that **children can participate at the HRC on an equal footing with adults, during the 2019 Annual Day of the Rights of the Child**. Although she was the only child in the room, she shared her and her peers' views on the rights of children with disabilities that she had collected prior to the Annual Day. All this was possible thanks to our effective cooperation with Child Rights Connect's member Lumos, together with OHCHR, UNICEF and the sponsoring States, Uruguay and the EU.

- We also organised a global consultation on child rights and the Sustainable Development Goals together with OHCHR in the form of a child-friendly written survey and three virtual roundtable discussions (in English, French and Spanish), with a total of 153 participating children between the ages of 6 and 17 years from 11 countries. As a result, **the related report of OHCHR to the UN High-level Political Forum on Child Rights and Sustainable Development included, for the very first time, a primary section presenting children's views.**



Childhood is meant to be the most beautiful part of life, but we live our childhood once, there is no room for mistakes."

Dumitrița, the youth advocate from Moldova, addressing the UN audience on the occasion of the March 2019 Annual Day on the Rights of the Child



We expect the world leaders to hear us, finally."

Iris, one of the child complainants who filed a complaint concerning the climate crisis with the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child



Unfortunately, children and adolescents face several difficulties, especially with regard to participation, because adults insist on discrediting the potentiality of the excluded individuals, characterizing them inferiorly, which in such a way makes them inferior..."

Vítor, a 17 year old from Brazil

2. Child Rights Connect enhanced the global protection and empowerment of children as human rights defenders

- Following the 2018 Day of General Discussion (DGD) of the CRC Committee focused on protecting and empowering children as human rights defenders, we worked with children, the UN and civil society experts to establish a roadmap for implementation of the DGD outcome recommendations. This roadmap includes individual commitments and concrete actions that will be instrumental to making the DGD recommendations a reality for children, such as a commitment from the UN Special Rapporteur on human rights defenders, Michel Forst, to involve children in his work. Thanks to the collaboration by him with us and our members, **the Special Rapporteur has started to meet with children more systematically during country visits**, such as in Moldova and Mongolia, and to review the particular situation of children human rights defenders both in global and country reports. Previous references to children were limited to contexts where they face human rights violations as an implication of the involvement of their parents in human rights activities. The Special Rapporteur's 2019 country reports on Moldova and Mongolia explicitly refer to the specificities of the situation of children as human rights defenders. His report on Mongolia introduces children and young human rights defenders as a specific group of defenders at risk and needing special protection.
- The impact of children's involvement in the Special Rapporteur's visit to Mongolia went much beyond influencing his final recommendations. The experience empowered the children involved to undertake advocacy at the national and international levels on their rights as defenders. We worked closely with Save the Children Mongolia to ensure that a child representative of the Young Voices Group could participate in the DGD follow-up meeting and contribute to the development of the roadmap. We also enabled the Young Voices Group to engage in the national consultation on the draft law on human rights defenders. **The children provided technical inputs to the government on the draft law**, thus becoming the first ever group of children human rights defenders to directly implement the DGD recommendation that: "States should develop and adopt comprehensive national laws and policies on protection and empowerment of human rights defenders, including children human rights defenders".

- Illustrating the impact and relevance of the 2018 DGD has helped us to persuade States to do more to achieve greater protection and empowerment of children human rights defenders. In March 2019 – in the midst of the global school strike movement led by children fighting climate change (Fridays For Future protests) – we successfully advocated for the inclusion of children in the HRC resolution on environmental human rights defenders. **The resolution is the first resolution of the Council to recognize children as human rights defenders** and calls on States: "To provide a safe and empowering context for initiatives organized by youth and children to defend human rights relating to the environment". This resolution provides a **strong advocacy tool for all the children standing up for the environment**, as recognized by the first ever joint statement of the Committee, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders and the Special Rapporteur on human rights and the environment.



Younger generations are afraid of not having the possibility to hope for a better future. I think everyone is aware of the threats represented by environmental harms but there is a lack of concrete actions from the international community. We call for a real change."

Solal, a child environmental human rights defender



In my meetings with children and adolescent defenders, I have and would like to encourage the government to promote the participatory rights of children in all decisions that affect them."

UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, in his Peru end-of-mission statement

3. Child Rights Connect contributed to bring the OPIC back as a priority on the international agenda to address the human rights violations suffered by children and contribute to the strengthening of national systems of protection

- 2019 was a unique opportunity to put the Optional Protocol on a Communications Procedure (OPIC) high on the international agenda as it saw the 5th anniversary of its entry into force in the year of the 30th anniversary of the UNCRC. Together with our members and strategic partners, such as the CRC Committee, the Special Representative of the Secretary General on violence against children, Najat Maalla M'jid, and the Permanent Missions of Slovakia and Germany to the UN, we carried out several activities to raise general awareness of the OPIC and convince States to ratify the instrument as well as to become its champions by encouraging other States to do the same.
- In April 2019 we convened a roundtable discussion, *Towards Better Implementation of the UNCRC through its Third Optional Protocol on a Communications Procedure* with selected States and partners to promote States' ratification of the OPIC and increase understanding of its added value to the realisation of children's rights. **The outcome report of the roundtable is a unique awareness raising and advocacy tool that can be used to promote the ratification of the OPIC with more solid and evidence-based arguments.** The findings in the report were presented to States in New York, including States not parties to the OPIC, during an event held in November 2019. The event opened with a strong message from children.



We are children human rights defenders who are aware of our right to speak to the Committee about the abuses that our friends and us face directly (...) Yet we do not really have access to the OPIC as it hasn't been introduced to the children of our country. (...) In order to demand our rights, children need to know and have a better understanding of the OPIC"

Young Voices Group of Save the Children in Mongolia

- In addition to advocacy for ratification of the OPIC, we also started to provide capacity building, technical assistance and expert advice to our members, lawyers and civil society partners, including children. In October 2019 we held the **first ever training workshop for children on the OPIC**, as part of the General Assembly of the REDNNYA (a network of children from Latin America), which took place in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia. The workshop was co-organized with Save the Children and included the participation of Luis Pedermera, Chair of the CRC Committee, and Jorge Cardona, former Committee member. The workshop raised a lot of interest amongst children, who were keen to understand how OPIC could be used to help advance child rights in their respective countries.
- The OPIC can only be effective if the right cases are brought to the Committee and there are a lot of technicalities in making good and strategic use of the mechanism. To make the OPIC more accessible and useful for children's access to justice, we launched a new website entirely dedicated to the OPIC which has become the go-to-place to find all existing information and tools. The website includes a specific section for children that we will develop jointly with them.



OPIC training

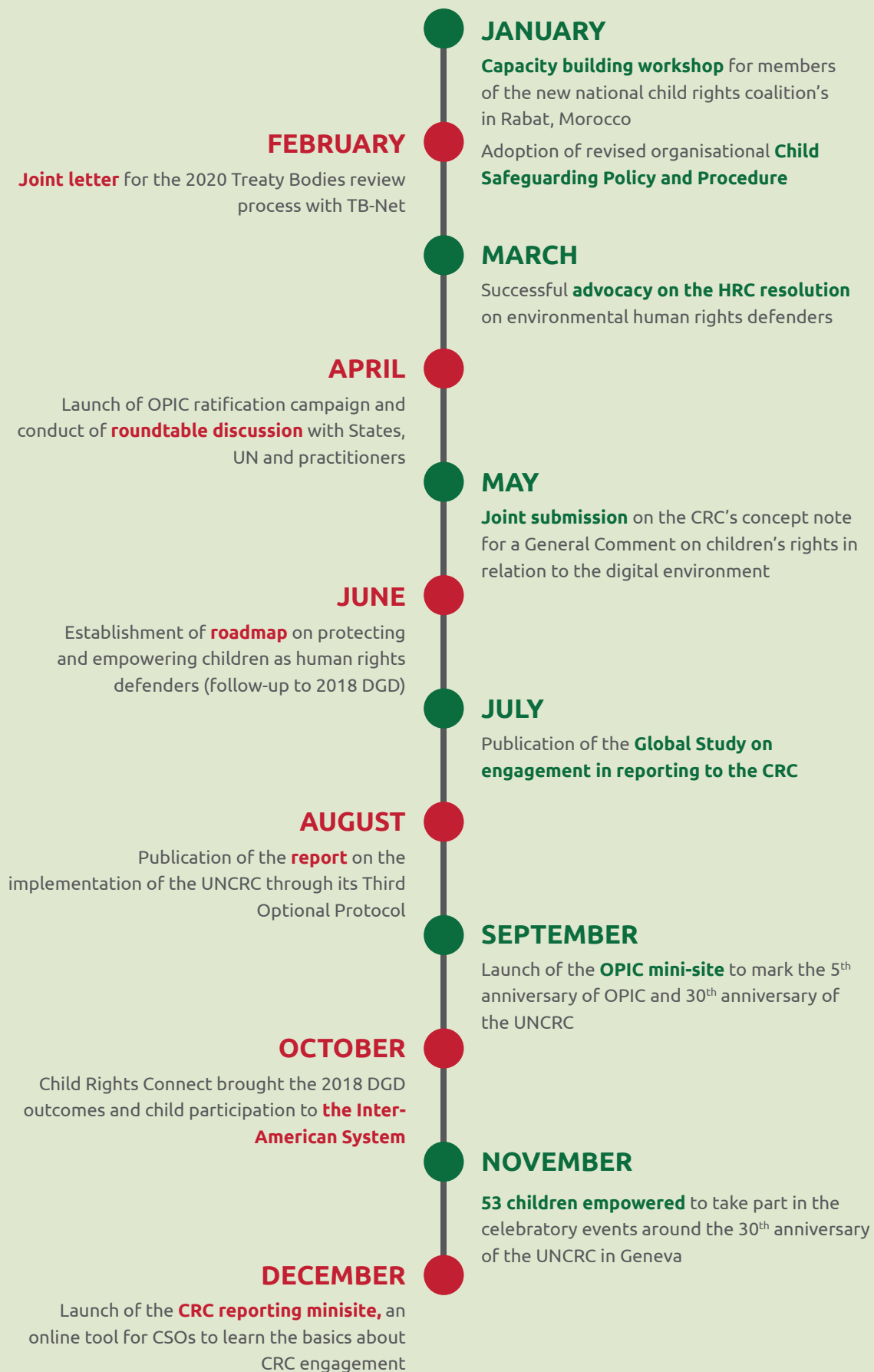


OPIC roundtable discussion in April

Additional programme highlights

2019 A YEAR IN REVIEW

Child Rights Connect contributed to the realisation of children's rights around the world. Here is a brief overview of key outputs.



Strengthening the capacity of children's rights defenders, including children, to use CRC reporting as an advocacy tool

- We empowered 186 children's rights defenders from national, regional and international organisations and coalitions to engage in CRC reporting, including 49 children. This represents a significant increase compared to last year, where 92 children's rights defenders were empowered (an increase of around 50 per cent).
- The number of civil society submissions to the Committee significantly increased from 155 in 2018 with respect to 37 countries to 208 submissions in 2019 with respect to 21 countries (an increase of around 35 per cent), for the same number of sessions. Out of these 208 submissions, eight reports came from children, while 15 were informed by children's views (this constitutes a 15 per cent increase from 2018). Sixty-two children attended or participated in the pre-sessions of and meetings with the Committee and followed the Committee sessions in 2019 (against 40 in 2018, which represents a 55 per cent increase).
- As the Committee continued to implement the Simplified Reporting Procedure (SRP) in 2019, we provided specific technical assistance to children's rights defenders from Hungary, Luxemburg, Netherlands and Switzerland to engage in the reporting cycle. We also shared feedback with the Committee on the challenges of the new procedure for civil society organisations and their recommendations on child participation.
- The SRP is evidence that CRC reporting is a technical process with evolving working methods. To ensure children's rights defenders can better understand the SRP, we updated our CRC reporting mini site, an online tool for civil society actors to learn the basics and reasons why to engage with the Committee (<https://crrreporting.childrightsconnect.org/>). We seized this opportunity to make it more user-friendly and easier to navigate. We also produced a new Handbook for adults engaging in CRC sessions (in English, French and Spanish). This is a very practical tool that helps children's rights defenders to make the most of the CRC sessions to strengthen their advocacy.
- We also led a capacity building webinar on CRC reporting organized by Save the Children which involved a group of children's organisations in China. There were questions from a wide range of perspectives and issues and participants responded that the webinar was an "enlightening opportunity" and looked for similar opportunities to work together in the future. We have since continued to build connections with these organisations in a region where there are typically low rates of participation in CRC reporting.

Following-up on the 2018 Day of General Discussion of the CRC Committee: Increasing the global recognition and protection of children as human rights defenders

- In June 2019, we published the 2018 DGD outcome report after its adoption by the Committee. It includes the detailed findings of the plenary and workshop discussions, and highlights the main recommendations endorsed by the Committee with the aim of providing guidance to States parties as primary duty bearers and to other relevant stakeholders (such as national human rights institutions, the Committee and the UN, civil society, media, the private sector and adults) to strengthen the protection and the empowerment of children human rights defenders. The report formed part of the Committee's 2019 report to the UN General Assembly, and a child-friendly version of the final recommendations was produced together with our 2019 Children's Advisory Team to facilitate its accessibility and dissemination.
- Following a strengthened collaboration with the Inter-American Children's Institute (IIN – OEA), Child Rights Connect participated for the first time in the XXII Pan-American Child Congress that took place from 29 to 31 October in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia. The Congress, which takes place every five years, is the main forum for exchange of experiences and policy development among member States of the Inter-American system. Participants included not only high-level officials from member States but also children, civil society representatives and international and regional human rights organizations. **Child Rights Connect presented the 2018 DGD as a good practice of child participation.** We did that together with Andy, a child from Ecuador, who shared his views on the DGD process and its impact on him and his peers. Although Andy did not attend the 2018 DGD in Geneva, he engaged through national-level consultations with children and he coordinated closely with Nayeli, the child advisor from Ecuador who is part of the DGD global Children's Advisory Team. Andy noted that many things were accomplished through the DGD, including:

"better articulation among child rights NGOs [and] dialogue with authorities for them to understand that [children's] voices should be heard in different spaces, including [their] homes, schools or community." He emphasized that "all these spaces are important for children and all children should be listened to."

- **The 2018 DGD spotlighted the key role of education for the empowerment of children as human rights defenders.** The DGD recommendations clearly call on States to recognize this role and ensure that children receive human rights education including education about children's rights and the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders. This is something we drew to the attention of the Human Rights Council by participating in the 2019 Social Forum which focussed on the promotion and protection of the rights of children and youth through education. In a panel discussion on education as empowerment for children and youth, Child Rights Connect shared the views of children which were collected through the 2018 DGD consultations.



If education is to empower children and promote their human rights, we must do more than inform. We must provide children with the means and the confidence to claim theirs, and others, rights, including through child participation in schools and in broader contexts, including at the UN. We must recognize them as human rights defenders capable of effecting positive change for a more prosperous and sustainable global society".

Alex Conte, Child Rights Connect



Pan-American Congress

Ensuring safe and meaningful child, and in particular girls', participation within and through the Universal Periodic Review

- Through our partnership with UPR Info, children from countries as varied as Albania, Colombia, El Salvador, India, Rwanda and Senegal amongst others were again offered the opportunity to participate in the pre-sessions of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) mechanism of the HRC, after years of these meetings involving adults only. Children actively participated in the preparation and drafting of civil society reports to the UPR. In Albania, for example, children developed their own report with the support of Save the Children Albania. The process was led by children and involved around 1,500 children overall. Two child representatives attended the UPR pre-session and participated in a side event that we organized with UPR Info and the Permanent Mission of Ireland to the UN where the CRC Committee also participated. The aim was to **raise awareness on the key role that children human rights defenders play to advance child rights through the UPR.**



- Two UPR reports on El Salvador were submitted with children's views, respectively by the national child rights coalition RIA and Plan International. A girl speaker from El Salvador took part in the related UPR pre-session. She also actively participated in the 2019 International Day of the Girl that our member Plan International organized in Geneva and that we co-sponsored for the first time. The Day was treated as a solution-storming exercise for meaningful, ethical and substantive participation of girls

and young women in decision-making processes. We presented our cooperation with UPR Info on child participation in the UPR to trigger discussions on how to expand space for girls in the UPR and other accountability and decision-making processes. This event took place at a pivotal moment for children's rights and gender equality. 2019 marked the 30th anniversary of the UNCRC and the 40th anniversary of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), two Conventions which form the cornerstone of girls' rights. Child Rights Connect co-sponsored the joint CRC-CEDAW celebratory event held in Geneva in October 2019 and used this occasion to remind what girls' participation in human rights mechanisms should mean.



We must ensure that what we see at the UN is inclusive and meaningful; and if we are to ensure that gaps in girls' participation at the UN are filled, we need to consider the entire cycle of engagement opportunities leading up to and following participation with UN mechanisms".

Alex Conte, Child Rights Connect



Alex Conte speaking in October

Further shaping international standards providing for children's rights across the UN

- We have engaged in further standard-setting by the CRC Committee, **towards strengthening children's rights in the context of the digital environment**. We coordinated our members' inputs and made a joint submission with the Centre for Human Rights and Citizenship Education of the Dublin City University Institute of Education and the Centre for Children's Rights at Queen's University Belfast. The submission informed the Committee's concept note for a General Comment on children's rights in relation to the digital environment. It builds on the findings from the online consultation held with approximately 2,700 children in the context of the 2018 DGD in relation to how children human rights defenders use digital technologies and interact in the digital environment. In October 2019, we actively participated in the expert meeting organized by 5Rights in London to share inputs for the development of the first draft of the General Comment. The General Comment is expected to be finalised in 2021.
- 2019 presented some unique opportunities to advance standards related to the rights of children with disabilities. Children's rights and disability rights have mostly developed in parallel, with limited intersections and collaboration between civil society organizations advocating for their realisation. The HRC's 2019 Annual Day and resolution on the rights of the child focused on the **empowerment of children with disabilities**, including through inclusive education. This created momentum for bringing together child rights and disability advocates and enabling them to exchange on common and diverging views, while listening to the views of children. Through a position paper, an oral statement and direct advocacy with States, we influenced the process and welcomed the final text of the resolution which recognizes the need for appropriate and adapted support and resources, and that providing the space and means for children with disabilities to effectively participate in all aspects of society is an integral part of their empowerment. We also supported the on-going efforts of the CRC Committee and the Committee on Persons with Disabilities to align their standards with regard to children by attending an expert workshop in September 2019. This event and was particularly key to find a first common ground for the diverging standards on small institutions/homes for children with disabilities.



2019 in numbers

**30th
anniversary of
the Convention
on the Rights to
the Child**

1st

official child-friendly
version of the Convention
developed with a global
team of child advisors

9

child advisors from 9
countries spread across
five regions (Africa, Asia,
Europe, Latin America, and
North America) involved
in the design of the child-
friendly UNCRC

CRC reporting

208

civil society submissions
to the Committee on the
Rights of the Child from
21 countries (+35%
compared to 2018)

186

children's human rights
defenders (including 49
children) empowered to
report to the Committee
(+50% compared to 2018)

OPIC

4

new countries ratified the
OPIC

5

communications finding
human rights violations by
the Committee under OPIC

**Communications
and social media**

50K

website user visits in 2019
(amongst whom around
46% of women and 61%
below 35 years old)

112K+

overall page views on the
general website

10

child advisors from 9 countries spread across five regions (Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, and North America) involved in the preparation for and conduct of international celebratory events around the 30th anniversary

53

children empowered to take part in the international celebratory events around the 30th anniversary

58K+

impressions on Twitter overall and 2% engagement rate on Tweets related to the 30th anniversary of the UNCRC

62

children took part in pre-sessions of and meetings with the Committee and followed Committee sessions

23

reports based on consultations with children or led by children were submitted to the Committee (+15% compared to 2018)

57K+

impressions on Twitter overall and 1.3% engagement rate on OPIC related Tweets

25%

increase in the overall number of Twitter followers compared to 2018

668.9K

overall impressions on Twitter

1.2%

average engagement rate on Tweets

Working groups

Working Group on children and armed conflict

Conveners: War Child Holland (up to December 2019); Defence for Children – International (DCI).

Members: Arigatou International (co-convenor); Defence for Children International – International Secretariat; Humanium, Terre des Hommes International Federation; World Vision International; Save the Children; War Child Holland (Convenor); Women’s World Summit Foundation.

External/Observer: Child Rights International Network (CRIN), Geneva Call; Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack; Watchlist.

Key outputs

- ✓ **Meeting with the Special Representative of the Secretary General on children and armed conflict (SRSG CAAC)** in March 2019
- ✓ **Side-event during the Human Rights Council** on the 6th of March 2019 with the SRSG CAAC, Human Rights Watch and DCI on the impact of counter-terrorism measures on children.

Looking ahead

A Working Group meeting in December 2019 enabled an exchange of views with the new representative of the Group of Friends and renew interest to organise common activities in 2020.

Some of the priorities include:

- Engage national actors
- Implementation of recommendations from the Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty
- HRC side-events
- Give priority at the UN to CAAC
- Access to justice (remedies)

Working Group on children of incarcerated parents

Conveners: NNAPes and Quaker United Nations Office.

Members: BICE, Children of Prisoners Europe, Defence for Children International, DCI Costa Rica, Elizabeth Fry Society, NNAPes, Quaker United Nations Office, REPR, SOS Children’s Villages.

Observers: Penal Reform International, INCCIP.

Strategic Partners: University of Gent and University of Huddersfield.

Key outputs

- ✓ **Shared developments and good practice**
- ✓ **Global Study on Children Deprived of their Liberty chapter on children incarcerated with their parents** – contributed to a useful analysis with clear and strong objectives
- ✓ **Consolidation and possible expansion of the Working Group** – including through participation in the INCCIP conference and CRC 30th Anniversary Conference.
- ✓ **Identified and supported an OPIC case**
- ✓ **Begun preparation for the UN Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice**

Looking ahead

Consolidation of INCCIP as an international coalition presents a new scenario for the Working Group. As the coalition strengthens it will start playing the role of the “international coordinating body” that the Working Group has played since its creation. In order not to duplicate efforts, the idea is that the Working Group will continue acting as a bridge between the coalition and organisations working on the ground and the UN bodies and related event and actions, with a particular focus on the connection with the CRC Committee. This coordination and articulation will take shape and will be better defined during 2020.

Working Group on the environment

Conveners: CRIN and Terre des Hommes.

Members: Associated Country Women of the World, CRC Asia, CRIN, Franciscans International, HRW, Humanium, Make Mother Matter, Plan International, Plan International Sweden, Save the Children Sweden, Terre des Hommes, World Vision.

Observers: Austrian National Coalition and Project Dryad.

Key outputs (WG established in May 2019)

- ✓ Submission to the **OHCHR background report to the Annual Full-Day Meeting on Realising Children's Rights in a Healthy Environment** that outlines important elements of children's right to a healthy environment and steps to implement it.
- ✓ **Contributed to the design of an intersessional event between the Human Rights Council and the CRC Committee** to define priorities and key steps towards the Full-Day Meeting.
- ✓ **Co-organised a session on children's rights and the environment during the 30th anniversary event** for the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in Geneva.

Looking ahead

The overall goal pursued by the Working Group will be to work towards the international recognition and implementation of children's fundamental right to a safe and healthy environment. In doing so, the Working Group will focus on: mainstreaming children's rights in key human rights and environmental frameworks and processes; encouraging and supporting the reporting of children's rights violations in relation to the degradation of the environment; and enabling mutual learning and capacity-building related to children's rights and the environment among member organisations.

Working Group on ending sexual exploitation of children

Conveners: ECPAT International (EI) and Internet Watch Foundation (IWF).

Members: ECPAT International, Center of Excellence in Alternative Care, International Catholic Child Bureau (BICE), International Federation of Terre des Hommes (TDH), Internet Watch Fondation, War Child Holland (WCH).

Context

In the course of 2019, there have been some substantial changes affecting the work of the Working Group, namely that IWF withdrew from its role as co-convenor and that ECPAT's Senior Advisor left ECPAT International. These circumstances heavily impacted on the activities of the Working Group. 2019 was therefore a year of transition during which the Working Group was largely inactive.

Looking ahead

With a view to reactivating the Working Group, another representative from ECPAT's Secretariat has been appointed to initiate a series of consultations with Child Rights Connect leadership, conveners of other thematic Working Groups as well as the members of this Working Group to agree on a way forward. This implies that the format, scope, and other key functional aspects of the Working Group will be reviewed and agreed upon with Working Group members to ensure the issue of the sexual exploitation of children remains high on the agenda of human rights mechanisms.

Working Group on children without parental care

Conveners: Hope and Homes for Children and Save the Children.

Members: ATD Quartermonde, African Child Forum, Family for Every Child, FICE International, Global Initiative to End Corporal Punishment of Children, Hope and Homes for Children, International Foster Care Organisation, International Federation of Social Workers, International Social Service, Lumos, Plan International, the Quaker UN Office, RELAF (Latin American Network for the Right to community and family based care for children and adolescents), Save the Children, SOS Children's Villages International, World Vision.

Observers: Additionally, various individual consultants and other organisations are currently observing the group, including but not exclusive to: Better Care Network, Better Care Network Netherlands, the Oak Foundation, University of Strathclyde Centre for Looked after Children (CELCIS), and UNICEF as well as working closely with our counterparts in the New York Working Group on Alternative Care in conjunction with the NGO Committee on UNICEF.

Key outputs

The WG supported the implementation of the Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children as follows:

- ✓ Issued a joint statement on the draft of the *'The rights of children with disabilities: an analysis of the doctrine and work of CRC and CRPD'*.
- ✓ Lobbied to influence text in the Human Rights Council Resolution on Children with Disabilities.
- ✓ Took part in a Human Rights Council side event on "Promoting quality alternative care for children with disabilities".
- ✓ Contributed to an interagency effort which created *Key Recommendations* on the *2019 UN Resolution on the Rights of the Child* and advocated with Member States during the drafting and adoption of the Resolution.
- ✓ Held a workshop celebrating the 10th anniversary of the UN Guidelines on Alternative Care for Children and focusing on prevention, preparation and empowerment of children to be do advocacy.
- ✓ Disseminated opportunities for learning through the two Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC).

Looking ahead

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed many of the priorities for 2020 but, so far, the Working Groups plans to: feed into wider global advocacy efforts to produce an interagency technical note on COVID-19 and alternative care, and various supporting documents; feed into a MOOC on COVID-19 Child Protection Risks, with attention on alternative care matters to be launched in June 2020; and feed into the interagency effort to facilitate the CRC Committee Day of General Discussion on alternative care.

Working Group on children and violence

Conveners: Arigatou International and World Vision International.

Members: Arigatou International, Bureau International Catholique de l'enfance (BICE), Defence for Children International, Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children, Plan International, Save the Children, Terre des Hommes International Secretariat, Women's World Summit Foundation (WWSF), War Child Holland, World Vision International, World Organization Against Torture (OMCT).

Observers: World Council of Churches (observer).

Key outputs

- ✓ Finalization of mapping of how violence against children has been addressed in the Concluding Observations of the CRC Committee in 47 countries, as well as through the HRC resolutions and UPR country reviews.
- ✓ Preparation of Terms of Reference for the engagement of a consultant to analyse the findings of the mapping, identify achievements, trends and gaps in the work of the Human Rights Council and the CRC Committee with regards to ending violence against children.

Looking ahead

- Report on the findings from the consultancy to inform the development of advocacy plans for the consortium during 2020-2021
- Advocacy brief based on the findings of the research to advocate to the CRC Committee and countries
- Development of online database on how the issues of VAC are addressed in the HR mechanisms.



Organisation

Members

	Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa (ACYA), New Zealand		ChildFund Alliance, USA		Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation, USA
	African Child Policy Forum, Ethiopia		Childhood Education International, USA		ECPAT International, Thailand
	Alliance for Children Mauritius, Mauritius		Children Advocacy Network (CAN-Pakistan), Pakistan		Eurochild, Belgium
	Alliance of NGOs active in the field of Child and Family Social Protection (APSCF), Moldova		Children of Prisoners Europe (COPE), France		European Association for Children in Hospital (EACH), Switzerland
	Anti-Slavery International, United Kingdom		Children's Parliament, Scotland, United Kingdom		Fédération Internationale des Communautés Educatives (FICE), Austria
	Arigatou International, Switzerland		Children's Rights Alliance, Ireland		Franciscans International, Switzerland
	Associated Country Women of the World (ACWW), United Kingdom		Children's Rights Alliance for England (CRAE), United Kingdom		Friends International Suisse, Switzerland
	Bahá'í International Community, USA		Conseil Français des Associations pour les Droits de l'Enfant (COFRADE), France		Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) (QUNO), Switzerland
	Bir Dünya Çocuk Derneği (Children of One World), Turkey		Consortium for Street Children (CSC), United Kingdom		Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children c/o APPROACH Ltd., United Kingdom
	Centre of Excellence in Alternative Care of Children, India		Defence for Children International (DCI), Switzerland		Hope and Homes for Children, United Kingdom
	ChildPact, Romania		Defence for Children International Costa Rica (DCI), Costa Rica		Human Rights Watch, USA
	Child Rights Coalition Asia, Philippines		Edmund Rice International, Switzerland		Humanium, Switzerland
	Child Rights International Network (CRIN), United Kingdom		EKAMA Development Foundation, Tanzania		INGO "Ponimanie", Belarus
	Child Rights Network Switzerland, Switzerland		Elizabeth Fry Society of Greater Vancouver, Canada		Institute on Statelessness and Inclusion, Netherlands

	International Association of Youth Judges and Magistrates (IAYFJM/AIMJF), Switzerland		Make Mothers Matter, France		Save the Children International, Switzerland
	International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN/GIFA), Switzerland		Marista Solidarity International Foundation (FMSI), Switzerland		Save the People (SAPI), Switzerland
	International Catholic Child Bureau (BICE), Switzerland		National Coalition Germany, Germany		SOS Children's Villages International, Switzerland / Austria
	International Child Rights Center (InCRC), Korea		Niñas, Niños, Adolescentes con Padres Encarcelados (NNAPES), Uruguay		Tanzania Child Rights Forum, Tanzania
	International Council of Women (ICW/CIF), France		Our Children Opatija, Croatia		Terre des Hommes International Federation, Switzerland
	International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW), Switzerland		Plan International, United Kingdom		Together Scotland, United Kingdom
	International Foster Care Organization (IFCO), Ireland		Plataforma de Organizaciones de Infancia, Spain		Voces Ciudadanas (ACEPT), Peru
	International Inner Wheel, United Kingdom		Proyecto Solidario, Spain		WAO Afrique, Togo
	International Juvenile Justice Observatory, Belgium		Railway Children, East Africa office, United Kingdom		War Child Holland, Netherlands
	International Movement "ATD Fourth World", France		Red Latinoamericana de Acogimiento (RELAF), Argentina		Women's World Summit Foundation (WWSF), Switzerland
	International Play Association, United Kingdom		Red Latinoamericana y Caribeña por la defensa de los derechos de los niños, niñas, y adolescentes (REDLAMYC), Mexico		World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS), United Kingdom
	International Social Service (ISS), Switzerland		Relais Enfants Parents Romands (REPR), Switzerland		World Organisation Against Torture/ SOS Torture (OMCT), Switzerland
	Internet Watch Foundation, United Kingdom		Rights of the Child NGO (ROC), Russia		World Vision International, USA
	Kinderrechtencoalitie Vlaanderen (Coalition of children's rights NGOs in Flanders), Belgium		Roshni Homes Trust, Pakistan		
	Lumos, United Kingdom		Rural Women Development Initiative (RUWODI), Tanzania		

Executive Committee and staff

Executive Committee

Maria Herczog

Family Child Youth Association (Eurochild), President
(From May 2019)

Théophane Niyèma

formerly of the African Child Policy Forum, Vice President
(From May 2019)

Rozanne Churlton

Together (Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights), Secretary
(From May 2019)

Alan Kikuchi-White

SOS Children's Villages International, Treasurer

Delia Pop

Hope and Homes for Children (President until May 2019)

Caroline Ford

Consortium for Street Children

Chris Derksen-Hiebert

World Vision International

Dorothy Rozga

formerly ECPAT International

Rut Feuk

Plan International Sweden

Sigurd Johns

Save the Children International

Smiljana Frick

Child Rights Information Centre

Stephen Langton

Independent co-opted member

Until May 2019

Eylah Kadjar

Terre des Hommes International Federation
(Former Vice President)

Annabel Trapp

Independent consultant (former Secretary)

Consultants

Jennifer Lynn Conway

Web design

Laura Theytaz-Bergman

Global Study on CRC engagement

Gertrude Quan Mafoa

OPIC

Christine Kabare

Management support

Staff



Alex Conte

Executive Director
(Since July 2019)



Stephen Langton

Interim Director
(To July 2019)



Ilaria Paolazzi

Programme
Manager



Emma Grindulis

Programme
Officer



**Agnès Gràcia
Corberó**

Programme
Officer



**Olivia Solari
Yrigoyen**

Legal Officer



Fanny Chappuis

CRC Reporting
and Programme
Support



**Leire Ibáñez
Larrea**

Network Assistant

Interns and volunteers

Amy Jones

Christine Kabare

Githaiga Gachuri Mwangi

Helena Howen

Judit Rosell

Karen Brüel Birkegaard

Mariam Ismail

Maureen Thiele

Laura Franchetti

Lyse Nathalie Meyimana

Finances

Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2019 and 2018

Assets

	2019 CHF	2018 CHF
Cash and cash equivalents	256,123	103,824
Accrued income	40,000	79,000
Prepaid expenses	3,248	6,902
Current assets	299,371	189,726
Cash deposit (visa card)	5,002	5,002
IT equipment	9,252	1,712
Fixed assets	14,254	6,714
Total assets	313,625	196,440

Liabilities

	2019 CHF	2018 CHF
Accounts payable	25,662	16,321
Accrued liabilities	36,711	41,762
Income received in advance	117,486	-
Current liabilities	179,859	58,083
Restricted funds on ongoing projects	-	14,634
Non-current liabilities	-	14,634
Restricted capital	37,130	37,130
Free capital	96,636	86,593
Capital of the organisation	133,766	123,723
Total liabilities and capital	313,625	196,440

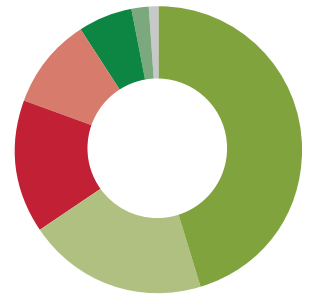
Income and operating expenses

Income

	2019 CHF	2018 CHF
Membership fees	103,549	84,368
Grant/donations from members	11,134	139,536
Grant/donations from governments	702,826	415,346
Grant/donations from foundations	150,000	150,000
Other income	24,476	1,827
Total income	991,985	791,077

Breakdown of 2019 income

	2019 CHF	%
SIDA	445,376	45%
Switzerland	200,000	20%
Oak Foundation	150,000	15%
Member fees	103,549	10%
Germany	56,450	6%
UNICEF	24,011	2%
Save the Children Sweden	11,134	1%



Operating expenses by cost centre

	2019 CHF	2018 CHF
Overhead	253,474	217,675
Personnel costs	92,738	97,816
Office costs	56,111	69,627
Professional services	104,086	50,232
Staff training	-	-
Team development	539	-
Communication and Networking	110,618	112,091
Implementation costs	100,663	84,655
Administration costs	8,047	3,407
Publications and website development	463	24,029
Networking	1,445	-
Network management	95,165	74,575
Implementation costs	78,283	65,698
General Assembly	9,100	7,556
Executive Committee	7,782	1,321
Working Groups	-	-
Programmes	505,187	333,629
Implementation costs	395,121	255,225
Programme development	-	58
Capacity building	22,532	3,198
Technical assistance	36,500	21,089
Advocacy	51,034	54,059
Total costs	964,444	737,970

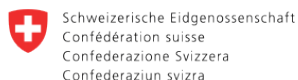
Our donors and supporters

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to our donors, partners and supporters. Your contributions enable us to support children's rights defenders around the globe to engage with each other and the UN human rights system, and to take important steps towards the universal realisation of children's rights.

Donors



Swedish International
Development Cooperation
Agency



Swiss Federal Department
of Foreign Affairs



Oak Foundation



Germany, Federal Ministry
for Foreign Affairs



Plan International Sweden



UNICEF



Save the Children Sweden

Looking ahead

What's on in 2020?

At the time of writing this report, the COVID-19 pandemic has forced all stakeholders in the field, including Child Rights Connect, to take measures to restrain the spreading of the virus. This will inevitably affect our efficiency in undertaking activities in 2020, for a duration and extent which remain unknown at this stage. We however remain fully mobilized to make necessary preparations for activities that are due to take place later in the year, to engage in substantive activities that do not depend on external commitments, and to respond to the particular challenges to child rights posed by this pandemic.

Institutionalizing Children's Advisory Teams within Child Rights Connect

Building on the successes of our Children's Advisory Teams in 2018 and 2019, we will establish a global Children's Advisory Team in 2020 as a permanent group within the organisation to advance our efforts on children's empowerment globally. With mentoring from former child advisors, the new team will guide us in the implementation of our new Strategy; 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 levels; reach out to and mobilise child-led initiatives to become part of our work and network; and act as a solid global platform for children to speak with one voice in front of the UN.

Further 2018 DGD follow-up: guiding States on protecting children human rights defenders

We will continue to monitor and follow-up on the 2018 DGD outcome document on protecting and empowering children human rights defenders, notably by developing an Implementation Guide to the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Defenders from a child rights perspective, together with children and experts. This will offer concrete guidance to States and other stakeholders on how to ensure that national laws, policies and practices allow children to fully and safely exercise their rights when acting as human rights defenders.

Ensuring child participation in the CRC DGD on children in alternative care

Through our dedicated Working Group, and with members' support, we will provide guidance and support on the Day of General Discussion (DGD) of the CRC Committee on children in alternative care, particularly regarding working methods and child participation. The DGD was initially scheduled for September 2020 but it has been postponed to 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Equipping children and adults with tools to engage in advocacy before UN mechanisms

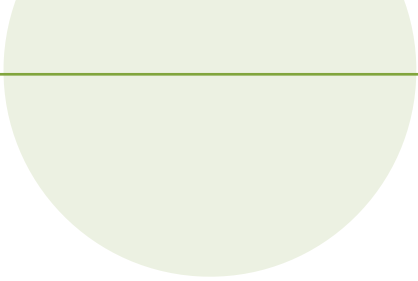
We will publish and disseminate a set of resources and tools on the CRC Committee and other UN human rights mechanisms with a view to further facilitate engagement of children and adults with these mechanisms in realising children's rights, including child-friendly and multilingual publications (a second edition of 'My Pocket Guide to the CRC' and 'Together with Children' and the first UPR guide for children).

Empowering children's rights defenders, including children, to engage with the CRC Committee

We will continue to support children and children's rights defenders to effectively engage in reporting to the CRC Committee, including ahead of and during the extraordinary session in Samoa, the first ever treaty body session to be held outside of Geneva or New York. Civil society from different regions of the world will be equipped with knowledge and skills on ways to effectively engage with the Committee through workshops on reporting to the Committee and on child participation. We will also continue to engage on the Committee's General Comment on children's rights in the digital environment and to provide technical guidance to the Committee on the adoption of its child safeguarding policy.

Engaging with the Human Rights Council and other UN mechanisms to promote children's rights

We will continue to engage with the HRC and other UN mechanisms throughout 2020 to promote children's rights and advance spaces for children's participation. Specific activities will include: advocating for the recognition of the



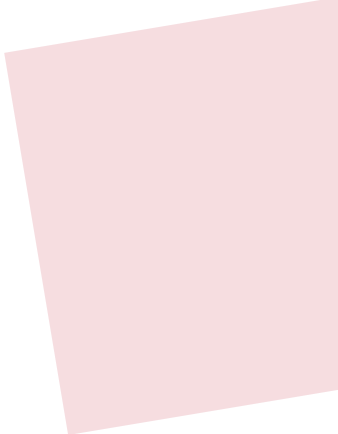
special position and unique needs of children exercising their freedom to assemble peacefully as part of the Human Rights Committee's elaboration of a General Comment on peaceful assembly; ensuring children's views and rights are taken into account at the 2020 Annual Day on the Rights of the Child on children's right to a healthy environment and its ensuing resolution; establishing working methods with partners to increase child rights focused UPR submission by Network members and civil society at large; and contributing to the 2020 review of treaty bodies from the perspective of children's rights.

Pursuing the OPIC ratification campaign

We will pursue the implementation of our OPIC ratification campaign, including through engagement of States in each region of the world. A multilingual OPIC ratification toolkit will be published and disseminated. A set of training materials will also be developed and used as part of capacity building workshops on the strategic use of OPIC for children, lawyers, representatives of national human rights institutions and other key stakeholders.

Ensuring a child rights-based approach to responding to the COVID-19 pandemic

Recognizing that the new coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic is having a major impact on the lives of children and families, we will undertake a series of activities related to the impact of the pandemic on children and on the ability of our members to engage with the UN human rights mechanisms based in Geneva. This will include making public statements and convening State and other stakeholder briefings to urge authorities, international organisations and civil society groups to, and guide them in, adopting a child rights-based approach to addressing the COVID-19 crisis, publishing a webpage of information and resources on child rights and the COVID-19 pandemic, and conducting a series of focused webinars with members and partners.





child rights connect

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