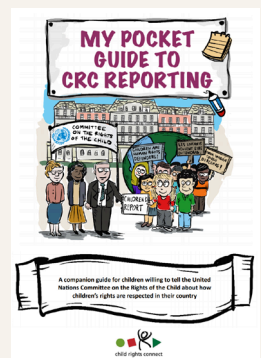


Together with children, for children

**A guide for
civil society
organisations
empowering
children in
CRC reporting**



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children in CRC reporting



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**Together with children, for children:
A guide for civil society organisations empowering children in CRC reporting**

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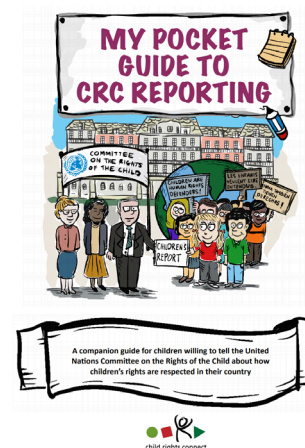
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This publication should be used in conjunction with:

My Pocket Guide to CRC Reporting – A companion guide for children willing to tell the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child about how children's rights are respected in their country, Second edition, Child Rights Connect 2020



HOW TO CHILD RIGHTS

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About Child Rights Connect

Since our establishment in 1983 to influence the drafting of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, Child Rights Connect, formerly the NGO Group for the CRC, has strived to connect international human rights mechanisms and processes to the daily realities of children.

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

- The expert organisation on 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, Switzerland;
- The leading organisation bringing global attention to child participation and the rights of child human rights defenders.

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In addition to the author (Sam Dimmock) and project manager (Lisa Myers), members of the Advisory Group were:

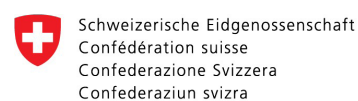
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Preface



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The re-edition of this Guide takes place at a time where the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child has just celebrated its 30th anniversary. Since its first edition in 2011, much happened in the process of the Committee's dialogues with civil society and the construction of recommendations and concluding observations. I have experienced this process, first as part of the reporting of civil society organisations – as established by Article 45 of the Convention – and now as a member of the body which monitors the implementation of the Treaty.

It is undeniable that without the role played by children's rights defenders at national level and without the support of Child Rights Connect to participate in the reporting cycle and dialogues with the Committee, it would not have the same quality to help the Committee to have a more comprehensive and objective vision of the processes that involve children and their rights in their countries.

In my opinion, among the significant advancements made in this field, the most important is the incorporation of the voice of children in written reports, through drawings, songs, films, or heard directly thanks to the participation of children's groups during the children's meetings with the Committee. The testimony of their concrete experiences contributes significantly to enhance the dialogue between the Committee and States.

We must not forget that children are still a social group with limited or no possibility of self-representation; institutions and adults continue to speak on their behalf, without being appointed by children to do so.

The voice of children is crucial. The development of tools such as this Guide helps adults to make sure children's voices are part of the extremely formal reporting processes of bodies such as the Committee on the Rights of the Child, and that children are empowered as human rights defenders.

Mr. Luis Ernesto PEDERNERA REYNA

Chairperson 2019-2021

UN Committee on the Rights of the Child

Introduction

Children have the right to participate in the reporting cycle of the Committee on the Rights of the Child (Committee) in the same way that adults do, based on Article 45 of the United Nations Convention on the rights of the child (CRC)¹. In its General Comment No. 12 on the right of the child to be heard, the Committee welcomed “written reports and additional oral information submitted by child organisations and children’s representatives in the monitoring process of child rights implementation by States parties, and encourages States parties and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to support children to present their views to the Committee”².

Furthermore, in its working methods for the participation of children in the reporting process, the Committee stated that “at the international level, the involvement of children in the work of the Committee has particular relevance, including in the reporting process of States parties’ implementation of the Convention and its Optional Protocols [...]. With regard to the reporting process, States parties have an obligation to ensure that children are encouraged and enabled to participate in the preparation of the State reports to the Committee”³.

Child participation in CRC reporting is not optional or a ‘nice to have’; since 1994, children have been exercising their right to participate in this process and have collaborated with the Committee mainly thanks to the support of civil society organisations. Although children have taken an increasingly active role in the reporting cycle, both in terms of monitoring of and advocacy for the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols, Child Rights Connect’s study (2019) *Global Status of Engagement in Reporting to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child*⁴ concluded that child participation continues to remain limited, ad-hoc and is rarely child-led.


Experience has shown that there are many ways in which children can engage in all the steps of the reporting cycle, regardless of their age, background or circumstances, and many good practices exist.

1 www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CRC.aspx

2 https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC%2fC%2fGC%2f12&Lang=en

3 https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC/C/66/2&Lang=en

4 www.childrightsconnect.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/global_status_report_final.pdf



This Guide aims to provide practical guidance to civil society organisations who wish to empower children through their engagement in the CRC reporting process. The recommendations and tips included in the Guide are based on the experiences of organisations and children, and the Guide explores concrete issues that need to be taken into consideration when supporting and promoting child participation. It also includes case studies, some practical materials, checklists and tips that organisations may want to adapt for their own work to support children to engage in human rights monitoring and advocacy.

We hope this Guide will support, inspire and encourage organisations to learn from good practices and address the barriers that continue to limit children's engagement. Through this Guide, civil society organisations can play a key role in fostering an empowering, safe and sustained participation of children in the CRC reporting cycle as well as in the broader United Nations (UN) human rights system.

1. Foundations

Basic requirements for the participation of children in the CRC reporting process.

In its General Comment No. 12⁵, the Committee has set **nine requirements** that must be respected for all processes in which children are heard and participate, including the reporting process⁶, hence the listing of the nine requirements in the Committee's working methods for the participation of children in the reporting process adopted in 2014. It is important to stress that each of the requirements are closely linked and reinforce one another.

a

Transparent and informative

Children must be provided with full, accessible, diversity-sensitive and age-appropriate information about their right to express their views freely and their views to be given due weight, and how this participation will take place, its scope, purpose and potential impact.

Children should be informed about their broader range of participatory rights beyond Article 12 and linking to Articles 13-17 of the CRC.^{7,8} This can help to promote a more holistic understanding of the CRC and empower children to exercise their rights. Transparency relating to an activity or process should be a two-way process where children are supported to engage in its development, implementation, follow-up and impact.

b

Voluntary

Children should never be coerced into expressing views against their wishes and they should be informed that they can cease involvement at any stage.

Providing break-out spaces (whether online or offline) can help to support children to feel comfortable and able to take time out or to discontinue their engagement. Linking to basic requirement (h) below, a dedicated adult child safeguarder can help ensure that children report any instances where they may feel coercion or pressure, and for these to be dealt with accordingly (see requirement (h) on safety).

⁵ https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC%2fC%2fGC%2f12&Lang=en

⁶ https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC/C/66/2&Lang=en

⁷ The Child-friendly Convention on the Rights of the Child by UNICEF-Child Rights Connect <https://weshare.unicef.org/CS.aspx?VP3=SearchResult&STID=2AMZIFJXAUY>

⁸ The Rights of Child Human Rights Defenders: Implementation Guide www.childrightsconnect.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/final-implementation-guide-the-rights-of-child-human-rights-defenders-forweb.pdf

c

Respectful

Children's views have to be treated with respect and they should be provided with opportunities to initiate ideas and activities. Adults working with children should acknowledge, respect and build on good examples of children's participation, for instance, in their contributions to the family, school, culture and the work environment. They also need an understanding of the socio-economic, environmental and cultural context of children's lives. Persons and organisations working for and with children should also respect children's views with regard to participation in public events.

To ensure children feel respected, it is important to continuously promote the recognition of children as equal rights holders and experts among adults. Child human rights defenders have told us that they feel most respected when adults are sensitive to the fact that most spaces are still adult-driven and can be overwhelming, listen carefully and offer encouragement and appreciation (see requirement (g) on training).

d

Relevant

The issues on which children have the right to express their views must be of real relevance to their lives and enable them to draw on their knowledge, skills and abilities. In addition, space needs to be created to enable children to highlight and address the issues they themselves identify as relevant and important.

It is important to reiterate that children have the right to express their views on any issues they wish, including those of public interest which may not affect the child directly. Empowering children in a continual and sustainable way can help to enable children to participate in building participatory spaces and deciding which issues are raised.

e

Child-friendly

Environments and working methods should be adapted to children's capacities. Adequate time and resources should be made available to ensure that children are adequately prepared and have the confidence and opportunity to contribute their views. Consideration needs to be given to the fact that children will need differing levels of support and forms of involvement according to their age and evolving capacities.

Children tell us that spaces constructed by adults can often feel intimidating and overwhelming and that they want to be able to re-think new spaces and working methods with adults where they can feel more equal. Many child-led initiatives have created their own participatory spaces and it is important that adults can embrace and learn from these. The adequate time and resources to prepare is relevant to all participants including adults (see requirement (c)).

f

Inclusive

Participation must be inclusive, avoid existing patterns of discrimination, and encourage opportunities for marginalised children, including both girls and boys, to be involved [...]. Children are not a homogenous group and participation needs to provide for equality of opportunity for all, without discrimination on any grounds. Programmes also need to ensure that they are culturally sensitive to children from all communities.

Children experience multiple and intersecting disadvantages, their childhood itself compounding the discrimination they may face for other reasons such as gender, socio-economic status and ability status. Inclusivity is closely linked to requirement (a) and the possibility to access information in different ways (for example, age-appropriate, different languages, braille, sign language, audio). Linking to requirement (e), it is important to re-think and build child-friendly spaces with children so that can be more inclusive, such as connecting with grassroots organisations and providing the means to participate online.

g

Supported by training

Adults need preparation, skills and support to facilitate children's participation effectively, to provide them, for example, with skills in listening, working jointly with children and engaging children effectively in accordance with their evolving capacities. Children themselves can be involved as trainers and facilitators on how to promote effective participation; they require capacity-building to strengthen their skills in, for example, effective participation awareness of their rights, and training in organising meetings, raising funds, dealing with the media, public speaking and advocacy.

Training is important beyond facilitation and listening skills and critical for each of the nine basic requirements for safe and empowering participation of children. Children's feedback should be continually collected and learned from in order to target and customise training for different actors involved, such as accompanying adults, teachers, staff members of NGOs and UN agencies.

h

Safe and sensitive to risk

In certain situations, expression of views may involve risks. Adults have a responsibility towards the children with whom they work and must take every precaution to minimise the risk to children of violence, exploitation or any other negative consequence of their participation. Action necessary to provide appropriate protection will include the development of a clear child-protection strategy which recognises the particular risks faced by some groups of children, and the extra barriers they face in obtaining help. Children must be aware of their right to be protected from harm and know where to go for help if needed. Investment in working with families and communities is important in order to build understanding of the value and implications of participation, and to minimise the risks to which children may otherwise be exposed.

Children continually tell us that they feel unsafe when they act as human rights defenders and face bullying, assault, intimidation, and reprisals from different spheres including family members, teachers, the State and members of public. The priority of any activity with children is safety and a key pillar of child safeguarding is an initial risk assessment where mitigation strategies can be developed, and the activity adapted accordingly. A clear child protection strategy should include a dedicated child safeguarder who is known to all children and adults, and a clear procedure to follow in the case that a child safeguarding incident or concern is raised. This must include support and care for children who have faced any form of abuse, exploitation, or neglect. In relation to requirement (g), it is essential that child safeguarding training is offered to everyone engaging in the activity in advance and with time to raise any questions or concerns. Child safeguarding should also be included in any follow-up actions so that feedback can be given to improve child safeguarding measures and practices.

i

Accountable

A commitment to follow-up and evaluation is essential. For example, in any research or consultative process, children must be informed as to how their views have been interpreted and used and, where necessary, provided with the opportunity to challenge and influence the analysis of the findings. Children are also entitled to be provided with clear feedback on how their participation has influenced any outcomes. Wherever appropriate, children should be given the opportunity to participate in follow-up processes or activities. Monitoring and evaluation of children's participation needs to be undertaken, where possible, with children themselves.

Accountability to children should run throughout empowerment activities whereby information about the opportunities and planning should be shared and discussed collectively with children from the very beginning. In this way, children can influence the process, understand and contribute to the intended impacts and share their ideas of how they can be best achieved.

Key Principles

Building on the nine basic requirements, child participation in the CRC reporting should be underpinned by three key principles: **empowerment**, **sustainability** and **safeguarding**.

In this sense, child participation should enable children to 1) understand and exercise their human rights, 2) take action to claim their own rights, 3) promote and defend children's rights, 4) be protected from harm.

It is crucial that children are supported to understand what children's rights are and mean to them based on their own experiences. To this purpose, the child-friendly version of the Convention⁹ developed by UNICEF and Child Rights Connect is a key tool, as is the practical Guide for adapting the child-friendly Convention to different contexts.¹⁰

It is equally important that children are provided with the necessary information for them to be able to take action if they wish so. This means that children must understand what they

⁹ Child Rights Connect and UNICEF developed the official child-friendly CRC in 2019 with a global team of child advisors, endorsed by the Committee and available in multi languages and formats: <https://weshare.unicef.org/CS.aspx?VP3=SearchResult&STID=2AMZIFJXAUY>

¹⁰ Guide for adapting the child-friendly example of the Convention with and for children in your context, Queens University Belfast Centre for Children's Rights, 2019: www.childrightsconnect.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/cf_crc_translation_guide_final.pdf

can do about their own rights and the rights of other children. The CRC reporting is a unique opportunity for children to act as human rights defenders and be empowered as such.

In 2018, the Committee dedicated its Day of General Discussion to the topic “Protecting and Empowering Children as Human Rights Defenders”¹¹, to foster a deeper understanding of the content and implications of the Convention with regard to child human rights defenders. There is no minimum age to act as human rights defender. Children who take actions to promote, protect and fulfil human rights, including children’s rights, are human rights defenders, even if they do not see themselves as such, or are not considered and called as such by others¹².

A child who monitors the implementation of the CRC and sends a submission to the Committee is a human rights defender. Civil society should use the CRC reporting as an opportunity to strengthen children’s understanding of their rights both as children and as human rights defenders. Even if children do not call themselves “defenders”, it is important that they understand that if they do monitoring and advocacy in the framework of the CRC reporting, they act as defenders and therefore they are entitled to specific rights and heightened protection as such. From the outset of the CRC reporting process, civil society should build on and aim to strengthen existing initiatives of child human rights defenders and partner with them to reach out to and engage other children, as they can serve as inspiration and role models.

No matter the extent of the engagement in the reporting process, all children who participate must be protected from harm. Adults who want to empower children to participate in the reporting process should take all precautions to minimise any negative consequence of their activities and protect them from any form of intimidation, reprisal or negative consequence. However, protective concerns should not be used as an excuse to limit children’s enjoyment of their right to participate in the reporting process, and neither should be concerns about the meaningfulness or tokenism of the experience. Adults must always remember that children are entitled to participate and that the ‘best interests’ of the child cannot be equated only with ‘welfare’ or protection from harm.

¹¹ www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CRC/Pages/Discussion2018.aspx

¹² www.childrightsconnect.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/final-implementation-guide-the-rights-of-child-human-rights-defenders-forweb.pdf

Working Methods

Understanding the working methods of the Committee and taking them into account is indispensable for an effective engagement of both adults and children in CRC reporting and in monitoring and advocacy activities.

There are two CRC reporting procedures: the **standard procedure** and the **simplified procedure**. The reporting steps vary according to the methodology used.

The standard reporting procedure

Two years after initial ratification, and every five years thereafter, a State party must submit a detailed report – called the State party report – outlining the measures it has taken to implement the CRC¹³ and / or the two Optional Protocols OPSC¹⁴ and OPAC¹⁵ and how effective these measures have been. The standard reporting cycle starts here.

Children’s rights defenders including children, NGOs, UNICEF and UN agencies, National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) and Ombudspersons can provide information to the Committee by sending **alternative reports**. Children can also submit in any way they wish, including films, studies, photographs, drawings, etc. Submissions can be published on the Committee’s website or kept confidential.

Three months after the submission of reports, the Committee invites children, NGOs, UNICEF and UN agencies, NHRIs and Ombudspersons to attend a confidential pre-sessional working group (**pre-session**) to discuss their concerns in more detail. A separate children’s meeting is convened upon request. These meetings take place in the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in Geneva, Switzerland. It is also possible for participants to take part in these meetings remotely.

After the pre-session, the Committee sends the State party a **list of issues** on which it requires further information in writing (**written replies**).

Three weeks before the session, any children’s rights defenders, including those who did not submit alternative reports, can submit concise **additional information** to the Committee.

Six months after the pre-session, the Committee convenes the State party examination (**country session**) usually in Geneva¹⁶ and issues its **concluding observations**.

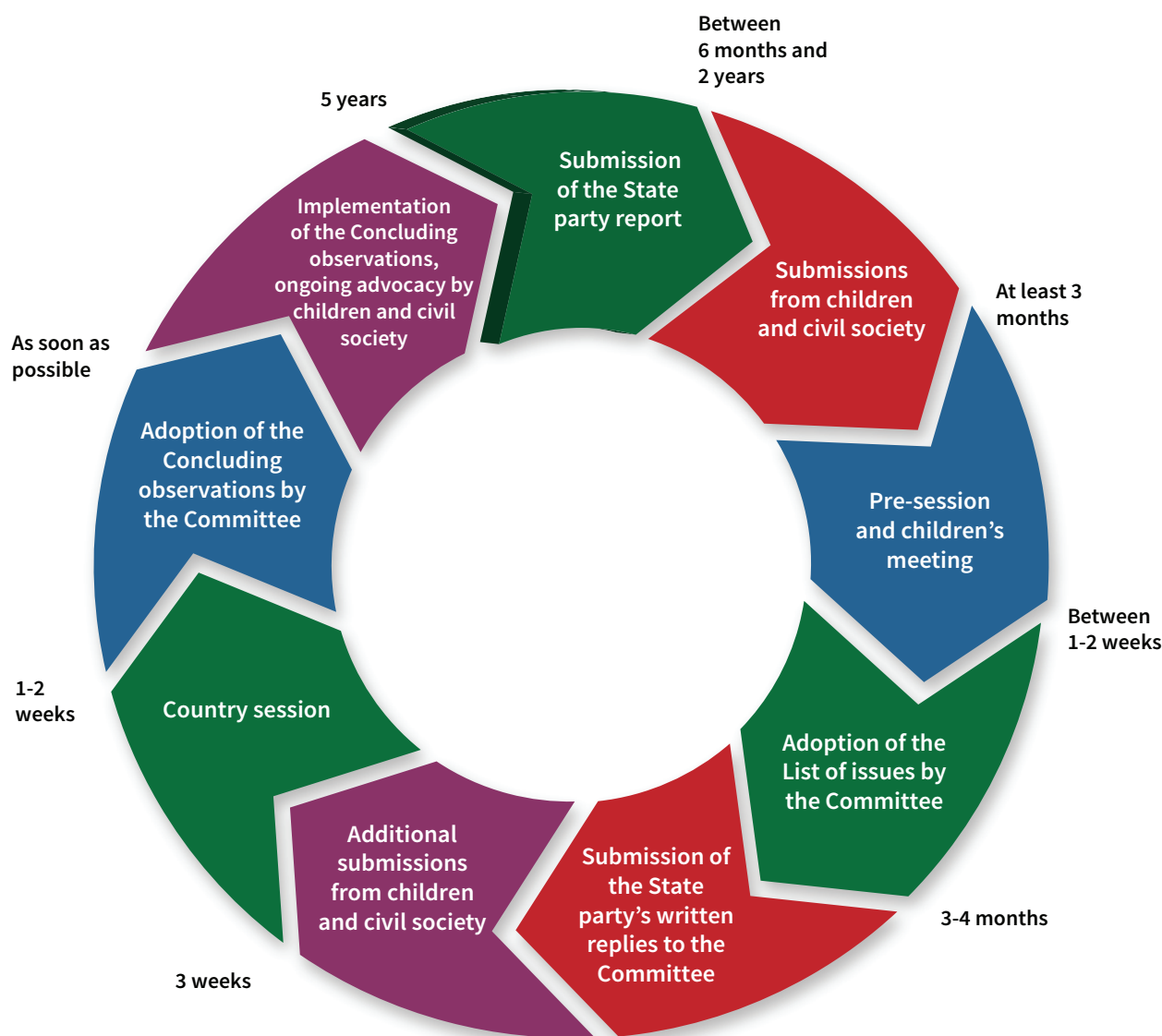
¹³ www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CRC.aspx

¹⁴ Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/OPSCCRC.aspx

¹⁵ Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/OPACCRC.aspx

By ratifying the CRC, a State party undertakes to implement the recommendations contained in the concluding observations. Between two State party reviews by the Committee, there are no official follow-up measures undertaken by the Committee. All interested actors can monitor the State party's implementation of the Committee's recommendations and contribute to their follow-up.

Standard Reporting Procedure of the Committee on the Rights of the Child



16 In 2020, the Committee held an extraordinary outreach session in Samoa – the first ever regional session of the United Nations Treaty Bodies

The simplified reporting procedure

The **simplified reporting cycle** is an optional procedure that States parties can choose. States parties deciding not to use the simplified reporting procedure are reviewed under the standard reporting procedure.

Children's rights defenders including children, NGOs, UNICEF and UN agencies, NHRIs and Ombudspersons can provide **written inputs** to the Committee to inform the **List of Issues Prior to Reporting (LOIPR)**. Children can also submit in any way they wish, including films, studies, photographs, drawings, etc. Submissions can be published on the Committee's website or kept confidential.

Three months after the submission of reports, the Committee adopts its **LOIPR** based on the written information received and sends it to the State to require further written information.

Twelve months later, the Government submits its **State party report** in response to the LOIPR.

Any children's rights defenders, including those who did not submit inputs to the LOIPR, can submit **written inputs to the State report** one month before the pre-session. This second submission is meant to be the comprehensive alternative report.

One month later, the Committee invites children, NGOs, UNICEF and UN agencies, NHRIs and Ombudspersons to attend a confidential pre-session to discuss their concerns in more detail. A separate children's meeting is also convened upon request. These meetings take place in the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in Geneva, Switzerland.

Three months after the pre-session, the Committee convenes the State party examination (**country session**) usually in Geneva and issues its **concluding observations**.

By ratifying the CRC, a State party undertakes to implement the recommendations contained in the concluding observations. Between two State party reviews by the Committee, there are no official follow-up measures undertaken by the Committee. All interested actors can monitor the State's implementation of the Committee's recommendations and contribute to their follow-up.

Simplified Reporting Procedure of the Committee on the Rights of the Child



For more detailed information about each aspect of the CRC reporting process, see Child Rights Connect's Guide for NGOs and NHRIs reporting to the Committee on the Rights of the Child¹⁷ as well as Child Rights Connect's dedicated CRC *mini-site*¹⁸.

Children should also be encouraged to express their views, give opinions and formulate recommendations about how the Optional Protocols are being implemented at national level, but due to the sensitive nature of the issues addressed in the Optional Protocols, protection, methodological and ethical considerations should be especially developed.

¹⁷ https://www.childrightsconnect.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/en_guidetocrcreportingcycle_childrightsconnect_2014.pdf

¹⁸ <https://crrreporting.childrightsconnect.org/>

See Child rights Connect's guide *Reporting on the OPSC and OPAC*¹⁹.

In addition to the Convention and to the OPSC and the OPAC, adults supporting children should inform them about the OPIC²⁰ on how they can lodge a complaint with the UN about violations of their rights, if violations cannot be addressed effectively at national level. See our dedicated *OPIC mini-site*²¹.

CASE STUDY



Putting forth the children's voices in an alternative report on the OPSC, Sri Lanka, 2018

In 2018, PEaCE (Protecting Environment and Children Everywhere - ECPAT Sri Lanka) and ECPAT International submitted an alternative report on the implementation of the OPSC in Sri Lanka. This was the first time ECPAT and its network members included recommendations formulated directly from children.

PEaCE facilitated a consultation process through a national awareness campaign on the sexual exploitation of children in 2016. Ultimately, it allowed 207 children from 9 provinces to formulate some recommendations to the President of Sri Lanka in the children's declaration 'The World We Want - through the eyes of the Child'. These recommendations were clearly identified in the alternative report as coming from the children. Five out of twelve children's recommendations were adopted by the Committee in their concluding observations.

Based on ECPAT's experience, organisations can find it challenging to support children's submissions on the OPSC. In particular, the lack of resources and short timeframe make it difficult to organise consultations with children and child victims which follow ethical, age and gender appropriate methodologies, and for which a comprehensive risk assessment and protection policy are conducted. Another challenge which may arise is seeking consent from the parents or guardians of the children, due to the sensitive topics covered by the OPSC.

PEaCE and ECPAT

¹⁹ www.childrightsconnect.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Guide_OP_EN_web.pdf

²⁰ Optional Protocol on a communications procedure https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=A/RES/66/138&Lang=en

²¹ <http://opic.childrightsconnect.org/>

Addressing barriers to children's engagement

Supporting children's engagement in CRC reporting – to whatever extent and in whichever way – has very real time and resource implications and as such it is essential that organisations understand the barriers children may face when engaging in such work. Achieving sustainable funding and engagement, particularly when managing children's expectations of their engagement, and ensuring children have ongoing support to undertake their own activism is key. Many NGOs report that they did not realise how much time and preparation children's engagement would take!

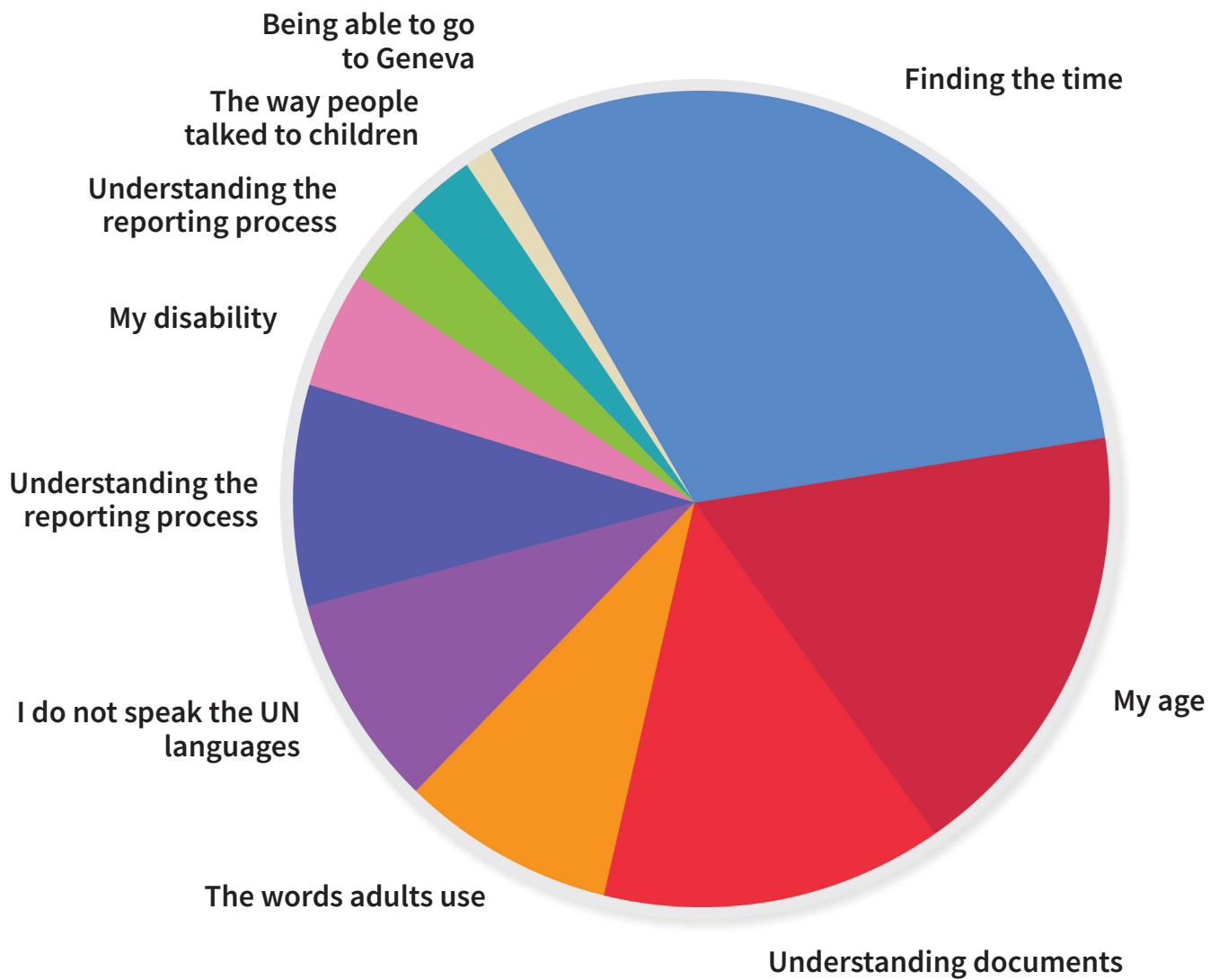


TIP: Promoting and ensuring child participation can be a long process, so you should allocate specific staff with experience in child participation to run this process in a time efficient and child sensitive manner.

Organisations have emphasised the value of empowering children to engage at the earliest possible stage and developing activities in partnership with them. This can help to take into account the different elements in children's lives that can limit their involvement in advocacy. In research carried out by Child Rights Connect, children were asked about the barriers they faced when engaging in CRC reporting²². A significant majority reported that they found it hard to find the time to become, or stay, engaged in children's rights monitoring and advocacy on account of responsibilities relating to school, family or employment. Others said their age and ability to understand documents often made it difficult for them to participate fully.

²² NGO Group for the CRC (2009), Maximising children's engagement in the reporting process for the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Barriers Identified by Children



With this in mind, it is crucial that organisations factor in every aspect of the reporting process, including activities and advocacy at national level in their planning.

Organisations must also work to identify funding sources that can support the achievement of these different aims both in the short and long-term.

CASE STUDY



Challenges to produce a child-led report, Malawi, 2016

The NGO Coalition on Child Rights (NGO CCR) in Malawi led the preparation of an alternative report and intended to support children to produce their own report. However, due to time constraints and a lack of capacity and existing child participation structures, it appeared unrealistic to have children leading and writing their own report. Alternatively, a consultant was recruited to facilitate the production of a child-informed report.

A task force of 12 members of the NGO CCR drew a roadmap for the consultations and worked closely with the consultant to identify child participants from different backgrounds. A total of 268 children (132 boys and 136 girls) were consulted: pupils and students, children from child rights clubs, refugee children, children with disabilities, children with albinism.

Children participated in focus group discussions, individual interviews, open debates and role-plays. These different activities, sometimes led by children themselves, brought out children's views as regards to the promotion, protection and fulfilment of their rights under the UNCRC.

The report was drafted by the consultant based on the views of children. The findings were validated by children themselves during two workshops with 54 children, mainly from child rights clubs. The validation workshops gave children a second opportunity to raise other critical issues. After a careful analysis of the issues and recommendations identified, children unanimously approved the report as the outcome of the consultative process.

The NGO CCR acknowledges that the whole process should have been child-led from the data collection to the data analysis and report writing, with the task force and consultant providing logistical and technical support. However, it was not possible to identify and to train a group of children to lead the whole process and to undertake activities by themselves.

The NGO CCR learned some lessons for future processes to involve and support children to engage in such activities, for example, to plan adequate time and resources for long-term and sustainable child participation processes and to continue working as a network to share institutional knowledge and expertise.

NGO Coalition on Child Rights

2. Preparation

Activities to engage children in the CRC reporting process

Organisations have used many different models and methodologies for supporting children in every step of the CRC reporting process, dependent on the context in which they are working, their own working methods, and the particular needs or ideas of children.

Ideally, children should submit their own evidence to the Committee in a separate children's submission and their views should be taken into account in both the State party report (organisations can encourage the State to involve children) and the organisations' reports to the Committee. Children should participate in meetings with the Committee, follow and monitor the session and take action at national level on the Committee's concluding observations.

Organisations already working in the children's rights field will usually have a range of established activities that are run by, with or for children, aimed at promoting and furthering children's rights. These can often be used as the foundation for activities to empower children to participate in CRC reporting.

Examples of activities that organisations have undertaken or built upon to support and enhance children's engagement in the reporting process and broader Committee activities include:

- Empowering children to learn about their human rights through a training and outreach activity, including by producing with them on- and off-line materials about children's rights, advocacy and campaigning;
- Building on existing activities of child-led initiatives to educate them about child rights and opportunities to engage in CRC reporting, leading to child-led submissions and follow-up actions;
- Facilitating meetings and consultations for children at local and national levels;
- Supporting children to gather evidence on children's rights or compare the State party and NGO reports and highlight issues that have not been addressed and produce a children's report for various audiences, from local authorities to the CRC Committee itself;
- Accompanying children in direct reporting and monitoring, from participating in a children's meeting with the Committee to observing the State party examination;
- Facilitating a visit by a Committee member focused on interactions with children;
- Taking action on the Committee's Concluding Observations – through dissemination, meetings with government officials, and child-led campaigns;

- Channelling children’s contributions during the drafting of CRC General Comments²³;
- Supporting children to engage in the planning, implementation and follow-up of the Committee’s Days of General Discussion²⁴ and in participating as speakers, moderators and audience in such UN events;
- Engaging with the media to promote and debate children’s rights.

CRC reporting is one of the many entry points to engage with the UN human rights system. Children, as human rights defenders, should be encouraged and supported to engage with other relevant UN and regional mechanisms (see chapter Follow-up work and ongoing monitoring).



TIP: As a general principle, organisations may wish to consider supporting children financially to participate in preparatory meetings and other activities, whether this is through paying for travel and accommodation, paying for parents or carers to accompany children to meetings, or through subsidising lost wages for working children.

Child safeguarding

It is essential to carefully consider the country context and child safeguarding measures before planning activities, to anticipate any difficulties or risks that may entail and to adapt the activities accordingly.

A risk assessment with mitigation strategies should be undertaken as priority (see template – Appendix 3) to list, discuss and assess risks and obstacles for each activity and related steps that you or children envisage, in addition to child safeguarding measures. It may be necessary to adapt your plans in different ways (prior to, during implementation and as part of the follow-up) to ensure child participants are safe from harm.



TIP: It is possible to contact Child Rights Connect if you wish to receive more information and support on child safeguarding.

²³ Read the General Comments: https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/TBSearch.aspx?Lang=en&TreatyID=5&DocTypeID=11 and contact Child Rights Connect to find out about upcoming ones.

²⁴ www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CRC/Pages/DiscussionDays.aspx

Check out Child Rights Connect Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedure²⁵ that can be used as a basis to develop or build on your own. It is important to ensure that everyone involved in your activities, both children and adults, are trained in accessible and age-appropriate ways to know about the child safeguarding measures in place and what to do / where to go if there is an incident or concern about a child's safety.

The Committee also adopted its own Child safeguarding procedure²⁶ to prevent and respond to any form of harm to children arising from and during their participation in the Committee's work.

Supporting children to address sensitive issues should not be avoided but should be very carefully planned and accompanied. To address grave violations, you may consider using existing material (complaints, Ombudspersons, NHRIs or human rights NGO reports, child helplines data, etc.). Rather than engaging children in collecting or giving new individual testimonies, children other than the victims may be invited to reflect upon such material. However, peer consultations or child-led surveys sometimes allow finding out about facts and/or perceptions that adult-led research would not reflect.

In addition, you should reflect on how to adapt the planned activities to ensure inclusivity and to empower very young children, children with disabilities and children in vulnerable situations (children living in poverty, children in street situations, children in alternative care, children in detention, children on the move, working children, refugee or asylum-seeking children, etc.) to also participate.



TIP: Sometimes, proposing broader CRC awareness-raising and creative activities can be easier or more acceptable (e.g. by a prison administration) than direct work on CRC reporting, but can ultimately nurture a children's submission while guaranteeing the necessary level of protection, anonymity, or age-appropriateness.

²⁵ <https://www.childrightsconnect.org/policies/>

²⁶ www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/CRC/crc-child-safeguarding-procedure-2020.pdf

CASE STUDY



A strategy for safe and inclusive participation of children in the CRC reporting, Moldova, 2017

A group of 25 children was set up to lead the child participation process in the CRC reporting in Moldova, facilitated by the Child Rights Information Center (CRIC).

Children were supported to assess risks related to their own and their peers' participation based on their own experiences, and with the thematic expertise in online safety provided by La Strada Moldova. The safeguarding procedures and mitigation strategies were developed based on this assessment. It included what the children, CRIC and other adults involved should do to keep children safe. Several tools were then developed together with the children, for example, short guides for journalists and representatives of authorities to tackle children's concerns during and after risk-sensitive events such as public meetings with the authorities or the media. As a result of this process, the core group of children felt better prepared to deal with possible risks and more confident to engage in public discussions.

In addition to safety, the children were supported to review their activities from the perspective of inclusiveness. They got familiar with a child-friendly version of the nine basic requirements for a safe and meaningful child participation in the reporting process from the Committee's Working Methods, and discussed how each requirement was reflected in their activities.

The group identified good examples and practices, but also what could be improved and how. Some recommendations were shortly implemented. For example, to increase inclusiveness and strengthen perspectives of excluded children in the report for the Committee, focus groups were conducted with Roma children and mothers under 18. Some recommendations required more time and resources, such as the creation of a web-portal (<https://monitor.drepturilecopilului.md/>) to inform and empower more children in the CRC monitoring and reporting.

Child Rights Information Center

Establishing Partnerships

Involving other organisations and individuals in work related to engaging children in the CRC reporting process can contribute significantly to the impact of the work, both in the short and the long-term. Key stakeholders to engage with include other children, schools, youth groups, child-led organisations, NGOs, faith organisations, national broadcast and print media, local authorities (or village/community leaders), parents and carers, parliamentarians, political parties and the State party. These links can help to build joint capacity, resources, knowledge and expertise and also build a strong foundation that can be used to lobby for State action on the Committee's Concluding Observations.

In particular, we recommend collaboration with your **national child rights coalition**, if one exists, or with other child rights organisations that may have complementary skills, expertise and resources to develop your initiative jointly.

You should consider consulting with the national or regional **UNICEF** office early in the process to check whether it has its own plans to support a child reporting process, or would be willing to either participate in or support your initiative technically or financially. Similarly, you should check the interest and potential support of **international NGOs** present in the country, as several have a strong interest in child participation.

Human rights or children's **Ombudspersons and NHRIs** are the other obvious potential partners for collaboration on child reporting.



TIP: Depending on how independence from the State can be guaranteed and perceived, you may ask government counterparts to also provide support for child reporting. Ultimately it is a State party's obligation to ensure that children are encouraged and enabled to participate in the preparation of the State reports to the Committee, as referred in the Committee's Working Methods²⁷ and CRC General Comments No. 5²⁸, 12²⁹ and 20³⁰.

²⁷ https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC/C/66/2&Lang=en

²⁸ General Comment No. 5 (2003): General Measures of Implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, see: https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC%2fGC%2f2003%2f5&Lang=en

²⁹ General Comment No. 12 (2009): The right of the child to be heard: https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC%2fC%2fGC%2f12&Lang=en

³⁰ General comment No. 20 (2016) on the implementation of the rights of the child during adolescence: https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC%2fC%2fGC%2f20&Lang=en

Achieving a “legacy” of children’s engagement in CRC monitoring is challenging and part of a much broader process of mainstreaming and integrating children’s participation in a sustained way at different levels. Building strong relationships with key national stakeholders has proven immensely valuable to many organisations in securing funding for follow-up activities to the formal CRC reporting process. For others, establishing links at local and provincial levels has been a very effective vehicle for achieving tangible change in children’s lives, and engaging children in human rights monitoring, on an ongoing basis.

Supporting children’s personal development and knowledge of the UN human rights system

To ensure that children have the skills they need to meaningfully engage in the CRC reporting process – and most importantly, to get the most out of their participation – organisations will need to provide information and training on children’s rights monitoring, again building on what had been achieved already rather than starting from scratch. It can be useful to focus on children’s personal development by supporting them to develop skills in areas such as public speaking, research, analysis, report writing and evaluation.



TIP: Children’s empowerment is part of a long-term process so their participation in CRC reporting should not be seen as a one-off event. It is important to take forward activities, such as those listed below, with a vision for sustained empowerment and participation in monitoring and implementation of the CRC and beyond.

Many organisations have found it useful to develop or adapt specific tools to enable children’s participation in monitoring, reporting and advocacy, such as:

- Child-friendly version of the CRC
- Child-friendly information on the reporting process and versions of relevant documents, such as the Concluding Observations, adapted or explained to children
- Child-friendly information about the law affecting children’s rights in their country
- Regular meetings to give children the opportunity to identify and discuss children’s rights issues

- Research tools for use by children
- Training and materials to help children develop campaigning skills
- Using theatre and video production to explore children's rights issues
- Building the capacity of partner/member organisations to support children's self-advocacy

Organisations will need to consider making additional support available – through dedicated materials, staff and the involvement of parents and carers – to enable younger children and children with particular needs to participate fully in the whole range of activities.



TIP: It is key to support children to have ownership over the process! Organisations should empower children to take forward their own initiatives by creating the space and opportunities for them to develop their ideas and be creative.

CASE STUDY



Ensuring younger children have their say, Germany, 2019

The one-year participative process to write the Child Rights Report was planned and carried out by the National Coalition of Germany with the support of its network. The most important players, however, were the children who participated in many ways.

Twenty-two children aged 8 to 17 independently initiated creative projects on a wide range of issues relating to children's rights. In joint workshops, the groups discussed their interests and ideas and prepared project plans. After carrying out their own initiatives, they presented the results and personal experiences at a second meeting. The twelve exciting projects had a variety of approaches with themes and formats including short films, surveys and study groups at schools.

It was important to also give younger children the chance to participate and have their say. With few existing connections to younger groups, and only limited resources available, the project team visited three day-care centres in Berlin.

Thirty-two children were involved in conversations on issues such as personal opinion, participation and privacy. The project team read a story³¹ to the day-care-centre children which described various situations in which children's rights are important. Through the story, the children were able to get to know their rights better in a fun and playful way. They got their own say and were able to share their thoughts, wishes and experiences on various topics important to them. The children also shared their opinions and personal experiences through written pieces or pictures that input the report. The conversations showed that, even at a young age, children have things to say about children's rights and have a strong sense of what is fair and right, and what is not.

In addition, a nation-wide survey gave children the chance to share their opinion on issues relating to children's rights. The survey could be completed online on the dedicated website of the Child Rights Report (www.kinderrechtereport.de) or printed out and sent back to ensure greater access and inclusivity. Two different versions were available based on age and questions could be skipped according to interest. A total of 2,725 children took part in the survey, including 39% of children aged 6-9 years old!

The report is a mosaic of many opinions, experiences and assessments made by a variety of participants and collected in different ways. When it came to participation, minimising access barriers was fundamental. Participation, including for younger children, will continue to be developed for future projects.

National Coalition of Germany

31 M)ein Tag voller Rechte (A day full of rights), Outlaw gGmbH: www.outlaw-ggmbh.de/fileadmin/content/Downloads/Kinderrechte_mit_Paul.pdf

Empowering children to gather evidence

Children can themselves collect evidence and gather their peers' experiences as a way of sharing children's views on the state of children's rights in their country. Indeed, evidence collected by children themselves have a special meaning and importance for the Committee. Some of the research projects undertaken by children have incorporated the views of thousands of children. Others have been smaller, focusing on the views of particular groups of children or the experiences of children living in particular settings. Some organisations have trained children in social research and investigative skills, and supported them to carry out the research themselves.

As a general rule, children should participate throughout the process: in designing the project, developing the questions, carrying out the research, undertaking the analysis and evaluation and follow-up activities. Adults can also play their part if there is resistance to child participation. In some situations, child-led research can lead to backlash from parents and carers who see it as a threat, so accompanying adults should help children handle such reactions. In other situations, child researchers felt they gained increased respect from peers and adults from the process. This was especially the case when child researchers were younger or perceived as more vulnerable (e.g. living in care) than the children they interviewed and considered these data-gathering exercises instrumental in enabling them to get their voices heard and taken seriously.

Children have used a range of methods to gather the views and experiences of their peers:

- Undertaking **surveys and questionnaires** with children at events, through schools and children's groups or associations, and online, in order to collect a wide cross-section of views and experiences;
- Undertaking targeted research through **focus group interviews**, with marginalised groups of children (in some cases, children previously identified by NGOs or the Committee as likely to face violations of their rights), to talk in detail about their rights and what needs to change;
- **One-to-one interviews** with vulnerable children, for example children in custody, children in mental health settings, or children who have experienced abuse;
- **Discussion days and consultation events**, bringing together large groups of children from different ages and backgrounds;
- **Launching a national call for evidence** to obtain case studies from children about how far they feel their rights are respected;
- Undertaking a **literature review** to determine where children's views are already being represented, and where children have not had the opportunity to share their experiences;
- Making or collecting **videos, photos, drawings** through competitions, workshops, partnerships with artists.

All of these different methods should be grounded in ethical research methods and in accordance with the nine basic requirements of the Committee's Working Methods – for example, reviewing research questions with supportive professionals to ensure they are appropriate and relevant, and will not have a disproportionate emotional impact on young participants; ensuring all children (and parents or carers) have consented to being involved in the research and have been provided with all the necessary information; ensuring children know what will be done with their views and get a feedback on how their contributions fed in the reporting or monitoring work; ensuring individual children cannot be identified through the research; providing assistance to ensure that children can express their views freely (through using private meeting spaces, interpreters, signers, and other methods as required by children); and ensuring that all children have the opportunity to contribute their views and experiences should they wish to do so.



TIP: Ensure that adequate funding is available for data gathering exercises – for example, for training to be provided for peer researchers, for travel to allow children to take part, for supporting online platforms for children, for the translation of materials into the different national languages, for the hiring of venues if required, and for any specific materials that may need to be developed to engage children with disabilities.

See **Appendix 1** for an example of ethical considerations governing research with children.

See **Appendix 2** for an example of a survey used by NGOs to gather children's views on their rights.

See **Appendix 3** for a template risk assessment for a children's rights research project.

3. Children's Submissions to the Committee

When Child Rights Connect asked children why they had engaged in the CRC reporting process, children said they wanted the opportunity to tell the Committee about children's rights in their countries, in their own way and in their own words. During the 2018 Day of General Discussion, children told the Committee "nothing about us, without us".

In several countries, children have used the evidence they gathered from their peers to develop their own submissions to the Committee, which are considered alongside the reports from the State party, UNICEF, NHRIs, Ombudspersons, NGOs and others.

Children's submissions

There are no hard and fast rules about what information children should include in their submissions to the Committee or what their submissions should look like. Written reports from other stakeholders should not be longer than 20,000 words³², but children's submissions do not have any word limit and children are encouraged to be as creative as possible in the way they decide to present their evidence to the Committee (videos, photographs, artworks, poems, songs, etc.).

Reports by civil society usually contain a section-by-section analysis of the State party report³³ based on the following nine clusters of rights to enable the Committee to compare with the government report:

1. General measures of implementation (Articles 4, 42, 44.6)
2. Definition of the child (Article 1)
3. General principles (Articles 2, 3, 6, 12)
4. Civil rights and freedoms (Articles 7, 8, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17)
5. Violence against children (Articles 19, 24.3, 28.2, 34, 37(a), 39)
6. Family environment and alternative care (Articles 5, 9, 10, 11, 18.1–2, 20, 21, 25, 27.4)
7. Disability, basic health and welfare (Articles 6, 18(3), 23, 24, 26, 27.1–3, 33)
8. Education, leisure and cultural activities (Articles 28, 29, 30, 31)
9. Special protection measures (Articles 22, 30, 32, 33, 35, 36, 37(b)–(d), 38, 39, 40)

³² 10,000 words for alternative reports and for written inputs to LOIPR, 20,000 words for written inputs to State report

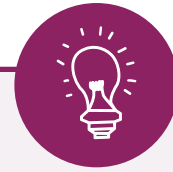
³³ Committee's guidelines for State reporting (Initial report, Periodic reports, OPAC report, OPSC report): www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CRC/Pages/CRCIndex.aspx

Children can be given information about these clusters, as a basis for discussion on whether they have information under each one, which ones they consider as a priority, whether they would prefer to select just a few or do a thematic report, rather than a comprehensive one. Children can also decide to cover all clusters but only as they pertain to a specific category of children (e.g. children with disabilities, indigenous, minority, asylum-seekers, working children, etc.).

It is essential to ensure children can shape their own agenda – quite often, particularly when supported by organisations, children's submissions mirror the organisations agendas and priorities and are not necessarily tackling the issues that they think affect them most. So, the starting point for consultation should be their own rights and how they perceive and experience them being fulfilled, or not.

To view public submissions by children to the Committee, check the database: www.childrightsconnect.org/alternative-report-archive. You can also ask Child Rights Connect to provide you with recent examples.

For practical advice to support children in developing their submission, see our guide for children My Pocket Guide to CRC Reporting.



TIP: Child Rights Connect can also provide advice and information about the development of children's submissions.

CASE STUDY



Children in street situations express their views through a video, Philippines, 2019

In 2016, 2018 and 2019, the child rights organisation Bahay Tuluyan convened a Congress for children in street situations in the Philippines. In 2019, the Street Children's Congress involved 47 children from 7 organisations. Children in street situations were given training about the CRC General Comment No. 21 on children in street situations. The participants were divided into groups which focused on different thematic areas of the General Comment: equal treatment, child labor, survival & development, health & disabilities, participation & freedom, justice for children, family connections, basic needs in life, education and child protection. They were given opportunities to share and reflect how these themes related to their own experiences.

During and after the Congress, the participants were assisted to produce creative outputs to share the key issues which emerged during their discussions. As a result, a group that focused particularly on the themes of justice for children and child participation produced a music video entitled '[Street Children are Not Criminals](#)'³⁴. Child participants led the creation of the video including writing the lyrics, directing and performing. They were assisted throughout this process by adult staff and youth leaders from Bahay Tuluyan, especially for the video editing. All children and youth performing in the video gave their informed consent to its public release on the International Day for Street Children.

In February 2020, children requested to submit their video to the Committee, as part of their country review. As the lyrics were written and performed in the children's mother tongue, Tagalog, an English transcript was provided and the video included subtitles in both languages. A joint statement prepared during the Congress was submitted along the video. It aimed to summarise the feedback and recommendations from each thematic group of the Congress and was approved by all the child participants.

Children in street situations had an opportunity to present their submission to government officials from various departments, civil society organisations and the press during a half day event. Adult representatives attended the children's performances (theatre, film, artwork, rap and photography) and listened to the statement from the congress. At the end of the event, adult representatives formulated pledges to support the rights of children in street situations.

Bahay Tuluyan

³⁴ www.youtube.com/watch?list=PLV_rST8pp2Br9NXCX4DhxZqN3WLYf4Z7l&v=HMX_Yxdy40o&feature=emb_logo

Practical matters relating to the submissions

Children's submissions are expected to be submitted in accordance with the deadlines relating to alternative reports and written inputs. Organisations should monitor the OHCHR Deadlines for the submission of State party report³⁵, the CRC session calendar³⁶ and check the corresponding deadlines for civil society organisations³⁷.

Submissions from children should be sent online through the dedicated platform on Child Rights Connect's website: www.childrightsconnect.org/upload-session-reports.

It is not requested to send hard copies to the Committee.

Children can decide if they want their submission to be kept confidential or to be published online. Supporting organisations should help and guide them to choose, by explaining the benefits but also the risks of disseminating their evidence in their own country and broader. Examples of activities include launch events, distributing press releases to the media, meeting with government officials, parliamentarians and other key stakeholders including the children's Ombudsperson, NGOs, child-led organisations, and local authorities. Children should be encouraged to ensure that all the children that participated in the submission, by contributing views, writing the report, or in some other capacity, receive a copy of the final submission in a form that is accessible to them.

³⁵ https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/MasterCalendar.aspx

³⁶ https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/SessionsList.aspx?Treaty=CRC

³⁷ www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CRC/Pages/InfoPartners.aspx

4. Children Presenting Their Views to the Committee

A children's meeting is a 1-hour private meeting with the Committee, either in person in Geneva or online, which takes place just before the country pre-session. Children's meetings are not yet a formal part of the reporting process and must be worked into the Committee's pre-session schedule in advance. Request for children's meetings have to be made when sending the submission through the online platform.

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Children's delegations

Meeting with the Committee is an opportunity for children to claim their place at the heart of the CRC reporting process. Most children who meet with the Committee participate in a children's meeting and/or attend the pre-session, the latter as observers or as participants.

For each country, there could be different children's delegations supported by several organisations participating in the same meeting. It is a great opportunity for children to meet with their peers in their country, but also implies that children should coordinate by: getting to know each other during the preparatory call organised by Child Rights Connect, having other opportunities to meet and chat about the meeting (in person when possible or remotely) and coordinating in Geneva during the briefing led by Child Rights Connect.

There is no standard approach to the size and composition of child delegations for the children's meeting, and no expectations from the Committee. However, it is important to work with children to consider what form of delegation is likely to have the biggest impact on the Committee, having in mind the limited time available for the meeting and child protection standards that should apply. Organisations should for instance take into account issues such as age, gender balance, ethnicity and background (for example, including minority and indigenous children, children with disabilities or vulnerable groups) to ensure a delegation as representative as possible, while keeping the delegation quite small to enable effective preparation, protection and participation.

Due to time constraints, the children's meeting and the pre-session are never extended beyond three hours and half in total. It is therefore important to take this into account when deciding

how many children should go to Geneva or participate online. Large delegations of children have sometimes felt frustrated by the time constraints, especially within the tight hour of the children's meeting. Managing children's expectations of meetings with the Committee is fundamentally important. Meetings with the Committee should be emphasised as part of a wider process with the ultimate aim of improving the implementation of children's rights in each country³⁸. Preparatory children's meetings should also be ensured whenever possible, based on past global experiences.



TIP: The Committee does not provide individual assistance to children. It is therefore essential that children understand that the Committee will not be able to intervene and directly improve their lives as a result of the meeting. A trained adult should prepare children mentally and emotionally as to what to expect, and avoid involving children who, due to their vulnerability, may be negatively impacted in any way due to their personal situation. This should be in line with a thorough risk assessment as well as finding ways to ensure that vulnerable children are still able to participate and have their voices heard.

Children representatives who wish to participate to the country pre-session and/or to the children's meeting should:

- ✓ Have been involved in the elaboration of children's views to the Committee (e.g. drafted a report, participated in the consultations for the elaboration of a submission, have produced or contributed to the production of a video, etc.) and be able to present the submission and which issues they think are a priority in their country and to answer questions from the Committee;
- ✓ Be trained about their rights under the Convention, and its Optional Protocols if relevant;
- ✓ Be informed about their participation in the CRC reporting process (scope, purpose, impact, modalities, barriers, risks);
- ✓ Be willing to participate;
- ✓ Understand that they would participate as a representative of a group of children and be able to represent different groups and concerns of the children in their country (special efforts should be made to ensure that children in marginalized and vulnerable situations are represented);

³⁸ Children can meet the Committee in other ways, such as during a rapporteur visit (see section 5 of this Guide).

- ✓ Be able to draw on their knowledge, skills and abilities to express their views on relevant issues;
- ✓ Be respectful of their peers' views.

In principle, children should select their representatives themselves. There are many different approaches that organisations and children can take in selecting delegations. Some of these have included:

- Child-led organisations voting for the children that will represent them in Geneva;
- Running an open competition asking children to “apply” for a place on the delegation, with successful entries chosen by children or organisations;
- Children approached on the basis of other children’s and organisations’ knowledge of their direct experience of issues to be raised or their child rights advocacy experience.

It has usually been the case that the overriding criterion for participating in a children’s delegation is their active role in preparing the children’s submission and/or active engagement in promoting or implementing children’s rights. This is intended by many organisations to signpost the legitimacy of children’s participation in the reporting process based on their status as children and as individual and collective rights-holders. Children who meet with the Committee should talk about the broader issues in their report/country and not only focus on providing testimonies about their personal circumstances.



TIP: Members of a children’s delegation should be under the age of 18 by the date of the meeting. If they turn 18 during the process, they can rather participate in the pre-session or make a special request to participate in the children’s meeting as child participant.

Once a children’s delegation has been selected, it is important to support their visit to Geneva or their participation online. Preparation and training should include:

- Enabling children to get to know other members of the delegation prior to travelling to Geneva or connecting online;
- Providing a briefing (and an itinerary for children to take away) about what will happen in Geneva / online, what to expect, and what their roles will be;
- Establishing whether children will be participating in the pre-session, a children’s meeting,

or both – and familiarising them with the likely set-up of each meeting;

- Ensuring children feel comfortable with the adults that will be accompanying them to Geneva or supporting them online, and that these adults are well briefed and trained;
- Providing training for children – for example, doing a roleplay so that they could feel comfortable speaking in front of the Committee members and talking to the screen if online, or a training in public speaking or media interviewing³⁹, to ensure they are prepared not only for meeting the Committee but also for any related activities at national level to promote their findings;
- Managing children’s expectations about what is likely to be achieved during the meeting itself;
- Ensuring parents and carers have consented to and are well informed about the activities children will be involved in while in Geneva or online, and are familiar with the adults accompanying children to Geneva;
- Having a child safeguarding policy in place, with well-defined procedures, roles and responsibilities.

See **Appendix 4** for a programme from a residential weekend preparing children to meet with the Committee in Geneva.



TIP: Children can find the whole process to be an intimidating experience – scheduling an extra day in Geneva to allow children to settle in, familiarise themselves with the city, recover from jetlag and prepare together for their meeting with the Committee can be useful and is advised.



TIP: The UN Committee only has access to English, French and Spanish interpretation during the pre-session, although translation into the other three UN languages (Arabic, Chinese and Russian) may be provided upon request. **Interpretation services are not provided** for the children’s meeting; interpretation must be provided by the accompanying adults from the children’s mother tongue into English.

³⁹ Organisations should follow existing guidance for interviewing children to ensure that the individual child and his/her peers and family are not put at risk. For more information about existing guidelines, contact Child Rights Connect.

Logistics and safety considerations for a children's delegation participation

The following will need to be considered when planning the logistics of your delegation's visit to Geneva or online:

ITEM	DETAILS	STATUS
Have you budgeted adequately for costs relating to the delegation visit or online participation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport, including transfer 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passports / visas 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost of travel to obtain passports / visas 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel and health insurance 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immunisation (if relevant) 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accommodation and a per diem for each child participant and accompanying adult 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If online, a safe and well-equipped space (including a stable device and Internet connection) and technical support 	
Have you anticipated additional costs that may be incurred as a result of the individual needs of delegation members such as?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language support 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A support worker for a participant with disabilities 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replacement wages for a working child (if appropriate) 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Toiletry kits or appropriate clothing (i.e. warm clothes) for children who do not possess these 	

ITEM	DETAILS	STATUS
<p>If delegation members and accompanying adults need to obtain passports or visas to travel to Geneva, have you factored in the time needed to obtain these?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Necessary parental/guardian authorisation and documents for all 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Request for invitation letter for visa from the OHCHR and/or Child Rights Connect 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time to submit request and collect visa 	
<p>Have you adequately informed and involved parents, carers and children themselves in decision-making and preparation?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consent to travel from parents or carers and children themselves for every delegation member (including if not needing a visa) 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Itinerary for parents and carers, along with emergency contact details 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ways to enable children to contact their parents or carers while in Geneva (phone, e-mail, collective/individual) 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identification and preparation of accompanying adults 	
<p>Do you have an appropriate child protection policy in place, and a risk assessment to cover the visit to Geneva?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advance information on protection policy to participants and their accompanying adults 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Written plan/guidance/contacts details to all delegations members for any issues that may arise 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adequate number of staff in the event of an emergency 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Psychological support planned for children if they have shared difficult or sensitive issues with the Committee 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff training to deal with these issues 	

ITEM	DETAILS	STATUS
Are you aware of all relevant support needs of delegation members and how to meet these needs during the delegation visit?	• Linguistic	
	• Dietary	
	• Religious	
	• Health	
	• Related requests made to Child Rights Connect/CRC Secretariat (i.e. access to building for wheel-chair, prayer space)	
Have you pre-arranged accommodation and meals for the delegation?	• Accommodation (in shared or single rooms in agreement with participants' wishes and parents/carers' agreement?)	
	• Breakfasts, lunches, snacks, dinners	



TIP: If an online participation, budget and safety should not be underestimated as children may have to travel in-country and technical difficulties have to be prevented with adequate equipment. It is possible to make a request to national UNICEF offices, UN agencies or international organisation to host the meeting and provide a safe and well-equipped space.

Child Rights Connect provides a Handbook for all organisations travelling to Geneva to participate in meetings with the Committee containing practical information about transport, accommodation, and the local area. It is a useful basis for preparing materials to advise children on what to expect in Geneva, including details on the climate, the currency, and the standard of living. You should consider translating and/or adapting it to your specific children's delegation.

The role of the accompanying adults

Children who travel to participate in a pre-session or a children's meeting must be accompanied by a chaperone, i.e. an accompanying adult responsible for them during the whole travel.

Being a chaperone is a twofold responsibility:

1. The chaperone has to ensure that children are safe, cared and protected in compliance with the child protection policy of the organisation of the chaperone during the whole duration of the trip;
2. The chaperone has to create an enabling environment for the children by addressing all barriers to their participation.

Chaperones should be prepared and supported by their respective organisations, and should be selected based on their experience and skills to facilitate the children's participation effectively, as well as their relationship with the child(ren) concerned. It is crucial that the child(ren) are empowered to be part of this selection process and have a say in who is selected.

Here are some tips and guidance to help chaperones in the process of preparation:

- ✓ Fully read and understand the Committee's working methods on child participation;
- ✓ Discuss with the children about your role, this experience, their objectives and expectations;
- ✓ Undertake a risk assessment of the whole experience – including logistical arrangements – well in advance and as early as possible, to prevent or minimise risks (see our Template Risk Assessment and Check List for Logistics);
- ✓ Manage children's expectations: explain what the Committee can and cannot do, in particular, remind them that the Committee cannot directly improve their lives or the lives of their families and friends and that their participation can only influence the general recommendations the Committee will make to the State;
- ✓ Explain the principle of confidentiality to the children and what it means in practice.

Briefings

A few weeks before the pre-session and children's meeting, Child Rights Connect invites all the pre-session participants and children's delegations to join preparatory calls. Two calls are organised per country reviewed: one with the adults and children (if they wish), one with the children and their accompanying adults. The aims are to present the main stages and steps of both meetings, to provide information about the Committee, OHCHR and the logistics, as well as to respond to any questions or doubts about children's participation in the meetings. This is also an opportunity for everyone to get to know the other participants and to start coordinating.

Prior to the pre-session and children's meetings, Child Rights Connect also organises separate briefings for organisations and children, which children should attend: the aim is to familiarise children with the UN buildings, go over rules and regulations, and give children the opportunity to raise any questions or concerns. This is an opportunity to "break the ice" before meeting with the Committee.

The children's meeting

Children's meetings are usually solely in-person or online (via videoconference or teleconference) but in some instances, are a combination of the two (in-person and remote participation).

The children's meeting usually lasts one hour and is scheduled immediately before the pre-session. The Committee members acting as Country Rapporteurs or Task Force for the State party examination (see details on the role of the Rapporteur in next section) will be present. Other Committee members might also attend. The meeting is intended to be much less formal than the pre-session, and Committee members will sit together with children rather than in the more formal seating arrangement used for the pre-session.

The meeting is an opportunity for children to share their views and those of children from their country. During the private meeting with the Committee, accompanying adults should not be present in the room unless children decide to have them present (to help them feel at ease) or if needed for specific needs. Chaperones should keep in mind that children are the key players in the children's meeting and if they participate, they should not speak unless providing interpretation or if the children ask for explanations. While doing this, chaperones should not give their own opinions or try to influence those of the children. It is essential to explain to the children the methodology and the format of the meeting beforehand, so that children can take an informed decision on the presence of accompanying adults, but children may also change their mind prior to the meetings. A representative of Child Rights Connect will be present in order to help facilitate and monitor the meeting together with a Human Rights Officer from

the OHCHR. Child Rights Connect will take notes for our own internal report but will not be participating in the dialogue or doing the interpretation.

Children decide if they want to deliver a statement, give a presentation on their main priorities, issues of concern and recommendations or to directly receive questions from the Committee. Committee members will ask children one question at a time, rather than posing a series of questions. After an hour, the Committee will close the meeting.



TIP: Any type of presentation (videos, PowerPoint, ...) can be arranged and shown in the meeting room or online. Please, inform Child Rights Connect if children plan to do such a presentation and contacts will be made with the CRC Secretariat to explore the feasibility of using such devices.

When children who participated in a meeting with the Committee were asked about their experiences, almost all said they felt they had been listened to and that the Committee had wanted to hear what they had to say. It is important to prepare children for the limited time they will have with the Committee so that they do not have unrealistic expectations of the meeting.

Children should be encouraged to see the meeting as an opportunity to highlight their major concerns and talk about what they want to see in the concluding observations; organisations should remind children that the Committee will also take their submission into account when formulating its concluding observations.

After the meeting, each participant to the children's meeting will receive a questionnaire on their participation, where they can share what they like or dislike about the meeting, in order to help the Committee to improve its Working Methods and future meetings with children. Answers to the survey are voluntary and can be submitted anonymously; they can be filled on paper or online.

More detail on the children's meeting can be found in Child Rights Connect's *Handbook for Children Participating in the Pre-Session*⁴⁰.

⁴⁰ https://www.childrightsconnect.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/crcreporting_ps_handbook_children_en.pdf

The pre-session

The pre-session is a 2.5 hour technical meeting where all 18 Committee members meet with selected children's rights defenders. It is a unique opportunity for children's rights defenders to confidentially share their information and concerns before the Committee's dialogue with the State – the session. It is not especially child friendly. It is usually a small meeting due to its format and confidential nature. Generally, no more than twelve participants attend the pre-session, in addition to Committee and CRC Secretariat members.

Participants usually include national, and sometimes international, NGOs, UNICEF or other UN agencies, Ombudspersons and NHRIs that have submitted reports. Observing or participating in the pre-session can give children a better understanding of the CRC reporting process and the way in which the Committee formulates its concluding observations – leading to more meaningful engagement. When determining the composition of delegations for the pre-session, organisations should not neglect to consider the expertise of child-led organisations, especially where issues such as child labour or the involvement of children in armed conflict are being discussed.

Following a short introduction by the Chair, participants will be asked to give short oral statement outlining their main issues of concern and updates and new developments since the submission of the report. Committee members will then ask series of questions based on the presentations and their reading of the State party, NGOs, UN agencies and other reports. The participants will be given a short break to decide how to answer the questions. Discussions between the Committee and participants continue for the duration of the meeting. More detail on the procedures in the pre-session can be found in Child Rights Connect's *Handbook for Adults Participating in the Pre-Session*⁴¹. Children may also speak during the presentation time and provide answers to the Committee's questions, if they wish. The chaperone's role is to help the children understand the discussions and participate if they wish to do so.

⁴¹ www.childrightsconnect.org/publications/

CASE STUDY



Children's meeting: an opportunity for children to meet with their peers, State of Palestine, 2019

Defence for Children International Palestine (DCIP) and SOS Children's Villages Palestine (SOS Palestine) took forward child participation processes resulting in the support of three children to participate together in a children's meeting in Geneva, as part of the initial CRC review of the State of Palestine.

DCIP facilitated child-led consultations for different groups of children from several areas in the West Bank and the Gaza strip. A total of 90 children discussed different clusters of rights relevant to their lives, guided by the following questions: What issues do you face when practicing your rights? What could be improved for you to fully enjoy such rights? Do these rights apply to all children? Children's views and opinions were then incorporated into the main alternative report submitted by DCIP and partner organisations.

Among the children consulted, six children from the DCIP protection units were pre-selected during the workshops to attend the children's meeting with the Committee. The nominations were based on their living areas, gender, backgrounds, understanding of children's rights and capacity to represent their peers. After interviews, a girl and a boy from marginalized areas were selected as the two child representatives. As part of DCIP protection units, they were already familiar with child rights and the situation of children rights in Palestine and were supported to reflect the life of children in Palestine and to formulate recommendation to improve this situation.

On its side, SOS Palestine organised two focus group discussions with 7 children from among the members of its children's council, some being also part of its child protection team. A child safeguarding focal point and a communications officer facilitated the discussions through different trainings and exercises. The children's views informed the alternative report submitted to the Committee. Before the final copy was submitted, children gathered and discussed the final most important inputs to include within the report.

A 16-year-old girl who contributed to the discussions had been nominated by the SOS Palestine children's council to represent children in the meeting with the Committee. Prior to the meeting, the child representative had several preparatory meetings

with the SOS Palestine team and the children who participated in the focus group discussions to select the key issues to present and prepare her presentation.

The two children supported by DCIP and the child supported by SOS Palestine travelled to Geneva where they met and coordinated prior to their meeting with the Committee. Following the children's meeting, they also attended the pre-session. The three children described both meetings as empowering experiences.

Back home, DCIP and SOS Palestine organised a session with the DCIP protection units, of which the members of the SOS Palestine children's council are also part. The three child representatives reported back to their peers.

During their periodic meetings, the members of the SOS children's council received feedback from their representative, who also organised a student gathering in front of her school in order to advocate for children's rights.

The children's meeting and pre-session created a great opportunity for different groups of children supported by two organisations to engage together in the Committee's meetings, to meet with their peers and to learn about the lives and experiences of other child human rights defenders.

**Defence for Children International
Palestine and SOS Children's Villages Palestine**

CASE STUDY



Participating in the children's meeting via videoconference, Somalia, 2019

For the initial review of Somalia, the national coalition led by Save the Children Somalia collected data through fifty focus group discussions, building on existing frameworks and launching a broader consultation process with child rights organisations. 25 children from the following groups were consulted: children in and out of school, child rights clubs, children from pastoralist communities, working children, children with disabilities, girls, children from internally displaced families, orphan children, children in street situations, children from minority groups, separated children.

5 children (3 girls, 2 boys) were selected by their peers from child rights clubs and child rights champions to present the children's findings in the meeting with the Committee. The 5 child representatives were given trainings on child rights, communication and confidence building through storytelling.

The original plan was for children to travel to Geneva to have a face-to-face meeting with the Committee. However, securing the necessary approvals from the authorities took longer than expected and the passports and visas of the children and their accompanying adults could not be proceeded on time. The possibility to participate online through videoconference was therefore a good opportunity for the children to still engage with the Committee.

In terms of technicalities, finding a space with videoconferencing facilities and a reliable internet connection was challenging. Save the Children Somalia worked with partners to find a space with the necessary equipment, but also safe and comfortable for the children. Children were shown the venue in advance and were supported by an IT team to interact with the technology. A professional interpreter was hired to allow children to comfortably communicate in their own language. In addition to the children's guardians, child safeguarding focal points ensured that children were safe throughout the online participation and movement process.

After the meeting, a face-to-face session was organised with the children to debrief on their participation. The session was also used to answer any questions the children might had. Back in their clubs, children shared their experience with their peers.

This was the first time for the children to engage in such high-level conversations with the Committee and they really appreciated the chance to share their views and present their own issues. Children requested to have more similar conversations with policy makers at national and regional level. Since then, they have had meetings with senior officials from the government on children's issues.

Participating in the reporting process has been an empowering experience and learning opportunity for them.

Save the Children Somalia

The session

A country session is a dialogue between the State party and the Committee. It extends over one day (two meetings of three hours each) and that of a report under an Optional Protocol extends over half a day (one three-hour meeting). The governmental delegation is invited to make a short opening statement, followed by a series of questions posed by Committee members. The questions and comments of the Committee may be based on information received from civil society organisations and children.

The session is public and although organisations and children do not have a right to speak, children should be supported to follow and monitor the State party examination, either in person or remotely, to obtain a comprehensive picture of the dialogue with the government. However, children might find it hard to follow an entire session of three hours, or simply get bored. The accompanying adults should anticipate breaks when the children can discreetly go out of the meeting room and debrief or undertake other activities.

The session is also webcasted live and archived in English and when available, in another language relevant to the country, on the UN Web TV: webtv.un.org/meetings-events/.

The session webcast is a very good advocacy tool to monitor the dialogue between the Committee and the State and make it visible at national level through dissemination and activities with children.

In order to make observation more meaningful, it is also important to plan for individual or collective tasks (e.g. note down references to issues addressed in the children's report, share

live comments on social media, select quotes from the government delegates to be used afterwards in the media or in other follow-up activities, draw in the session using comic strips or illustrations, etc.).

The Committee does not meet formally with organisations or children during the session. While in Geneva, it may also be possible to meet with Committee members informally before and during the session to present additional information, provide updates or suggest possible questions.

It is also possible to communicate with Child Rights Connect online during the dialogue to send live comments that Child Rights Connect can try to convey to the Committee's members on your behalf. Child Rights Connect follows every session and prepares summaries of the sessions⁴², but this does not compare to "being there" and official summary records are often not available in all languages until months after the discussion.

CASE STUDY



Supporting children to engage in the session through the webcast, Moldova, 2017⁴³

The Child Rights Information Center (CRIC) coordinated with a group of 6 interested children and the NGO Alliance to follow the session of Moldova through the live webcast on the UN Web TV and to organise related activities. Children's expectations and concerns were clarified prior to the event.

On the first day, children opted to follow the session in their own group with an adult facilitator. On the second day, they followed the session together with civil society and other stakeholders: 10 NGO representatives, 1 representative of the Ombudsman Office and 6 journalists took part in this event. Children set the rules of discussion during the event - for example, they could freely discuss while watching the session. This was important because they had many questions including in relation to the context of the topics raised or the laws and policies discussed. A lot of explanations and additional information were provided by adults to help children understand the technical language of the session.

Children sent their live comments and questions to the Committee members by emailing Child Rights Connect staff, who is always present in the session room.

⁴² The summaries are available as country reports on www.childrightsconnect.org/crc-sessions-and-webcasting/

⁴³ www.childrightsconnect.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/CASE-STUDY_Moldova_SessionWebcast_2019.pdf

Some children were interviewed by journalists, after conducting a risks assessment and developing mitigation strategies for engaging with the media.

After the session, CRIC supported the children to review the process and to analyse if/how their recommendations were taken up by the Committee and reflected in the Concluding Observations. Feedback was shared with the wider national monitoring group of children during a workshop to raise awareness of the main results of the session.

The webcast was an opportunity for the children to follow the session while being in a friendly environment. The lengthy session was made more dynamic and increased children's understanding of the whole CRC reporting process. Children reported being surprised and proud that the Committee took up some of the issues that they had prioritised and realised that they can influence such high-level discussions about their rights. In addition, the engagement with the media helped children raise public awareness about issues, concerns as well as solutions for implementation of their rights.

Child Rights Information Center

5. Children Sharing Their Perspectives Through a Committee Country Visit

For every State party examination, one or two members of the Committee are appointed as Country Rapporteurs, or three or four members as a Task Force. They will lead the Committee's questioning during the pre-session and session. However, as there is no appointed follow-up Rapporteur or Task Force, any Committee member can be invited for a country visit.

Many organisations decide to invite Committee members to visit their country in order to allow the Committee to hear directly from children about their lives and get familiar with the national context. The country visit allows the Committee to meet children in their own environment, understand the main issues affecting children and can provide more time for children to discuss their concerns in a child-friendly setting.

A country visit is an extremely useful tool that allows larger numbers of children, and children from more diverse backgrounds, to actively participate in the CRC reporting process. It is especially useful where organisations do not have the funding to bring a delegation to Geneva but wish to enable children to meet directly with Committee members.

Organising a Committee country visit

Country visits are often funded by organisations or UNICEF, as the Committee does not have any budget for this. Costs usually include flights, domestic travel, accommodation and possibly, a per diem for the invited Committee member. There are no hard and fast rules for arranging country visits, but organisations should take the following into consideration:

- Identify the right member to invite, taking into account the regional and thematic expertise. The language is also a strong criterion to be able to speak directly with the children. You should also check the date of the mandate of the Committee member⁴⁴ you wish to invite;
- Allow sufficient time to invite the Committee member (initially through the Secretariat of the Committee and with support from Child Rights Connect if needed) and plan an effective visit;
- Factor in time to obtain the appropriate visas required for the Committee member visit if required;

⁴⁴ www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CRC/Pages/Membership.aspx

- Approach stakeholders such as UNICEF, international NGOs, the children’s Ombudsperson for assistance with funding and organising the country visit;
- Appoint one person to liaise with the Committee member regarding the visit, particularly if multiple organisations are involved;
- Involve children in the programme for the Committee visit and empower children to participate in the planning, implementation and follow-up of the country visit;
- Ask the Committee member whether there is anything in particular he/she would like to see;
- Ensure variation in the programme of activities – examples include parliamentary events, meetings with children, discussions with NGOs about emerging and existing children’s rights violations, meeting government officials and visits to particular settings or institutions – such as children in alternative care, local towns, hospitals, schools and juvenile or detention centres as well as prisons;
- Consider which parts of the country the Committee will visit – it is unlikely that visits will extend for longer than two to four days;
- Identify opportunities to use the Committee visit to raise awareness of children’s rights with children, the State party, the media, the judiciary and the general public.

See **Appendix 5** for examples of itineraries for visits by a Committee member. For an example of an agenda of a high-level meeting between children, NGOs and the UN Rapporteur, please see **Appendix 6**.

Strategically planning a country visit

It is important to determine the most appropriate time for a country visit to take place. As an unwritten rule, the country visit can happen before the pre-session or after the session, but not in between. This depends on the outcome the children want to influence most. If the children wish to influence the concluding observations, the country visit should occur **before the pre-session**, and meetings should be organised with children and non-governmental representatives only, to avoid influencing the Committee’s views during the examination. However, if the children want to predominantly influence the follow-up to and implementation of the recommendations, the country visit should be scheduled **after the country session**. Meetings with children, NGOs, NHRIs, Ombudsperson and government are encouraged to create opportunities for joint follow-up and ensuring all stakeholders take ownership of the concluding observations.

In some country contexts, inviting the Committee can be negatively perceived or even entail risks such as reprisals. You should assess such risks and consider whether authorities should be informed or asked for their official consent, so as to secure the legitimacy of the visit and, most importantly, the safety of children talking to the Committee.

These country visits may also be official and in response to an invitation issued by the State party.

Organisations and children that have taken part in or supported country visits have told Child Rights Connect that these visits had a significant impact not only on the content of the concluding observations, but also on the levels of awareness of children's rights among government officials and children in their country.

CASE STUDY



A follow-up visit, Guatemala, 2018

In 2017, the organisation CODENAJ (Coordinator for the Rights of Children, Adolescents and Youth) led a child participation process and presented their first report to the Committee which included the views of 405 children. Two representatives of CODENAJ participated in the pre-session and attended the session.

Nine months after the country session, two members of the Committee were invited to make a 4-day visit to Guatemala, organised together by Red Niña Niño and the coalition CIPRODENI (Institutional Coordinator for the Promotion of Children's Rights).

The main purpose of the follow-up visit was to publicise the Concluding Observations and to disseminate the 54 recommendations as a guide for both the Government and the civil society on the actions to implement at national level, in order to guarantee the fulfilment of the rights of all children. As the visit happened a few weeks after the Committee held in Geneva its Day of General Discussion (DGD) on protecting and empowering child human rights defenders, where two adolescents participated as delegates of CODENAJ, it was also an opportunity to build upon the unique momentum and mobilisation created by the DGD.

There was a dialogue between the Committee members and active members of CODENAJ from various regions of the country and from various organisations that

work with children. 18 children shared the difficulties of being a child in their country and their different communities. In their own words, they shared the challenges they face every day and how their rights are vulnerated, such as not being able to go to school or not having their voices heard in their communities, and that the State ignores and does not comply with the Committee's recommendations. The members of CODENAJ were very happy of their direct exchange with the Committee members and that they were interested in learning about the context of Guatemalan childhood. The Committee members acknowledged being impressed by the experiences shared by the children, particularly when facing challenges such as marginalisation and violence against children.

The Committee members also held public forums and private meetings with civil society organisations, UNICEF, representatives of the government (including from the Public Ministry and the Congress) and local authorities. In addition, a visit was organised to a centre for women deprived of liberty living with their children.

The country visit allowed the Committee members to experience the reality of children's rights in Guatemala and provided a unique opportunity to hear directly from children their views and experiences within their living environments. On the last day of the visit, the Committee members took part in a press conference where they shared their main conclusions and the six urgent issues they had identified for the government to address.

Red Niña Niño and CIPRODENI

6. Child Reporting Outcomes and Continued Empowerment

Concluding observations

The concluding observations lay out the Committee's conclusions and recommendations following a State party examination. They take into account the reports and meetings with the State, children, NGOs, UN agencies, Ombudspersons and NHRIs. Concluding observations set out the achievements of the State party in implementing the CRC, the Committee's concerns in relation to existing or potential children's rights violations, and the action the Committee requires the State party to take to remedy the situation or to further promote and protect children's rights. Since 2016, the Committee issues a new type of Concluding Observations which identifies up to 6 issues that require "urgent measures". The concluding observations are sent to the State party by the Secretariat of the Committee and are published on the OHCHR website⁴⁵.

Experience shows that many organisations that have supported children to engage in the CRC reporting process and the children themselves feel that **children's voices and experiences have been reflected in the Committee's concluding observations**.

It is important that organisations advocate for States to make the concluding observations available to children in a form and language accessible to them **as soon as possible** after their publication. This is often an activity that organisations will take forward. Disseminating the concluding observations to children is crucial to ensure they are able to fully engage in the entire reporting process. Children may need support to identify where their input has had a direct or indirect influence on the recommendations.

Many organisations have supported children to play a lead role in the dissemination of the concluding observations. Different methods of dissemination can include:

- Creating a children's version of the concluding observations;
- Translating the concluding observations into national languages, including indigenous or minority languages;
- Sending the concluding observations to all children that have participated in the reporting process, and to the organisations and adults that have supported them to do so;

⁴⁵ https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/SessionsList.aspx?Treaty=CRC

- Creating blogs, podcasts, online content and films to tell children about the concluding observations;
- Organising events to share the concluding observations with children and debate the action that should be taken. It is often useful to include the State party in this, helping it to fulfil its obligations to disseminate the concluding observations to children;
- Working with children to decide how to monitor the progress of the State party in implementing the concluding observations;
- Using the media – and children’s platforms – to raise awareness and debate children’s rights issues;
- Encouraging member organisations to send out information about the concluding observations to the children they work with.

CASE STUDY



Producing an outcome report for children on their participation, Hungary, 2020

In 2018, the ‘How do you see it?’ campaign led by the Hintonalovon Child Rights Foundation supported 5,300 children aged 10 to 17 to engage in an online survey and focus group discussions, in order to express their views on growing up in Hungary. The selection of six Child Rights Ambassadors to involve in the campaign from its planning to its evaluation began in June 2018. The three-round application process started with the completion of a creative online application, followed by a personal interview and a three-day day camp which helped the Hintonalovon Foundation as well as the children to understand the project and better outline the tasks. Applicants’ anonymous feedbacks were considered when deciding about the composition of the group of Child Rights Ambassadors.

The program was voluntary and every Child Rights Ambassador had the opportunity to choose a task of his/her own interest. Some of them wrote articles about why it was important to participate in the reporting process, while others made videos, memes, posters, and other campaign materials to promote the questionnaire to collect children’s views or to produce information for children.

Further to the realisation of the campaign and the submission of the first children's report, the Child Rights Ambassadors presented the findings to the Government Ministry of Human Resources and initiated a discussion about the State report. Following their meeting, two children were invited to the government's official consultation forum, a thematic working group on the rights of the child. The child representatives also gave media interviews, conference talks and presented their report to the Committee during the pre-session and children's meeting.

As it is important for children to receive feedback on the outcome of their participation in reporting to the Committee, the *Hintalovon Foundation* produced a child-friendly publication in Hungarian. The Child Rights Ambassadors were consulted on the draft. The online document summarises what children's rights are, what the children's consultations and the report revealed, as well as what the Committee recommended to the government, including in comparison with the recommendations posed in the children's report. The dissemination of the Committee's recommendations was also supported by quizzes, infographics and educational materials.

A series of articles on the child participation process and results in CRC reporting and on relevant children's rights was launched on a dedicated website for 10-18-year-old.

The development and implementation of the "How do you see it?" campaign were guided by the Committee's nine child participation principles. A specific child safeguarding policy and procedure, a risk analysis and a complaints mechanism were developed. In addition, continuous support and training on child rights, media representation, communication, debate, computer skills, team building and cooperation for the children was ensured by a team of 4 adults. The campaign enabled children to be listened to and showed them that their voice matters.

Hintalovon Child Rights Foundation

Follow-up work and ongoing monitoring

Even if the Committee does not currently have a formal follow-up procedure, the publication of the concluding observations does not and should not signal the end of the CRC reporting process for children, as well as for civil society organisations and the State party. Harnessing children's enthusiasm for reporting and campaigning on children's rights – and engaging them in children's rights ongoing monitoring – will help to ensure children's aspirations for and expectations of the CRC reporting process are met. It will help children to achieve change for children's rights and have a real impact on law, policy and practice at national and local levels.

Some other Treaty Bodies do have such a follow-up procedure in place which can inspire all interested actors to monitor the State's implementation of the Committee's recommendations and contribute to their follow-up with the OHCHR National Mechanisms for Reporting and Follow-up⁴⁶.

Beyond CRC reporting and monitoring, it is important to support children to learn about the broader human rights framework and to identify any other reporting opportunities and entry points. Children may want to mainstream children's rights in the UN human rights system and further implementation at the local or national level, or to strengthen their advocacy on a particular issue. This could be done by reporting to other human rights Committees⁴⁷ such as the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, or others, and to consider other mechanisms, such as the Universal Periodic Review (UPR). As explained in the dedicated chapter on Protecting and empowering child human rights defenders, children may want to take action to promote and defend the rights of others, so should receive the global picture of the UN human rights system.

At the regional level, children can also find Regional human rights mechanisms⁴⁸.



TIP: Check our UPR fact sheet⁴⁹ and our child-friendly UPR guide⁵⁰.

⁴⁶ www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/HR_PUB_16_1_NMRF_PracticalGuide.pdf

⁴⁷ Human Rights Treaty Bodies: www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/Pages/HumanRightsBodies.aspx

⁴⁸ www.ohchr.org/EN/Countries/NHRI/Pages/Links.aspx

⁴⁹ www.childrightsconnect.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/en_factsheet-4.pdf

⁵⁰ www.childrightsconnect.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/upr-proyecto-final-english.pdf

The range of work that organisations can engage children in following the publication of the concluding observations is only limited by creativity (and funding!). The following list is by no means exhaustive but is intended to provide ideas from which organisations can begin to plan sustained work to support children’s self advocacy and involvement in human rights monitoring:

- Campaigning on specific children’s rights issues raised by the concluding observations
- Promoting children’s rights through the media
- Raising awareness of children’s rights with government officials, practitioners and other adults working with children
- Supporting children to share information about children’s rights and human rights monitoring with their peers, including online
- Planning for the next periodic reporting process based on lessons learned
- Working directly with the State party to address the concluding observations
- Securing parliamentary debates, inquiries and questions
- Holding national events for children to discuss children’s rights issues
- Delivering children’s rights outreach sessions in schools, youth clubs, children in alternative care and other institutions to raise awareness
- Establishing a group to enable permanent, child-led monitoring of CRC compliance, using indicators developed by children
- Supporting the use of concluding observations in litigation, including by raising judicial awareness of the text and status of the concluding observations
- Ensure transfer and sharing of inter-generational experiences and skills – children grow out of their roles and often lose the opportunity for continuous engagement as young adults



TIP: The follow-up process is key to changing the children’s rights situation in your country and to continuing to empower children to act as human rights defenders. It is important to ensure that there are adequate human and financial resources for follow-up processes, and that they include all interested children.

Useful documents, websites, and contacts

Committee on the Rights of the Child

- Website: www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CRC/Pages/CRCIndex.aspx
- Webpage for children: www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CRC/Pages/InformationForChildren.aspx

Child Rights Connect Website

- Our website: www.childrightsconnect.org
- Our website on CRC reporting: crcreporting.childrightsconnect.org
- Our website on OPIC: opic.childrightsconnect.org

Child Rights Connect Publications

- Our Guide for NGOs and NHRIs Reporting to the Committee on the Rights of the Child: www.childrightsconnect.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/EN_GuidetoCRCReportingCycleChildRightsConnect_2014.pdf
- Our guide for children My Pocket Guide to CRC Reporting: https://www.childrightsconnect.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/en_guidetocrcreportingcycle_childrightsconnect_2014.pdf
- The child-friendly Convention on the Rights of the Child by UNICEF and Child Rights Connect: <https://weshare.unicef.org/CS.aspx?VP3=SearchResult&STID=2AMZIFJJXAUY> and its Guide for Adapting the Child-Friendly Example of the Convention on the Rights of the Child with and for Children in your Context, Queens University Belfast Centre for Children's Rights: www.childrightsconnect.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/cf_crc_translation_guide_final.pdf
- Our Implementation Guide on The Rights of Child Human Rights Defenders: www.childrightsconnect.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/final-implementation-guide-the-rights-of-child-human-rights-defenders-forweb.pdf
- All our publications for children: www.childrightsconnect.org/publications-for-children/
- Find all our resources and publications: www.childrightsconnect.org/publications

For any questions, contact Child Rights Connect at crcreporting@childrightsconnect.org or call 0041 22 552 41 30.

Appendices

Appendix 1

Example of ethical considerations

Hintalovon Foundation, Hungary,
“How do you see it?” campaign, 2019

Principle	How do we ensure it?
Transparency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of information materials which take into account the characteristics of the target groups, e.g. age. • Introducing the process, purpose, and significance of the report and the rights of the participants. • Presentation of the ways and circumstances of participation, definition of responsibilities. • Providing extensive access, online campaign for the circulation of knowledge. • Creating a separate campaign page, democratizing campaign materials. • Specific addressing and information for groups dealing with children. • Voluntary agreement with children supported by an organization with parental consent. • Outlining guidelines for supporting adults. • Professional guidance for supporting adults.
Voluntary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation and the way it is done is based on the free decision of the child. • Provide adequate amount of child-friendly information and time to decide whether to participate in the questionnaire or the campaign. • Questionnaire completion can be interrupted and there are no mandatory questions. • The participation of children joining the campaign may be suspended and their activities are voluntary. • Professional guidance for supporting adults.

Principle	How do we ensure it?
Respectful	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children’s opinion are fully accepted at every stage of their participation and of the reporting. • A special report on the experiences of children is being prepared for the Commission. • The campaign encourages and supports children’s own initiatives. • The materials for children and the tone of the questionnaire are acceptable, respectful, encouraging. • In cooperation with children, the atmosphere is acceptable, democratic. • The campaign respects the special needs of children. • Professional guidance for supporting adults.
Relevant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The role of children in the campaign is based on their abilities, experiences and knowledge. • The questions fit into the experiences of the children, the topics are trying to cover the whole spectrum of their daily lives. • The report is not self-serving, materials prepared during the campaign and the report support the enforcement of children’s rights and the work of students, adults and professional organizations.
Child-friendly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing adequate amount of time for the children to express their opinions and participate in the campaign. • The campaign is available on interfaces that are comfortable and accessible to children. • Communicating in an understandable but not infantile way to get the attention of the children. • The language, length, and form of the information material is child-friendly. • The report that is being prepared is comprehensible, relevant and useful for children. • The physical environment is child-friendly. • Support materials facilitating child participation and campaign materials can be freely used. • Professional guidance for supporting adults. • The questionnaire was developed in collaboration with the children.

Principle	How do we ensure it?
Inclusive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in the campaign is open to any child or group of children. • Full democratization of campaign materials is guaranteed. • Special measures to involve marginalized children (parallel methodologies, targeted inquiries). • Targeted involvement and support of adults (parents, professional organizations, institutions) in the case of children who are more difficult to reach because of their age and background. • Elaborate specific aspects of the campaign and report representation together with the children. • Efforts to reach children directly. • Lack of prejudice when considering the views of children. • Based on professional cooperation and involving organizations from the beginning. • Wide range of activities to encourage collaborations. • Professional guidance for supporting adults.
Supported by trainings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting the participation of children with child-friendly and targeted materials. • Providing adequate time and space for the personal preparation of children in the campaign. • Strengthening children's skills. • Supporting adult helpers with support materials and regular information. • Supporting relevant organizations, providing regular meetings. Providing support to affiliated organizations to develop child participation policies. • Professional guidance for supporting adults.

Principle	How do we ensure it?
Safe and sensitive to risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing children and adults with information on child participation policies. • Building a complaint mechanism. • Preliminary risk analysis taking into account the characteristics of the socio-political environment. • Including children’s experiences into a separate report from NGOs. • Voluntary agreement with children supported by an organization with parental consent. • Participation in the survey is anonymous, respondents cannot be traced back based on their opinion. • Focus group discussions are conducted by trained professionals from the professional organizations involved in the campaign. • Focus group professionals have a duty of confidentiality; no one can identify the focus group’s experience based on their opinion. • Professional guidance for supporting adults.
Accountable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular meetings and communication with the professional organizations involved in the campaign. • Regular monitoring and evaluation of results and with children. • Professional foundation, making background description accessible. • Make the report based on the survey available to everyone. • Continuous communication on campaign materials and achievements on the official site of the campaign. • Encourage feedback from children, adult helpers, and affiliated organizations. • Informing children about the results of the opinion poll, the Geneva hearing and the outcome of the reporting. • Supporting children in the follow-up procedure of the Final Comments.

Appendix 2

Example of children's rights survey: Online questionnaire

Hintalovon Foundation, Hungary,

“How do you see it?” campaign, 2019

Hello! The United Nations' aim is to get to know the experiences and opinions of children regarding education, schools and local, domestic and online issues. By filling in this survey you contribute to stakeholders paying close attention to matters important to children.

1. I fill in the survey
2. The surveys are collected.
3. The results are delivered to the UN.
4. The UN asks Hungary.
5. They propose recommendations for improvement.

While completing the survey, it is important to acknowledge:

- The survey takes about 10-15 minutes
- You are completely anonymous. We have no chance of finding out who you are or trace your answers back to you.
- There are no right or wrong answers! The important thing is that you give your opinion.
- You can skip any question you would rather not answer.

For safety reasons please declare: (tick the box)

- I understand the aim of the survey.
- I consent to my answer being gathered together with others' in a public report and delivered to the UN.
- I have read the privacy policy.

Thanks!

How old are you?

- 9 years old or younger
- 10-14 years old
- 15-17 years old
- 18 years old or older

School and safety**What do you think about your school? (Choose a maximum of 4!)**

- I learn a lot of useful things
- In my school it is always fun to learn
- I like the teachers and they respect me
- It's a happy place, where I can have fun and make friends
- Much from what I learn is useless
- Learning things is often exhausting and a gloomy journey
- I feel teachers don't respect me
- There is a lot of bullying. Some children are left out.
- I don't go to school.

How safe do you feel?

	Not at all	Not too safe	I feel more safe	Completely safe
At home				
At school				
In your city or town				
On the Internet				

My school has: (Check all of the ones you know are there!)

- check-in gate
- security camera
- security guard
- school police officer
- crime prevention advisor
- child protection representative

- school psychologist
- special education teacher
- school doctor
- school nurse
- student union
- other support personnel or organisation
- I don't go to school.

**What do you think would make your school safer?
(Choose a maximum of 3!)**

- More and better security, such as cameras at the school gate
- More adult professionals I can turn to with my problems
- Making sure no one is treated badly because of being different
- Making sure no one can use or buy drugs or alcohol in or around the school
- Stop bullying
- More effective student union
- Better school building and grounds
- My school is already a safe place
- I don't know

**One of your classmates is often bullied. Somebody picks on him or her during a break and their argument turns into a fight when the teacher steps in. If something like this happens what are the usual consequences?
(Choose a maximum of 3!)**

- They try to solve the problem together
- The parents are informed or disciplinary action is taken
- The teachers make him or her write a test, give a bad mark or change the study material
- Something is taken away from them or they are excluded from something (e.g. they cannot go on the school trip)
- They get scolded
- They get punished physically (they receive corporal punishment)
- The teachers don't care much about it
- I don't know

What happens if you break the rules of the school? Write an example of what would happen at your school:

Information

Do you talk about the following things with adults in your family? (Check all of the ones you talk about!)

- What to do if someone bullies or hurts you
- Online safety
- Sex and sexual education
- Drugs, alcohol
- Your rights
- Your obligations
- We don't talk about these.

Do you talk about the following things with adults in your school? (Check all of the ones you talk about!)

- What to do if someone bullies or hurts you
- Online safety
- Sex and sexual education
- Drugs, alcohol
- Your rights
- Your obligations
- We don't talk about these.

Do you feel adults listen to you and your opinion when making decisions?

	Always	Most often	Sometimes	Never
In my family				
In my school				
In my city/town				

Is it important for you to be up-to-date on the latest news and information?

- Yes, I always keep up with the news, I am up-to-date
- Yes, but there are a lot of things I don't understand
- Yes, but I'm not completely sure where to search for information
- No, because when I tried to search for information I didn't understand much of it
- No, I don't really care

In recent years, lots of students stood up for education reform online or by participating in protests. What is your opinion about this? What good or bad experiences do you have about expressing your opinion?

Free time

Do you do activities like sports, music or theatre outside school hours/in your free time?

- Yes
- No, it is too expensive
- No, I don't have time for it
- No, because there's nothing around where I live
- No, because there's everything in my school
- No, I don't really care.
- No, because of other reasons.

Family

How much time do you spend with your family?

- I am content with the time I spend with family.
- I would like to spend more time with my family, but I can't because they work too much
- I would like to spend more time with my family, but I can't because we no longer live together

- I spend too much time with my family. I would like to spend more time doing other things.
- None of the above.

You are late from home. What happens? (Choose a maximum of 3!)

- I get scolded, but I know that if I admit it, I can make it right.
- I get shouted at, humiliated or they don't even talk to me.
- They take something away from me (e.g. I can't play on the computer or get grounded)
- I get smacked or hit.
- They don't make a scene, they understand it happens sometimes.
- They don't care if I'm back in time or not.
- We don't discuss at what time I should be home

Health

What are your experiences from your last visit to the doctor? (For example, think about your last visit to the general practitioner, school dentist, nurse, gynaecology or emergency department)

- I received proper treatment
- I wasn't satisfied with the treatment
- There was no treatment available.

Have you ever sought help for personal, mental problems or questions regarding drugs, alcohol or addiction?

- Yes, and I received proper treatment
- Yes, but I wasn't satisfied with the treatment
- No, I'm not affected.
- No, I was ashamed.
- No, I knew what to do.
- No, there was no treatment or help available.

Do you have a specific good or bad experience from a visit to the doctor's?

Opportunities

Tick in the box if your class has:

- a disabled kid
- a gypsy/ Roma kid
- a kid from a different country
- a Hungarian kid from a different country
- a refugee kid

Have you ever felt that someone doesn't accept you or treat you unfairly because of a specific quality you have? (Check all the appropriate ones)

- Your family
- Your teachers
- Other kids
- Outside of school (e.g. in the shop, at the doctor's etc.)
- I have never felt like that

Do you feel you have to work harder than other kids to achieve your dreams?

- Yes
- No

What would help you to have the same chances? (Choose a maximum of 2!)

- If I had a more accepting environment
- If I had someone who paid more attention to me
- If my family had better opportunities
- If I had easier access to services
- I would need something else

In recent years, refugees have been a hot topic. What do you think about them?

Future

**What is your biggest concern or fear regarding your future?
(Choose a maximum of 3!)**

- Climate change
- That I won't find a job
- That I won't have a house
- That a lot of foreign people will move into the country I live in
- That too many of my friends and relatives will move abroad
- That there will be too much violence where I live
- War or a terrorist attack
- That my family won't be around to help me
- That there will be too many people consuming drugs/alcohol in my environment
- I don't worry about my future

How could Hungary help you to improve your life and future opportunities?

- By taking steps towards the preservation of peace
- The introduction of environmental measures
- Good quality education and job opportunities
- Further state, municipal and social aid and support.
- By providing further opportunities for children and young adults to influence decisions about the future of the country.
- If everyone was treated equally.

Other Experiences

Has anything else come to your mind? You can tell us here!

Who am I?

Boy or girl?

- boy
- girl
- if none of the above apply to you or you use a different word, please write the word you use to describe your sex:

Where do you live?

- Capital
- Regional capital city
- City
- Town

Which region do you live in? (choose from the list) ...

What kind of school do you go to?

- primary school
- apprentice training school
- vocational school
- secondary grammar school
- I don't go to school

Which applies to you? If multiple ones are applicable, please check all of them! (Don't forget: your answers are anonymous, you cannot be identified, but if you wish you may skip any question.)

- I am a private student
- I live with foster parents
- I live in a children's home
- I am raised by a family member other than my parents.
- I have been adopted
- I have a disability
- I am an LMBTQI
- I am an ethnicity. (e.g. gypsy, German, Romanian, Slovakian, Slovenian etc.)
- I am a dual citizen
- I came as a refugee
- None of these are applicable to me

Appendix 3

Template risk assessment – children’s rights research project

This template is an example of a risk assessment taken forward for CRC reporting and will need to be adapted and added to in order to reflect the particular situation and needs of children involved in the research and the different methodologies and approaches used.

The Child Rights Connect’s Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedure also includes a draft risk assessment framework: <https://www.childrightsconnect.org/organisation/#policies>

Risk	Action Taken to Minimise Risk	Action Taken if Risk Occurs
Children do not feel safe at the venue	On arrival, staff will familiarise all children with the venue, point out key areas and let them know who else is using the venue.	Staff always on hand to deal with any concerns. Child participants approaching staff with anxieties should be taken aside, and the problems discussed and resolved.
Child researchers arrive unprepared	Briefing papers will be sent to child researchers and they will be invited to discuss any questions or concerns with support staff prior to the interview. Researchers have received training and are aware of their role and the materials that will be used in the research with participants. A support worker will meet researchers prior to every interview to run a short briefing and ensure they are confident in explaining the research and leading the discussion. The support worker will also be present during the interview to support the researcher.	If, after discussion, a child researcher does not feel confident about explaining the research brief to participants, the supporter worker will introduce the research and support the child researcher to ask questions during the interview, encouraging them to take the lead wherever possible.

Risk	Action Taken to Minimise Risk	Action Taken if Risk Occurs
An interviewee turns up to the interview without a signed consent form	Consent forms will be sent prior to the research taking place.	Verbal consent will be requested from participants prior to the interview and they will be reminded that they can leave at any point, and are not required to answer questions they feel uncomfortable with. The use of pseudonyms will be explained.
Child participants are not clear about the purpose or aims of the research	Clear information and consent forms are sent to children prior to their participation. The researcher will introduce the research at the start of the interview, clearly explaining the aims and what will happen with the research.	Child participants will be encouraged to ask questions at any point; the aims of the research will be reiterated as necessary. They will be reminded that their views will be anonymous, and that their participation is voluntary – they do not have to answer any questions they do not feel comfortable with, and may stop the interview at any time.
Children become distressed at questions asked or answered during the interview	<p>A copy of the interview questions will be sent to the organiser prior to the interview. The researcher will contact the host organisation in advance to ask if any issues have arisen that the researchers need to be aware of.</p> <p>Participants will be reminded they can leave the room at any point during the discussion and that they do not have to answer any questions they do not want to. Researchers will be briefed about the sensitivity of the interview and asked to be supportive of any answers given by participants.</p>	<p>If a child becomes distressed they shall be given the option of leaving the room and an adult should accompany the child. Issues should be followed up in accordance with the organisation's child protection policy.</p> <p>If a child researcher becomes distressed during the interview, the above will apply. An additional child researcher will be on hand to continue the interview if appropriate.</p>

Risk	Action Taken to Minimise Risk	Action Taken if Risk Occurs
<p>Information is disclosed during an interview which raises serious child protection issues</p>	<p>The researchers are aware of techniques to discourage children from disclosing personal information, and have been briefed on procedures to follow in the event of a disclosure. It has been made clear to researchers and participants that the intention of the research is not to encourage such disclosures.</p> <p>Appropriate adults to support children will be available as required. The organisation's child protection policy will govern how issues that have been disclosed are dealt with and followed up.</p>	<p>Should a disclosure be made in a focus group, the researcher should sensitively halt the discussion of that particular issue and, if necessary, remove the child from the session (accompanied by an appropriate staff member). Disclosures should subsequently be dealt with</p> <p>in line with the organisation's child protection policy, and respect the child's confidentiality.</p>
<p>Children allege that they have been abused or mistreated during the meeting</p>	<p>All staff have appropriate child protection checks and will work in line with the organisation's child protection policy.</p>	<p>If an allegation is made during an interview, the on-call manager should be contacted immediately. The adult concerned should have no further contact with the child concerned.</p> <p>The procedures in the organisation's child protection policy should be followed, keeping the child informed at each stage and respecting their confidentiality.</p>

Appendix 4

Programme from a weekend residential to prepare the children's delegation to the Committee on the Rights of the Child

Children's Rights Alliance for England

Delegation residential programme

SATURDAY	
13.00	Lunch
13.45	Welcome, ground rules and games
14.00	The role of the delegation, and aims and expectations
14.45	Children's human rights and the CRC
15.30	Break
15.45	The CRC reporting process
16.15	Progress on the Get ready project and achievements so far
16.30	The children's rights investigation – understanding the methods and being able to explain them to others
16.45	Break
17.00	Preparing for going to Geneva part 1: Key research findings
18.40	Roles on delegation
19.00	Dinner
SUNDAY	
09.00	Games
09.30	Recap of Saturday – any questions?
09.45	What happened in 2002 (the last UK examination)
10.45	Going to Geneva – what to expect?
11.30	Preparing for going to Geneva part 2: Role plays and answering questions
13.00	Lunch
13.45	Preparing for going to Geneva part 3: Media training
15.00	Roles on the delegation
15.30	Next steps – rapporteur visit and the government examination
15.45	Things to do before June 2008
16.00	Finish

Appendix 5

Example itineraries for a visit by the rapporteur from the Committee on the Rights of the Child

1. Visit of the Committee on the Rights of the Child to Guatemala

Agenda

12 to 16 November 2018

Sunday 11 November

Arrival in Guatemala City, transfer to the Hotel
Coordination dinner, CIPRODENI – Red Niña Niño



Monday 12 November

8:30 to 12:30 - Hotel Hilton Garden

Red Niña Niño Assembly

Presentation Analysis of the situation of children in Guatemala

Follow-up mechanisms to the Concluding Observations and Recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child to the State of Guatemala

Participation: Open to CSOs, Red Niña Niño, CIPRODENI and guests



12:30 to 14:30 - Hotel Hilton Garden

Forum: Association La Alianza

Participation: Guests

14:30 to 17:00- Hotel Hilton Garden

United Nations system

Follow-up of the United Nations System to the Concluding Observations and Recommendations of the CRC Committee to Guatemala.

UNICEF Resident Representative

Participation: Representatives of United Nations Agencies in Guatemala

17:00 to 19:30 - Hotel Hilton Garden

Public Forum: Compensation and Worthy Reparation. IEPADES - UNICEF

Participation: General public

Tuesday 13 November

7:00 to 8:30 - Hotel Hilton Garden

Breakfast

- Mr. Jordán Rodas Andrade, Human Rights Ombudsperson
- Ms. Claudia Masselli, Human Rights Deputy Ombudsperson
- Mr. Oscar Rodríguez, Child Rights Defender

Participation: Authorities of the Institution of the Human Rights Ombudsperson

8:30 to 12:00 - Hotel Hilton Garden

Meeting with Government Representatives of Guatemala

Follow-up to the State commitments before the CRC Concluding Observations and Recommendations

Participation: Representatives of the invited Public Institutions

12:30 to 14:30

Meeting with the Prosecutor against femicide

UNICEF - IEPADES

Participation: Private meeting

14:30 to 17:00 - Hotel Hilton Garden

Thematic Bilateral Dialogues

Participation: Representatives of the State's Ministries and Secretaries

Wednesday 14 November

7:00 to 8:30 - Hotel Hilton Garden

Breakfast

Commission for Minors and the Family, Congress of the Republic

- Mr. Walter Félix, President
- Ms. Sandra Morán, Deputy
- Mr. Eduardo de Matta
- Ms. Beatriz Estrada, Advisor

Participation: Child and Family Commission

8:30 to 12:30 - PRODESSA

Working meeting

Children representatives of the Coordinadora de Niñez, Adolescencia y Juventud – CODENAJ

Participation: Children representatives of CODENAJ, ODISOJ, Levantemos Guatemala, Kamalb´e e IEPADES.

12:30 to 15:00 - Hotel Hilton Garden

Seminar: Children's rights with family members deprived of liberty

Association Colectivo Artesanas

Participation: Guests

15:00

Departure to the city of Quetzaltenango

Thursday 15 November

7:00 to 8:30 - Pensión Bonifaz, Quetzaltenango

Press conference

Participation: Media Representatives

**8:30 to 12:30 - Pensión Bonifaz, Quetzaltenango
Centro Ecu­mé­ni­co de In­te­gración Pastoral – CEIPA**

Working meeting

Local authorities, child representatives from civil society organisations

Participation: Guests

12:30 to 13:30

Visit to the Center of Women deprived of Liberty, Quetzaltenango

Association Colectivo Artesanas

Participation: Guests

14:30

Departure to Guatemala City

Friday 16 November

7:00 to 8:30 - Hotel Hilton Garden

Meeting: Follow-up mechanisms

Participation: Follow-up Commission Red Niña Niño, CIPRODENI, UNICEF, IEPADES

9:00 to 11:00 - Hotel Panamerican

Press conference

- Preliminary conclusions of the non-official visit of the Committee
- Public presentation of the CRC Concluding Observations and Recommendations to the State of Guatemala

Participation: Media, Red Niña Niño, CIPRODENI

12:00 to 12:30 - Plaza Mayor de la Constitución

Homage to the memory of the adolescents who died in Hogar Virgen de la Asunción.

Laying of wreaths of flowers, altar.

Participation: Media, Red Niña Niño, CIPRODENI

Saturday 17 November

End of the non-official visit of the Committee

2. Programme for Country Rapporteur visit to Scotland, 2 and 3 September 2015 (after the session)

Read the report of the visit: www.cypcs.org.uk/ufiles/UN-Taskforce-Visit-report.pdf

Visit by Ms. Amal Aldoseri,
Vice Chairperson for the UN Committee on the Rights of
the Child, to Scotland



Agenda

Wednesday 2 September

07:00 – Collection from the Edinburgh Airport by Jaime Dunlop and Gareth Brown

07:30 – Arrival at the hotel and free time

11:00 – Brunch and welcome at the Scottish Youth Parliament Offices

11:30 – Leave to travel to Falkland

12:30 – Visit with the Children’s Parliament

13:30 – Leave to travel to Cowdenbeath

14:00 – Visit with Gingerbread

14:50 – Leave to travel to Methil

15:30 – Visit with Kirkland High School and Community College

16:30 – Leave to travel to Kirkcaldy

17:00 – Visit with Hub 8

18:00 – Return to Edinburgh

19:00 – Free time

20:00 – Dinner with Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament (TBC)

Thursday 3 September

09:00 – Meet at the Scottish Youth Parliament Offices for Tea and Coffee

09:30 – GLOW meet session with school pupils at the SYP Offices

10:10 – Walk to Scottish Storytelling Centre for Welcome Event

10:30 – Welcome event at Scottish Storytelling Centre (See below)

11:40 – Travel to Waverley Train Station

- 12:00** – Travel to Glasgow
- 13:15** – Glasgow City Mission
- 14:15** – Travel to Child Clan Law and Who Cares Scotland? Offices
- 14:30** – Visit with clan childlaw
- 15:00** – Visit with Who Cares Scotland?
- 15:30** – Travel to discussion group on the criminal justice system
- 16:00** – Discussion with young people facilitated by the Centre for Youth and Criminal Justice
- 17:00** – Travel to visit with roshni
- 17:30** – Visit with roshni
- 18:30** – Travel to Glasgow Airport
- 20:35** – Leave Scotland

Welcome Event Agenda

Scottish Storytelling Centre, Edinburgh 10:00-11:30am

Thursday 3 September 2015

- 10:00-10:30** – Tea and coffee
- 10:30-10:35** – Welcome from Jordan Linden MSYP – Chair of SYP
- 10:35-10:40** – Ms. Amal Aldoseri – Vice-Chairperson of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child
- 10:40-10:50** – Welcome from Aileen Campbell MSP – Minister for Children and Young People
- 10:50-11:00** – Presentation by Article 12
- 11:00-11:10** – Presentation by SCCYP, Together and SHRC
- 11:10-11:15** – Concluding remarks – Liam McArthur MSP
- 11:15** – Close from Jordan Linden MSYP

Appendix 6

Agenda for a high-level meeting between children, NGOs and the Country Rapporteur

Children's Rights Alliance for England

UK Committee on the Rights of the Child
UK examination, 2008
Country Rapporteur visit to England



Breakfast meeting with Professor Lucy Smith

Sunday 7 September 2008, 9–12.30 pm

The Library, The Chesterfield Mayfair Hotel, 35 Charles Street, Mayfair, London,
W1J 5EB

In attendance: senior representatives from 11 MILLION (office of Children's Commissioner for England), Equality and Human Rights Commission, The Children's Society, CRAE Secretariat, NSPCC, Save the Children UK and UK National Committee for UNICEF

- 8.45 am** Arrival, coffee and pastries
- 9.00 am** Welcome and purpose of event
Short presentations and discussions
- **Children's position in society**
Abdul Munie, Get ready for Geneva Lauren Harrison, Get ready for Geneva
 - **Juvenile justice**
Chris Callender, Assistant Director (Legal), Howard League for Penal Reform
Tim Bateman, Senior Policy Development Officer, Nacro
 - **Asylum and Immigration**
Nadine Finch, Barrister, Garden Court Chambers
Lisa Nandy, Chair of Refugee Children's Consortium
- 10.30 am** Refreshments

- 10.40 am** Short presentations and discussions
- **Children’s access to justice**
 - Fiona Burrough, in-house Counsel and Policy Co-ordinator, Just for Kids Law
 - James Kenrick, Advice Services Development Manager, Youth Access
 - **Children’s right to privacy**
 - Terri Dowty, Director of Action on Rights for Children
 - Dr Eileen Munro, Reader in Social Policy, London School of Economics
 - **Child poverty and inequality**
 - Paul Dornan, Head of Policy and Research, Child Poverty Action Group
 - Jason Strelitz, Child Poverty Adviser, Save the Children UK
- 12.10 pm** General discussion
- 12.30 pm** END



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