

Annual Report 2013



About Us

We were initially set up in 1983 as the *Ad Hoc NGO Group for the drafting of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child* to influence the drafting of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the first and most comprehensive international human rights treaty for children. Since then, we have worked for three decades to connect the UN human rights systems to the daily realities of children's lives.

We have grown into one of the largest child rights networks in the world with members at international, regional and national levels, committed to ensuring that all children fully enjoy their rights as defined by the CRC. Our Secretariat, based in Geneva, Switzerland, is considered a leading expert on the promotion of child rights at the international level, particularly in the work of the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

Child Rights Connect continues to play a central role in key child rights developments at the international level, including the drafting of UN treaties on child rights. We work closely with national NGOs and coalitions, UN agencies and experts and States, and children themselves to advance child rights around the world.

Child Rights Connect holds special ECOSOC consultative status at the United Nations.



Strategic priorities for 2010–2014

- Enhance the effective engagement of NGOs and other relevant partners in the CRC reporting process and other activities of the Committee on the Rights of the Child.
- Mainstream child rights in relevant activities of other United Nations human rights mechanisms and procedures.
- Promote the realisation of child rights at national level through the effective implementation of the recommendations and other outputs of the Committee and other relevant international human rights mechanisms.
- Pursue and support international advocacy on priority child rights issues through coordinated action with members and partners.

Vision

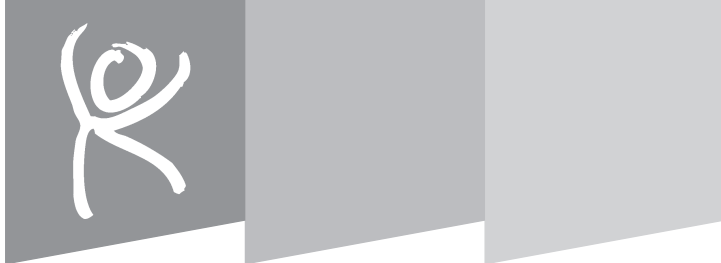
Child Rights Connect envisions a world in which children's rights, as defined by the Convention on the Rights of the Child, are universally recognised and realised.

Mission

Child Rights Connect's Mission is to facilitate the promotion, implementation and monitoring of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Cover image: Two girls ride on a bike in Palu, Central Sulawesi, Indonesia.

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Foreword



On the 30th Anniversary of Child Rights Connect (formerly NGO Group for the CRC), it behoves advocates, practitioners and monitors of children's rights to congratulate this focal organisation, which has helped to make the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) a sustained reality in children's lives. Child Rights Connect works with the UN to monitor the Committee on the Rights of the Child in a dynamic partnership to pursue the implementation of the Convention and report on progress.

Child Rights Connect, based in Geneva, has played an essential role as a professional liaison between the Committee and NGOs on the ground at country and regional levels. They have assisted NGOs both to make inputs into periodic State party reports and also to prepare their own alternative reports.

“From my nearly seven years of experience on the Committee, we cannot underestimate the immense contribution that Child Rights Connect has made to the fuller reporting and assessment of the progress achieved in the realisation of child rights in all regions.”

The work of Child Rights Connect has evolved over the years and their relationship with the Committee has also become more substantive. There is increased professionalism in the organisation, which is backed by strong experts from the NGOs that constitute the Child Rights Connect network. This has enabled them to contribute effectively to the expanding work of the Committee in developing General Comments (17 to date) and organising Days of General Discussion on critical child rights issues. Child Rights Connect has also improved their sup-

port to the implementation of the Committee's recommendations and other outputs; however, there is still room to further strengthen this important contribution in terms of depth and geographical coverage.

The dialogue and feedback provided through periodic meetings with the Child Rights Connect Executive Committee and relevant staff have been invaluable to the Committee. They have effectively enhanced the engagement of national NGOs and children in the Committee's pre-session working group meetings. Their guidance and logistical support for such engagement and participation have ameliorated what could otherwise be daunting encounters for NGO participants in the Committee's conference room in distant Geneva. The webcasting of the sessions of the Committee is yet another valuable service that has made the Committee's monitoring work less remote and more accessible.

The realisation of children's rights must be an ongoing process, especially for the millions of children left behind and disadvantaged in inequitable socioeconomic development. Child Rights Connect has maintained a solid advocacy profile through campaigns for the ratifications of the three Optional Protocols to the CRC and engagement in broader human rights platforms including the Human Rights Council. With the Council's Universal Periodic Review process gaining wide interest from States parties, the network has taken advantage to make significant advocacy contributions through briefings and background documentation.

It is my conviction that sustained realisation of children's rights cannot be achieved without the dedication of civil society groups and NGOs and Child Rights Connect has proved this over the past 30 years. They have helped to strategically connect the centre of the treaty body system with stakeholders at the periphery and bring the realities of the periphery to the centre. I wish therefore to personally congratulate Child Rights Connect and encourage them to continue with renewed dedication and professionalism to keep all stakeholders honest to the cause and moral obligation of child rights everywhere.

Agnes Akosua Aidoo, PhD

Member of CRC Committee (2007–2013)

Former Committee Vice-Chairperson
and Rapporteur

Introduction



Dear colleagues and friends of Child Rights Connect,

It is a great pleasure to share with you some reflections and to celebrate a very busy and successful year for Child Rights Connect, formerly the NGO Group for the CRC. To say

that 2013 was a highly significant year for Child Rights Connect feels, in fact, like something of an understatement.

Of particular importance this year was the agreement to change our name to Child Rights Connect and, in doing so, better represent the activities that take our reach beyond the scope of the CRC, for example at the Human Rights Council. It was felt that the new identity as Child Rights Connect would be an important opportunity to recognise this broader scope of work and to raise the visibility and profile of the network. Of course this process also led to the launch of the new Child Rights Connect website and the development of our identity on social media – making our message more accessible to our members and partners and encouraging cooperation.

This year also marked the celebration of the 30th Anniversary of the establishment of the network and those celebrations were very much linked to raising awareness about our evolved identity. In Geneva, in collaboration with the Human Rights Film Festival, we hosted a screening and 30th anniversary reception around a Costa Rican film “Gestación” which told an empowering story of young people as advocates for their own rights. The 30th Anniversary was also marked by our first ever on-line campaign, engaging members and partners on the ratification of the child rights treaties attracting signatures from almost 140 countries.

Celebrations and change of identity aside, this year has also seen the opening of a process to build on our successes through the new strategic plan to take us forward for 2015–2019. Throughout the year, planning meetings/retreats with Secretariat and ExCo Members took place to ensure that the future plan nurtures continuing growth of our capacities and activities, especially with the new OP3 and work within the broader UN human rights system, as well as the promotion of ethical and meaningful child participation.

On the question of OP3, it has been very exciting

throughout 2013 to watch the ratification campaign move towards the next significant milestone and entry into force! In 2013 a total of 7 States ratified – Albania, Bolivia, Germany, Montenegro, Portugal, Slovakia and Spain.

Child Rights Connect worked to ensure that the voices of children are heard in the development of accessible justice processes intended to help them. We conducted a survey with children to gather their input on how complaints could be collected and how the Committee could communicate with them. The OP3 advocacy work goes on through continuing efforts to press for further, hopefully universal, ratification of this vital treaty which opens up the opportunity for children to pursue a complaint with the Committee.

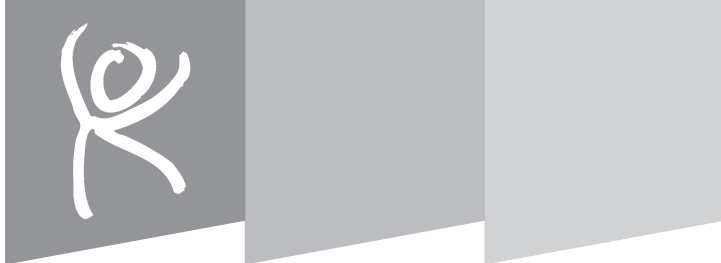
Whilst 2013 has been a significant year of reflection and change, our core work in supporting the work of the CRC continues. Following the elections of new CRC members we supported the orientation of the largest turnover in CRC membership in more than a decade. In particular we hosted a retreat with members on the issues around, and practicalities of, effective child participation in the work of the Committee. Additionally, we remain entirely committed to promoting effective follow-up on the Concluding Observations of the CRC and continue to gather case studies on follow-up to inform about best practices from countries all over the world.

In the midst of all of these achievements we have welcomed a variety of new faces and personalities to the Child Rights Connect team. In particular we welcomed Ilaria Paolazzi as the new Child Rights Officer and worked with Sabrina Frutig as an Advocacy Assistant. Covering for our Director Lisa Myers’ maternity leave in 2013 we benefitted from the commitment and expertise of Roisin Fegan, who took on the Interim Director role during Lisa’s absence. We also welcome and warmly congratulate Lisa Myers on the birth of her daughter, Lara Amélie Sarah, and Anita Goh on the birth of her son, Gary-Lok, in 2013.

As this will be my final year after six years serving on the ExCo, I wanted to take this opportunity to extend my sincere gratitude to all the colleagues on the ExCo, past and present, and especially to thank all the staff and the interns of Child Rights Connect for their excellent work over those years, for 2013 in particular, and to wish everybody all the very best for a successful 2014 and beyond!

Alan Kikuchi-White

Child Rights Connect President



2013: 30 years as a global voice for child rights

In 1983, we started as a loosely coordinated group of 20 NGOs seeking to influence the drafting of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which became the *Ad Hoc Group for the drafting of the Convention on the Rights of the Child*, working towards a comprehensive United Nations (UN) treaty on child rights. Once the CRC was adopted, our founding members recognised the increased impact we could have by coordinating our work for strategic advocacy. Shortly after, we officially became the *NGO Group for the CRC* and built on our initial successes, continuing to collaborate to ensure that the CRC makes a real difference to the lives of children throughout the world.

Over 30 years, we have grown into one of the world's largest child rights networks. In addition to our international Secretariat based in Geneva, we now have 80 members and countless partners across the globe, all continuing to work together towards our shared vision: ensuring that every child is able to fully enjoy the rights guaranteed in the CRC.

To kick off our 30th anniversary year of celebration, the Child Rights Connect Secretariat organised a panel and reflection with our members about our history and continuing role at the 2013 General Assembly. We asked them what they saw as the most important role we've played over the past three decades. They responded overwhelmingly: it's our ability to bring organisations from all over the world together so that we can act and speak as a global voice for child rights.



Child Rights Connect members and staff reflect on contributions to the 30th Anniversary Gallery walk.

“ There have been a large number of major contributions of the NGO Group (now Child Rights Connect), among which uniting large numbers of NGOs in a global voice for children and providing expertise and coordination for jointly advancing children’s rights.”

TERRE DES HOMMES
INTERNATIONAL
FEDERATION

Terre des Hommes
International Federation

An evolving identity – from the NGO Group for the CRC to Child Rights Connect



During the past three decades, we have significantly expanded both our areas of work and our staff, aiming towards fulfilling

our mission of ensuring that every child fully enjoys his or her rights. Because of changes and developments, the name adopted with our original mandate, The NGO Group for the CRC, no longer captured the breadth of the work carried out by our Secretariat and members.

The Secretariat staff undertook the task of developing a new name that would accurately capture the organisation’s work: bringing together actors from national, regional and international levels to advance child rights through engagement with the UN human rights system. Through a collaborative process, involving feedback from internal and external partners, a new name was chosen: Child Rights Connect. After being accepted during our General Assembly meeting in March, the name was publicly launched in April throughout our entire global network.

As Child Rights Connect, the organisation now has a more dynamic identity that better matches the scope of activities and range of partners we work with. Undertaking this change during our 30th anniversary year was an opportune time to harness Child

Rights Connect’s past successes and the evolution of its work over time, in response to the demands of child rights advocacy at the international level. Looking ahead to opportunities for future growth, we are ready to meet those ever-changing demands by being connected to our members and partners, including children, as well as to the UN human rights system, for the advancement of child rights.

Using 30 years of momentum to increase our outreach

Moving Child Rights UP on national agendas

To mark our 30th anniversary, Child Rights Connect looked back to its roots and major achievements, most notably the successful influencing of the drafting of the CRC and its three Optional Protocols (OPs). These four treaties are the most important international legal documents for child rights. They set out a specific framework for protecting and promoting rights for every child, which is a first step to making rights a reality for children around the world. However, a significant challenge remains in that many people around the world are still not aware of the treaties or the rights that they guarantee. Violations of children’s rights are still happening every day and proper legal systems are not in place to ensure justice where they occur.

In October, Child Rights Connect launched the “UP Child Rights” campaign: Universally Promoting Child Rights. Our goal was to bring our members and partners together in a new way, to raise awareness about these core child right treaties. We created a petition, which served as a basis for



our awareness raising efforts. By signing the petition, people were calling on their governments to prioritise child rights in their national agendas by ratifying all four UN child rights treaties.

In addition to the petition, and to reach a broader audience, Child Rights Connect developed a full microsite for the “UP Child Rights” campaign, which served as a platform for sharing case studies about the impact of the four treaties and success stories from projects carried out by our members and partners. The site, www.upchildrights.org, exists in English, French and Spanish. Content is also available in Arabic and Turkish, made possible by collaboration with partner organisations.

During a one-month period from 21 October to 20 November, the Child Rights Connect Secretariat, as

“ I think that the way the NGO Group [now Child Rights Connect] worked with the drafting of the CRC and the Committee was the breakthrough in terms of child rights, but also in the organisation, the acceptance and legitimacy of the NGO role and the interaction with the Committee.”



RACHEL BRETT, REPRESENTATIVE FOR
HUMAN RIGHTS AND REFUGEES AT THE
QUAKER UNITED NATIONS OFFICE

Celebrating with our network and beyond in Geneva

As an organisation that is well known at the UN, Child Rights Connect was seeking to reach the broader public and seized its 30th anniversary as an opportunity to this end. To break out of the box, Child Rights Connect, in partnership with *Festival du Film et Forum International sur les Droits Humains* (FIFDH) hosted a cinematic evening on child rights.

At Maison Grütli in the town centre of Geneva, we screened *Gestación*, an award-winning Costa Rican film, based on a true story of two teenagers struggling with an unexpected pregnancy, strict traditional values and how to defend their rights. For this occasion, we were joined by the film's director, Esteban Ramirez, who travelled from Costa Rica to support us in the promotion of the important message of the film: that children are active agents in claiming their rights and that joint

action can – and does – result in the fulfilment of children's rights.

After the film, Child Rights Connect

President Alan Kikuchi-White hosted a lively discussion with the audience, who pitched engaging questions to Mr Ramirez, as well as Child Rights Connect Interim Director, Roisin Fegan. The event was attended by more than 100 people, including several network members and partners, as well as many new faces from around Geneva. Based on the feedback we received and the energetic buzz at the reception afterwards, audience members were animated by the message of the event and in addition were able to learn about the work of Child Rights Connect for the realisation of children's rights in a community setting.



Child Rights Connect Interim Director Roisin Fegan, Film Director Esteban Ramírez and Child Rights Connect President, Alan Kikuchi-White field questions from the audience after a film screening in celebration of the organisation's 30th anniversary.

well as members and partners, reached out to people around the world. In just one month, “UP Child Rights” messaging reached more than half of a million people from 138 countries in every region of the world, via the UP microsite, blogs, Facebook and Twitter. We had 1,700 signatures and active participation from over 3,000 people and 40 organisations in 10 different languages, calling on their governments to protect, respect and fulfil the rights of children through universal ratification of the CRC and all three of its OPs.

Though we have finished our ‘active-campaigning’ period, the website and petition remain open due to the level of response to this initiative. Individuals from around the world are still signing on to the petition and Child Rights Connect continues to share messages on advocacy for ratification and additions to the UP Child Rights blog.

Getting the message out: investing in better communications

One of the distinct strengths of Child Rights Connect is the breadth of knowledge that the network and the Secretariat have. In 2013, we directed our focus to new ways of ensuring that the information we have reaches our members and partners, as well as a broader audience, in an accessible, engaging and convenient way. In addition to our new Communications Officer, hired at the end of 2012, the Secretariat worked with two communications technology consultants to ensure we were growing our efforts in a relevant and sustainable manner. We conducted a communications survey among our key audiences to determine what sort of information is most useful to them and how they would like to receive it. From this, we better understood how to foster even stronger collaboration for advocacy on child rights, both among actors at the international level, and between those working at the international, regional and national levels. Furthermore, the results of the



The homepage of Child Rights Connect's redesigned website: www.childrightsconnect.org.

survey guided our development of a redesigned website, as well as the opening of our social media accounts, and helped to shape our new communications strategy.

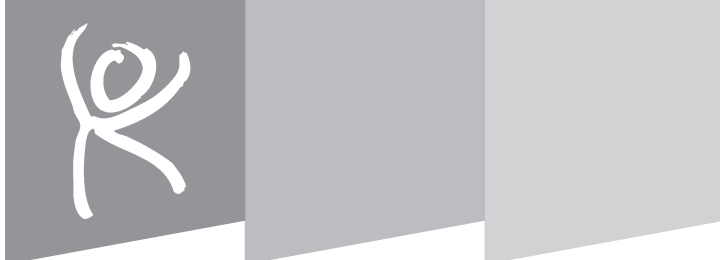
A fresh face for www.childrightsconnect.org

The new Child Rights Connect site was launched in September 2013, with updated content, integration with social media to keep users up to date and additional ways for members and partners to share news about their activities and successes. Employing best practices for usability and writing for the web, the site features in-depth information and publications on child rights, explaining how NGOs, as well as children and child-led organisations, can effectively engage with the UN human rights system for the advancement of child rights. Since many of the topics covered deal with complex UN processes, the entire site was developed with the aim to be accessible to non-professionals, as well as to children and child-led organisations. Additionally, a section has been added that is specifically geared to identify-

ing the specific ways in which children and child-led organisations can work with the UN regarding their rights. In consultation with members, as well as other partners, including children and child-led organisations, the website will continue to be strengthened to facilitate our strategic objective of rendering the UN human rights system more accessible for advocacy on children's rights.

Social Media

Using the UP! Child Rights campaign as a first foray to build a solid social media base, we have continued to manage and grow our presence on Facebook and Twitter. Within just four months, Child Rights Connect reached a following of more than 1,000 organisations and individuals on these platforms. Social media provides us with a way to quickly spread the word about new developments and opportunities for child rights organisations around the world. It also lets the Secretariat showcase the work of our membership and engage in conversations with partners and advocates all around the world.



Connecting national voices to the UN for better child rights systems

Child Rights Connect has led the way for considerable developments in child rights at international level, while also maintaining our essential role of building the capacity of national child rights actors. Child Rights Connect continues to be the link between these partners and the Committee. We make the reporting cycle more accessible to national, regional, and international child rights NGOs, children and child-led organisations and national human rights institutions (NHRIs) through on-going technical assistance, tailored training workshops and practical publications. This work ensures that national civil society actors are not only present at meetings with the Committee, but also that they are empowered to have a real impact on the process and ultimately influence the advancement of child rights in their respective countries.

Ensuring that Committee members know how we work to mobilise national, regional and international-level partners is one of our main priorities. Thanks to the reliable and relevant information received from these partners, the Committee is able to make more concrete and effective recommendations to States, to more fully guarantee the rights defined in the CRC and its Optional Protocols.

States reviewed in the pre-sessions and sessions

CRC 20 reports	OPAC 13 reports	OPSC 15 reports	Integrated (CRC) 8 reports
Armenia Congo Guinea Guinea Bissau Guyana Holy See India Indonesia Jordan Kuwait Malta Monaco Niue Portugal Russian Federation Rwanda Sao Tomé & Príncipe St. Lucia Tuvalu Uzbekistan	Burkina Faso China Holy See India Jordan Paraguay Portugal Russian Federation Rwanda Slovakia United States Uzbekistan Yemen	Armenia Burkina Faso Germany Holy See India Jordan Moldova Paraguay Philippines Portugal Rwanda Slovakia United Kingdom United States Uzbekistan	China Germany Israel Kyrgyzstan Lithuania Luxembourg Slovenia Yemen

In 2013, the Committee on the Rights of the Child reviewed 56 State Reports from 35 countries.

National civil society actors contextualise State reviews

In 2013, the Committee on the Rights of the Child reviewed 56 State reports from 35 countries during its pre-sessions and sessions. Child Rights Connect facilitated the transmission of 206 alternative reports to the Committee from NGOs in every State reviewed. This included 98 reports prepared by national NGOs, of which 24 were from coalitions representing vast networks of organisations. Many of the NGO reports were based on consultations with children and five reports were created exclusively by children.

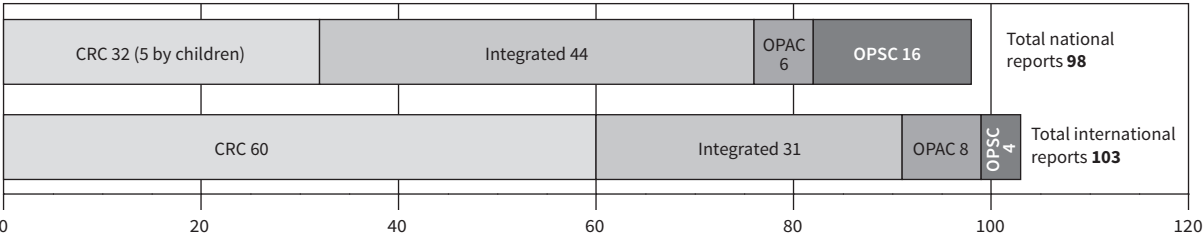
International NGOs continue to show a keen interest in the reporting cycle, reporting regularly on States under review. This year, the Committee received 103 reports from international NGOs. This was particularly significant for the reviews of China, Niue, Russian Federation, Tuvalu and Uzbekistan—where there may be less national civil society activity. Despite challenges for civil society cooperation and engagement with the UN human rights system for various reasons, national NGOs from these coun-

tries did make constructive submissions to the Committee. While Child Rights Connect is not responsible for writing the reports, we did successfully support NGOs from all countries to access, and meaningfully participate in, the monitoring and reporting process of the Committee.

Of particular interest to many civil society actors around the world this year was the pre-session of the Holy See. The Committee received important inputs on a range of issues from international NGOs, which enhanced its understanding of the legal system of the Holy See and thus how the CRC and its OPs should be implemented there in practice. The reports were an important resource for the Committee when it came to preparing its dialogue with the State and, ultimately, its recommendations.

Coming to Geneva to meet with the Committee is a significant occasion for NGOs to explain their reports in more detail and enhance the Committee’s understanding of the child rights situation in the country being reviewed. Furthermore, NGO representatives – and particularly those coming to Geneva for the first

Number of alternative reports transmitted by Child Rights Connect



Child Rights Connect facilitated the transmission of reports for 100% of the States reviewed in 2013.

Child Rights Connect technical, logistical and financial support

Child Rights Connect provided technical, logistical and financial support to NGO representatives to attend the sessions and/or pre-sessions in Geneva.

Number of representatives receiving technical and logistical support: 133 including 8 children

Number of NGO representatives receiving additional financial support: 44 NGO representatives

Countries where Child Rights Connect provided only logistical and technical support: Germany, Guyana, Holy See, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Niue, Portugal, Sao Tomé & Príncipe, Slovenia, Tuvalu, United Kingdom, United States

Countries where Child Rights Connect provided financial support as well as logistical and technical support: Armenia, Burkina Faso, China, Congo, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, India, Indonesia, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lithuania, Moldova, Paraguay, Philippines, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Slovakia, St. Lucia, Uzbekistan, Yemen

time – are empowered by the opportunity to conduct international advocacy. Child Rights Connect accompanies these national partners throughout the process, both at a distance and when in Geneva, to ensure that they are equipped with the right information and support so they can make the most of their meeting with the Committee. This year, we provided technical support to NGO representatives from all States under review. For the sessions and pre-sessions in Geneva, Child Rights Connect provided logistical support to 133 participants, including 8 children and 4 NHRI representatives. In addition, financial support for travel and accommodation was provided to 44 NGO representatives from Eastern Europe and the “global south.”

Keeping the Optional Protocols on the agenda

After a State’s initial review under the Optional Protocols (OPs) on the involvement of children in armed conflict (OPAC) and/or sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (OPSC), the following periodic reports on the OPs are integrated into the CRC State report. In the integrated reports, the OPs are often not given as much attention as during the initial ones. To ensure that the child rights issues related to the OPs remain a priority for States, NGOs must be empowered to monitor the OPs’ implementation and submit information about this to the Committee.

In our training workshops with child rights coalitions and individual NGO networks, we systematically address the OPs. Many coalitions first came together to begin reporting on the CRC and therefore do not always feel they have the capacity among their membership to adequately address OPSC and/or OPAC in their reports. The Committee does not have set instructions on how the OPs should be covered in the integrated alternative reports. Some NGOs and coalitions report separately on periodic reviews of one or both OPs, while others integrate them into the CRC alternative report. For example, this year, NGOs from Germany reported separately on the State’s integrated CRC and OPAC report, while those from Slovenia chose to address the CRC and both OPs in a cross-cutting manner in one combined report.

Our technical assistance and capacity building messages to NGOs focus on the provisions of the OPs, which are not as numerous as the CRC. Using our 2010 reporting guide as a reference, Child Rights Connect enhances NGOs’ understanding of what monitoring of the OPs in a holistic manner entails. Using tools such as mapping exercises to identify the NGOs working in their countries on issues related to OPAC and OPSC, coalitions take account of what resources



Committee on the Rights of the Child Chair and Members along with NGO representatives and children from Yemen during the pre-session.

and expertise they already have at their disposal and assess how they could expand or adapt their current membership to ensure the OPs are monitored and reported on. In turn, when Child Rights Connect is contacted by individual NGOs working on OPAC or OPSC issues, we put them in contact with the coalitions in their countries and encourage them to work together and submit a joint report. This year, that was the case for ECPAT UK and the Child Rights Alliance of England. Through cooperation in reporting, OPAC and OPSC-related discussions between the Committee and States under review are well informed of the national context and recommendations from the Committee set out concrete steps for ways forward to advance child rights at the national level.

Child Participation in the work of the Committee

The Child Rights Connect Secretariat is at the forefront of researching and promoting the ethical and meaningful participation of children and child-led organisations within the UN human rights system, particularly the Committee. Over the year, we provided support and expert advice to 8 children travelling to Geneva to meet with the Committee, from China, India, Indonesia and Yemen.

In June, Director Lisa Myers was invited to speak at Nottingham University’s Human Rights Law Centre Summer School on the Rights of the Child. The presentation focused on the advancement of child rights through engagement with the UN human rights system. Participants learned more about the work Child Rights Connect is doing to empower children and child-led organisations to submit their views to the Committee. This was a great opportunity for us to network with other professionals working in the field of child participation and to learn more about emerging research on ethical and meaningful con-

sultations with children so that their views can be taken into account in policy and law-development processes.

Continuing our work to promote positive child participation, we supported the Committee in the organisation and running of its full day retreat in September on the participation of children in its activities. The retreat created a forum for open debate and discussion on how the Committee feels it can best ensure that children's views are taken into account in the State review process. Based on the outcomes of the retreat, the Committee will adopt internal working methods and publicly available guidelines next year to ensure that children and child-led organisations seeking to engage with the Committee can find out how and when to do that. In turn, Child Rights Connect will be able to use these guidelines to further promote child participation in the work of the Committee and to support children, child-led organisations and adult chaperones to engage in a meaningful way in the reporting process of the Committee and link this engagement to their daily realities and advocacy in their countries.

Transmitting the CRC sessions around the world through webcasting

After a very successful pilot year in 2012, Child Rights Connect continued to webcast the Committee sessions. Through these webcasts, we reach a broader audience, making the UN child rights system accessible to NGOs and national coalitions, children and child-led organisations, State representatives and other interested individuals around the world. This is an obvious complement to our work supporting national NGO partners preparing and submitting reports to the Committee.

To alert interested people and organisations, Child Rights Connect reached out via email to NGOs and NHRIs from relevant countries and regions to alert them to the possibility to watch the webcasts live and encourage them to share the message through

their networks. Over the course of the year more than 5,000 people from every region of the world tuned in to the webcast site during the CRC sessions.

Child Rights Connect took care of all aspects of the webcasting daily, while the Committee was in session, from equipment set up, to filming, to archiving the videos on a centralised website for all treaty bodies. The website, www.treatybodywebcast.org, is a pilot project run by several Geneva-based NGOs to demonstrate the benefit of webcasting to the OHCHR and to show that it can be accomplished with minimal investment in technology and staff time. Child Rights Connect was able to webcast all of the Committee sessions for 2013 without any additional funding or staff members.

We will continue the webcasts for the time being with the aim to convince States of the need to give adequate resources to OHCHR for this tool to be put in place and therefore ensure increased accessibility and transparency.

Follow-up to recommendations – Case studies

The Committee does not currently foresee that it will adopt a formal follow-up procedure for the implementation of its Concluding Observations. The role of national civil society actors is crucial, therefore, for monitoring their implementation and for collaborating with all levels of government, where possible, to support that process. Follow-up to Concluding Observations is not necessarily additional work for NGOs and coalitions, but rather these recommendations are a tool to reinforce on-going advocacy activities at the national level.

This year, Child Rights Connect updated its followup strategy based on the Committee's decision not to adopt a follow-up procedure and compiled a further 10 case studies. The case studies feature a range of ideas for successful follow-up activities, encourage networking among NGOs from different countries and kick start discussions among NGOs and coalitions on how to use the Committee's recommendations to drive the child rights agenda forward in their countries. The case studies were laid out and translated into French and Spanish, and shared directly by email with partners requesting specific support in that regard, as well as through workshops, NGO Forums and our website. Furthermore, they were featured in the Office of the High Commissioner's publication, "A practical guide for civil society: How to Follow up on United Nations Human Rights Recommendations".

Based on first-hand experience, as well as feedback from national civil society actors, Child Rights Connect continued to prepare the necessary



Child Rights Officer Roisin Fegan sets up the webcast for the Committee session in September.

elements during 2013 for our upcoming practical publication on follow-up to the Committee's Concluding Observations.

Collaborating with the Committee on the Rights of the Child

Positive working relationships with individual members of the Committee are invaluable for Child Rights Connect's work. We regularly discuss with Committee members, both in formal and informal settings, about how we can better support them to maximise their engagement with civil society actors, particularly national NGOs and coalitions, in all their activities.

Supporting the Committee through the biggest membership change in a decade

2013 was a year of significant change for the Committee. With eight new members elected, it was the biggest turnover in the Committee in ten years, since it increased from 10 to 18 members in 2003. In addition, the Committee elected a new Chair and an entirely new Bureau.

In May, Child Rights Connect Director, Lisa Myers, and Child Rights Officer, Roisín Fegan, took part in the official induction day, explaining how our organisation works to support national, regional and international civil society actors to engage with the Committee. Of particular importance is that incoming Committee members know where the civil society information is coming from for the State reviews. Our long-standing relationship with the Committee gives us this unique opportunity to provide a useful orientation for the new Committee members on how to best promote civil society cooperation for child rights in the UN system.

Equally important is Committee members' awareness of the child rights actors based in Geneva. To this end, we organised a meeting between the new members and the NGOs that interact with the Committee on a regular basis. As a result of having organised and coordinated this meeting, new Committee members had the opportunity to meet some of the main child rights NGO representatives, both based in Geneva and beyond, and understand how those NGOs work with the Committee in various capacities.

The Child Rights Connect Executive Committee and Secretariat had meetings and a working dinner with the Committee members in the course of the year. These are annual activities that provide a significant opportunity to build relationships with the Committee and its Secretariat, and discuss areas of collaboration, as well as the Committee's working methods. All of these meetings provide important



Child Rights Connect staff and Executive Committee members establish positive working relationships with members of the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

opportunities for Child Rights Connect and its partners to continue strong working relationships with the Committee through this time of transition with new members.

Providing Input on the Committee's General Comments

The General Comments of the Committee provide an official interpretation of the CRC that can be used by States to improve implementation at national level. These documents detail how a particular article – or group of articles – should be interpreted and therefore also serve as an invaluable advocacy tool for civil society actors. Child Rights Connect supports the Committee to develop consistently good quality General Comments through on-going support both for the selection of topics, as well as for thorough research and drafting processes.

Our activities in 2013 included participating in General Comment expert meetings and seminars; submitting papers and written statements on the General Comments; and proposing possible strategies for external consultations. Child Rights Connect also kept interested NGO partners around the world updated about opportunities to give inputs and encouraged civil society participation in the elaboration of General Comments. This process is closely followed by organisations and experts working at national level, as they are keen to have the Committee's expertise on how provisions of the CRC can be more fully implemented on the ground.

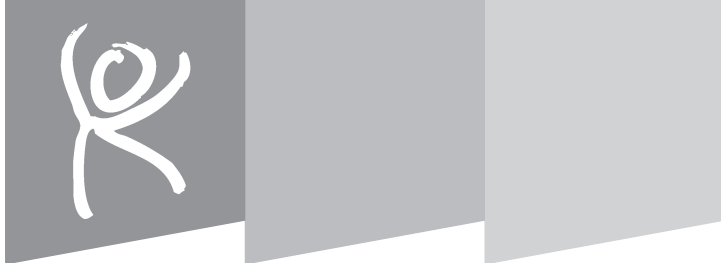
Our activities proved important input for the end result, which was the adoption of four General Comments on key issues affecting the realisation of children's rights at national level: 14. The right of the child to have his or her best interests taken as a primary consideration (art. 3, para. 1); 15. The right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health (Article. 24); 16. State obliga-

tions regarding the impact of the business sector on children's rights; and 17. The right of the child to rest, leisure, play, recreational activities, cultural life and the arts.

Supporting the Committee in strengthening their working methods

Throughout 2013, we have been supporting the Committee in the internal review of its working methods. Child Rights Connect has been working with the Committee since it was created and has the institutional memory to be able to support the Committee's discussions on how and why its current methods of work were devised. We also work to keep an open

connection between the Committee and external partners, so that it is clear when there are opportunities to engage, like in the reporting process, General Comments or Days of General Discussion. In the spirit of our on-going approach to ensure that the work of the Committee corresponds to the situation of children at national level, Child Rights Connect strives to make sure that the standards created for civil society engagement are consistently upheld. Through our support for the Committee in strengthening their working methods Child Rights Connect tries to guarantee that the Committee continues to benefit from the work of national civil society actors in the reviews of the child rights situation of every State.



Building capacity at national and regional levels for better UN engagement

Child Rights Connect works to empower and build the capacity of civil society actors to affect change at the national level by effectively engaging with the Committee on the Rights of the Child (the Committee) and the broader UN human rights system such as the Human Rights Council (HRC) and its Universal Periodic Review (UPR) mechanism.

In 2013, we had several opportunities to take up this role in training workshops for national NGOs and coalitions. Child Rights Connect is recognised as being at the forefront of advancing the child rights agenda at the international level and in particular, for its expertise on NGO engagement with the Committee. In addition to capacity building workshops, we are regularly invited to weigh in on discussions with a range of stakeholders at national, regional and international levels.

At all of our trainings and events this year, Child Rights Connect distributed publications to participants on reporting to the Committee, including resources especially for children and child-led organisations, follow-up to Concluding Observations for national-level advocacy, child rights advocacy in the UPR, and advocacy around OP3 CRC. Providing the most up to date information possible in the form of tools and publications in several languages enables NGOs to follow up and get involved and continue learning after capacity building sessions. It also allows for the information to be shared with a wider group of colleagues at national level.

A strong base for joint advocacy

Working in coalitions has proved to be very effective for advancing children's rights and gives a stronger voice to civil society organisations, as well as to maximise resources. Most importantly, though, coalitions set the standard for intersectional collaboration for the realisation of child rights. We prioritise the capacity building of national child rights NGOs, particularly those working in coalitions. We tailor our trainings to meet the needs of each group, focusing on the role of NGOs at all stages of the Committee's periodic State review cycle for the CRC, OPAC and OPSC and how to link child rights advocacy to other international mechanisms, namely the Human Rights Council, its Universal Periodic Review mechanism and Special Procedures.

Asia

In November, Child Rights Connect returned to Bangkok to continue our participation in a five-year capacity building programme for child rights NGOs in Asia, led by Plan International's Asia Regional Office. One of the main focuses of this year's programme

was peer-to-peer exchange among Asian and Scandinavian coalitions. The sessions were an important opportunity for NGOs to identify and exchange best practices in their work at national level, especially focusing on on-going and meaningful ways in which children can engage in advocacy for their rights. Based on its involvement in the strengthening of the working methods of the Committee, Child Rights Connect shared information about developments in the work of the Committee that is essential for NGOs to maximise their engagement in the reporting process and other activities.

During the four-day training, we were active in discussions on how to improve collaboration within national coalitions for a strategic approach to the CRC reporting cycle. This included submitting reports to the Committee with a view to influencing Concluding Observations and integrating those recommendations into national-level advocacy. Participants also received information about the Third Optional Protocol to the CRC on a communications procedure. Based on our experience in the conceptualisation, drafting and ratification campaigns for this OP, Child Rights Connect brought important informa-

tion to the discussions on how to address challenges and make gains in national advocacy activities for ratification.

Key Accomplishments: NGOs from 10 countries received new and updated information about the CRC reporting process, the reporting status of their respective States and the working methods of the Committee. Good practices, achievements and challenges in national-level advocacy were identified and shared between NGOs working in Asia, Scandinavia and at international level.

Who participated: Our Child Rights Officer, Ilaria Paolazzi joined 32 participants, including representatives from NGO coalitions and Plan Country Offices, in Cambodia, Nepal, Pakistan, Vietnam, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Bangladesh, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland.



Child Rights Officer Ilaria Paolazzi presents to national child rights NGOs from Asia on how they can engage in the CRC reporting cycle at a training in Thailand.

Latin America

Regional networks are powerful partners for effective civil society engagement in the UN human rights system on child rights. The Latin American and Caribbean Network for Children (REDLAMYC) is a Child Rights Connect member and represents an extensive network of child rights NGO coalitions from more than 24 countries. This year, REDLAMYC invited Child Rights Connect to participate in its two days of training prior to its Annual General Assembly. Child Rights Connect worked directly with REDLAMYC's executive director to tailor presentations to the network's needs.

In addition to providing valuable updates on the Committee's new working methods, Child Rights Connect's Interim Director Officer, Roisin Fegan, discussed new opportunities for coalitions to engage with the Committee in the future and how to maximise their impact. She met with individual coalitions to discuss the reporting status of their respective States under the CRC and its Optional Protocols and

shared region-specific updates about the OP3 CRC ratification campaign. Through these conversations with professionals working at national and regional level, Child Rights Connect was able to respond to challenges in CRC monitoring and reporting in the region, including follow-up to Committee recommendations.

Another major point of focus was public investment in children, a priority for the REDLAMYC, and a proposal to the Committee for a new General Comment in partnership with Save the Children International. The training also provided a forum to improve our own understanding of the regional dynamics, monitor best practices and deepen working relationships with the network as a whole, as well as with individual national coalitions and with the Brazilian and Ecuadorian members of the Committee who were in attendance.

Key accomplishments: By providing up-to-date information on Committee working methods, reporting deadlines and how to find online resources, members of REDLAMYC from across the Latin American and Caribbean region were empowered to more effectively engage in the CRC reporting cycle; Latin American-based participants expressed that meeting Geneva-based colleagues face-to-face made collaboration with Child Rights Connect, the Committee and other partners seem achievable and more worthwhile.

Who participated: Child Rights Connect Interim Director Roisin Fegan attended and facilitated sessions over two days of meetings with REDLAMYC organisations and coalitions from 24 countries in advance of their annual general assembly.

Europe

Establishing a child rights coalition in Slovenia

Child Rights Connect most often focuses on regional-level trainings, where NGOs from different countries within a region come together. This is of proven benefit for sharing best practices and discussions on how to overcome common challenges; however, opportunities also arise where it is possible to have a deep impact by focusing our time and resources on the strengthening and capacity building of a coalition in one country in particular. The coalition in Slovenia was established in March this year and up to that point, no civil society actors from the country had submitted reports to the Committee for the State review that June.

Child Rights Connect travelled to Ljubljana for three days in April to facilitate a seminar-style workshop for members of the new coalition. With our guidance, participants mapped their strengths and

“ I would like to thank you in the name of our coalition ZIPOM for making the impossible for us possible. You helped us become

**središče
ZIPOM**

more competent and confident.”

SARA GEIGER SMOLE, ZIPOM
COALITION, SLOVENIA

resources within the current composition of the coalition and had in-depth discussions on how to attract new partners working on the CRC and its two Optional Protocols. The workshop also went into detail on child participation, including identification of groups of children the coalition was already engaged with and those that would need to be reached out to.

Specifically in relation to the review of Slovenia by the Committee, participants received training on the reporting cycle. The draft alternative report was finalised pursuant to this and submitted to the Committee. There would otherwise have been no NGO submission from Slovenia. Two members of the coalition were subsequently funded by Child Rights Connect to come to the session in Geneva in June and have informal meetings with the Committee on that basis. They were able to see how their alternative report enhanced the Committee’s understanding of the country situation and thus how they influenced the specificity of the Concluding Observations.

The workshop focused for a time on follow-up to the Committee’s Concluding Observations, using the establishment of a Child Ombudsperson and the ratification of the Third Optional Protocol as case studies. These have since been taken forward as their advocacy models and formed the basis for establishing an equitable working relationship with the government and a set of common objectives for the coalition.

Key accomplishments: Support from Child Rights Connect ensured that an alternative report was submitted by NGOs in Slovenia, when otherwise there would not have been information from civil society to complement the State report; the ZIPOM coalition joined the Ratify OP3 CRC International Coalition to promote the third optional protocol to the CRC.

Who participated: Child Rights Connect’s Roisin Fegan led the training process with members of the Slovenian child rights coalition, ZIPOM.

Weighing in on “Why Child Rights Matter” in Belfast

The Centre for Children’s Rights at Queen’s University of Belfast asked “Why Child Rights Matter” in their seminar, which stimulated a public dialogue around

child rights by promoting the effective engagement of civil society, government and state institutions in the CRC monitoring and reporting cycle. Child Rights Connect was invited to make a presentation on how civil society can engage in this process and discuss the strategic objectives of doing so, by enhancing the Committee’s understanding of the situation in the State under review.

With an audience of representatives from NGOs, NHRIs and government, our Child Rights Officer, Ilaria Paolazzi, provoked discussions on how civil society organisations from the devolved States within the United Kingdom could best work together to maximise the impact of their engagement, and therefore of the process itself on the realities of children in the country. Both this presentation and our participation in other forums during the day strengthened the capacity of NGOs to engage in the CRC reporting cycle in an effective and coordinated way.

The Centre for Children’s Rights in Belfast has been a partner for promoting positive child participation in the past and this event helped to reinforce collaboration between them and Child Rights Connect, as well as to deepen relationships with civil society actors in Northern Ireland.

Key accomplishments: Key messages, such as the benefit of strategic NGO engagement reporting cycle of the Committee through formal and informal discussions; the importance and benefits of meaningful child participation in child rights advocacy was highlighted and reinforced as a subject for future work.

Who participated: About 50 participants from Queen’s University and civil society organisations participated in sessions during the day. Our Child Rights Officer Ilaria Paolazzi delivered a presentation on “Effective NGO engagement in the CRC reporting cycle” to about 25 NGO, NHRI and government representatives.



Child Rights Officer Ilaria Paolazzi along with organisers of the “Why Child Rights Matter” conference at the Centre for Children’s Rights at Queen’s University of Belfast in Belfast.

Sharing the expertise of the Child Rights Connect Secretariat

Child Rights Connect NGO Forums – A unique opportunity for global information exchange

At every Committee pre-session, Child Rights Connect brings together the NGO participants to network and learn from each other's achievements and challenges. Because the NGO Forums are based on the schedule of the pre-session, it gives these national child rights professionals from all different regions the rare chance to interact and share with others going through the same reporting process.

The half-day Forums combine a training component from Child Rights Connect and other experts with best practices and experiences being shared by the NGOs participants. They gain practical information and advice on how to incorporate international-level advocacy in their national activities. Sessions from Child Rights Connect staff include information on the next steps the Committee's reporting cycle; ways for participants to develop their expertise in follow-up to the Committee's concluding observations; child participation in monitoring and reporting; and using other mechanisms such as UPR.

During each of the Forums, Child Rights Connect presented OP3 CRC and how NGOs can be involved in the ratification campaign to help increase access to justice for children in their country. In addition to sharing information on effectively engaging with the Committee, Child Rights Connect invited external speakers from SOS Children's Villages International and World Vision International to share their perspectives and best practices from their experience in working with the UPR. Furthermore, when children are present at the pre-session, they are invited to speak to the participants about how they prepared their submission and how they have used it to reinforce their advocacy at national level. This year, children from Hong Kong, China, spoke about how they prepared their report and a child participant from



Children from Hong Kong present on the importance of a children's report during the NGO forum in February 2013.

Indonesia showed his video on child labour, which he had prepared together with a larger group of children active on this issue in the capital.

All our practical tools and publications on the CRC, OPAC and OPSC, child participation, UPR and OP3CRC are given to the NGO representatives and children taking part in the Forums. Following these meetings, Child Rights Connect followed up with the participants in preparation for the session with their States and provided practical advice about the opportunities for international-level engagement such as those discussed during the Forums.

In addition to travelling to workshops and conferences, the Child Rights Connect secretariat is able to reach a broader audience by providing input on publications by partners. This year we were asked to provide content for publications such as the Office of the High Commissioner's Guide on *How to follow up on United Nations Human Rights Recommendations: A practice guide for civil society*. In this guide, our case studies on follow-up developed in 2012 and 2013 are cited in the 'Learn more' section.

Publications, processes and documents Child Rights Connect contributed to in 2013:

- CRC Committee amended Rules of Procedure for State review process
- CRC Committee amended Working Methods for State review process
- CRC Committee General Comments on the Best Interests of the Child, the Right to Play and Child Rights and the Business Sector
- 4th quarterly bulletin on business and children – Business & Human Rights Resource Centre
- Board of Trustees of the UN Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Peoples expanded mandate to increase indigenous peoples' engagement with the treaty bodies – inputs on how best to assess and select funding applicants for CRC Committee
- Practical Guide for Indigenous Peoples Using UN Mechanisms
- SRSG on VAC Child-Friendly Version of the 3rd Optional Protocol: "Raising Understanding among Children and Young People on the OPCP – Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a Communications Procedure"

Child Rights Connect is confident that being physically present in-country or at a regional level for technical assistance and capacity-building training does have an added value in some cases. However, we are committed to finding ways to reach greater numbers of people using new technologies that facilitate this without international travel. This year we participated virtually in several discussions on child rights at the UN, on the work of the Committee and on opportunities for direct advocacy by children. During these online events, we worked with partners including Human Rights Education Association (HREA), International Service for Human Rights (ISHR), the University of Berlin, and through a Google+ Hangout with members of the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

Spotlight on child rights and advocacy at the UN

Additionally, Advocacy Officer Anita Goh was one of seven expert Conversation Leaders in sessions during the online conversation series “Engaging the United Nations Human Rights Council”, organised by ISHR and the New Tactics online community. This free, public discussion was part of a larger conversa-

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tion series from February 11 to 15, and was a chance for experts and interested individuals to create a dialogue on successful engagement in the HRC and its UPR. Throughout the week, experts and individuals from around the world exchanged ideas, resources and asked questions in the form of posts on an online forum, which remains available after the event as a resource for anyone interested in engaging with the HRC.

University of Berlin conference on OP3 CRC

In November, Child Rights Connect was invited to serve as a panellist at a conference organised by Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Kindernothilfe and the German national child rights coalition about the implementation of OP3 CRC in Germany. Both as an organisation and as co-chairs of the International Coalition (see page 17), Child Rights Connect has worked closely with Germany and German NGOs throughout the ratification campaign for OP3 CRC. Since Germany announced their ratification at the International Coalition's event in February, participation in this forum was an opportunity to share our insight with national actors that can use OP3 CRC when it enters into force.

Advocacy Officer Anita Goh was not able to attend the event in person, but Child Rights Connect produced a short video presentation. In this, Anita traced the history of the creation of OP3 and our assessment of the final text. The event not only allowed for a discussion of how the new OP will be implemented, but it also allowed Child Rights Connect to continue our positive working relationship with German NGOs and its national child rights coalition. This was the second time we were asked to participate in such an event in Germany.

Google+ Hangout with the Committee

In partnership with OHCHR, Child Rights Connect got the Committee on the Rights of the Child involved in its first ever online public interaction platform and reached out to audiences around the world in a new way about access to justice for children. On Thursday 12 December, we organised a Google+ Hangout

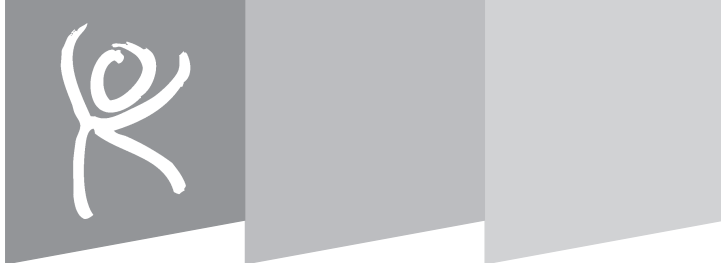


Advocacy Officer Anita Goh joins a virtual discussion on access to justice for children with members of the Committee.

focusing on the new OP to the CRC and access to justice for children. The Hangout was a live panel discussion with people from all over the world and featured Advocacy Officer Anita Goh and Committee Members Olga A. Khazova and Hatem Kotrane. More than 200 people from around the world tuned in to watch and thousands more tweeted about the discussion with the hashtag #Justice4Kids.

Keeping Child Rights in International Discussions on Human Rights

The Vienna +20 conferences in June 2013 marked the 20th anniversary of the World Conference on Human Rights, which made crucial contributions to the global human rights regime and is best known for the creation of the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). Roisin Fegan took part in several key meetings including the Civil Society Organisation (CSO) Conference and the Annual Meeting of UN Special Procedures Mandate Holders. Though human rights organisations from all over the world attended the event, there were no other child rights-specific NGOs present. Our attendance, therefore, was important for the inclusion of a child rights perspective in the outcome document, which was presented to States at the Vienna +20 Conference the following week.



Access to justice for every child

Promoting entry into force of the third optional protocol to the CRC and paving the way for implementation

Over the course of 2013, Child Rights Connect continued as a leader in the worldwide campaign to promote the third Optional Protocol to the CRC on a Communications Procedure (OP3 CRC). The OP3 CRC is an international legal framework to ensure violations of children's rights can be fully addressed when a solution is not available at national level. Once in force, the OP3 CRC will allow children and their representatives to bring cases on rights violations directly to the Committee on the Rights of the Child and to receive a concrete UN recommendation for remedy at national level. This treaty is a fundamental step forward in ensuring that children have access to justice.

As a key proponent of the OP3 CRC since the beginning of the drafting process, Child Rights Connect promoted the ratification of the treaty as part of our own advocacy within the UN and as the co-chair of the leading International Coalition for the OPCRC on a Communications Procedure, Ratify OP3 CRC. In 2013, we reached out to members, partners and States, including every UN mission in New York, to call for the ratification of the OP3 CRC and raise awareness to make access to justice for children a priority issue in the UN human rights system. Our efforts have seen an increased number of States who have ratified the treaty and have been key in preparations for the implementation of the communications procedure that the OP3 CRC will bring when it enters into force.

Keeping access to justice at the forefront in the UN in Geneva

Child Rights Connect took concrete steps to make sure that the child's right to an effective remedy remains on States' priority agenda at the UN in Geneva. Working both with States and with UN bodies, Child Rights Connect garnered support for the OP3 CRC and promoted access to justice for children as a key human rights theme.

At the beginning of 2013, Child Rights Connect successfully advocated for the UN Human Rights Council to select "Access to Justice for Children" for the 2014 theme of the Annual Day on the Rights of the Child. This is a yearly event at the HRC dedicated to child rights and is an important time for UN bodies, States and NGOs alike to discuss critical issues in the same forum. The 2014 Annual Day will be the first international forum dedicated to the topic of access to justice for children. It will be an opportunity for all actors to reflect and analyse how their children can access justice at home, if at all, and also to discuss

Ratify OP3 CRC

INTERNATIONAL COALITION FOR THE OPCRC
ON A COMMUNICATIONS PROCEDURE

what the role of OP3 CRC will be at national and international levels.

Child Rights Connect kept OP3 CRC States parties engaged in the promotion of ratification of the treaty among other States. We worked closely with the States that ratified OP3 CRC in 2012 and 2013, successfully advocating for them to make a joint oral statement before the Human Rights Council in September. In the end, five of the six States agreed to participate and Albania delivered the statement on behalf of Bolivia, Germany, Spain and Thailand. On 9 September, five of the six States parties to the OP3 CRC at the time "call[ed] on all States, including the States represented here in the Human Rights Council, to ratify the Third Optional Protocol" and "urge[d] States to once again demonstrate their strong politi-

cal will and take decisive action to uphold the rights of children by accelerating the process of ratification within their own countries”.

Working together as a coalition to promote OP3 CRC

Focusing new advocacy efforts on the UN in New York

Building on our advocacy work done in Geneva over the course of the year, Child Rights Connect participated in joint advocacy in New York, both as an organisation and as co-chairs of the International Coalition for the OPCRC on a Communications Procedure, Ratify OP3 CRC (henceforth the International Coalition). These efforts were important to reinforce the advocacy achievements made in Geneva and to reach out to new UN actors and fora in New York – where States can sign, ratify or accede to OP3 CRC. A broad range of efforts were undertaken throughout the year, including a side event, letter-writing campaigns, and meetings with NGOs, experts and States, which resulted in new signatures and ratifications of the OP (see map below).

As a call for ratification, the International Coalition organised an official event on OP3 CRC at the UN in New York on 28 February 2013 to raise awareness about OP3 CRC amongst UN missions. Child Rights Connect, as co-chairs of the International Coalition, played an important role in the preparation and publicising work, to make the event a success. Child Rights Connect Director Lisa Myers and Child Rights Assistant Laure Elmaleh were present in New York for the event, reinforcing the call for swift ratification and entry into force and strengthening key relationships with New York partners like OHCHR, the Special Representatives of the Secretary General on Violence against Children and Children Involved in Armed Conflict, as well as select UN Missions. The event served as a forum for States to share news on national ratification processes and also as a deadline to incentivise those States that were about to sign or ratify OP3 CRC, to do so. During the event, in



International Coalition Members, UN Experts and State Permanent Representatives participate in a panel on OP3 CRC during the event in New York on 28 February, 2013.

“ The Albanian Parliament ratified the Third Optional Protocol on the Communication Procedures of the International Convention on the Right of the Child, on May 2013. This additional instrument is a powerful tool towards the protection and enforcement of Child Rights both at the international and domestic level. Therefore, Albania has enthusiastically supported the initiative of



Child Rights Connect to promote and urge the ratification of this Protocol by all member states.”

HE. MRS. FILLORETA KODRA,
AMBASSADOR, PERMANENT
REPRESENTATIVE OF ALBANIA
TO GENEVA

front of more than 75 participants, two new States announced their ratifications: Germany and Bolivia.

While in New York, Lisa Myers and Laure Elmaleh conducted bilateral advocacy work with selected UN missions and strategised with key NGO partners based there to agree common next steps in their advocacy work. Meeting State representatives face-to-face is a crucial opportunity to build on relationships established through correspondence and ensure that States are fully aware of the significance of OP3 CRC as a tool for providing access to justice for children. It also enhances collaborative action and effective cooperation among NGOs in New York, the location of the UN treaty collection and site of ratification. Better communication between New York and Geneva-based NGOs on important news strengthens the civil society voice calling for ratification of the OP and the advancement of other child rights issues.

To build on the positive momentum from the first half of the year, the International Coalition hired a New York-based consultant to promote the 2013 UN Treaty Event, which is an annual occasion to encourage States to ratify new treaties. Child Rights Connect was part of the task force that recruited, supervised and guided the consultant throughout her mandate from July until October. We also prepared the background tools, including template letters, that the consultant required to perform the mandated tasks with real impact in a short time. During this period, the consultant reached out to every UN mission in New York, encouraging them to ratify and highlighting the UN Treaty Event as an opportunity to do so. In the end two new States, Portugal and Montenegro, ratified OP3 CRC during the UN Treaty Event and six additional States signed as a pledge to ratify.

Finally, Child Rights Connect, through the International Coalition, approached a number of high-level child rights experts to encourage them to call for the ratification of OP3 CRC in their oral statements before the Third Committee of the UN General Assembly in November. Child Rights Connect worked

with the Special Rapporteur on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, Ms. Najat Maalla M'Jid, and the Chair of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, Ms. Kirsten Sandberg, who both made that call to States.

Key OP3 CRC advocacy achievements of 2013

During the International Coalition OP3 CRC event in New York:

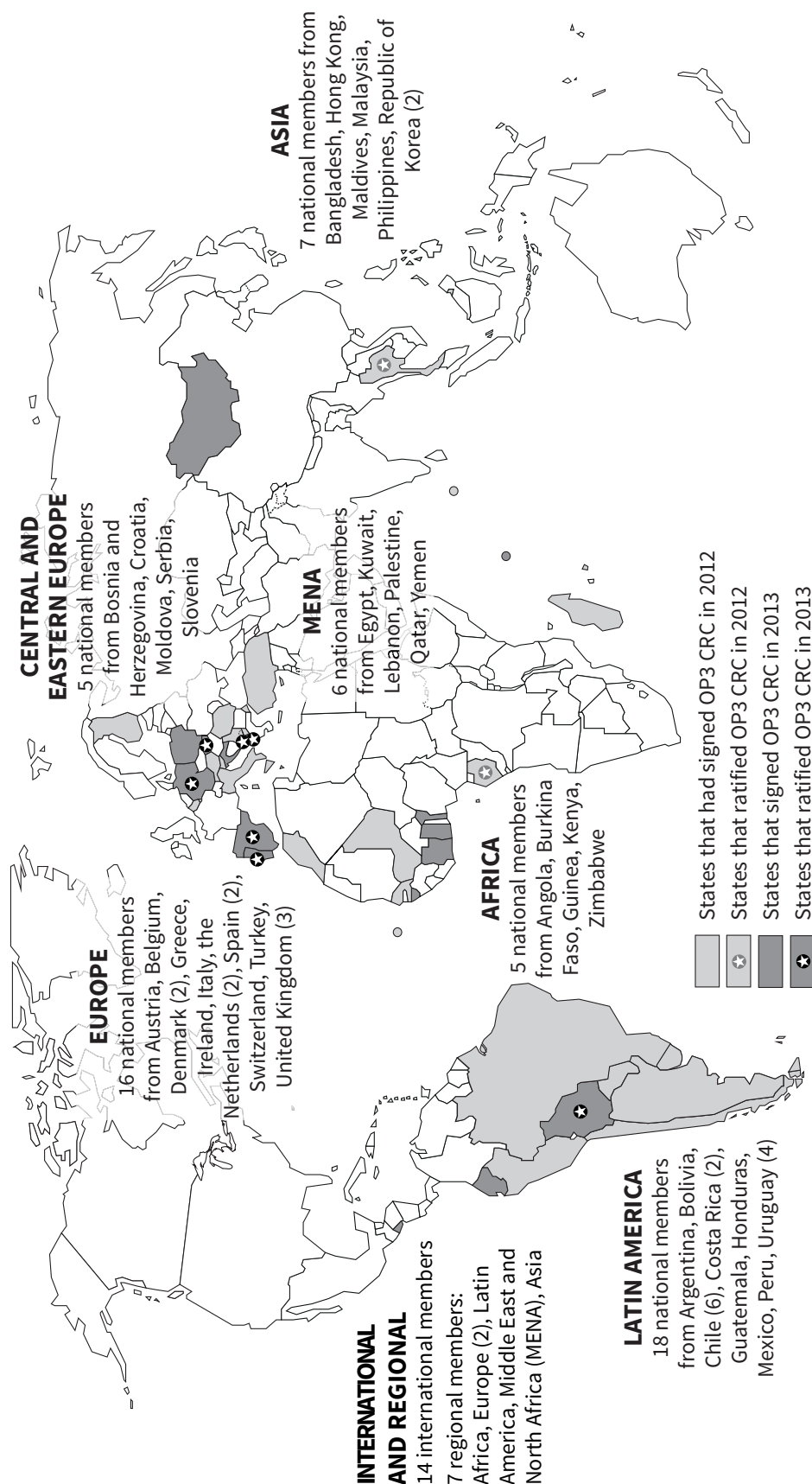
- Germany ratified OP3 CRC and announced its ratification at the event.
- Bolivia announced its intention to ratify OP3 CRC and did so less than 2 months later.
- The event showed significant support of OP3 CRC from many levels. It was co-sponsored by 5 States and attended by over 75 participants, including UN Missions, NGOs and other relevant partners.

The International Coalition's New York-based consultant reached out to every UN mission with information on why the new optional protocol is important to recognise children as rights holders and guarantee their access to justice. She encouraged each State to sign and ratify OP3 CRC at the UN Treaty Event.

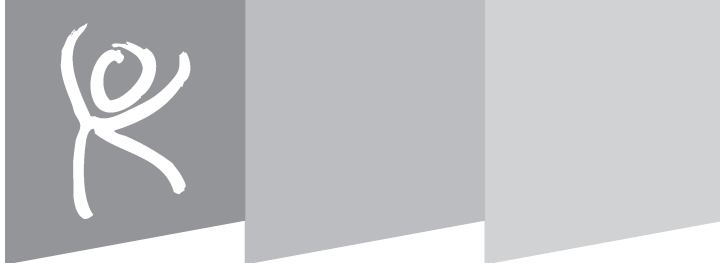
At the UN Treaty Event, Portugal and Montenegro ratified OP3 CRC. Six additional States signed (see map)

PROGRESS OF THE OP3 CRC RATIFICATION CAMPAIGN DURING 2013

Ratify OP3 CRC International Coalition is composed of 77 national, regional and international non-governmental organisational and networks, human rights institutions, and other non-governmental bodies from all regions. Member regions and countries are shown in lists on this map.



During 2013, OP3 CRC was ratified by 7 States: Albania, Bolivia, Germany, Montenegro, Portugal, Slovakia and Spain. It was signed by 10 States: Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Mongolia, Poland, and Seychelles.



Maximising the impact of the Ratify OP3 CRC International Coalition

The International Coalition has been the premier civil society actor to promote OP3 CRC and its ratification since it was established in 2011. From the beginning, Child Rights Connect has been instrumental in setting up and leading the International Coalition, which now boasts 77 member organisations from 57 countries in all the regions of the world. Although our term as co-chair of the International Coalition officially ended in March 2013, Child Rights Connect continued to undertake co-chair duties until late October 2013, when another International Coalition member was able to take up this role.

Strengthening leadership and communications in the International Coalition

To encourage good working practices and reflect on the first year of working together as a coalition, Child Rights Connect also organised and hosted the first face-to-face meeting of the Coalition's Steering Committee in Geneva in March. This meeting enabled the Steering Committee to share views on the progress of the International Coalition, including its achievements and challenges to date. Looking ahead at that point, it was a chance to decide jointly on the Coalition's work plan and strategy for 2013. Meeting in person triggered a positive boost in engagement by Coalition members and we saw that new dynamics and ways of collaboration emerged.

Effective advocacy through the International Coalition depends on internal organisation and proper management. Child Rights Connect continued to ensure that the Coalition ran smoothly by processing membership applications, liaising with members to encourage participation, and keeping the Coalition's website up to date about news and opportunities to engage. To encourage the involvement of new partners and facilitate members' communication on their advocacy efforts, Child Rights Connect took the lead on the redesign of the website to include new features and tools, and updated the website and web-mail hosting services. In addition to being a general awareness raising tool about OP3 CRC, the new site allows members and partners to keep up to date on news and have access to the latest publications and resources developed for the International Coalition. Solid plans were laid to also have a member's sign-in section of the site to allow for direct exchange and collaboration on advocacy strategies and events.

In addition to its co-chair duties, Child Rights Connect continued its work as an active member of the Coalition and produced and disseminated several publications and tools aimed at assisting its members and partners in their ratification campaigns. Two tools designed to aid in advocacy were OP3 talking points and country-specific factsheets for 60 new States. These were shared with Steering Committee members and a number of Coalition members and used in meetings with governments on OP3 CRC. Additionally, our Child-Friendly OP3 CRC Leaflet was made available in Arabic, English, French, Russian and Spanish and given to organisations working directly with children across the globe. The publication was used as background information on OP3 to help children answer the survey we conducted (see next page).

Empowering worldwide networks for OP3 CRC

On 10 March 2013, Child Rights Connect organised its first "training of trainers" about OP3 CRC. The participants included members of the Steering Committee of the International Coalition, Child Rights Connect staff and interested staff from Child Rights Connect member organisations.

This pilot session deepened participants' understanding of the provisions of OP3 CRC, which is critical for targeted advocacy with government officials to promote ratification. Furthermore, it empowered members and partners to direct their own trainings and presentations on OP3 CRC within their respective networks worldwide to maximise the distribution of information. With intricate knowledge of the specific provisions of the OP, participants were better placed to field questions from those they would



Child Rights Connect staff and participants in our first OP3 CRC “training of trainers.”

go on to train and ensure beneficiaries understood the provisions themselves, as well as the rationale for why they had been worded as they are.

“ Taking part in the training was an opportunity to raise awareness on the new protocol with relevant actors in the Brussels arena and exchange ideas how on we could advocate together for its entrance into force and future implementation. It was very



useful to refresh knowledge on the Protocol and to learn from case studies of the OP3 CRC campaign.”

MAFALDA LEAL, SENIOR POLICY COORDINATOR (CHILD RIGHTS AND CHILD PARTICIPATION), EUROCHILD

Reaching out to partners

Child Rights Connect continued to systematically raise awareness and mobilise civil society on OP3 CRC in its activities. The provisions of the OP, the ratification campaign and explanations on how civil society could integrate this issue in their existing work were included in all our NGO Forums and trainings. In addition to our participation in the 8th CSO Forum on the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child in Addis Ababa in November 2013 (see below), we also responded to requests to provide tailored presentations to Defence for Children International staff members from the MENA region in June 2013.

Mobilising NGOs in Africa

Since the beginning of the drafting and adoption of OP3 CRC, African States have been among the last to engage on this new treaty. The progress made with child rights NGOs in the region was similarly slow. This began to change in 2013 as several States signed

OP3 CRC during the UN Treaty Event in September, showing an opening for Child Rights Connect to start raising awareness about OP3 CRC among NGOs in the region and encourage them to start to support national-level ratification campaigns. Child Rights Connect responded positively when we were invited by the President of the CSO Forum on the African Charter to present OP3 CRC to the NGOs at their 8th Civil Society Organisation (CSO) Forum, entitled “Eliminating Harmful Social and Cultural Practices Affecting Children: Our Collective Responsibility”.

Taking part on behalf of the International Coalition in this regional meeting gave Child Rights Connect the chance to raise awareness and answer questions from NGOs working across the African region on OP3 CRC. Our Child Rights Assistant, Laure Elmaleh presented to more than 100 NGO representatives from each of the five African sub-regions and from almost every country on the continent. Given that Africa already has a regional communications mechanism to address violations of children’s rights, the meeting was a chance to discuss with NGO representatives the functioning of the current system, how OP3 CRC can be complimentary and what added value it brings.

Publications about OP3 CRC and about joining the International Coalition were given to all of the participants and many were particularly interested in the mechanism and about starting advocacy at national level. Since the Forum, Child Rights Connect has remained in contact with some of the attendees about promoting ratification at national level.

Ensuring children’s views are included in discussions on OP3 CRC

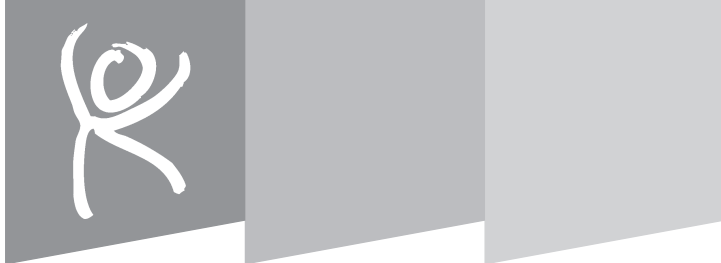
When OP3 CRC comes into force, children as the rights holders will be the ultimate users of the mechanism, along with their representatives. In 2013, the Committee adopted its rules of procedure on how it will carry out its tasks under OP3 CRC. To make sure that the views of children are taken into account as the Committee drafts its internal working methods in 2014, Child Rights Connect developed a survey for children to share their opinions and concerns about how they will be able to access the communications procedure under OP3 CRC and how it will be implemented. Working with a specialised consultant, the survey, along with information about the treaty and the rules of procedure, was made available in English, French and Spanish. The survey was distributed through our member network with an excellent response. A total of 310 children from 24 countries representing all regions of the world responded between September and October 2013, either of

their own initiative or with the assistance of an adult.

Besides being a great opportunity to raise awareness on OP3 CRC amongst children and child-led organisations, the survey provided invaluable insight for the development of the Committee's working methods. Key findings were shared during a meeting with Committee members in November 2013. Views shared by children have already been used directly by OHCHR as they were shared in their December 2013 report "Access to justice for children". Child Rights Connect will undertake follow-up activities throughout 2014 to ensure that the views from children continue to be taken into account during the drafting of the Committee's working methods and, ultimately, in their implementation.

Sharing our expertise and knowledge on OP3 CRC for its effective use and implementation

Based on its expertise developed throughout the negotiations of the text of OP3 CRC, Child Rights Connect has been researching and preparing a draft legal commentary in 2013. The UN does not prepare *travaux préparatoires* for OPs, so this publication will be crucial for archiving the intricacies of the drafting of the OP3 CRC and ensuring that knowledge of how the provisions came to be what they are today is preserved. The commentary is a technical piece that speaks to a range of stakeholders, including States, children's representatives, legal practitioners and child rights NGOs and coalitions. Understanding the role these stakeholders can – and in the case of States parties, are obligated to – play, is paramount to ensuring that the Committee's official opinion on how violations should be remedied is received by child victims in a timely manner and, furthermore, that it is followed up on to ensure remedy of the violation and contribute to preventing further violations.



Using the full UN system to promote children's rights

Child Rights Connect links the advocacy work of national, regional and international NGOs, children, child-led organisations and NHRIs to the UN human rights system. To promote the inclusion of a child rights perspective in all human rights discussions and decisions, the Secretariat proactively provides technical assistance and capacity building to national NGOs and, in particular, to child rights coalitions. This allows these national actors to effectively engage with the Committee, as well as the Human Rights Council (HRC) and its Universal Periodic Review (UPR). Working groups under the umbrella of Child Rights Connect focus on key themes, issues or processes related to child rights and give members an opportunity for debate and joint action. Because of past work and related achievements, Child Rights Connect is in an optimal position to draw on the diverse experiences and knowledge of its current partners, as well as to reach out to new partners. The expertise of our Secretariat and broad network allows us to carry out a broad range of work on child rights, including proactive advocacy work, as well as research, training and NGO support.

Strategic engagement in the Human Rights Council

Within the framework of the HRC, Child Rights Connect actively participates in the drafting of international child rights instruments; advocates for child rights internationally, with a specific focus on the HRC and its UPR mechanism; supports and monitors the work of the Committee; and conducts research on evolving areas in children's rights. We take a comprehensive approach to advancing child rights and do not follow one particular theme. As such, we can objectively assess opportunities for advocacy on child rights, which puts us in a unique position to coordinate civil society actors to work towards consistent integration of a child rights perspective in the different areas of work of the HRC.

Despite being part of its mandate, the Human Rights Council still does not address child rights systematically. In 2013, both the Child Rights Connect

Secretariat and our Working Groups continue to coordinate civil society efforts and work together on child rights. After the HRC organisational meetings that took place prior to each session, the Secretariat circulated summaries of the points discussed and convened meetings with interested NGOs to encourage collaboration on resolutions and oral statements. During every HRC session, the Child Rights Connect Secretariat observed discussions on resolutions not being covered by member organisations that follow particular themes.

In the resolutions that we followed, we took a proactive role by suggesting text to be incorporated. Our direct advocacy work on the resolutions resulted in the inclusion of wording reflecting the standards of the CRC and its Optional Protocols and helped to deter initiatives that may have had a negative impact on those standards. In the March session, we suggested language for the Annual Resolution on the Rights of the Child, "the right of the child to the highest attainable standard of health" and the resolution on "protection of the family". This proved extremely valuable to ensure that child rights were fully taken into account and to prevent any lowering of established child rights standards. In September, we provided inputs for the resolution on "preventable mortality and morbidity of children under-5 years of age as a human rights concern". Furthermore, we supported the preparation of a joint written statement led by our partner organisation the International Service for Human Rights, which was submitted to the Human Rights Council at its 24th session. This statement promoted the introduction of a checklist for the selection and appointment of a new UN expert on human rights defenders (A/HRC/24/NGO/39).

Child Rights Connect also followed HRC resolutions that aren't traditionally considered to be child rights issues to look for new opportunities for child rights NGOs to be engaged and to maintain a deep understanding of the broad range of human rights topics being discussed. We shared information with our members and partners to encourage engagement with the HRC and established working relationships with the lead States of the resolu-

tions. These resolutions included: “Human rights of migrants” “National human rights institutions” in the June session and “Civil society space: creating and maintaining, in law and in practice, a safe and enabling environment”; “Cooperation with the United Nations, its representatives and mechanisms in the field of human rights”; “Equal political participation”; and “The rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association” in the September session.

Sharing our expertise with the Working Group on Mainstreaming

The Child Rights Connect Secretariat played an active role in the work of our members’ Working Group on Mainstreaming (see page 30). During the Working Group’s development of a new work plan and strategy, we advised members for the identification of key advocacy objectives. We assisted WG members to undertake a pilot mainstreaming advocacy activity targeting the resolution on “Preventable mortality and morbidity of children less than 5 years of age as a human rights concern”.

Top-level meeting to integrate child rights into the UN system

To reach out at all levels of the UN human rights system, Child Rights Connect participated in small high-level OHCHR meetings on their 2014–2017 Strategic Management Plan, the first with High Commissioner Navi Pillay, where Child Right Connect Advocacy Officer Anita Goh took the floor, and the second with Deputy High Commissioner Flavia Pansieri, where Director Lisa Myers made a statement. Child Rights Connect’s message at both meetings stressed the need for a child rights perspective to be fully integrated into all human rights discussions and decisions, and made concrete recommendations for how the OHCHR can accomplish this. The OHCHR specifically took note of Child Rights Connect’s interventions during both meetings, including our inputs in their official summaries that were produced and circulated. In 2014, we will continue to closely monitor how the OHCHR incorporates a child rights perspective into its work and makes recommendations that further address child rights in all of the human rights mechanisms.

“Coordination is key for NGOs to work together more effectively and maximise opportunities. For the Human Rights Council



and its Universal Periodic Review, Child Rights Connect provides such a possibility to organisations operating within the international arena.”

ANNA TOMASI, ADVOCACY OFFICER, DEFENCE FOR CHILDREN INTERNATIONAL

Working towards concrete UPR recommendations to improve child rights at a national level

As the second cycle of the Universal Periodic Review continues, Child Rights Connect has been further developing its work to ensure the inclusion of child rights issues in State reviews. Every UPR results in specific recommendations on how the State under review should improve its compliance with the international human rights treaties to which it is party before its next review. Child Rights Connect coordinated NGO participation and indirect advocacy with States to make sure that child rights issues were consistently and concretely included in UPR recommendations.

To strengthen NGO participation on child rights in the UPR, we led regular meetings of 10 Geneva-based member and partner NGOs to discuss issues specific to upcoming States under review, as well as to share information and organise advocacy efforts. During these meetings, Child Rights Connect presented research on specific child rights issues, which had been raised either during the first UPR cycle or in pre-sessions and sessions of the second cycle. In our coordination of advocacy, we put special emphasis on ensuring broad coverage of child rights issues for each State under review, ensuring collaboration among NGOs on common messages and the identification of States not being covered.

This year we continued our collaboration with UPR-Info on the popular series of fact sheets about how NGOs, particularly national NGOs, can maximise their engagement in the UPR process to reinforce their child rights advocacy work in their countries. Over the year we updated fact sheets 1, 2, 3 and 4 with important new information about methods of work in the second cycle. The fact sheets are available in English, French and Spanish in both printed and digital versions.

Direct advocacy by Child Rights Connect

In our direct advocacy with the UPR, Child Rights Connect works to have concrete recommendations to improve child rights made and then accepted by each State under review. As a base, we research the ratification status of the CRC and its OPs for each State under review, as well as each State's reservations, declarations and reporting status. Using this information, Child Rights Connect targeted specific States in 2013, encouraging them to make recommendations on child rights to States under review in the UPR that had outstanding reservations to the CRC and its Optional Protocols or had long overdue periodic reports. During the year, 14 briefs were disseminated to diplomatic missions via e-mail and in oral statements during the UPR pre-sessions. These messages were repeated during the EU meetings to exchange views on the UPR.

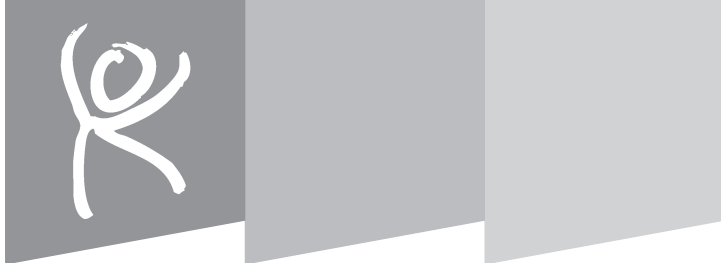
In 2013, our advocacy briefs included a total of 27 key points on the ratification of child rights treaties, as well as the lifting of reservations to CRC, OPSC and OPAC, for the full realisation of all children's rights. To support our efforts working for the rapid entry into force of OP3 CRC, Child Rights Connect specifically targeted States to consistently bring up the signature/ratification of this new treaty for all States under review. Over the course of the year, States that we had targeted in late 2012 and 2013 made 50 concrete recommendations to improve child rights in States under Review. Of these, a total of 36 were accepted by the States under review for implementation at a national level before the next UPR cycle and 7 recommendations are still pending acceptance.

Treaty Body Strengthening

The intergovernmental process continued in New York in 2013, with States debating how they thought the Treaty Bodies could improve their working methods, streamline reporting demands on States and ensure more effective functioning. The Treaty Bodies' mandates come from the treaties that create them. Treaty Bodies themselves therefore reserve the right to make decisions on their working methods, independent of the views of States parties.

The Committee on the Rights of the Child is held up as a model during the State review processes because of the Committee's effective integration of inputs from civil society actors. Child Rights Connect participated in treaty body strengthening discussions as part of a group of human rights NGOs working with all treaty bodies. Speaking as one voice with this group through joint statements made to States, Child Rights Connect advocated for standards set by the Committee to be upheld and used to influence the strengthening of other treaty bodies.

In New York, Director Lisa Myers addressed States during treaty body strengthening meetings. In Geneva, the Child Rights Connect Secretariat kept the Committee informed of the activities being undertaken by NGOs to ensure that the process would in fact serve to strengthen the treaty body system. Bearing in mind the current backlog of the Committee, we advocated for States to support the effective functioning of the treaty body system by providing adequate resources for staffing and other support services to ensure the Committee can effectively carry out its mandate. Co-facilitators of the intergovernmental process had expected to finalise a resolution and corresponding budget by the end of 2013, however discussions were deferred to early 2014.



Tools and publications

An integral part of Child Rights Connect's work is to engage NGOs, including child-led organisations, to utilise the UN human rights system to support their advocacy for child rights at national, regional and international levels. One way we do this is by providing timely, practical, in-depth information in several languages on how to fully take advantages of the opportunities within the UN system to advance child rights.

Our tools and publications support capacity-building and advocacy efforts and increase our impact by allowing for greater organisation and cooperation within civil society all over the world. This year we produced new tools and updated or reprinted existing materials. Whenever possible, Child Rights Connect makes child-friendly versions of materials and consults children to produce information interesting and usable for children.

Highlight of 2013 Tools and Publications

30th Anniversary USB Keys

Updated Child Rights Connect website
(see page 4)

Update of UPR Fact Sheets 1, 2, 3 and 4
(see page 25)

Reprint of OP3 CRC Ratification Leaflets

Translation of OP3 CRC child-friendly leaflet into
4 languages

OP3 CRC Information Pack & Frequently Asked
Questions for NGOs

Draft of Legal Commentary on OP3 CRC
(see page 23)

New Case Studies on NGOs' use of Concluding
Observations (see page 8)

Reports on States reviewed under the CRC and
OPs

Articles for International Service for Human
Rights Human Rights Monitor Quarterly (now the
Human Rights Monitor Monthly)

GroupTalk quarterly newsletter

2013 was our 30th Anniversary year, an opportunity for Child Rights Connect to look to the future in planning our communications and publications. In addition to significant improvements made to our website and online communications (see page 4), we looked for additional ways to be "green" when we distribute our publications and tools.

Printed versions of guides and leaflets are still useful tools, especially for note taking and for dissemination in countries where internet access is less reliable or widespread. In addition, however, Child Rights Connect looked to improve the distribution of electronic copies of our publications. The initiative we took was to make **custom USB keys**, which were loaded with all of our major publications in all of the available languages. The USB keys provide an easy and cost efficient alternative to travel with and share publications. They are especially useful at events and trainings so that participants can have electronic versions of all of our tools and share them with col-



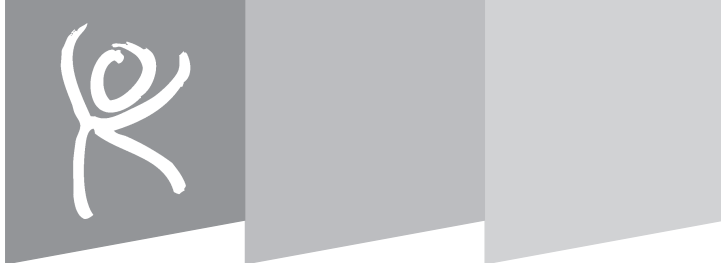
leagues and partner organisations afterwards.

To distribute publications in an organised manner during trainings, Child Rights Connect also produced **reusable tote bags**. The bags are large enough to store guides, notes and reports that NGOs and coalitions need during the CRC reporting process. They are made of high-quality material so that they can be used long-term.

Child Rights Connect continued our electronic outreach to a broad child and human rights audience through member and partner organisations. We wrote articles and updates about child rights for the newly-digital **Human Rights Monitor** from the International Service for Human Rights (ISHR). We digitally shared news and reports about States reporting

to the Committee, Committee elections and OP3 CRC including through our website, the website of the International Coalition and CRINMAILS. Our **GroupTalk newsletter** remains a key instrument for communicating and updating our members and partners. Over 2013, we grew our GroupTalk email list, adding a large number of staff from member organisations who hadn't received the newsletter in the past.

As always, Child Rights Connect works only with printers who are certified as using practices that are safe for the environment. All of our printed publications are also available in electronic versions so that they can be accessible to the maximum number of people.



Thematic Working Groups: members working together

Child Rights Connect currently has five active thematic Working Groups comprised of member organisations working together on specific child rights issues. Through the Working Groups, our members combine forces, speaking as one voice and giving greater power to their advocacy. They also provide an opportunity for our members to share ideas and best practices from their own experiences at national, regional and international levels.

More information about the Working Groups can be found on our website. The 2013 highlights and activities of the Working Groups are as follows:

Children of Incarcerated Parents

The Working Group works to promote greater awareness on issues related to children of incarcerated parents and to ensure that such issues are meaningfully included in the UN Human Rights system, including in debates and resolutions of the Human Rights Council.

The Working Group was very active during 2013, with activities at regional and international levels, work done with several UN treaty bodies and a publication, *Children of parents sentenced to death or executed, How are they affected, How can they be supported?*, published in the six UN languages. Over the course of the year, we hosted two side events at the HRC and led the consultation and adoption processes on the HRC resolution 22/18 on “Human rights of children of parents sentenced to the death penalty or executed”. During the HRC’s Annual Day on the Rights of the Child, three Working Group members delivered statements on the mental health of children of prisoners in Europe, ensuring that the issue was well represented during this significant day.

In addition to the work at the HRC, we raised awareness and made suggestions for inclusion of issues relating to children of incarcerated parents in other Geneva-based human rights mechanisms and beyond. The Working Group monitored the Committee on the Rights of the Child’s reviews of States to encourage them to make recommendations related to the impact of incarceration or execution of parents on their children. We also contributed to the drafting process of the General Comment developed by the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, on *Children of Imprisoned*

Mothers. For the UN Crime Commission in Vienna in April 2013, we organised an awareness raising event for this expert audience, which doesn’t regularly address child rights specifically.

Children without Parental Care

2013 was a very busy and productive year for the group. The main priority was the completion and launch of *Moving Forward: Implementing the Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children*. This handbook was launched at a side event during the Human Rights Council on 7 March in Geneva. Representatives from the Permanent Missions of Brazil and Namibia participated in a panel with a representative from



Members of the Children without Parental Care Working Group at their March 2013 side event to the Human Rights Council to launch *Moving Forward: Implementing the Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children*.

UNICEF and Nigel Cantwell from the Centre for Excellence for Looked After Children in Scotland (CELCIS), on behalf of the Working Group. *Moving Forward* is currently available in English, French, Spanish, Russian and Chinese at www.alternativecareguidelines.org and will be launched in Italian in early 2014.

In addition to the Geneva event, the Working Group supported the promotion of *Moving Forward* across the globe, distributing copies of the handbook, supporting events and arranging presentations to child rights experts. Launch events were held in New York, India, Uruguay, the Netherlands, Russia, Mexico and Japan and *Moving Forward* was distributed at professional conferences in Switzerland, Serbia, Montenegro, Croatia, Bulgaria, Georgia and Armenia. Presentations on the substance of the handbook were made to several child rights expert groups including the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child and the African Committee of Experts on the Rights of the Child.

The Working Group also looked for ways to interact with other UN human rights treaty bodies about the *Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children* to make sure that this issue is taken into consideration within the broader UN system. We presented both the *Guidelines* and *Moving Forward* to the UN Human Rights Committee and the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

Towards the end of the year Working Group members came together around an initiative led by Save the Children International and the Better Care Network, to develop a tool to track the implementation of the *Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children*. Efforts surrounding this tool will carry the work of the group into 2014.

Children and Violence

The Working Group on Children and Violence acts as a global focal point to advance the recommendations put forward in the UN Study on Violence Against Children (VAC). We promote our advocacy messages among key actors in Geneva, including UN human rights mechanisms and other UN agencies, as well as diplomatic missions and regional institutions, in collaboration with civil society organisations and networks. The Working Group also supports the office of the UN Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) on VAC, lobbying for the renewal of this important mandate and calling for proper funding to be provided for the meaningful execution of the mandate. The Working Group submitted a letter to the Fifth Committee of the UN General Assembly concerning the budget for the office of the SRSG/VAC, which enjoyed great success, resulting in a deci-



Participants listen to the panel discussion at the Working Group on Children and Violence's ILO side event, "Child domestic workers – a reality of violence and slavery".

sion to approve the funding requested by the office of the SRSG.

This year we engaged with the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and hosted a side event, "Child domestic workers – a reality of violence and slavery", at the World Day Against Child Labour in June. This well-attended event focused on promoting the ratification of the ILO Convention No.189, which deals with the rights of children in domestic work.

During the year 2013, the Working Group saw particular interest from our members around the topic of children involved in armed conflict. As such, we set up a focus group on this theme, which will work under the umbrella of the Working Group on Children and Violence.

Mainstreaming Child Rights

The goal of the Working Group on Mainstreaming Child Rights is to ensure that a child rights perspective is systematically taken into consideration within the activities of the UN human rights system. 2013 was an important year of restructuring for the Working Group, and many of the efforts focused on choosing concrete objectives and developing a plan to move forward. Working together with the Child Rights Connect Secretariat, the Working Group members established a strategy and, as a first order of business, we submitted a joint statement on the OHCHR's thematic strategies for 2014–2017.

Looking ahead, the Working Group has set out next steps for 2014. These include research into what the UN does to mainstream children's rights future opportunities for more coverage of relevant issues; advocate for a half day on children's rights mainstreaming in the Human Rights Council, in addition to the Annual Day on the Rights of the Child; and develop advocacy activities around a call for a

Child Rights Unit at the OHCHR. We anticipate that the realisation of this third strategic objective would result in increased capacity within the UN to address children's rights in a comprehensive and coordinated manner.

Universal Birth Registration

2013 was an exciting year for the Working Group on Universal Birth Registration. After more than 3 years of intense advocacy work by the Working Group, the governing body of the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) unanimously adopted a piece of international law specifically focused on civil registration, on 17 October 2013. This incredible advocacy achievement represents a breakthrough, setting the framework for civil registration as a tool to protect the rights of refugees and asylum-seekers.

In addition to this significant breakthrough for birth registration, the Working Group undertook many activities towards its aim of promoting universal birth registration (UBR) through United Nations human rights and humanitarian bodies and other key institutions. In the context of the HRC, the Working Group participated in side events and worked on the drafting and adoption of two resolutions: "Birth registration and the right of everyone to recognition everywhere as a person before the law" and "The

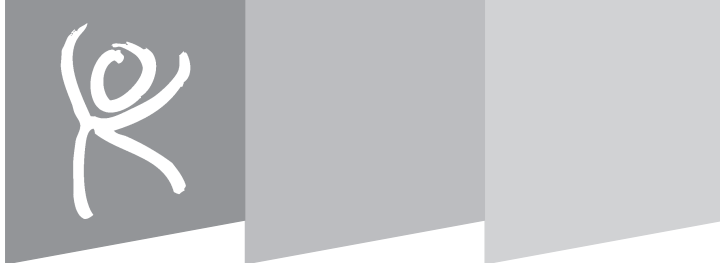


An audience gathers at the UN Palais des Nations during the Working Group on Universal Birth Registration's Photo Exhibit "Make Me Visible – Birth Registration Matters".

right of the child to the highest attainable standard of health".

Alongside the 22nd HRC session, we organized the side event "Birth Registration and Health from a Human Rights Perspective", under the leadership of World Vision. The Permanent Missions of Paraguay, Turkey, Ethiopia and Mexico sponsored the event, and speakers included Plan, the WHO and the OHCHR and more than 40 people attended.

The Working Group was also active in the State reviews by the Committee on the Rights of the Child and lobbied in the Universal Period Review process, encouraging recommendations to be made to States about UBR.



Organisational development

A strategic plan for the next five years

Child Rights Connect's current five-year strategic plan will come to an end at the close of 2014, and over the past year we have worked as Secretariat staff and Executive Committee (ExCo) members to build a new plan that will set clear objectives to guide our work from 2015 until 2019. To make sure that as many important viewpoints as possible were heard and included in the new plan, Child Rights Connect worked with former Coordinator Laura Theytaz-Bergman as a consultant to interview members and partners about how the organisation should move forward.

Starting in Summer 2013, retreats were held with staff and ExCo members to discuss the areas of work and objectives to be included in the new plan. Keeping in mind the results of the mid-term assessment of the current strategic plan, the successes and challenges of everyday work, and the perspectives shared through the interviews with the consultant, staff and ExCo members developed a new plan. We agreed on how we would build on our achievements and goals for growth given the opportunities we see on the horizon. In addition to enhancing our core work, our next strategic plan will include ways to more effectively integrate child rights into the broader UN system; the impending entry into force of OP3 CRC; and developing best practices on child participation at international level. The new five-year strategic plan will be adopted during the Child Rights

Connect General Assembly in March 2014 and come into effect in January 2015.

Child Rights Connect Executive Committee Elections

During the Child Rights Connect General Assembly each year elections are held for the Executive Committee. Each candidate, whether running for the first time or for re-election, will give a brief introduction of themselves and their work relating to the organisation. The members present at the General Assembly will then vote.

Members for re-election

Anne-Sophie Lois, Plan International, was unanimously re-elected for a new term on the Executive Committee.

New Members

Child Rights Connect welcomed three new members to our Executive Committee: Jorge Freyre from RED-LAMYC; Eylah Kadjar from Terre des Hommes International Federation; and Annabel Trapp from War Child Holland.

Executive Committee Bureau changes

Alan Kikuchi-White, SOS Children's Villages, was elected President of the Executive Committee to replace Roberta Cecchetti who stepped down from her role, but will stay on as an Executive Committee member. Alan will serve in this role for one year, until the end of his final term. Anne-Sophie Lois will continue as Vice President; Ileana Bello, Defense for Children International, will continue as treasurer, and Eylah Kadjar was elected to be Secretary.

New Member Organisations

Child Rights Connect warmly welcomed nine new member organisations admitted by the General Assembly:



Child Rights Connect Staff and Executive Committee brainstorm for the new strategic plan, to come into effect in 2015.



2013 Child Rights Connect General Assembly.

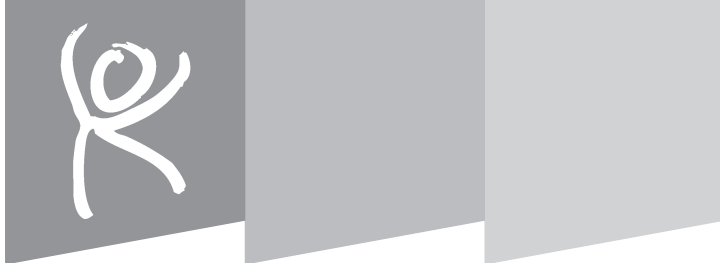
Casa Alianza Suisse
 COFRADE (Conseil français des Associations pour les
 Droits de l'Enfant)
 Edmund Rice International
 Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation
 Hope and Homes for Children
 International Juvenile Justice Observatory (IJJO)
 Internet Watch Foundation
 Marist International Solidarity Foundation (FMSI)
 Our Children "Opatija"

This year also saw organisations finishing their memberships: the International Falcon Movement

and Penal Reform International decided to end their time as members due to lack of resources or insufficient synergy between their work and the work of Child Rights Connect.

Changes in Working Groups

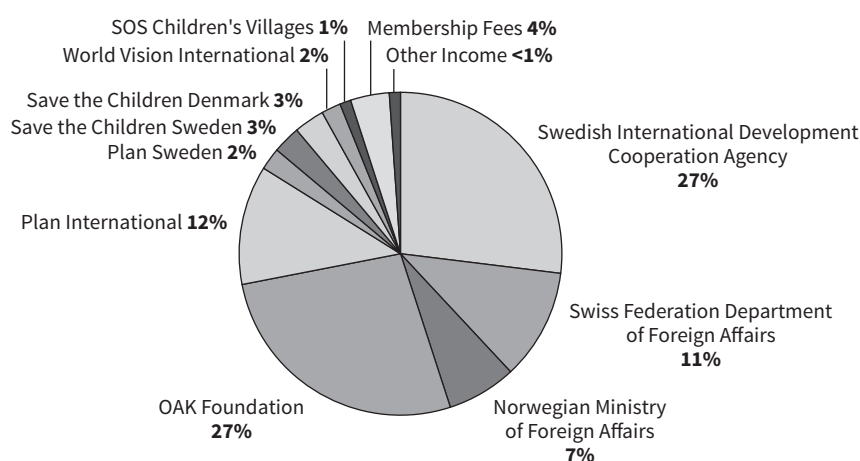
The Working Group on Mainstreaming, which was previously the Working Group on the Human Rights Council, developed a new strategy to broaden its focus towards mainstreaming child rights beyond the work of the HRC.



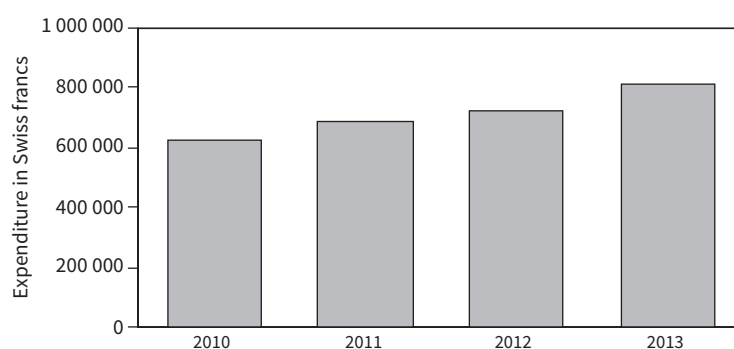
Accounts and funding

Funding partners and members extended their financial support of our work in 2013. Thanks to their continued and strengthened commitments, we were able to increase the scale of our work, both in terms of staff and programmes, to have a greater impact on child rights. Child Rights Connect sincerely thanks all of its donors for their support.

2013 sources of funding

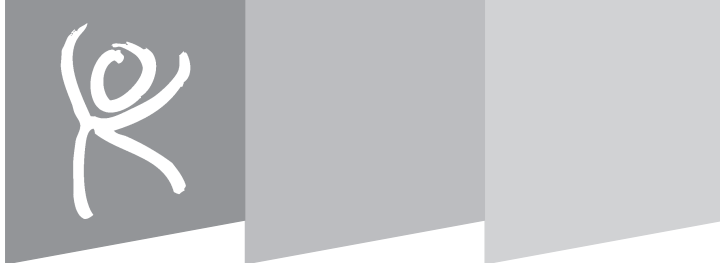


Child Rights Connect expenditure, 2010–2013



2013 expenditures of the Child Rights Connect

2013	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency	Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs	Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs	OAK Foundation	Plan International	Plan Sweden	Save the Children Sweden	Save the Children Denmark	World Vision International	SOS Children's Villages	Members fees	Other income	TOTAL
Activities													
NGO participation in CRC/OPs reporting process	12,442		59,894	16,562							-1,204		87,694
Tools & research on CRC, follow-up to Concluding Observations & UPR	8,150	1,388							5,920				15,458
Training on CRC reporting, HRC & UPR	5,584	1,900		4,657								-241	11,900
Campaign for OP3 CRC - travel, training & publications		35		31,380									31,415
OP3 CRC Coalition				7,734									7,734
30th anniversary of Child Rights Connect		1,012									8,280	889	10,181
Personnel and interns	151,154	78,688	4,525	140,736	56,494	21,445	28,233	24,430	10,865	3,716	753	723	521,762
Rebranding process & annual report	820	2,050								302	4,410	198	7,780
New website, platform & social media	3,577	75		11,560									15,212
Core Costs													
Rent, operational costs & staff development	34,979	7,403		20						7,045	12,967	377	62,791
ExCo, GA & Working Group activities	9,742									939		80	10,761
Professional services (accountant, auditors. IT)	15,585	6,600									65		22,250
Engagement with the Committee on the Rights of Child	5,008	849										60	5,917
Total expenditure per donor in 2013	247,041	100,000	64,419	212,649	56,494	21,445	28,233	24,430	16,785	12,002	25,271	2,086	810,854
Total donor income for 2013													
Income allocated to reserves											7,386		7,386
Income earmarked for 2014				29,551	55,989								85,540
TOTAL DONOR INCOME	247,041	100,000	64,419	242,200	112,483	21,445	28,233	24,430	16,785	12,002	32,657	2,086	903,780



Structure and governance

Child Rights Connect consists of three organs, the most senior being the General Assembly, which meets annually, and is comprised of our member organisations. The Executive Committee, accountable to the **General Assembly**, provides strategic support, guidance, and oversight of the work of the Child Rights Connect and its **Secretariat**. The latter is responsible for carrying out the daily work of the network, especially relating to reporting on the CRC and its Optional Protocols, mainstreaming child rights and the new Optional Protocol on a Communications Procedure.

To advance child rights within the international human rights system, Child Rights Connect's members join forces through our thematic Working Groups to address a particular child rights theme or issue.

Secretariat Staff

Lisa Myers – Director
 Anita Goh – Advocacy Officer
 Roisín Fegan – Child Rights Officer/Interim Director
 Ilaria Paolazzi – Child Rights Officer (since October)
 Muriel Dreifuss Bisson – Administrative Officer
 Laura Collier – Communications Officer
 Laure Elmaleh – Child Rights Assistant
 Sabrina Frutig – Advocacy Assistant (May to September)



2013 Child Rights Connect Secretariat Staff.

Short-term Staff and independent consultants

Irene Basal, Maria Pia Bianchetti, Sabine Cazenave, Jennifer Lynn Conway, Elodie Flachaire, Alain Gross, Alana Kapell, Yury Obozny, Jenna Scherer, Frances Sheahan, Laura Theytaz-Bergman

Interns and Volunteers

Lucia di Rosa, Crystal Crawford, Lucy Avranas, Sabrina Frutig, Andrea Soley Junco, Elisabeth Markee-Behrends
 UN Volunteer translators: Pauline Bollengier, Andrea

Durighello, Catherine Kohler, Henry Lenis, Sylvia Riveroll, Naomi Ruiz

Executive Committee

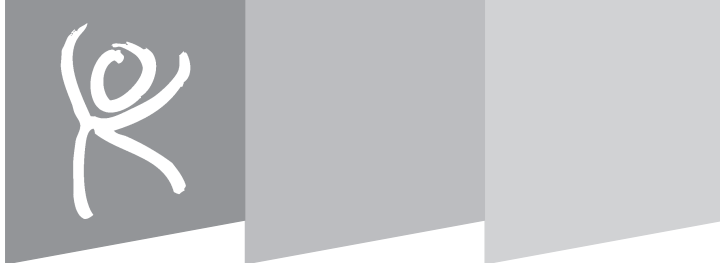
Alan Kikuchi-White – President
 SOS Villages International
 Anne-Sophie Lois – Vice-President
 PLAN International
 Eylah Kadjar – Secretary
 Terre des Hommes International
 Ileana Bello – Treasurer
 Defence for Children International

Members

Conchi Ballesteros
 Plataforma de Organizaciones de Infancia
 Peter Newell
 APPROACH – Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children
 Veronica Yates
 Child Rights International Network
 Roberta Cecchetti
 Save the Children International
 Annabel Trapp (since March)
 War Child Holland
 Jorge Freyre (since March)
 REDLAMYC

Working Groups

Working Group on Children of Incarcerated Parents
 Working Group on Children without Parental Care
 Working Group on Children and Violence
 Working Group on Indigenous Children (inactive in 2013)
 Working Group on Mainstreaming Child Rights
 Working Group on Universal Birth Registration



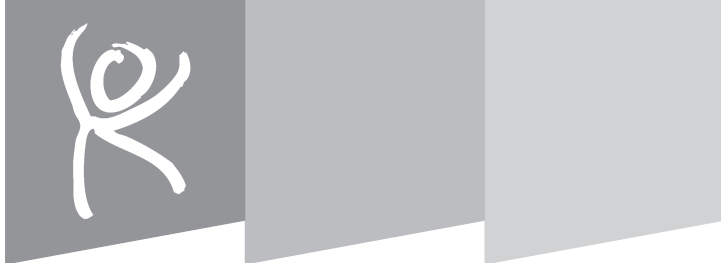
Our Members

Child Rights Connect is a network of 80 national, regional and international NGOs and networks. Together we have a broad reach and work in almost every country of the world.

2013 list of Child Right Connect member organisations:

1. Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa
2. African Child Policy Forum
3. Alliance for Children (Mauritius)
4. Anti-Slavery International
5. APPROACH Ltd. – Global Initiative to End all Corporal Punishment of Children
6. Arigatou International
7. Associated Country Women of the World
8. Association of Networks for Community Empowerment
9. Baha'i International Community
10. Casa Alianza Suisse
11. Child Helpline International
12. Child Rights International Network (CRIN)
13. Child Rights Network Switzerland
14. Children's Rights Alliance
15. Children's Rights Alliance for England (CRAE)
16. Child Soldiers International
17. Child Fund International
18. Coalition Against Trafficking in Women International
19. COFRADE (Conseil français des Associations pour les Droits de l'Enfant)
20. Consortium for Street Children
21. Defence for Children International
22. Defence for Children Internationala – DCI Costa Rica
23. ECPAT International
24. Edmund Rice International
25. Egyptian Foundation for Advancement of Childhood Conditions
26. Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation
27. EuroChild
28. European Association for Children in Hospital
29. Fédération Internationale des Communautés Educatives
30. First Nations Child and Family Caring society of Canada Incorporated
31. Friends World Committee for Consultation (QUNO)
32. Fundación Privada Intervida
33. Hopes and Homes for Children
34. Human Rights Watch
35. Inter African Committee on Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women (IAC-HTPS)
36. International Alliance of Women
37. International Association of Youth and Family Judges and Magistrates
38. International Baby Food Action Network

39. International Catholic Child Bureau (BICE)
40. International Council of Jewish Women
41. International Council of Women
42. International Federation of Social Workers
43. International Foster Care Organisation
44. International Inner Wheel
45. International Institute for Child Rights and Development
46. International Juvenile Justice Observatory (IJJO)
47. International Movement “ATD Fourth World”
48. International Play Association: Promoting the Child’s Right to Play
49. International School Psychology Association
50. International Social Service
51. Internet Watch Foundation
52. Make Mothers Matter International / Le Mouvement Mondial des Mères
53. Marist International Solidarity Foundation (FMSI)
54. Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns
55. National Aboriginal Islander Child Care
56. National Coalition for the Implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in Germany
57. Plan International
58. Plataforma de Organizaciones de Infancia
59. Proyecto Solidario
60. Red Latinoamericana de Acogimiento
61. Red Latinoamericana y Caribena por la Defensa de los Niños, las Niñas y los Adolescentes
62. Resources Aimed at the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (RAPCAN)
63. ROC (The “Right of the Child” NGO)
64. Roshni Homes Trust
65. Save the Children International
66. Society “Our Children” Opatija
67. SOS Children’s Villages International
68. Tanzania Child Rights Forum
69. Terre des Hommes International Federation
70. Together Scotland
71. WAO Afrique
72. War Child Holland
73. Women’s World Summit Foundation
74. World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action
75. World Alliance of YMCAs
76. World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts
77. World Organisation Against Torture / SOS Torture (OMCT)
78. World Union of Catholic Women’s Organisations
79. World Vision International
80. Young Men’s Christian Association of Costa Rica



Thanks

Child Rights Connect relies on the financial support of its donors and partners to run our programmes and support our objectives. We are grateful to the following donors for their support in 2013:

Governments

Norway
Sweden
Switzerland

Foundations

OAK Foundation

Child Rights Connect and International Coalition Members

Plan International
Plan Sweden
Save the Children Denmark
Save the Children Sweden
SOS Children's Villages International
World Vision International
Membership fees

Participating in the production and editing of this report

Laura Collier
Roisín Fegan

Concept and design

minimum graphics

Printing

Imprimerie Minute

Child Rights Connect envisions a world in which child rights, as defined by the Convention on the Rights of the Child, are universally recognised and realised. With your support, we can help make this happen. Donations can be made to Child Rights Connect through:

Child Rights Connect
UBS SA Vermont – Nations
Chemin Louis Dunant, 17
1211 Geneva 20
Switzerland

For Swiss Francs and other currencies:

Account No. 279- 230010.01M
IBAN: CH55 0027 9279 2300 1001 M

For US Dollars:

Account No. 279-230010.60L
IBAN: CH55 0027 9279 2300 1060 L
BIC: UBSWCHZH80A

**To find out more about how you can help be a part of this vision,
please contact:**

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