

EXTERNAL EVALUATION OF CHILD RIGHTS CONNECT'S ACTIVITIES IN 2019-2022

Conducted in April/July 2022 by a consultancy firm (RightsHouse) as part of the grant agreement with the Swedish International Development and Cooperation Agency (Sida), and focusing on all programmatic Strategic Priorities of Child Rights Connect (CRCnct), against the six OECD DAC evaluation criteria.

METHODOLOGY



- Desk review
- Interviews with key informants (+50)
- Focus group discussions with children (+10)
- Survey of members and observers
- Direct activity observation

KEY FINDINGS

Relevance

"CRCnct's strategic priorities remain highly relevant"

"The membership particularly underscores the importance of Strategic Priority 1 on the recognition, protection and empowerment of Child Human Rights Defenders (CHRDs) and Strategic Priority 2 on engagement with the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC Committee). CRCnct has taken several important initiatives to strengthen participation and engagement of the membership. However, there may be opportunities to further strengthen the membership's sense of ownership over the strategic priorities. There is a firm consensus, recognised also within the Secretariat, that CRCnct should further strengthen its membership in the Global South and better engage smaller organisations".

Coherence

"Without CRCnct's presence, the global civil society's advocacy and influence on children's rights and child rights mainstreaming would be hampered"

"CRCnct's programme activities are complementary to other interventions in the child rights sector at the international level. CRCnct plays a unique role in representing and creating space for the global child rights-focused civil society – including children – to participate in the UN human rights mechanisms. The production of relevant guidance and tools, including child-friendly versions, is another global added value which contributes to children's participation in the human rights field at both global and local levels".

Effectiveness

"Overall, CRCnct has made important progress towards the attainment of its four outcomes"

"Outcome 1 on the rights of CHRDs, including through child participation at all levels, has been achieved to a *high extent*, especially at the regional and international levels. Outcome 2 on empowering children's rights defenders to engage with the CRC Committee is also largely attained" but could be strengthened through "an increased focus on the follow up of the Committee's recommendations". In relation to Outcome 3 on strengthened accountability for child rights across the UN system, "important milestones have been reached when it comes to child rights mainstreaming within the UN system". Under Outcome 4 on promoting the OPIC, CRCnct has "contributed to increased attention to and knowledge about the protocol across multiple actors". However, the ratification process is slow and CRCnct's capacity to influence States is limited. "CRCnct may nevertheless contribute in bringing increased attention to the issues of child access to justice more generally".

Efficiency

"Overall, CRCnct has managed to implement its activities in a timely and economic manner"

The absence of detailed budgets and financial reports means, however, that "a more detailed efficiency analysis considering costs for specific outputs has not been possible". In the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, "deviations (...)" have been limited. The organisation has shown that it has the ability to adapt its operations to changes in the external context, and this ability is underpinned by a strong learning culture at the Secretariat. Amongst the members, there is a high degree of satisfaction with the staff team's performance."

Impact

"It is clear that [CRCnct] has managed to influence institutional systems and practices of actors of central importance from a child rights perspective"

"While it is difficult to identify to what extent and how CRCnct has contributed to improve the rights of children around the globe, i.e., to impact level changes, it is clear that it has managed to influence institutional systems and practices of actors of central importance from a child rights perspective, in particular at the global level. Most significantly, perhaps, it has **increased the acceptance of child participation** within the UN system at the same time as it has contributed to **set an example that can have broader impact at both the global and local levels**".

Sustainability

"The results attained under outcome 1, 2 and 3 concern changes in attitudes and practices that are likely to be of a lasting nature."

"If OPIC ratification advances, this result is also characterised by a high degree of sustainability. However, ratification is largely outside CRCnct's control and the value and sustainability of any results made towards advancing ratification are uncertain".

Child participation in focus



"The establishment of the Children's Advisory Team serves as a role model for other organisations"

"Children's participation facilitated by CRCnct is of high quality and in compliance with child safeguarding principles". Making child participation an integral part of both its organisation and programme "has led to positive outcomes". Individually, "engagement with CRCnct has strengthened children's skills, confidence and networks" and "prepared them to continue to pursue child rights initiatives and engage as a CHRD". At an institutional level, this has "contributed to changed attitudes and practices within the UN human rights mechanisms".

Gender & diversity

In this area, "CRCnct's practices are less well developed although the organisation has made visible progress in the past year". "The development of a gender and diversity mainstreaming guideline (in the pipeline) is positive". There is recognition that "a strategic and proactive approach to membership can help ensure that the voices of the most marginalised groups of children are being heard".

Enabling factors

- Positive recent organisational developments
- Professional & committed staff
- Democratic organisational structure
- Broad, global and diverse membership
- Ability to coordinate the voices of members and other CSOs
- Constructive relationships with key actors (incl. CRC Committee)

RECOMMENDATIONS

01 Funding and Finances

- Strengthen and diversify the funding base
- Produce more detailed budgets & financial reports

02 Membership

Continue to strengthen members' sense of ownership over the organisation's strategic priorities and work

03 Results framework

Reformulate Strategic Priorities to clearly identify the target groups and tie them to the Theory of Change, include a reference to child rights mainstreaming, and consistently communicate on Strategic Priorities

04 Gender and diversity

Invest in developing and implementing gender and diversity sensitive strategies in all areas of the organisation and work (programming, reporting, members' engagement, etc.)

05 Follow up to UN recommendations

Subject to resources, consider how to support members' follow-up to CRC Committee recommendations

06 Working Groups

Strengthen cooperation *between* Working Groups

07 Child participation

- Produce and share child-friendly information about the working groups
- Invite children to participate in the working groups
- Ensure early and inclusive child participation
- Strengthen the capacity of children to play a role in considering the views of other children