

EVALUATION OF THE WORK OF CHILD RIGHTS CONNECT

Final report of SIDA-funded evaluation



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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Child Rights Connect, formerly the NGO Group for the CRC, is one of the largest international networks for children's rights. Its aim is to ensure that all children can fully enjoy their rights, as defined by the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). It is an independent, non-profit worldwide network of more than 80 national, regional and international organisations. Child Rights Connect has a special working relationship with the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, UNICEF and other UN bodies.

Child Rights Connect started receiving funding from SIDA in 1994 and moved to a joint grant with CRIN in 2007 at the request of SIDA. There have been three joint grants from SIDA for funding of core activities: 2007-2009, 2010-2012 and 2013-2015. This evaluation report on the work of Child Rights Connect covers the period since 2010.

This SIDA-funded evaluation was conducted during August- October 2015. The methodology included drawing up an analytical framework, desk research and reviews of all relevant documentation. Interviews and a workshop were conducted with all staff. Around 40 interviews took place in person or by Skype, telephone or email with board members and key external stakeholders. An online survey produced responses from 86 organisations in 51 countries.

During 2010-15 Child Rights Connect continued to play a vital role in the coordination and logistical organisation of all civil society and other non-government representatives participating in the pre- sessions and sessions of the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC). This included technical support, with information, guidance and training about how to report to and engage with the CRC Committee. This role became more demanding due to the CRC Committee adding extra sessions in 2010 and again in 2015, in order to catch up with the backlog of countries which needed to be reviewed. Child Rights Connect has produced and updated several guides for NGOs wishing to report to the CRC Committee about the situation in their countries, including information targeted at the Optional Protocols to the CRC. It has encouraged NGOs to follow-up the recommendations from the CRC Committee in their own countries, providing advice and case studies. Since 2010 training and capacity building has expanded to include engaging with the Human Rights Council and Universal Periodic Review, as well as focusing on the 3rd Optional Protocol to the CRC, which has been the subject of major campaigning and advocacy with a wide range of partners.

A new way to support civil society participation in the CRC Committee began in 2011, with the use of webcasting. Technology has been increasingly important in other ways too: video conferences and webinars; Skype briefings for children; online report collection and registration for the CRC; and use of social media for advocacy. Child Rights Connect set up a new standalone website in 2013 and has sent out a weekly members' newsletter by email to keep members up-to-date with the work of Child Rights Connect and its members, as well as key child rights developments at the UN and elsewhere.

Considerable resources have been devoted to facilitating improvements in child participation and engagement with the CRC Committee. After advocacy from Child Rights Connect, the CRC Committee decided to draft new working methods on child-participation, which is now a key principle in their work. Child Rights Connect has supported increasing numbers of children to participate in CRC sessions, moving from 10 in 2010 to 79 in 2015. Child Rights Connect has also worked closely with the CRC Committee on their working procedures, "Days of General Discussion" and on the development of "General Comments". It represented a child rights position in UN treaty body strengthening discussions. It has drawn up criteria for CRC membership and encouraged national NGOs to put forward strong candidates for CRC elections.

Child Rights Connect has been the only civil society organisation consistently involved in organising the Human Rights Council (HRC) Annual Day on the Rights of the Child with states and UN actors, identifying NGOs with relevant expertise and representing NGO priorities. It has produced a training module and factsheets on the

HRC's Universal Periodic Review (UPR). Various advocacy initiatives have been undertaken with the HRC, on topics such as protection of the family, and this has led to wording proposed by Child Rights Connect being incorporated in HRC resolutions.

The evaluation found that the most significant changes brought about by the work of Child Rights Connect were the adoption of the Third Optional Protocol to the CRC on a Communications Procedure (OP3 CRC) with a strong text, and the fact that the CRC Committee increasingly values child participation. Their main strengths and achievements include:

- Coordination and capacity-building for NGO participation in the CRC process
- Supporting and influencing the work of the CRC Committee
- Providing a platform for NGOs to collaborate on child rights
- Some very active Working Groups addressing particular aspects of child rights
- Advocacy for child rights in the Human Rights Council and Universal Periodic Review
- Close working relationship with Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
- Effective partnerships with a wide range of organisations, big and small
- Provision of practical tools, information and guidance for NGOs in several languages
- Major contribution to standard setting (e.g. drafting of OP3)
- Enhanced communications through a new website and effective use of technology
- Professional staff team in the Secretariat with relevant expertise and good contacts

There have been a number of challenges over the last few years, primarily the changing CRC requirements, risks associated with the treaty body strengthening process, funding limitations, and the heavy workload with a small staff.

Child Rights Connect has grown and developed over the last six years and consolidated its key role in civil society interaction with the UN CRC Committee. The additional focus on the Human Rights Council has the potential to lead to a long-term positive impact on children's rights. Child Rights Connect has also met the challenge of developing from a loose network of child rights NGOs into a professional organisation with its own governance and staff. Consolidating this role and adapting to the changing international landscape is the main challenge for the coming period. The SIDA core funding has been a vital part of this development and enabled the organisation to have a secure working base.

A number of recommendations are made for the future:

- a. **The SIDA funding of core activities should continue**, as a separate grant rather than jointly with CRIN (see joint evaluation report for more information). SIDA should consider increasing its grant so that it continues to fund an agreed percentage of the core budget bearing in mind that increased core funding is essential for the delivery of the strategic plan.
- b. **Investigate new ways of supporting national coalitions** in following up the implementation of CRC and HRC recommendations at national level. Develop capacity- building tools ready for their involvement with the new optional protocol (OP3). Promote the integration and further strengthening of the involvement of children. Consider offering training and capacity building online, possibly in conjunction with a member organisation which has a learning platform in place. Set up systems to allow national actors to be actively involved in exchanging experience and good practices.
- c. **Develop and communicate a clear advocacy strategy** which defines priorities and roles, including membership involvement in decision making and advocacy activities. Consolidate the role of Child Rights Connect in coordinating NGO input to the Human Rights Council on child rights issues on behalf of members.
- d. **Continue to facilitate the strengthening of child participation:** this should include finalising the standards for child participation in international processes, as well as finalising Child Rights Connect's own child safeguarding policy. Develop website space and materials, as well as social media options, to support

local organisations working with children and young people to follow up recommendations from the CRC Committee and other treaty bodies in their own country

- e. **Review membership arrangements and develop a membership strategy** to reinvigorate the membership network, clarify membership criteria and benefits and involve the membership more closely in future strategy and activities. As part of this consider the nature of partnerships with different groups and what Child Rights Connect will in future offer to members and non-members. Consider whether the organisations Child Rights Connect works closely with should, if they so wish, become members of the network (for example national coalitions) or whether to retain a different relationship with these organisations. Consult with and use regional members to reach out and involve the wider membership. Consider how to involve and interact effectively with faith-based organizations that continue to have significant impact on the reality of children in some parts of the world.
- f. **Agree a fundraising strategy and diversify funding.** Involve ExCo in fundraising meetings with donors to help explain the network and collaborative approach. Consider entering into strategic alliances with other non-member organisations for specific projects, which could include projects of Working Groups (see below), including administrative costs as part of the grant application.
- g. **Clarify governance and organisation:** finalise revision of the statutes to clarify the respective roles and responsibilities of the ExCo and the staff and put in place the necessary policies to guide the work. Set up a Finance sub-committee of ExCo for closer attention to financial issues. Develop a system for declaring conflicts of interest. Undertake

Board training in the role of board members. Continue to diversify the membership of ExCo and use the facility to co-opt ExCo members from outside the organisation to bring extra skills and different perspectives.

- h. **Working Groups:** these need clearer terms of reference and objectives, with work plans, time-frames and regular reporting to ExCo. Integrate their planning and reporting with the planning and reporting of the Secretariat, linked to the strategic plan.
- i. **Clarify the role of the General Assembly:** Given that many members seem to have a limited understanding and involvement in the work of Child Rights Connect, consider a two- day meeting with more time for exchange and discussion, as well as fostering a sense of belonging and collaboration. A budget should be allocated with agreed criteria for funding a certain number of members who are unable to fund themselves and to allow the meeting to be less Geneva-dominated. ExCo should take decisions on admission of new members to the network based on clear criteria agreed by the General Assembly rather than potential new members being considered at the GA. Provide space for presentations by members and other organisations and promote the exchange of experience and good practices.
- j. **Systematise knowledge management, including results-based planning and reporting.** Ensure that operational plans have clear objectives and success criteria which can be monitored and measured. Increase documentation, evaluation and drawing out of “lessons learned” to inform future priorities and interventions. Use the strategic plan to make strategic choices when necessary, to allow the delivery of quality work and avoid burnout of staff.
- k. **Further strengthen external and internal communications.** Good communications are key to the effectiveness of Child Rights Connect as a membership network. Clarify the role of Child Rights Connect to overcome the confusion with the CRC Committee and OHCHR and manage the expectations of members and non-members. Further invest in tools and content for network management, as well as coordination with members and other partners. Continue to explore opportunities for civil society engagement through social media and other technological platforms, including technic tools for working with members/partners at a distance.

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Child Rights Connect, formerly the NGO Group for the CRC, is one of the largest international networks for children's rights. Its aim is to ensure that all children can fully enjoy their rights, as defined by the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). It is an independent, non-profit network of more than 80 national, regional and international organisations, networks and coalitions with a membership covering almost every country on the planet. It is based in Geneva, Switzerland, and has a small Secretariat near the UN offices, currently with seven staff (6.3 full-time equivalent) and a number of interns.

Child Rights Connect has a special working relationship with the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, UNICEF and other UN bodies. The then NGO Group for the CRC started work formally in 1983 and contributed to major children's rights developments such as the drafting of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), the ILO Convention on child labor (1999), the Optional Protocols to the CRC on children in armed conflict and sale of children (2000), the Optional Protocol to the CRC on a communications procedure (2011), and the on-going integration of civil society reporting into the monitoring of children's rights around the world.

The change of name to Child Rights Connect occurred in April 2013, the year of the 30th anniversary of the organisation. This name was chosen to reflect more accurately its role in coordinating and facilitating civil society engagement with all UN human rights mechanisms on child rights, not just the CRC Committee. Later that year, in September 2013, a new website was launched www.childrightsconnect.org.

Child Rights Connect started receiving funding from SIDA in 1994 and moved to a joint grant with CRIN in 2007 at the request of SIDA. Child Rights Connect and CRIN had been working together since the establishment of CRIN in 1995. The initial cooperation focused on information provision and dissemination, with CRIN hosting a shared database of Alternative Reports submitted to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child and the then NGO Group for the CRC gathering and uploading these reports (1998 onwards). CRIN also hosted the NGO Group's web pages. As both organisations developed, they worked together on advocacy campaigns and mainstreaming children's rights in the UN more generally. At the same time, they started to have more distinct, but complementary, strategies.

There have been three joint grants from SIDA for funding of core activities of the organisations: 2007-2009, 2010-2012 and 2013-2015. As part of the third grant phase, it was agreed that SIDA would fund an evaluation of both organisations and their joint work; this was provided for in article 13 of the *Agreement on Core Support* signed with SIDA in June 2013. This evaluation of the work of Child Rights Connect covers the period since 2010, ie the last two SIDA grants.

The evaluator would like to thank the staff of Child Rights Connect for their commitment to the evaluation process and for all the support and documentation that they provided. They had endless patience with all the questions and requests for information.

3. APPROACH TO THE EVALUATION – PURPOSE, SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

The evaluation of Child Rights Connect had the following aims, as set out in the Terms of Reference developed in agreement with SIDA:

- Analyse and evaluate the work and development of Child Rights Connect since the start of the previous strategic plan in 2010
- Review the impact of the organisation's work on the realisation of children's rights
- Analyse and evaluate the effectiveness of the methods of work chosen to accomplish the objectives, including with regard to methods of advocacy
- Identify the major challenges to Child Rights Connect's work and its success/failure in overcoming them.

- Make recommendations to address current and future potential challenges
- Review the organisation's use of resources
- Review the 2015-2019 strategic plan in order to highlight priorities, and make recommendations for short and long-term areas of focus within the strategic period, explicitly based on the evaluation findings

As SIDA has provided core funding to Child Rights Connect, and the funds have not been allocated to specific projects, all aspects of its work and activities since 2010 fall within the scope of the evaluation.

The methodology for the evaluation involved drawing up an analytical framework to guide the evaluation, together with key evaluation questions (please see appendix G). Desk research was undertaken and reviews of all relevant documents such as annual reports, publications and funding proposals. The evaluator spent time at the Child Rights Connect office during two visits in August 2015 and conducted Interviews with all staff, as well as key partners based in Geneva. A staff workshop was held in Geneva on 27 August 2015 and a further joint workshop with CRIN on 28 September 2015. Key people identified for interview included members of the Executive Committee (ExCo), representatives of INGOs (who were also members of Child Rights Connect), the CRC Committee, UNICEF, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, UN diplomatic missions and donors. Around 40 interviews were conducted in person or by Skype, telephone or email. A complete list of people who contributed to the evaluation can be found at Appendix B. Separately, an online survey was sent out on Survey Monkey to 620 network members and contacts worldwide and 86 responses were received from 51 different countries (see charts below for more details of respondents). In addition information was gathered from a sample of children and young people who had participated in CRC sessions, as well as the national child rights coalitions in Senegal and Cambodia which facilitated the children's involvement. All information gathered was then compiled and analysed for this report.

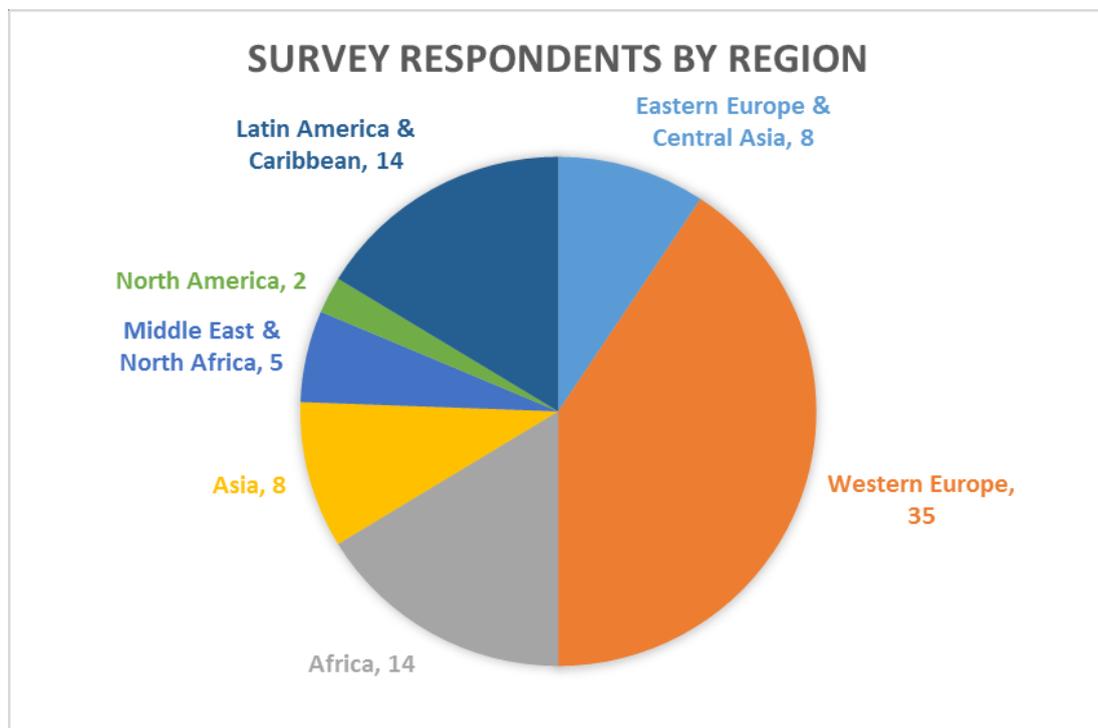


Figure 1 Number of responses to online member/contact survey by region

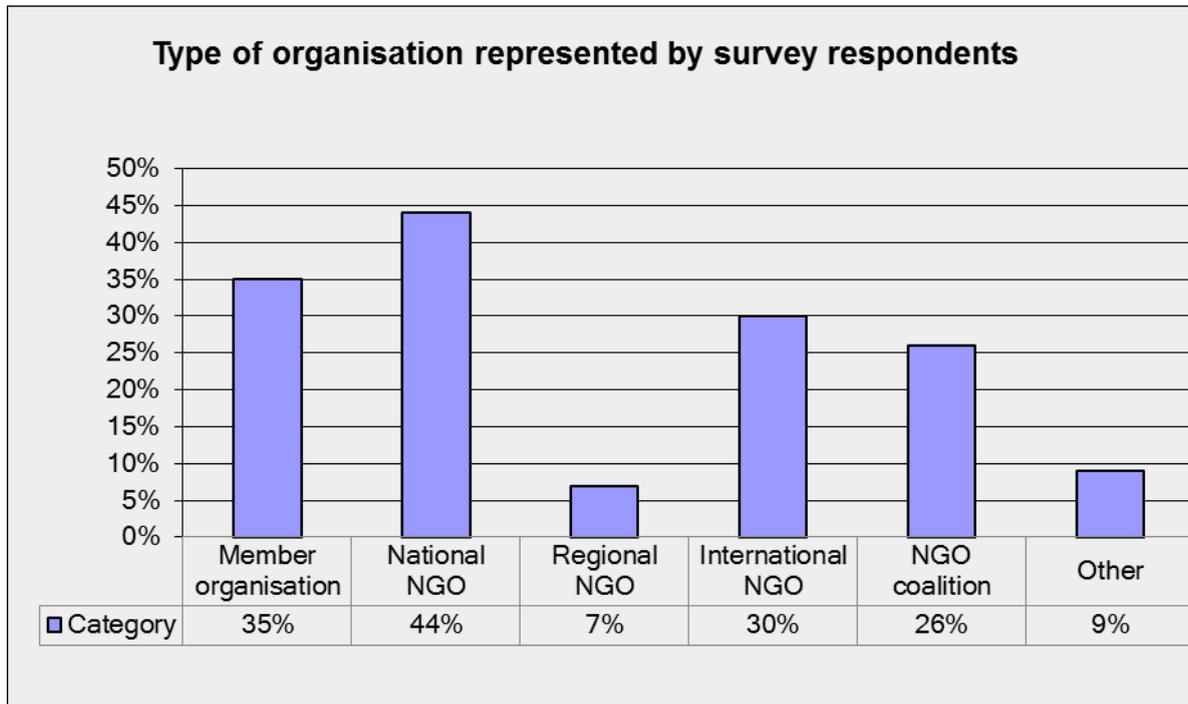


Figure 2 Survey respondents by type of organization

Please note that organisations responding may fall into more than one category of organisation, for example, a national NGO may also be the representative of a national NGO coalition. It can be seen that nearly half the responses to the survey came from national NGOs, located in countries worldwide. The overall response rate was 14% which is average for an online survey, but a high response rate in comparison with other surveys sent out by Child Rights Connect in the last few years. The fact that responses came from 51 countries shows the worldwide reach of the work of Child Rights Connect (please note Appendix B includes the list of countries). Thirty respondents were from member organisations (22 of the 84 member organisations, so around a quarter of members are presented in the survey), with over half (17) being from INGOs. 159 of the 620 surveys sent out were to individuals from member organisations; therefore the member response rate (19%) was higher than the overall response rate. However it should be noted that 14 of the 30 member responses did not categorise themselves as members. Several of these were from national offices of INGOs, so it is possible that some people may not be aware that their organization is member.

Profile of member organisations	
National NGO	9
Regional NGO	1
International NGO	17
NGO coalition	7
Other	1

Figure 3 Profile of members in survey

4. FINDINGS

4.1 Assessment of activities and achievements

The second phase of joint SIDA funding with CRIN coincided with the start of the Child Rights Connect strategic plan for 2010-14. In 2010 the organisation was still called the NGO Group for the CRC. The role was mainly focused on continuing and consolidating the longstanding work on supporting the CRC reporting process. At the same time the NGO Group was becoming involved in other initiatives, including lobbying the Human Rights Council on child rights issues; leading the campaign for the complaints mechanism under the UN CRC (now the Third Optional Protocol to the CRC – OP3); sharing information on children’s rights and the Universal Periodic Review (UPR); and supporting enhanced child participation. In 2012 Child Rights Connect was accorded ECOSOC status, allowing it formally to deliver its own statements to UN bodies. A summary Timeline showing key

milestones and achievements since 2007, compiled with Child Rights Connect staff can be found at Appendix F. The Strategic Plan for 2010-14 described four strategic priorities, with child participation as a cross-cutting principle:

- i. 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.
- ii. Mainstream child rights in relevant activities of other United Nations human rights mechanisms and procedures.
- iii. 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.
- iv. Pursue and support international advocacy on priority child rights issues through coordinated action with members and partners.

The strategic plan for 2015-19 has broadly similar objectives, but highlights two new strategic priorities: child participation as a strategic priority in its own right; and the effective use of the Third Optional Protocol to the CRC (OP3).

All those consulted for the evaluation referred to the extensive range of activities and achievements of the organisation over the last six years. Many of these are described in the annual reports for the period. It was also noted that the work has become more strategic in its approach.

A summary of the main activities and achievements which have been enabled by the SIDA grant, together with other funding, is provided below. Please see Appendix C for a table of progress against the specific objectives set out in the SIDA proposals for 2010-2012 and 2013-15, which were linked closely to the strategic plan.

Supporting civil society participation in the CRC

The Committee on the Rights of the Child is the UN treaty body with the highest number of ratifications and reporting states. It has the best civil society participation of any UN treaty bodies: countries which rarely report at international level (eg North Korea) are involved in reporting to the CRC Committee. Therefore the CRC is an entry point for the human rights accountability of states. Since the CRC was set up, Child Rights Connect has played a vital role in the coordination and logistical organisation of all civil society and other non-government representatives participating in the pre-sessions and sessions (including NGOs, national and regional coalitions, children, ombudspersons and National Human Rights Institutions). This role continued during 2010-15 and became more demanding due to the CRC Committee adding extra sessions in 2010 and again in 2015, in order to catch up with the backlog of countries which needed to be reviewed. At the same time the OHCHR Secretariat experienced a number of changes and had reduced capacity, which led to Child Rights Connect taking on some extra tasks.

In the last few years there have been a number of developments which could have reduced the effectiveness of civil society participation in the work of the CRC Committee. Child Rights Connect has carried out direct advocacy at UN level to preserve the confidentiality of civil society's participation and ensure a similar confidential process for children. This advocacy has focused particularly the treaty body strengthening/harmonising process and on child participation at the CRC (please see further information in subsequent sections). As a consequence, the CRC Committee has retained its policy of holding confidential meetings with civil society representatives and is the only UN treaty body to have this arrangement.

In summary, Child Rights Connect has undertaken the following activities to support NGOs:

- Alerting them to the forthcoming review of their state by the CRC Committee
- Explaining how the reporting process to the CRC works Providing information, guidance and training on drafting civil society alternative reports which can be submitted to the CRC Committee to consider alongside those from states
- Giving feedback on the format of draft reports so that they are presented appropriately for the CRC Committee
- Logistical, technical and, in some cases, financial support to travel to Geneva to interact with the CRC Committee
- Facilitating their attendance at the CRC Committee’s pre-session where the Committee speaks with non-state actors about the key issues in the states under review
- Facilitating their attendance at the Committee’s formal session with the state in question providing information and examples of follow-up actions and advocacy strategy

Fifty organisations which responded to the survey (59%) had attended sessions of the CRC Committee with the support of Child Rights Connect. Several made very positive comments about the assistance they had received. The following examples are from African NGOs or coalitions (non-members; please note that some comments have been translated from French):

- *“Child Rights Connect is excellent at organising pre-sessions”*
- *“We were astounded by the excellent work done before, during and after the pre-session – providing accessible materials on drafting the alternative report, organising and preparing the trip for the participants, welcome, orientation of participants in Geneva, organizing forums for children and adults, monitoring and evaluation, sharing recommendations”.*
- *“Thank you! Thanks to you, the situation of children has been able to be heard, even if the road is still long. At least we have been able to partly be heard by the authorities. That’s a positive step forward”*
- *“Was very useful in supporting national NGOs to present their complementary reports to the Committee on the Rights of the Child. It has done a lot in assisting national NGOs especially from Africa to be able to write, submit and make presentations before the CRC”.*
- *“Child Rights Connect enhances our monitoring and reporting, facilitates our mission and mandate”.*

The table below shows the numbers of NGO representatives supported by Child Rights Connect to attend the CRC Committee sessions and the number of alternative reports received and transmitted to the Committee by Child Rights Connect. There has been a move towards more “integrated reporting”, meaning that reports to the CRC Committee include reports on the optional protocols (OPAC and OPSC). Further details for each year can be found in the annual reports on the Child Rights Connect website.

Supporting NGO participation in the work of the CRC Committee						
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
<i>States examined in CRC pre-sessions and sessions</i>	40	37	37	32	36	51
Work undertaken by Child Rights Connect						
Number of NGO participants who received logistical and technical support from Child Rights Connect	328	220	134	130	249	374
Number of above NGO participants who additionally received financial support	75	44	53	44	55	21
Alternative reports on CRC received and transmitted by Child Rights Connect to CRC Committee	126	114	133	74	104	204
Alternative reports on OPAC* received and transmitted by Child Rights Connect to CRC Committee	12	8	18	4	12	5
Alternative reports on OPSC* received and transmitted by Child Rights Connect to CRC Committee	17	2	14	10	7	9

Figure 4 Table of support for NGO engagement with CRC Committee

*OPAC: Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict

*OPSC: Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography

Please note: lower numbers for OPSC and OPAC due to increased "integrated" reporting.

The data above shows that Child Rights Connect has been involved not only in technical support and advice to NGO participants, but also logistics including their travel and accommodation in Geneva. This has become an increasing task, especially in 2015 with the CRC Committee's "double chambers" and additional participants. In 2014 Child Rights Connect entered into a strategic cooperation with CAGI, the Geneva Welcome Centre, to use their services, such as reduced prices for booking of hotels. However this cooperation increased the workload, due to the additional coordination required. In 2015, in order to address this, focal points in each country were identified, normally an NGO coalition, so that the Child Rights Connect Secretariat could be in contact with one person per country, who would take on in-country coordination. They also set up a website so that reports could be uploaded by NGOs directly, and to which OHCHR had direct access. This meant that OHCHR could receive the reports themselves and make the necessary copies for the meetings, rather than this being the responsibility of Child Rights Connect. At the same time funding criteria were introduced for pre-session participation, particularly aimed at funding NGOs that could find not any other funding and from countries where there would otherwise be no NGO representation. General participation in the session is no longer funded. There has also been further investment in webcasting CRC sessions (see further on page 13 below), to ensure that this works effectively and makes the sessions accessible to a wider audience. Overall these changes have reduced the workload for Child Rights Connect and allowed it to focus on the technical support and advice which it is best placed to provide.

Inevitably, some organisations have not been happy about the decision to introduce more rigorous criteria for financial support for attendance at CRC Committee sessions. One Latin American NGO reported that they did not have the resources to attend themselves and the NGO coalition selected did not represent other NGOs in their country. They had tried to find a way of participating remotely through the internet but this had not been possible.

Certain INGOs with representatives at the UN in Geneva have national offices or partners in developing countries. Some misunderstandings have arisen in relation to the attendance of their local partners at CRC sessions. One member INGO suggested improving communications:

“Child Rights Connect engages directly with my colleagues at the national level and all three parties assume that we are all informing each other, which is not always the case..... It is a definite communications gap, leading to missed opportunities and embarrassing situations where staff and children travel to Geneva without informing our Geneva office (sometimes because they don't know we exist!).”

Child Rights Connect aims to treat all national actors in the same way and respects confidentiality, assuming that international organisations will have their own communications systems with local partners. This approach may need to be more clearly communicated.

Providing guidance on reporting to the Committee on the Rights of the Child

Since 2010 Child Rights Connect has produced and updated several guides for NGOs wishing to report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the child about the children’s rights situations in their countries, including information specifically targeted at the Optional Protocols to the CRC.

The Reporting Cycle of the Committee on the Rights of the Child: a guide for NGOs and NHRIs

(revised 2014) Provides up-to-date information on the procedures for the examination of reports submitted under the CRC and its

Optional Protocols. It explains how NGOs can interact with the CRC Committee by submitting information and participating in the pre-sessional working group meeting. *(Available in English, French & Spanish; earlier version in Russian)*

Reporting on OPSC and OPAC (2011)

Reflects official guidelines on reporting on the CRC and the Optional Protocol on the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography (OPSC) and the Optional Protocol on the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict (OPAC). The provisions of the two treaties are explained and advice provided to NGOs on how to participate effectively in the process *(in English, French & Spanish)*

Training and capacity building

Child Rights Connect has undertaken training and capacity building for NGOs and other non-state actors engaging with the CRC for many years. Since 2010 the training on the CRC reporting process has expanded to include engaging with the Human Rights Council and Universal Periodic Review, as well as focusing on the 3rd Optional Protocol to the CRC (see further below, page 19). A “follow-up” module has also been added, on how to link the recommendations from the CRC Committee and other UN treaty bodies to national advocacy plans for NGOs, to enable them to work on advancing child rights in their respective countries.

Capacity building activities in Geneva during the CRC pre-sessions have taken the form of a half-day Best Practice and Exchange Forum for adults and children. In 2015 these have been under review, to re-assess how to make the sessions most effective for the diversity of participants and in the short time available. In future it is proposed to set up an online platform for capacity building and best practice exchange, to complement the fora in Geneva and allow discussions and contacts to continue between reporting years.

Staff designed training modules and delivered training on request on numerous occasions during 2010-15, including regional and national training workshops.

Year	Examples of training workshops
2010	Training on the UPR was provided for ECPAT's International Secretariat in Thailand
2011	Regional workshop on child participation in child rights monitoring delivered for Plan in Cambodia. Regional workshop on OP3 in Thailand
2012	National advocacy training on OP3 in Thailand, Belgium and Turkey Regional training on OP3 in Indonesia Regional training on OP3, UPR and HRC with Plan in Panama
2013	OP3 ratification training at CSO Forum in Addis Ababa and training of trainers for the members of the Ratify OP3 CRC Steering Committee Training on accessing the CRC for representatives from Plan Asia offices and national coalitions from 9 countries at the annual Civil Society Coalitions meeting in Bangkok
2014	Workshops at the 7 th regional meeting for child rights coalitions in Europe on CRC, UPR, OP3 and communications strategy, in Bulgaria Capacity-building workshop on CRC reporting in Lithuania Child rights-based education and training on CRC reporting in Belfast, N Ireland Advancing children's rights through the UN for member organisation Edmund Rice
2015	Training for National Human Rights Institutions on CRC reporting

Figure 5 Training workshops run by Child Rights Connect

During 2010-15 training and capacity-building work on CRC, HRC and UPR was mainly reactive (ie carried out when invited), due to resource constraints and other priorities, while the organisation of training on OP3 was often initiated by Child Rights Connect.

Webcasting and use of technology to enhance communications and participation

This is an aspect of Child Rights Connect's work which has come more and more to the fore since 2010. A new way to support civil society participation in the CRC began in 2011, when the NGO Group helped In CRC, an NGO from the Republic of Korea, to webcast three state reviews during the 58th Session of the CRC Committee. NGOs and other stakeholders were able to watch the governments of Panama, Republic of Korea and the Syrian Arab Republic being examined by the Committee. Subsequently, national NGOs were able to use the videos for follow-up work in their country. After this Child Rights Connect participated in a pilot project with the CCPR Centre and others to webcast the sessions of all UN treaty bodies, offering live worldwide access in order to make the session more accessible to those unable to participate. During 2012, the NGO Group webcast the CRC reviews of 21 states, as well as the Day of General Discussion on children in the context of international migration and the signing ceremony for the new Optional Protocol on a Communications Procedure (OP3). They took care of all aspects of the webcasting equipment set-up and filming. This responsibility continued in subsequent years and was part of an advocacy plan to convince the UN that they should do this themselves, and to show that it can be done. In

2014 the UN General Assembly decided that official webcasting of all treaty bodies' sessions would start as soon as feasible. However this has still not happened. In 2015 Child Rights Connect invested in professional webcasting (as opposed to doing it themselves), in order to make sure that the session could be viewed by a wider audience. This coincided with stopping funding participants to attend these sessions, as it was decided that investing in professional webcasting was more efficient than paying for a limited number of individuals to travel to Geneva. Webcasts can be found at www.treatybodywebcast.org.

In 2014 Child Rights Connect assisted the CRC Committee to organise their Day of General Discussion (DGD) on the theme of digital media and children's rights and disseminated information on how to participate through online submissions and social media. Child Rights Connect carried out the webcasting of the sessions of the

DGD and live tweeted the highlights of the discussion, as well as setting up a photo message gallery on Instagram.

Technology has also been used effectively in a number of other ways:

- Online report collection and registration for attending the CRC Committee pre-sessions and sessions began in 2015
- Working with children by Skype in advance of their participation in CRC Committee sessions since 2012 (see further below)
- During the CRC Committee's 68th pre-session in 2014, Child Rights Connect organised the first video conference between the Committee and children with disabilities from a country in Africa, allowing the children to explain the impact of discrimination on their rights as children.
- During 2013 Child Rights Connect started using social media (Facebook and Twitter) more extensively as part of the UP! Child Rights campaign, to spread the word about new developments and opportunities for child rights organisations around the world.
- Video-conferences and webinars have been used to broadcast training events held in Geneva in English, French and Spanish. For example, in 2011 a webinar on the role of NGOs in the promotion and monitoring of child rights was delivered for West African NGOs; in 2012, online presentations were delivered by Skype and webinar platforms to NGOs based in Spain, Latin America and Bangladesh.
- In 2013, in partnership with OHCHR, Child Rights Connect assisted the CRC Committee to be involved in its first ever online public interaction platform, on the topic of access to justice for children. This was conducted through a live panel discussion using a "Google+ Hangout" with over 200 people watching and many more tweeting afterwards on the topic.
- Disseminating a weekly *Member News* to members to keep them up-to-date with the work of Child Rights Connect and its members, as well as key child rights developments at the UN and elsewhere. This was previously a quarterly newsletter called *GroupTalk* until 2013.
- Carrying out surveys of members and contacts – for example a communications survey in 2013 to find out what sort of information was most useful to members and contacts in order to support stronger collaboration for advocacy on child rights.

Until 2013 Child Rights Connect did not have its own website and gave limited priority to its own communications. The NGO Group had historically limited its visibility, not least because of avoiding any suggestion of competition with key members based in Geneva. The information it produced was mainly disseminated on its behalf by CRIN until 2013. The addition of a post of Communications Officer has allowed Child Rights Connect to project a much more professional image and has enabled NGOs and other interested parties to have a better understanding of Child Rights Connect's role. A member INGO commented in the survey: *"I appreciate all the good work that Child Rights Connect is doing, and the valuable information they are sending out in their newsletter to stay up to date on what is happening in Geneva".*

However the use of technology can still present some problems for NGOs in certain parts of the world. Some NGO coalitions reported that they were unable to take advantage of opportunities to participate at a distance as their internet access was not reliable enough.

Follow-up after the CRC Committee sessions

Child Rights Connect attended all 18 sessions of the Committee from 2010-15 (sessions 53-70) and monitored the examination of reports by the Committee in the presence of the relevant governments. Country reports were produced on the discussions for sessions 53-69. These reports allowed NGOs from the country concerned, as well as the broader child rights community, to receive unofficial summaries of the dialogue months before the official summary records become available. This was particularly useful to those unable to travel to Geneva. The reports have normally been available only in English.

In addition, during 2010-11, Child Rights Connect wrote articles on the main points and outcomes of CRC sessions which were published in the ISHR Human Rights Monitor Quarterly.

During 2015, given the investment in professional webcasting, allowing NGOs and others unable to travel to Geneva to follow CRC sessions online, as well as increased provision of information on the OHCHR website, it was decided to discontinue the country session reports and focus staff efforts more on other priorities, such as strengthening the follow-up from CRC sessions.

This has been done by continuing to disseminate the “Concluding Observations” from CRC sessions and by providing NGOs with case studies showing strategies for follow-up in-country. Ten case studies have been published so far from a range of different settings: Cambodia, England, Azerbaijan, DRC, Italy, Peru, Philippines, Senegal, Sri Lanka, and International NGO. Another ten are in the pipeline. The studies can be found on the Child Rights Connect website.

Child Rights Connect also carried out research in 2011 to look at ways of strengthening the role of non-state actors in the follow-up to the CRC Committee’s recommendations, but the study was not published. Plans for more systematic follow-up of the CRC recommendations with further support for national NGOs and coalitions proved difficult to realise due to limited resources and staffing. However some national actors (non-members) made links between different aspects of Child Rights Connect’s work in their responses to the online survey:

- *“From the first view I decided to mark "good" or "average" for the promotion of child rights realization on national level. But after clear thinking, everything is connected. Child Rights Connect engaged and supported us in alternate reporting to UN Committee on the CRC. We have lobbied relevant Concluding Observations, and all of this was reflected at National Plan of Action towards making better State of Children and their Protection for 2012-2016 (in our country)... Then, Child Rights Connect is excellent on national level as well”.*
- *“I consider Child Rights Connect as the body of the Children Rights Committee. Its supports and commitment to NGO is really amazing. If legislation about children will change (in my country) the Child Rights Connect team have to be mentioned”.*

Child Participation

In the last six years Child Rights Connect has devoted considerable resources to facilitating improvements in child participation and engagement with the CRC Committee. As already mentioned, child participation was a cross-cutting issue in the 2010-14 strategic plan, but became more important during this period and was made one of four strategic priorities from 2013 onwards. Guidelines were developed for children’s participation in the reporting process in 2010, following research conducted with children in 2009. After advocacy from Child Rights Connect, the CRC Committee decided to draft new working methods on child-participation. Child Rights Connect supported them and co-organised a retreat on this subject for the Committee in 2013. In June 2014 the CRC Committee issued updated working guidelines for the Committee’s engagement with children, entitled *Working methods for the participation of children in the reporting process of the Committee on the Rights of the Child* (paper CRC/C/66/2), demonstrating that child participation is a key principle in their work. This document refers to the role of Child Rights Connect in making this a reality. Child Rights Connect disseminated the guidelines to members and partners, especially those working at national level.

In 2011 Child Rights Connect conducted further research on the importance of children’s reporting to the CRC Committee. This led to an internal document entitled *Children’s reports to the Committee on the Rights of the Child - Because it’s their right*, analysing existing reports and identifying guidelines and good practices. Building on this research, Child Rights Connect produced three publications targeted at children and NGOs accompanying them (see the list in the box below). These are available on the website, along with links to other child friendly publications about the UN from Save the Children and UNICEF.

My Pocket Guide to CRC reporting (2011). An introduction for children and teens about the CRC, the Committee on the Rights of the Child and its reporting process. *(English/French/Spanish)*

Together with Children – for children (2011). This is a guide for NGOs accompanying children during the CRC reporting process, containing practical advice and tools. *(English/French/Spanish)*

Speak up for your Rights - OP3 CRC (2013). A short guide for children, young people and child-led organisations to help them understand the CRC Optional Protocol (OP3) on a communications procedure. *(English/Arabic/French/Russian/Spanish)*

Child Rights Connect has supported national organisations which have facilitated the involvement of children with the CRC Committee and acted as their “chaperones” in Geneva. Advance preparation has ranged from advising on the selection of children and providing information to Swiss embassies to facilitate visa applications, to advising on supporting material needed and how to make effective presentations to the Committee. From 2012 Child Rights Connect started conducting advance virtual briefings via Skype for children coming to Geneva for CRC sessions, a few weeks before their trip. Once in Geneva, Child Rights Connect has accompanied the children to help them prepare and present their views to the CRC Committee. A children’s Best Practice Exchange Forum (for under 18’s) has also taken place at CRC pre-sessions since 2014, in parallel with the similar fora for NGO representatives already referred to above. Prior to this, children attended the adult forum. This has allowed children the opportunity to reflect on their visit to Geneva through interactive activities games and group work, share experiences with other children and plan follow-up when they get home.

During 2010-15 Child Rights Connect supported over 150 children from a variety of countries to attend CRC Committee sessions in person. In 2014 Child Rights Connect assisted the CRC Committee to have its first “virtual” meeting with children over Skype. The table below gives more information about child participation in Geneva with the CRC Committee.

Year	Number of children’s reports submitted	No of children supported at CRC Committee	Countries of children attending CRC Committee sessions
2010	3	10	Japan, Serbia <i>(and possibly others)</i>
2011	1	8	Cambodia, Costa Rica, Republic of Korea, Myanmar, Australia
2012	3	7	Albania, Canada, Thailand
2013	8	4	Indonesia, India
2014	8	26	Mexico, Ghana, Nepal, Honduras, Mauritius, Cambodia, Netherlands, Uruguay, Colombia, Germany
2015	6	79	UK, Bulgaria, Senegal, Gabon, Zimbabwe, Ireland, Zambia, Peru, Kenya, France, Benin, Brazil, Chile, Bangladesh

Figure 6 Child participation in the CRC

Children interviewed for the evaluation were all very positive about their experience and the support they received from Child Rights Connect. They had mainly got involved in reporting to the CRC through being in children’s clubs and wanting to let people outside their own country, at international level, know about the difficulties faced by children where they lived. One boy referred to his wish to “*do the positive work for society like a proverb (children is the resource of the nation)*”. Those who had been to Geneva particularly appreciated:

- Being given information, advice and reassurance by Child Rights Connect so that they knew what to expect in Geneva
- Participating in meetings and debates with children from other countries
- Having a private session with the CRC Committee. One girl noted *“the UN committee pay much attention on the children and listen carefully the issues raised by the children”*.
- The possibility of contributing to improvements in children’s lives: *“Participate in this meeting is very important because we show the suffering of child abuse, violation of the child to the International level to let them see and help us to find a good solution”*.

One young person from Europe felt that child participation could be further improved:

“Maybe more participation on behalf of the youth in the session, ask more kids to give their opinion face to face with the committee”.

When asked about the follow-up after meeting with CRC committee, all those interviewed stated that they had shared their experiences on their return home, with report-backs to other children and groups such as civil society organisations, local authorities and government representatives. Some had written reports of their activities. One young person explained the follow-up advocacy undertaken:

“We delivered an advocacy report to the authorities. It is too early to evaluate the actions of the state as a result of our advocacy since our return, but we have been assured that our appeals have not fallen on deaf ears”.

NGO coalitions which have facilitated child participation in the CRC reporting process noted that their collaboration with Child Rights Connect had had a number of successful outcomes:

- Children had developed the capacity to draft their own report;
- Children had had the opportunity to speak directly to the CRC Committee about their concerns, suggestions and recommendations;
- Children’s representatives had had opportunity to meet each other and also to speak to other international NGOs in Geneva about issues in their country

Child Rights Connect was praised for supporting the children’s ideas and proposals without trying to influence them or impose adult perceptions. However a number of ongoing difficulties were also acknowledged, particularly in relation to maintaining the interest of children and young people and supporting them in the follow-up back in their country. More assistance was needed to enable increased capacity building of children and young people and to plan the steps to take with children in the intervening period until the next reporting period, especially in the context of very limited budgets. One INGO from Asia noted the considerable efforts made by some very vulnerable children to produce a video to submit to the CRC Committee, for which they had received no feedback – this was not the fault of Child Rights Connect, but showed the need for better systems of recognition and encouragement.

Child Rights Connect has also contributed to children’s participation in the CRC Committee’s Days of General Discussion, the HRC Annual Days on the Rights of the Child and the ratification process for the third optional protocol to the CRC on a communications procedure (OP3). In 2013 children’s views were researched, compiled and presented to the CRC Committee and the Human Rights Council. 310 children from 24 countries answered a questionnaire (in English, French or Spanish) on child-friendly justice at international level. Their views were fed into an OHCHR report and were presented to the CRC Committee for the preparation of its internal working methods relating to the new optional protocol (OP3).

Internally, Child Rights Connect started working on minimum standards for children’s participation in international meetings and a first draft was produced in 2012. After the adoption of CRC Committee’s working methods on child participation, and after staff had received training on child participation in December 2014, it was proposed to widen the focus of these standards and produce *“minimum standards for child participation in international processes”*. Work has not as yet proceeded on this. Please see Appendix E for a table of advocacy outcomes relating to work on child participation.

Support to the CRC Committee

Over a long period Child Rights Connect has had a close working relationship with CRC Committee members, who often rely on Child Rights Connect staff for information and technical support. This has included keeping the CRC Committee up-to-date with the work of the HRC and UPR on child rights, as well as recommending panel members and experts for seminars on particular topics. Often Child Rights Connect has “filled the gap” – carrying out tasks which one might assume would be done by others – for example during the process of developing the Optional Protocol (OP3) on a Communications Procedure in 2011, it fell to them to update the Committee on the latest changes made to the draft protocol, as well as briefing them on the position of child rights NGOs.

The Child Rights Connect Executive Committee and Secretariat has held meetings and a working dinner with the Committee members every year, in order to build relationships with the Committee and its Secretariat, and discuss areas of collaboration, as well as the Committee’s working methods. When new CRC Committee members have been elected, Child Rights Connect has organised briefings and induction meetings with UNICEF in Geneva. 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. Child Rights Connect took part in the official induction day, explaining its work in supporting national, regional and international civil society actors to engage with the Committee.

A member of the CRC Committee recognised the “mammoth task of receiving inputs from NGOs in the form of alternative reports” and praised the work of Child Rights Connect in “getting the voice of NGOs and those of children heard - and in doing so ensuring that the work they do is synergised with what the Committee does”.

Improving the working methods of the CRC Committee

As part of its close working arrangements with the CRC Committee, Child Rights Connect has been able to influence its working methods in a number of ways, for example:

- Supporting the development of new working methods relating to child participation, as already referred to above
- Supporting the preparation of the CRC Committee’s Days of General Discussion. In 2011 the then NGO Group’s Working Group on Children of Incarcerated Parents assisted the Committee in preparing the concept note, agenda, panelists and working groups for the General Day of Discussion on this topic, as well as setting up an exhibition with a collection of children’s testimonies of how parental incarceration had affected children.
- Contributing to the CRC Committee Rules of Procedure for the third Optional Protocol on a communications procedure (OP3) in 2012
- Contributing to the CRC Committee amended Rules of Procedure for the state review process in 2013
- Carrying out baseline research and supporting the CRC Committee to determine how best it could implement its plans for a simplified reporting procedure (2014-15), ensuring that the new system would retain key elements such as effective NGO and child participation. This was linked to the UN General Assembly resolution on strengthening and enhancing the effective functioning of the human rights treaty body system (see further below) in which simplified reporting procedures were encouraged.

Influencing “General Comments”

Child Rights Connect has been closely involved in the development of “General Comments” by the CRC Committee. These are developed on particular topics to strengthen understanding of the CRC and its implementation at national level. The work has included the following:

- Providing support for the selection of topics;
- Publicising the Committee’s calls for submissions to civil society, especially those who have expertise in the area covered by the General Comment in question;
- Attending expert meetings;
- Submitting papers and written statements on the General Comments;
- Proposing possible strategies for external consultations and developing draft texts;
- Keeping interested NGO partners around the world updated.

In 2011 this included General Comments on the protection from all forms of violence, the best interests of the child, health, the right to play, and business and child rights. In 2012 the then NGO Group’s Working Group on Indigenous Children was involved in the adoption of General Comment 11. In 2014 the Committee was working on the different stages of four General Comments and Child Rights Connect was the lead partner for the General Comments on investment in children, providing comments on the final draft.

Campaigning on the 3rd Optional Protocol to the CRC

Child Rights Connect has been involved in campaigning on the 3rd Optional Protocol to the CRC (known as OP3) throughout the period 2010-15. 2010 marked the start of the drafting process. A Working Group (of the then NGO Group) was already in place and a “Core Group” was set up to set campaign priorities and strategies for influencing drafting statements and releases. Representatives of Child Rights Connect were invited to expert consultations and a research project was carried out to prepare the NGO submissions on the draft text developed by the UN “open-ended working group”. Child Rights Connect continued to mobilise civil society, ran a number of training workshops and established partnerships with new stakeholders to strengthen the campaign. An Advocacy Toolkit which had been produced previously was updated a number of times (most recently 2012) and an advocacy briefing was circulated to members and wider networks. Intensive advocacy work continued during 2011: Child Rights Connect undertook direct advocacy activities with UN diplomatic missions in Geneva, coordinated advocacy with Working Group members, other members and partners at national and international levels, and provided support to the Chairperson of the UN “open-ended working group” throughout the drafting process. These activities, together with direct advocacy activities in New York contributed to the adoption of OP3 at the end of the year by the UN General Assembly. Throughout the process, the then NGO Group mobilised and coordinated the campaign with other actors such as National Human Rights Institutions through their International Coordinating Committee (ICC), disability rights NGOs, and an increasing number of national and regional child rights NGOs in Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America.

The role of the then NGO Group in the drafting process was recognised by the UN and it was invited as one of the few official panelists at the signing ceremony in February 2012. The Chairperson of the UN Working Group that drafted the protocol specifically thanked Peter Newell from the Global Initiative to End Corporal Punishment (who co-chaired the then NGO Group Working Group) and Anita Goh from the NGO Group. For the remainder of 2012, the NGO Group focused its efforts on ratification and entry into force of the new OP3 CRC. It was instrumental in the creation of a new coalition (Ratify OP3 CRC – International Coalition for the OPCRC on a Communications Procedure), notably by developing its website, and by the production and dissemination of advocacy tools and information leaflets. As well as working with the coalition, it had its own ratification campaign which included direct advocacy activities, targeting ten states from all regions which could rapidly ratify international treaties. Other activities included letter campaigns (providing template letters for NGOs to use and sending letters to all UN missions in New York), awareness-raising sessions and many training events at national and regional level.

During 2013, Child Rights Connect continued as a leader in the worldwide campaign to promote the OP3 CRC and its ratification. This included lobbying members, partners and states, including every UN mission in New York. The International Coalition, which by then had 77 members, had decided to focus its advocacy on the UN in New York and organised an official event on OP3 CRC in February 2013 to raise awareness amongst UN missions. Child Rights Connect, as co-chair of the International Coalition during much of 2013, played an important role in the preparation of this event and in subsequent advocacy initiatives related to the 2013 UN Treaty Event, which is an annual occasion when states are encouraged to ratify new treaties. This led to a number of states ratifying or agreeing to ratify the OP3 protocol. Back in Geneva, 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, with a clear link to the new optional protocol. Another achievement was the development of a survey for children to share their opinions and concerns about accessing the communications procedure under OP3 CRC. The survey, along with further information about the treaty, was distributed through members and partners and a total of 310 children from 24 countries responded with their views.

2014 was the year when OP3 entered into force (in April) – the culmination of more than five years of campaigning and advocacy. This was a major development as, despite its near universal ratification, the CRC was previously the only international human rights treaty that had no mechanism for victims to seek justice internationally, when they could not get redress for violations of their rights at national level. Having taken a leadership role in creating the International Coalition (which by now had 96 members), the activities of Child Rights Connect in 2014-15 mainly focused on jointly organising events to mark the entry into force of OP3, coordinating a statement at the HRC’s Annual Day on the Rights of the Child on behalf of the coalition, planning a regional capacity-building conference in Ethiopia and continuing training and advocacy on ratification. Child Rights Connect also led the design of a new website for the International Coalition, which was launched on the day of the entry into force of the OP3 CRC.

Throughout 2010 to 2015, Child Rights Connect trained and raised awareness of national civil society actors on OP3 in each Child Rights Connect forum, which took place three times a year with participants to the pre-sessions of the CRC Committee.

Influencing CRC Committee elections

Based on the factsheet about CRC Committee membership (produced in 2006, available on the Child Rights Connect website), during the CRC elections in 2010, 2012 and 2013 Child Rights Connect requested NGOs in a number of countries to put forward strong candidates. In 2010 the then NGO Group developed a set of criteria for CRC Committee members based on its role of monitoring the Committee’s work since its inception. During elections information was compiled to provide UN missions with useful background about candidates in preparation for the voting carried out by state representatives. Child Rights Connect was also able to collaborate with CRIN on this: CRIN interviewed candidates where possible and put information on the CRIN website. This was done in a more limited way in 2014, as the process was brought forward by 6 months and there was less time available for providing information and lobbying.

It was acknowledged by several interviewees that the work on influencing elections had not always been very successful. However one INGO (member organisation) noted

“We do ourselves a disfavor if we evaluate by looking at the result – the election process is out of our control. The results could have been even worse without our initiatives. We have brought the issue to the agenda”.

This comment demonstrates the value of the work which has been done to highlight the importance of the role of CRC Committee members and the skills required.

Representing a child rights position in all treaty body strengthening discussions

From its unique position with the CRC Committee, Child Rights Connect has been well placed to develop an overview of child rights NGOs engagement in the UN generally and has increasingly expanded its role in this direction in the last six years, as part of “mainstreaming” child rights in the UN system. This has included collaborating with human rights NGOs in relation to the HRC review (2012); co-organising the HRC annual day on the rights of the child; using UN side events to influence the international framework for human rights; facilitating the participation of NGOs in UPR; and taking part in consultations to strengthen the treaty body system. Discussions on strengthening and streamlining the UN treaty body system had been ongoing since 2009. Child Rights Connect played an important role in this, particularly as the CRC Committee was held up as a model during the state review processes, because of the Committee’s effective integration of inputs from civil society actors, in a confidential manner, facilitated by Child Rights Connect. In addition this was a key area of work, as any decision to change treaty body processes would have an impact on the work of the CRC Committee. Child Rights Connect was keen to ensure that that any streamlining and strengthening should not compromise its high standards and good practices. It represented the voice of civil society on child rights through submissions and advocacy with other human rights NGOs. It contributed to planning the implementation of the necessary changes once the resolution “strengthening and enhancing the effective functioning of the human rights treaty body system” had been adopted by the UN General Assembly in April 2014.

Human Rights Council – coordination of the Annual Day on the Rights of the Child

Since the first HRC Day on the Rights of the Child in 2009, Child Rights Connect has been the only civil society organisation consistently involved in organising the event with states and UN actors, identifying NGOs with relevant expertise, depending on the topic, and representing NGO priorities.

Year	Theme of HRC Annual Day on the Rights of the Child	Child Rights Connect achievements
2010	The fight against sexual violence against children	Part of the organising core group; helped prepare the two panels, contributed to decisions on themes to be covered and panelists; ensured that NGOs’ expertise was represented. Financial support to participant from Kenyan national NGO.
2011	Children working and/or living on the streets	Co-organiser; coordinated NGO input on topics and panelists; financial support to panelist from Latin America; co-sponsored several NGO statements; Working Group on Violence against Children assisted with preparation
2012	Children and the administration of justice	Co-organiser; coordinated NGO input on topics and panelists; financial support to panelist from African Committee of Experts; ensured NGO priorities in the “Omnibus” resolution.
2013	Right to Health	Co-organiser; coordinated NGO input on topics and panelists; suggested language for final resolution; Members of Working Group on Children of Incarcerated Parents delivered statements on the mental health of children of prisoners in Europe,
2014	Access to Justice for Children	Co-organiser; thematic lead role in organising the panel and providing inputs on the resolution. Gathered and Included the views of 310 children from 24 countries on access to justice; shared reflections on the OP3 CRC’s role in improving children’s access to justice with States
2015	Investment in Children	Co-organiser; coordinated NGO input on topics and panelists; in-depth technical assistance to members leading discussions; Working Group on Investment in Children gathered & input views of children worldwide on government spending to protect/promote child rights

Figure 7 Involvement in the HRC annual day on the rights of the child

Child Rights Connect has also undertaken various advocacy initiatives with the HRC. In 2013-14 significant work took place in relation to protection of the family, in the light of attempts by certain organisations to introduce the idea that the family, understood as the nuclear family, has rights as a unit, without taking account of the rights of the child and related issues. Child Rights Connect coordinated the advocacy activities of members and partners, including providing information; drafting and delivery of submissions and joint position papers; and organising side events. There was close collaboration with other human rights NGOs, UN agencies, UN experts and various states. This resulted in a wide spectrum of actors joining forces and speaking with one voice to defend children's rights, and the inclusion of a child rights perspective in the final resolution. One member INGO commented in the survey:

"Child Rights Connect certainly kept us up to date with the threats to Child Rights over the 'Family Rights' movement, as led by Russia & co. This was a very important role they played, keeping all tabs on all three corners of the debate (children, families & diversity)"

Supporting engagement with the Universal Periodic Review

The UPR was established when the Human Rights Council was created in 2006 by the UN General Assembly. It involves a periodic review of the human rights records of all 193 UN member states on a cyclical basis (the first cycle was 2008-11 and the second 2012-16). Child Rights Connect realised that this presented child rights NGOs with an additional platform for lobbying states, thereby reinforcing existing advocacy and pressure for change. In 2010 Child Rights Connect designed and produced a training module to explain the mechanism and encourage child rights NGOs and national coalitions to submit UPR reports and follow-up UPR recommendations related to children's rights. In 2010 a training workshop was organised in Thailand for ECPAT International and Child Rights Connect subsequently assisted ECPAT to design an in-house training programme which led to four more workshops in 2011. Child Rights Connect has continued to provide training on the UPR, as a complementary mechanism to CRC reporting, in its NGO Fora and at relevant national and regional events.

In partnership with UPR Info, Child Rights Connect produced four UPR fact sheets in English, French and Spanish, and has provided on-going advice and support to national NGOs taking part in the UPR, making links with the CRC reporting process.

- **Fact Sheet 1: The Universal Periodic Review (2011):** provides information on how the UPR mechanism functions; how it differs from the CRC reporting mechanism; and how NGOs can influence the process and bring key child rights issues to the forefront.
- **Fact Sheet 2: NGO Written Submission for the UPR (2011):** provides information about how to prepare and submit a written report for consideration at the UPR of a given state, so as to communicate key messages effectively.
- **Fact Sheet 3: NGO Advocacy in the UPR (2013):** provides information about how to advocate effectively in the UPR. It includes a model NGO advocacy strategy.
- **Fact Sheet 4: Follow-up to the UPR (2014):** provides information about the activities that NGOs can take after their State is reviewed under the UPR to encourage the government to implement the recommendations.

Child Rights Connect has also carried out its own advocacy programme related to the UPR. In 2012 it researched the ratification status of states on the OPSC, OPAC and OP3 CRC, their reservations and declarations, as well as their non-reporting. Based on this research, advocacy briefs on 17 States were prepared for UPR pre-sessions and direct advocacy was undertaken with UN missions in Geneva. Similar exercises in 2013 and 2014 led to the preparation of briefs on 14 states and 13 states respectively. Working Groups of Child Rights Connect have also made submissions to the UPR on issues such as birth registration and children of incarcerated parents.

Other initiatives have included taking part in civil society capacity building webinars and online conversations focusing on advocacy opportunities with the HRC and UPR (2013); coordinating NGO participation and advocacy with states to make sure that child rights issues were consistently and concretely included in UPR recommendations; leading meetings of Geneva-based member and partner NGOs to discuss issues specific to states about to be reviewed under the UPR; and taking part in a panel on children's rights at the 19th session of the UPR (2014).

Working Groups

Working Groups are the main way for Child Rights Connect member organisations to be involved in the network. These are formally set up by the General Assembly and report back each year on their work and plans. Member organisations take on chairing and convening meetings: normally there are two co-chairs. Some member organisations interviewed for the evaluation, especially those based in Geneva, stated that the opportunity to be part of one or more working groups was their main reason for being a member of Child Rights Connect, in order to be able to engage more effectively with UN mechanisms in collaboration with others. In practice the groups have had varying levels of activity, according to the interests and available time of members. Although in theory they have had agreed objectives and workplans, this has also been inconsistent.

Working Groups have had a budget to support their work which has varied over the years, but was a maximum of 1000 Swiss francs per group in 2012-14. It is also expected that resources will be available when necessary from the organisations which are members of the Working Group. One survey respondent stated that the budget was not enough to enable a working group to carry out research and produce publications. In future it is planned to have a more strategic approach and link the budget for working groups to their plans and to the annual plan of the Secretariat.

The table below provides information on the Working Groups which have been in place since 2010.

Working Groups operating 15	Status and activities during 2010-
Children without parental care	In place throughout 2010-15 Promoting and contributing to the implementation of Guidelines on Alternative Care of Children (2009)
Mainstreaming	In place throughout 2010-15, originally as Working Group on the HRC. Focus on ensuring the HRC addresses child rights
Children and Violence	In place throughout 2010-15, NGO platform for information-sharing and strategy following up the recommendations of the UNVAC study (2009). Current priority - Focus Group on Children in Armed Conflict set up in 2013
Children of Incarcerated Parents	Set up to support CRC Day of General Discussion on children of incarcerated parents in 2011 and has continued since, raising awareness through inputs on HRC resolutions, providing information to the CRC, UPR and other special procedures mandates, as well as to regional mechanisms. In 2014 they took part in the campaign for the new UN Global Study on Children deprived of Liberty
Universal Birth Registration (UBR)	Established in 2012. Promoting UBR through UN (HRC, UPR) and other mechanisms. In 2014 produced a short film "Register Me!" in conjunction with UNHCR and others.
Investment in Children	Set up formally in 2015, having started as an informal working group on public spending in 2014. In collaboration with Queens University Belfast gathered views of 2,700 children from 70+ countries on government spending to protect & promote child rights, to support the HRC Annual Day on the Rights of the Child in 2015, also the CRC General Comment.
Indigenous Children	Operated during 2010-12. Involved in the adoption of General Comment 11. Conducted events in 2012 to facilitate engagement in international advocacy efforts to improve protection of indigenous children's rights. Closed in 2014 after lack of activity.

Working Groups operating during 2010-15	Status and activities
Communications Procedure for the CRC (OP3)	In place before 2010. Focus on the drafting of the new optional protocol and mobilising key partners through training workshops. Closed down in 2012 and became the International Coalition for the Ratification of the new OP3.
Sexual Exploitation of Children	Operated during 2010-11, focussing on follow-up to Stockholm conference and article 34 of the CRC. Advocacy with UN mechanisms. Formally closed down in 2012.
Juvenile Justice	Disbanded in 2010

Figure 8 Working Groups of Child Rights Connect

Documentation is in place about the use of the Child Rights Connect name and logo by Working Groups. Historically Secretariat staff have not necessarily been involved in working groups and this has sometimes led to a lack of coordination and knowledge about what groups were doing, as well as uncertainties about representing Child Rights Connect in public. One interviewee from an international NGO commented on the need to “*avoid duplication between actions and initiatives of WGs and Child Rights Connect itself with States and UN monitoring bodies*”. In 2015 it was decided that a member of the Secretariat staff would attend all working group meetings to provide information as necessary and ensure a better level of coordination and awareness. Several contributors to the evaluation commented positively on this and saw the value of closer links between the secretariat and the working groups.

4.2 Impact of work

The role of Child Rights Connect is an enabling one in terms of having an impact on child rights – it is not providing services in the field or working directly with children in a way that leads to an immediate change or effect on their rights and well-being, except in relation to supporting children and young people to interact with the CRC Committee and other human rights mechanisms. It can therefore be more difficult to assess the impact and value of the work. One way of determining impact is to frame the question in different ways – for example, what is it that Child Rights Connect has achieved that has led to changes or been significant in advancing children’s rights? What is the evidence that others have taken up the suggestions and recommendations put forward by Child Rights Connect in advocacy initiatives?

Changes brought about by the work of Child Rights Connect

At a workshop on 27 August 2015 staff identified the following “Most Significant Changes” brought about by Child Rights Connect since 2010:

- **OP3** – adopted with strong text and quick entry into force. Child Rights Connect was a leading actor in the creation, drafting, adoption and entry into force of the protocol.
- **Child participation in UN HR mechanisms:** 1st Annual Day of the Rights of the Child with meaningful child participation; CRC Committee now values child participation and working methods
- **Better access to information and communications** between the CRC Committee and national actors, including children, through technology
- **Space for civil society engagement in CRC** reporting process: leading actor for engagement in pre-sessions; influenced treaty body strengthening process to preserve civil society engagement.

Based on these, a question was included in the survey sent to network members and partners (provided in English and French). Respondents were asked to select **ONE Most Significant Change** from the list. Six people (out of the 86 respondents) did not answer this question.

Most Significant Changes brought about by Child Rights Connect since 2010	Overall survey votes	Member votes in survey
Third Optional Protocol to the CRC on a Communications Procedure (OP3 CRC) adopted with strong text	24	11
The CRC Committee increasingly values child participation	24	7
Civil society engagement has been preserved in the Treaty Body strengthening process	11	3
Use of technology allows better communication between the CRC Committee and national actors, including children	9	1
The early entry into force of the third Optional Protocol (OP3 CRC)	5	3
Effective child participation in the Human Rights Council's Annual Day on the Rights of the Child	4	2
Other (<i>respondents referred to valuing the technical and financial support provided and the professional service from staff</i>)	4	2
Total responses on "Most Significant Change"	80	29

Figure 9 Most Significant Changes

The table above shows that the wider network particularly recognised the importance of Child Rights Connect's work on getting OP3 adopted with a strong text and their contribution to child participation in the CRC Committee. Together these two changes constituted more than half the votes. It can be seen that the responses of members were broadly in line with overall assessment, but there was a particularly low vote for "use of technology". Their response to another question (on support for NGO engagement with the CRC, please see chapter 4.3 below) suggests that they do not know much about Child Rights Connect's work on using IT to enhance communications and participation.

Results and outcomes of advocacy initiatives

Over the last six years Child Rights Connect has increased its advocacy initiatives, as already noted in section 4.1 above. Several interviewees commented on the effective approach to advocacy, focusing on collaboration and relationship building, and grounded in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The advocacy has had impact in a number of areas, supplementing the points listed above in "most significant changes":

- The CRC Committee adopted formal working methods on the participation of children in 2014, based on recommendations by Child Rights Connect
- The CRC Committee integrated recommendations from Child Rights Connect on including key child friendly principles in the Committee's rules of procedure
- Increased participation of children in the CRC reporting process, by enabling the Committee to hear children's views through Skype, video reports and other creative methods
- The practical tools and support provided to children has enabled them to be better prepared when meeting the CRC Committee; as a result their views have been taken into account and the children themselves have had a more positive experience

- Outcomes of the treaty body strengthening process: UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/68/268, included preserving specific provisions in the working methods of the CRC Committee, such as the confidential pre-session for national civil society actors and the meetings with children. The CRC Committee is the only treaty body to have this in place and Child Rights Connect successfully advocated for this to be retained during the UN treaty body strengthening process. In addition the same resolution committed the UN to starting official webcasting of all treaty body sessions.
- In relation to integrating child participation into the work of the HRC, specific reference to Child Rights Connect's survey with children and key outcomes was made in the official OHCHR report for the 2014 annual day on the rights of the child. The related HRC resolution contained issues raised by the children in the survey. Space was provided for hearing children's views in 2014 and 2015.
- Influencing the theme for the HRC annual day on the rights of the child: Child Rights Connect successfully advocated for a day on children's access to justice in 2014.
- The HRC initiative to cut or make biennial the annual day on the rights of the child (as part of "streamlining proposals") was put on hold in 2015
- Several HRC resolutions contain language proposed by Child Rights Connect: all HRC resolutions on the rights of the child; resolution on the right of the child to engage in play and recreational activities (2014); resolution on birth registration; resolution on mortality and morbidity of children under 5-year of age; resolution on the protection of the family (2015)

Please see appendix D for a table of advocacy initiatives and related outcomes and Appendix E for a table of advocacy outcomes relating specifically to work on child participation.

4.3 Views of stakeholders around the world

This section looks mainly at views about the work of Child Rights Connect expressed through the online survey. As previously noted, there were 86 responses, of which 30 were from member organisations. The analysis includes comparisons between member and non-member responses.

In 2013, the year of its 30th anniversary, the Child Rights Connect Secretariat organised a panel at General Assembly to promote reflection with members about achievements during its 30 years of existence. In considering a question about the most important role of the organisation, there was an overwhelming response from those attending the General Assembly: it was the ability to bring organisations from all over the world together to act and speak as a global voice for child rights. However the survey conducted for the evaluation showed a slightly different perspective. Survey participants were asked to rank the main strengths of Child Rights Connect in order of importance, with the following results:

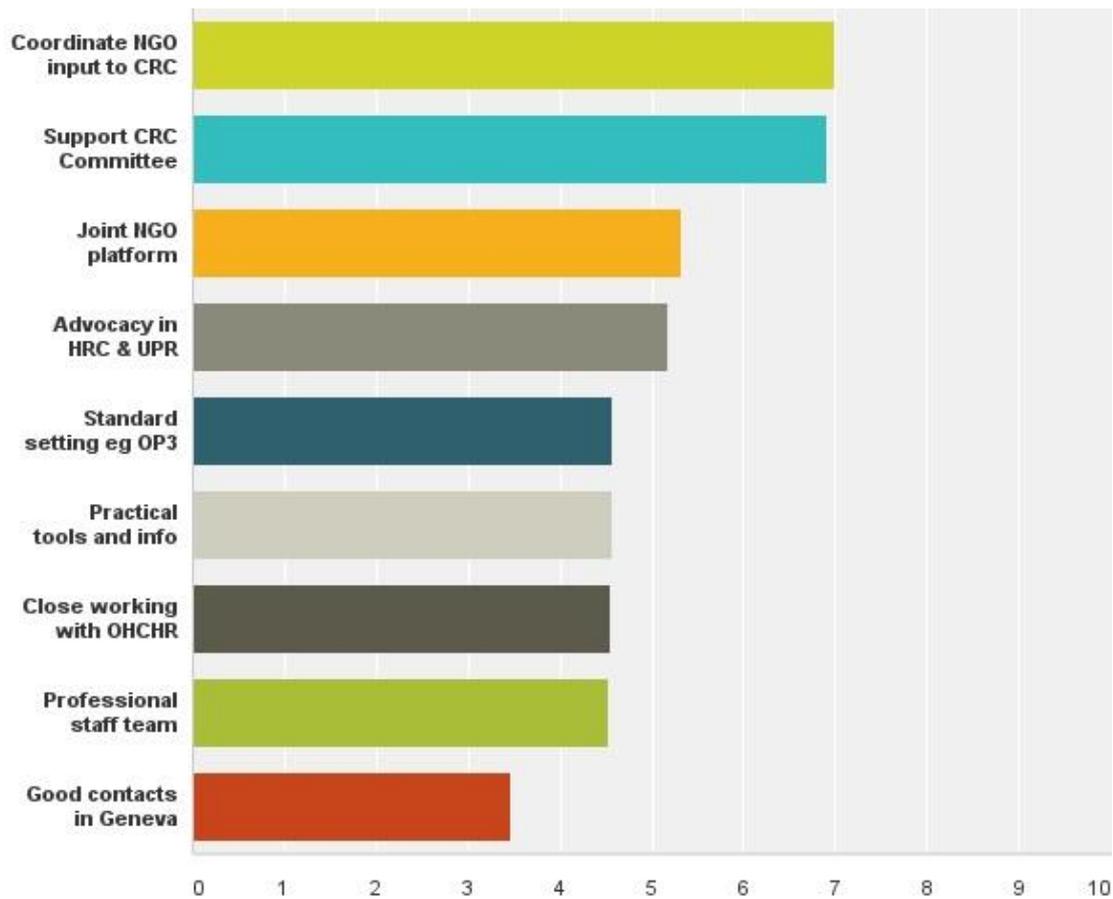


Figure 10 The strengths of Child Rights Connect - survey results

It can be seen that the wider network viewed Child Right Connect’s greatest strength as their work on coordination and capacity-building for NGO participation in the CRC reporting process and work of the Committee. Supporting and influencing the work of the CRC Committee was also deemed a particularly strong point. Members who responded to the survey gave the same ranking. Overall this may suggest that the General Assembly does not necessarily reflect the views of the membership at large – but it is of course important to bear in mind that only 30 members (from 22 member organisations) responded to the survey. At the same time these views on Child Rights Connect’s greatest strengths were broadly shared by many of those interviewed individually. A number of respondents gave extra comments:

- *Child Rights Connect is such an important pillar for us as national coalitions. Without them, we would not have managed to push our government to the current levels on reporting* (Coalition from East Africa – non-member)
- *“There are at least 3 activities deserving a 1, including professional staff team - but the questionnaire does not allow such a ranking”* (member NGO from Europe)
- *“No words to express what they are doing”* (Latin American NGO which rated all aspects of the work as “excellent” or “very effective” – non-member)

The survey also asked members and contacts to rate the performance of Child Rights Connect on carrying out the priorities in the 2010-14 strategic plan. The table below shows the results. The highest rating is given to the priority area which was also deemed the main strength of the organisation – supporting NGO engagement with the CRC Committee: 95% of respondents stated that this work was either “excellent” or “good”. International advocacy was also deemed “excellent” or “good” by more than 80% of respondents. The responses of Child Rights Connect members were in line with this overall response.

Q6 Child Rights Connect's performance on strategic plan priorities

Answered: 86 Skipped: 0

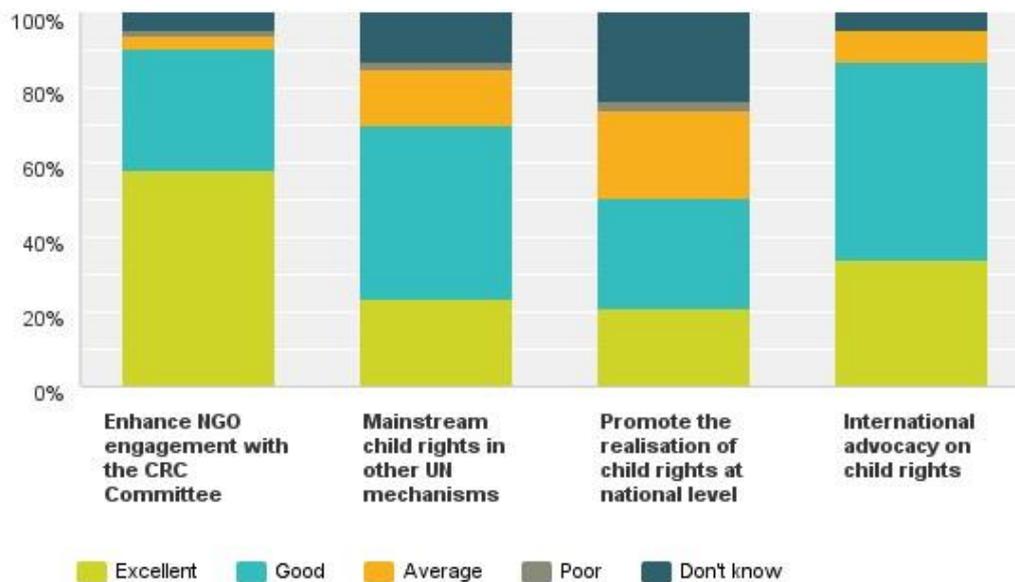


Figure 11 Views of survey respondents on implementation of the strategic plan

Members and contacts were also asked for more detailed information on two of these priorities: facilitating NGO engagement with the CRC Committee and promoting the realisation of child rights at national level.

As can be seen in the next table they gave positive feedback on the specific work related to facilitating NGO engagement with the CRC Committee. The highest ratings were given to supporting NGOs in the reporting process, and to the publications and tools produced to assist them. The only category where less than 60% of respondents judged the work to be “good” or “excellent” was the use of technology to enhance participation and communications. This may be because not all respondents have as yet taken advantage of this; in addition 25% said “don’t know” to this question. Responses from members were in line with the overall response, except that there was a higher proportion of “don’t know” responses in relation to “outreach to national NGOs” (34%) and “use of IT to enhance communications” (41%).

Q7 How effective has the work been on enhancing NGO engagement with the CRC Committee?

Answered: 85 Skipped: 1

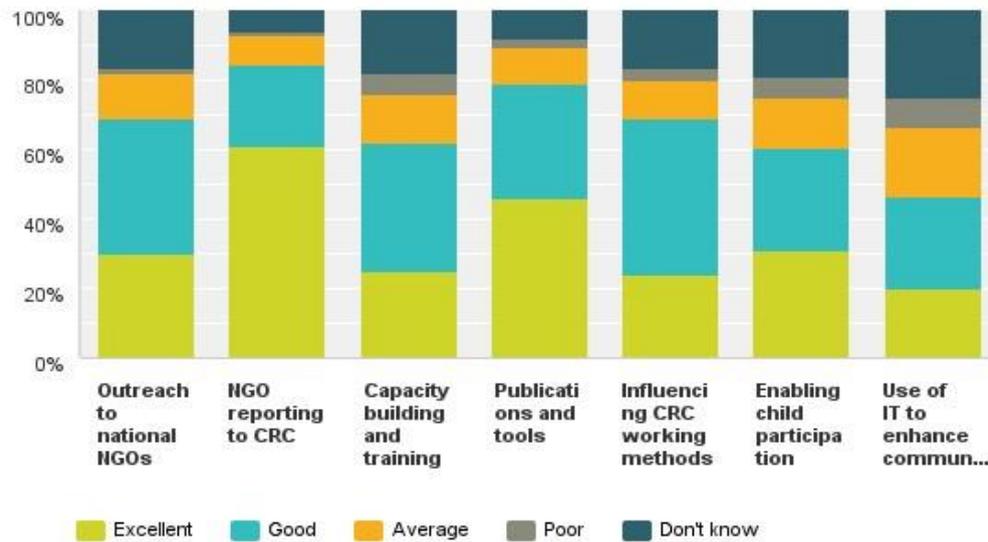


Figure 12 Views of network members on support for NGO engagement with the CRC Committee

One member INGO offered suggestions for improvement:

Was great to have a supportive organization to facilitate CRC participation. However, could have been better organized. Would have been great to have been put in direct contact with fellow NGO speakers prior to pre-session to share (and possibly coordinate on) messages. When I arrived at our meeting point before the pre-session, I waited for nearly 30 mins before finding they'd proceeded without me. By the time I finally found them, I'd missed the briefing. No further introductions facilitated, which made coordination around Committee questions difficult

The issue raised about advance coordination is already being addressed through the establishment of country focal points prior to the meeting in Geneva, as already mentioned elsewhere in this report. This was put in place from September 2015 to ensure prior coordination amongst participants at the same country pre-session.

The responses on Child Rights Connect's work on promoting the realisation of child rights at national level were more mixed. While many respondents were satisfied with the information and materials they had received, the table below suggests there is more to be done on sharing best practices and on capacity building and training. Responses from members were broadly in line with the overall response, except that there was a higher proportion of "don't know" in all areas, particularly in relation to "collecting and sharing best practices" and "providing capacity building", where in each case nearly half the respondents put "don't know". INGO members in particular did not seem to be very aware of the work of Child Rights Connect in promoting child rights at national level.

Q8 Performance of Child Rights Connect on promoting child rights at national level

Answered: 85 Skipped: 1

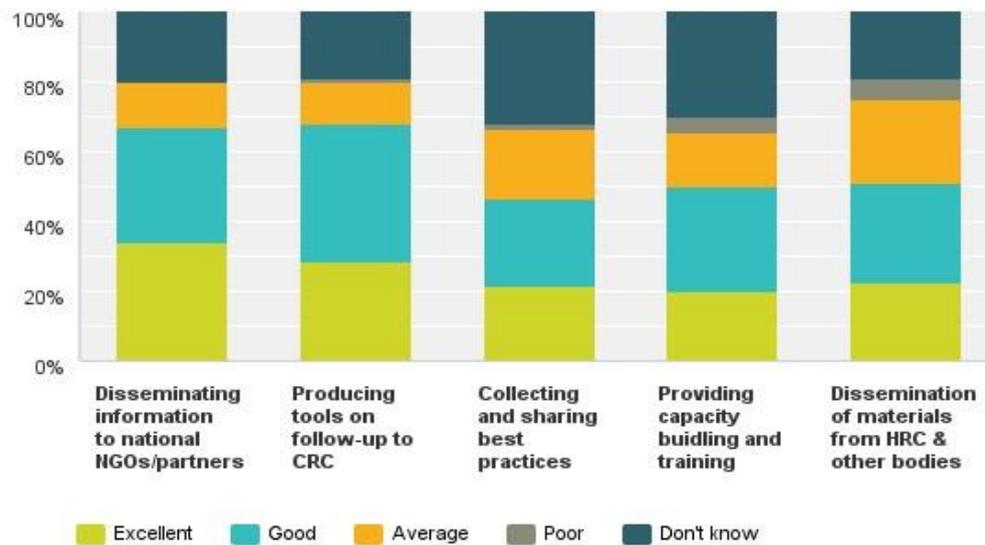


Figure 13 Views of survey respondents on support provided for work at national level

Some respondents added specific comments to explain their rating, for example:

“There is need for Child Rights Connect to improve its support for NGOs to carry out advocacy activities at national through capacity building of personnel at country level. Child Rights Connect had done great in sharing information to national coalitions and supporting in the reporting processes. Child Rights Connect has supported NGOs in its reporting cycle and had played a key role in bridging the gap between the Committee and NGOs, especially in following up with reports and information on sessions. However, there is need to conduct training at national level for staff of NGOs in charge of reporting and follow ups.” (NGO coalition from West Africa, non-member) *“To effectively “Promote the realisation of child rights at national level”, local language document would have to be available”* (European NGO, member)

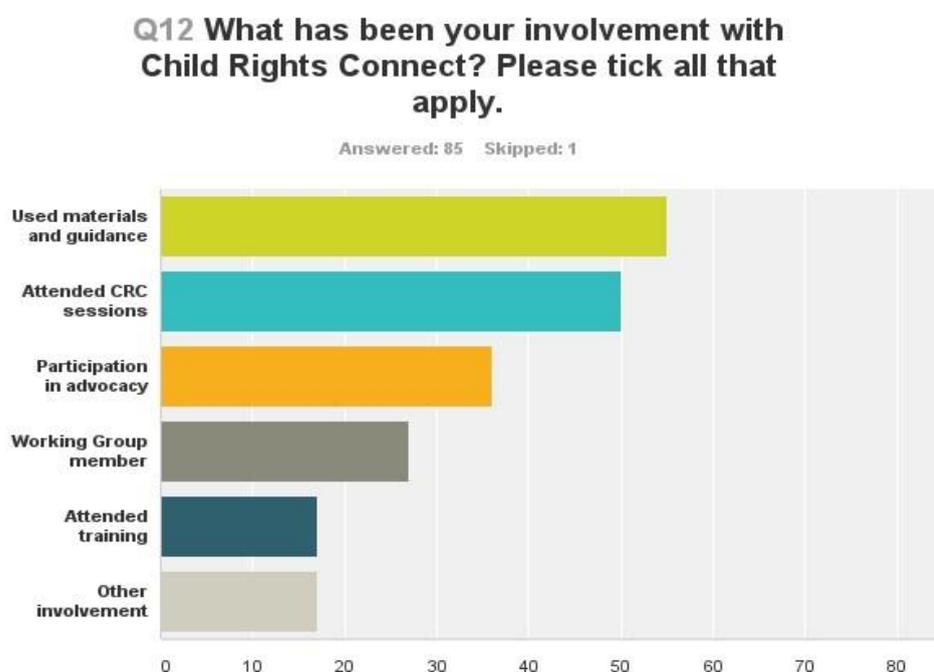
These views demonstrate the level of interest of national NGOs in getting more support for their work at local level. It is clearly not possible for Child Rights Connect to start working at national level around the world, nor to produce materials in local languages. However there is scope for more to be done in promoting best practice, through provision of relevant materials and setting up of online training platforms and exchange fora, working closely with Child Rights Connect members.

Finally, it is interesting to note the different types of involvement with Child Rights Connect reported by respondents to the survey:

- 64% of respondents (55) had used Child Rights Connect materials and guidance, including 20 members.
- 59% (50) reported that they had attended CRC sessions with the support of Child Rights Connect; 37 of these were from national NGOs and NGO coalitions; 14 were members.
- 42% (36) had participated in advocacy initiatives organised by Child Rights Connect, including 16 of the 30 members responding to the survey. About half of those who had participated in advocacy were from international NGOs and half from national NGOs or NGO coalitions.
- 31% (27) had participated in Working Groups as members or observers. Of these more than half were from international NGOs and more than half (16) were members.

- 20% (17) had attended training organised by Child Rights Connect.
- Child Rights Connect members were more likely to be members of Working Groups and participate in advocacy. They were less likely to have attended training.

The table below shows a summary of the involvement of respondents with Child Rights Connect.



Overall the survey does not show a large disparity between the views of members and non-members. It would have been reasonable to expect that members would have more knowledge about the work of Child Rights Connect than non-members, but this does not seem to be the case. In fact in some cases they know less – for example in relation to use of IT to enhance communications. This is probably because Child Rights Connect has actually worked more closely with some of its non-member partner and contacts, particularly on its core work of NGO engagement with the CRC. This has led to many NGOs and coalitions around the world feeling a close affinity to the work of Child Rights Connect, which has been a vital support for their national work on child rights; they would like more support for follow-up in country. Child Rights Connect has been able to establish these good working relationships with national NGOs and coalitions, even at a distance. However this has not been achieved in the same way with the membership and the survey results (together with the fact that many members did not respond) point to a gap in the links with member organisations and the fostering of an effective network.

4.4 Partnerships with other organisations

Child Rights Connect's working methods are based on a partnership approach. This is partly due to being a membership organisation, but also because the nature of the work (advocacy, campaigning, influencing) means that joint working with others is far more effective than taking individual initiatives. In 2015 Child Rights Connect has 84 members, but in practice it has been working with many more contacts and partners throughout the world on reporting to the CRC, training, awareness raising, advocacy and campaigning. Its database runs to over 600 members and contacts, although not all of these involve active partnerships.

Historically Child Rights Connect worked mainly with child rights organisations, particularly NGOs at international, regional and national level. There is a close working relationship on advocacy and lobbying with child rights INGOs based in Geneva, many of which are members of Child Rights Connect. However during the period of the last two SIDA grants, it has also established new partnerships with human rights organisations, such as the Human Rights Education Association (HREA), the International Service for Human Rights (ISHR), CCPR Centre (Centre for Civil and Political Rights) and the International Commission of Jurists. This has been key in integrating children's rights into different areas of the UN human rights system beyond the CRC, as well as for the OP3 campaign and advocacy related the treaty body strengthening process. Child Rights Connect has also liaised with the International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights (ICC) to provide support and training to National Human Rights Institutions and ombudspersons, to ensure their effective involvement in reporting to the CRC Committee. UPR-Info has been another important partner, with whom collaboration started in 2010 with fact sheets on the UPR.

Other close partnerships are particularly important for the day-to-work in Geneva. Many of those interviewed for the evaluation (for example OHCHR, UN missions) noted that Child Rights Connect was a valued partner in their work.

4.5 Organisational issues

Name change and rebranding

In 2010 it was decided that the name "The NGO Group for the CRC" no longer captured the breadth of the work carried out by the organisation. Secretariat staff undertook the task of developing a new name that would accurately capture the organisation's evolving mandate: 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, various new names were considered. This turned out to be a complex and time-consuming process for a number of reasons, including the need to ensure that the new name would not be confused with other organisations and could be easily translated into a website address. An initial recommendation by ExCo and decision by the General Assembly in 2012 about a new name (International Action for Children's Rights) was later reversed. The name Child Rights Connect was finally chosen and accepted by General Assembly meeting in March 2013. This new name was publicly launched in April 2013 and communicated to the global network.

New website

During 2010-13 the Child Rights Connect website was hosted on the CRIN website. It was made available in French and Spanish as well as English in 2011. The new Child Rights Connect standalone site was launched in September 2013, with updated content and integration with social media (Facebook and Twitter) to provide additional ways for members and partners to keep up to date and share news about their activities and successes. The website is user-friendly and mainly focused on the work of Child Rights Connect, providing details of available information and publications, and 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.

Governance and the role of the Executive Committee (ExCo)

Child Rights Connect has continued to be governed by a General Assembly which meets once a year and elects an Executive Committee (known as ExCo) to oversee the work in between assemblies. ExCo meets quarterly and can have up to 10 members, at least 7 of which must be elected, while 3 can be co-opted to add desirable skills or experience and/or to help to maintain an appropriate geographical/gender balance. In practice this latter option has been used on very few occasions. It was discussed in 2010 and 2012: in the end ExCo agreed not to co-opt anyone, but instead to call on external people as necessary. There have been five presidents of

ExCo during 2010-15. Most ExCo members are from the larger child rights INGOs; more recently there has also been a representative from a regional coalition in Latin America which has added a new perspective. The statutes of the organisation were updated in 2010 (voting procedures and arrangements related to convenors of working groups) and in 2013 (change of name). In 2014 it was decided to have a full revision of the statutes; work has proceeded on this during 2015 and a consultation with members has begun.

The commitment and leadership of individual ExCo members, especially those in the “bureau” (ie with specific officer roles) have been vital to the effective operation and sustainability of the organisation. ExCo meetings have tended to cover a mixture of issues, often without formal reports, including catching up with the latest developments at the CRC Committee or in human rights treaty bodies. Minutes of the meetings show that they have not necessarily focused only on strategy or specifically on the work of Child Rights Connect. This may be for historical reasons, dating back to the way the former NGO Group started, as a forum for NGOs to get together and discuss ways of taking forward child rights issues at the UN. The ExCo role and responsibilities had already been updated back in 2007 when the role of Coordinator was created; this was later changed to Director. There were various initiatives to clarify the division of roles and responsibilities during 2010-15, including making sure that ExCo was getting an appropriate service from the Secretariat (for example providing reports and minute taking). However ExCo has sometimes continued to be involved in operational matters to support the staff at difficult times. As a result some areas have remained where the respective roles of ExCo and staff have continued to be intertwined, for example in relation to staff management or signing off on publications. The evaluation revealed a difference of views amongst ExCo members as to whether they were appointed to act in their individual capacity or as representatives of their organisation. In either case they can sometimes find themselves in a difficult situation, balancing their role in Child Rights Connect with the priorities and expectations of their own organisation, particularly if their organisation is a funder of Child Rights Connect, leading to potential conflicts of interest. In early November a workshop was held to clarify these issues. It was concluded that ExCo should have a governance role and oversee the work of the secretariat from a strategic point of view, with members operating in their individual capacity. It is planned to reflect this in the revised statutes and other relevant documents.

The table below shows responses to a question about the effectiveness of ExCo by the 30 members of Child Rights Connect who filled in the online survey. (This table does not include the responses of non-members whose views would not be so relevant for this question). While most respondents gave either “very effective” or, more frequently, “fairly effective” to most questions, there is a significant number of “don’t know” responses. Fourteen members (50%) were unable to comment on the effectiveness of ExCo in overseeing Working Groups. Responses by non- members also led to many “don’t know” answers, which may not be surprising, but overall these results suggest that many people are largely unaware of the work of ExCo and how it fulfils its important role in the organisation.

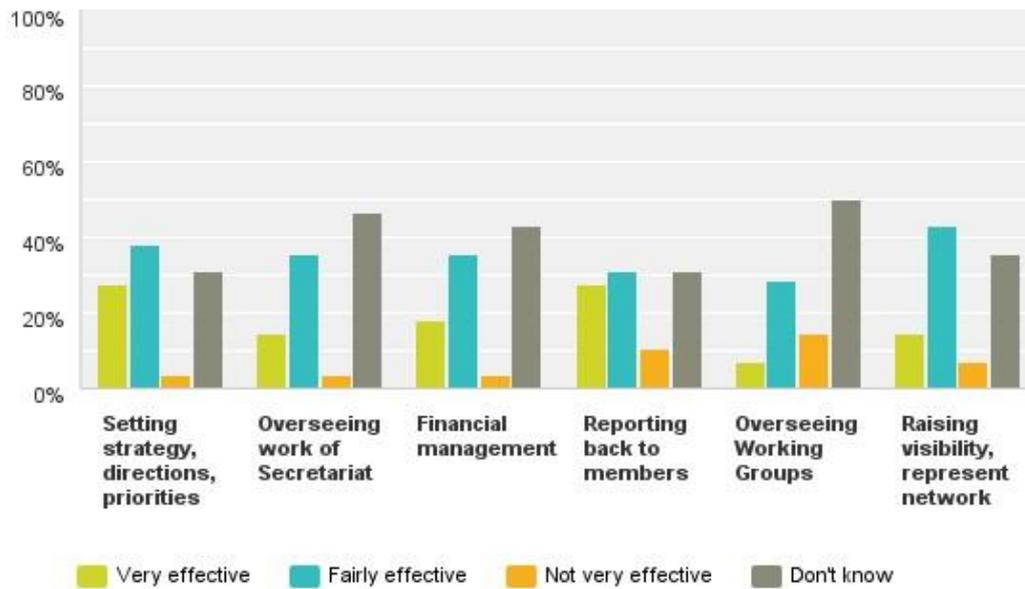


Figure 14 Member responses on effectiveness of ExCo

While very few respondents put “not very effective” (the maximum was four people, in relation to overseeing Working Groups), there were also some negative comments. One international NGO stated: “*There is no transparency at the leadership level, reporting, communication, etc. The financial situation is not clearly explained*”. In relation to finances, minutes of ExCo meetings suggest regular but limited attention to this issue through oral reports, even in 2014 when there was a financial crisis, and an overreliance on the Treasurer to take care of financial matters. When the Ernst and Young audit report was commissioned in 2013 (see section 4.6), the Treasurer reported back on this to ExCo, but the report itself was not reviewed.

ExCo makes recommendations about new members joining the network (after checks as to whether they meet the membership criteria), but the final decision is made by the General Assembly. There have been applications in recent years which have led to detailed and sometimes inappropriate “public” discussions about the merits of individual organisations during the General Assembly, for example in 2013. Some people found this embarrassing and were confused that ExCo did not seem to speak with one voice. This is a question of governance and suggests that training for Board members may be needed.

Staffing and management

In 2010 there were 2.5 staff. As at late 2015 Child Rights Connect has a small but strong professional staff team of seven (6.3 full-time equivalent; until very recently all women), who have developed expertise and knowledge on child rights and are extremely hard working. Interviews for the evaluation found that all staff are very committed, value the team work with their colleagues and enjoy working for the organisation. At the same time they expressed considerable concerns about workload and financial stability. Feedback from external stakeholders was very positive. In the online survey an NGO coalition from the UK (member) noted “*The strengths that Child Rights Connect have are all underpinned by the excellent staff team*”. This was a generally held view amongst those surveyed and interviewed.

Over the last six years there have been increasing demands on the organisation due to the widening of its role - working with other human rights mechanisms on child rights, not just the CRC Committee, as well as developing new advocacy initiatives. Campaigning on OP3 took up huge resources in excess of what was included in the strategic plan, as did work related to the 25th anniversary of the CRC and the 30th anniversary of Child Rights Connect. During this time the role with the CRC Committee did not diminish – the CRC Committee operated in “double chambers” in 2010 and again in 2015, meaning that workload practically doubled. The staffing and management capacity has not kept pace with the growth in the organisation’s work.

Sometimes this led to personnel issues being neglected, for example staff appraisals did not take place in 2012 or 2013.

Some external stakeholders commented on disruption caused by staff changes in recent years. In fact the staffing has been relatively stable, but there were periods when temporary staff were in place due to maternity leave – including twice for the Director. With a very small staff this inevitably had an impact on work schedules and continuity. A post of fundraiser was also in place from 2010-12, but subsequently discontinued.

In early 2015 there was a change of Director after the long-standing postholder left. The process of recruitment was carried out in a rigorous manner, based on defining the required competencies. Since then the organisation has been in a phase of review and internal restructuring. The 2015-19 strategic plan envisaged an increase in staff, with some of the Director's programme responsibilities being delegated, to allow her to concentrate on management, fundraising and key representational roles. The previous Director had identified the need to make changes and had proposed a new structure. Due to financial constraints it was not possible to increase the staff complement or fully implement the proposed changes. This has left some gaps in certain areas of work, such as advocacy. In addition for a long time there had been insufficient clarity about the distribution of tasks, with everyone pitching in to cope with the very heavy workload. Sometimes ExCo members stepped in to try and help with particular tasks, but this was not a long-term solution and tended to lead to more confusion over roles. The new Director has been leading a process to address these issues, including prioritising and identifying tasks which could be dropped or done in a different way.

Child protection policy

Work started on developing a child protection policy in 2013, based on policies from member organisations such as Save the Children. Further work was undertaken in early 2015 with advice from Keeping Children Safe, although the policy was not finalised. Currently there is no formal child protection policy in place.

4.6 Use of resources

For the last six years, SIDA has been Child Rights Connect's biggest donor. The 2010 grant was 1.75 million Swedish Kroner, and this annual amount has stayed the same over the whole period. Overall organisational income in 2015 is at a similar level to that in 2010. After a major financial crisis in 2007 when the income dropped to SwFr 359,108, considerable efforts were made to improve financial stability and income had more than doubled by 2010. A reserves policy was put in place, but reportedly it was not always respected. During 2010-12 a fundraiser was employed and, although this was deemed unsuccessful at the time, it would seem to have been a factor in the considerable increase in income for 2012 and 2013. However financial problems loomed again in 2014: there was a delay in the grant from another major donor, and exchange rates had a negative effect on the SIDA funding, which is allocated in Swedish Kroner. There was insufficient financial monitoring and documentation and the problem only came to light at a very late stage. The organisation came very close to not being able to pay the staff. The shortfall was made up mainly from reserves. Child Rights Connect's location in Switzerland has put it in a vulnerable position financially due to the strength of the Swiss franc. As can be seen from the table below, this has had an even larger impact on the budget in 2015 when the SIDA income for core funding (1.75 million Kroner each year for the whole period 2010-15, with an increase in 2015 to cover the evaluation) was 20% lower than in 2013. Careful financial management has minimised the impact.

Year	Income in Swiss francs	Expenditure Swiss francs	Income from SIDA (SwFr)	Income from SIDA (SEK)	% of income from SIDA	Notes
2010	785,651	624,866	256,110	1,750,000	33%	Also extra SIDA income: 73,913 from 2009; 36,459 carried forward to 2011
2011	683,342	683,342	266,138	1,750,000	36%	21,931 of the SIDA money was carried forward to 2012
2012	866,840	716,948	263,781	1,750,000	35%	
2013	903,780	810,834	247,041	1,750,000	27%	
2014	750,631	816,047	229,775	1,750,000	30%	SIDA income reduced by 7% due to exchange rates
2015	807,974	806,232	251,651	2,250,000	31%	SIDA income decreased by approx. 20 % due to the strong Swiss Franc, but remained at 31% of the total income due to 500,000 SEK extra to cover the evaluation fees.

Figure 15 Income and expenditure 2010-2015

The table below shows that SIDA funding has been allocated to nearly all the core areas of work (figures in Swiss francs):

Activity	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	
NGO participation in CRC		67275	9401		12442	1740
Tools, publications, research		10110	23641	12354	8150	600
Training and meetings				2292	5584	6109
International coalition / OP3		2254	2362	400		98
OP3 CRC publications				3638		334
CRC Day of General Discussion						2758
Personnel and interns		80336	144603	173655	151154	180256
Annual report and rebranding		1354	2323	2913	820	1296
Website, IT and social media		18332	5617		3577	1028
Rent and operational costs		25885	34905	43337	34979	27502
ExCo, General Assembly and Working Groups		2678	7810	3741	9742	3911
Professional services		11417	13545	16033	15585	4143
Engagement with CRC Committee				5420	5008	
Carried forward to next year		36459	21931			
Total SIDA income		256100	266138	263781	247041	229775

Figure 16 Allocation of funding from SIDA 2010-14

In most years more than half the SIDA funding has been allocated to personnel costs. The second largest amount has been for rent and operational costs, including staff training. Overall personnel costs have risen to 68% of total expenditure from 59% in 2010, which is not surprising for a small membership organisation

which is highly dependent on professional expertise and knowledge to organise activities and provide advice and support to members.

Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
% of organisational expenditure on personnel costs	59%	54%	56%	64%	68%
% of SIDA funding spent on personnel	31%	54%	65%	61%	78%

Figure 17 Organisational expenditure on personnel 2010-14

As can be seen in the table above, 78% of SIDA funding was used for personnel costs in 2014: this is partly because these costs had continued to rise (up 50% from 2010), but also because the SIDA funding was reduced due to exchange rate fluctuations: this meant the percentage expenditure on personnel costs was probably higher than it would have been if the total funding had been higher.

In 2010, around 50% of SIDA funding was allocated to NGO participation in the work of the CRC Committee: this was a year when the CRC met in double chambers. After this other funders were interested in financing this participation and Child Rights Connect was able to use the SIDA funding for the core costs of running the organisation (staff, premises, etc.).

A review of the financial management and internal control system was carried out by Ernst and Young at the request of SIDA in March 2013. The aim was to verify whether there were reliable systems and competencies in place to meet the standards of accountancy and management of resources expected by SIDA. It was found that procedures were acceptable for the size of organisation and that measures had been undertaken to strengthen internal controls and financial management. A few recommendations were made related to audit, delegation of authority, petty cash and anti-corruption policy. These were subsequently implemented. Financial procedures have been further developed in 2015 and a new accounting structure is planned from January 2016.

In summary, during the last six years SIDA's contribution has been key to the day-to-day functioning of the organisation and to its achievements. The resources provided have been managed and used effectively, in accordance with the plans and reports provided to SIDA.

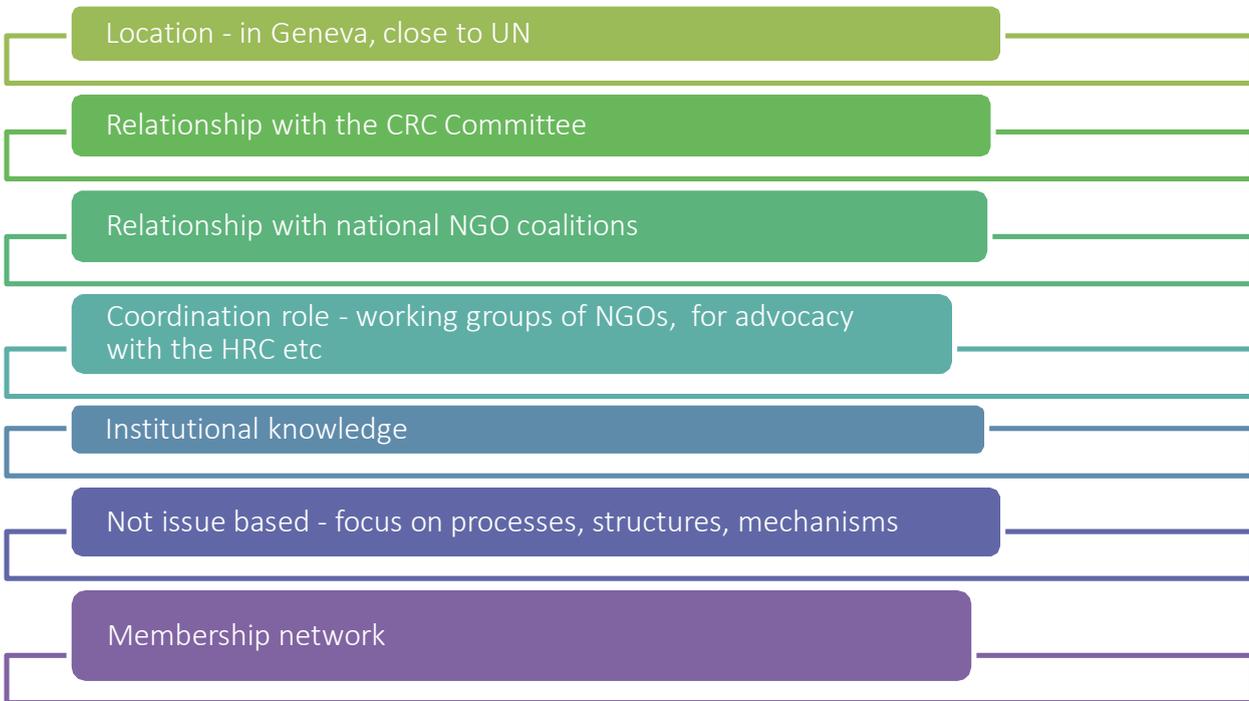
5 SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

The main strengths and achievements of Child Rights Connect over the last six years can be summarized as follows:

- Coordination and capacity-building for NGO and children's participation in the CRC reporting process and work of the CRC Committee
- Supporting and influencing the work of the CRC Committee
- Providing a platform for NGOs, members and non-members, to collaborate on child rights
- Providing a link between child rights NGOs working on the ground and the CRC Committee
- Some very active Working Groups of enthusiastic members addressing particular aspects of child rights (for example Children of Incarcerated Parents)
- Advocacy for child rights in the Human Rights Council and Universal Periodic Review
- Close working relationship with Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the CRC Committee's Secretariat
- Effective partnerships with a wide range of organisations, big and small
- Provision of practical tools, information and guidance for NGOs in several languages
- Major contribution to standard setting (e.g. drafting of OP3)
- Provision of tailored support and advice to members, NGO coalitions and children
- Enhanced communications through a new website and effective use of technology
- Professional staff team in the Secretariat with relevant expertise and knowledge

- Seen as independent and a reliable source of information
- Good contacts in Geneva

Overall Child Rights Connect has a number of strategic advantages which make it unique in what it can contribute to advancing child rights internationally:



6 SUMMARY OF CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

CRC Committee requirements

A number of factors relating to the operation of the CRC Committee led to a vastly increased workload for Child Rights Connect in recent years, for example

- The CRC at various stages accumulated a backlog in reviewing states, which led to “double chambers” and extra meeting time.
- A large turnover in membership of the CRC Committee, including new members with a limited understanding of the reporting process and the involvement of NGOs
- Changes and staffing reductions at the OHCHR Secretariat in 2010, which led to Child Rights Connect undertaking more logistical work to support CRC sessions.

The question of the respective roles of the OHCHR Secretariat and the Child Rights Connect Secretariat gave rise to some tensions during the period of these grants. However this issue is now being actively addressed and a retreat meeting to plan the way forward was held in August between staff from Child Rights Connect, OHCHR and UNICEF.

Treaty body strengthening process

Proposals to change treaty body processes were in danger of having a negative impact on the work of the CRC Committee and reduce NGO participation and influence (as already discussed above on page 21). Child Rights Connect was keen to ensure that that any streamlining and strengthening should not compromise the CRC Committee’s high standards and good practices. This required painstaking work and varied types of advocacy to represent the civil society position on child rights. The success of this work also depended on the new collaboration with human rights organisations; this partnership is likely to be increasingly important, particularly in work related to the HRC.

Coordination with Geneva based INGOs

It has not always proved easy to coordinate adequately with Geneva based INGOs and maximise resources and impact, particularly on advocacy, due to time constraints and differing priorities. There were some suggestions that some member INGOs had sometimes used Child Rights Connect Working Groups as a platform for their own advocacy, rather than attempting to harmonise views and work together. This means being clearer about the role of Working Groups in the context of the Child Rights Connect Strategic Plan, as well as having agreements about what it means to be a member of Child Rights Connect and work together on key advocacy topics. The aim should be that members feel a collective ownership of the strategic plan, rather than the plan being seen as applying only to the work of the Child Rights Connect Secretariat.

Financial stability

After a major financial crisis in 2006-7, steps were taken to professionalise the organisation, restructure the governance and put it on a more sound financial footing, including having a policy for reserves. However financial problems hit again in late 2014 when a major grant was delayed, leading to acute cash-flow problems. One factor was the overreliance of the organisation on certain donors. In 2015 the new Director has put in place more systematic forecasting, monitoring and reporting to the ExCo. Membership fees (although a small part of the budget) have not always been paid on time, if at all, and in 2010 and 2012 some organisations had their membership discontinued due to non-payment. Some members, who are at the same time donors, had their membership fee waived in the past. This had a major impact, as those organisations were also the ones who would provide the biggest membership fee (as membership fees depend on the size and child-related budget of the organization). These fees provide the only way of building up reserves. This issue is in the process of being resolved and in future all members will have to pay the membership fee.

Fundraising

Child Rights Connect has a range of long-term donors, including several providing core funding. However, in attempts to expand fundraising it has often proved hard to sell what Child Rights Connect does, as children are not direct beneficiaries (apart from those who attend sessions in Geneva) and many donors have been more interested in funding service delivery programmes than advocacy and “behind the scenes” work. There was a fundraiser in post from 2010-12 and, although this was not deemed successful at the time, financial data would suggest that it did lead to increased income; some of the ideas and documentation from that period may be useful for the future. A fundraising strategy was due to be drawn up in 2014. Work has been underway in 2015 to secure more multi-year funding and to explore new funding streams. This has resulted in one major donor switching to 3-year core funding and doubling the grant.

Measuring success and evaluating impact

Child Rights Connect’s strategic plans and funding proposals to SIDA have included objectives, activities and planned results, but not indicators or other ways of measuring outcomes. Objectives tend to have been quite general and have not changed much from one planning period to the next. Although details of activities and initiatives have been recorded in annual reports, case studies and other documents, there has been no systematic documentation and evaluation of the impact of the work. The last formal evaluation was conducted in 2001. Therefore there has been a lack of analytical information to inform decisions about work priorities, as well as limited concrete evidence and examples to present to potential donors. However in 2014 and 2015 it produced three “lessons learned” documents, reviewing the activities and results in three areas:

- Case study on supporting children to influence decisions affecting them (in conjunction with War Child) this documented the work done on child participation in the CRC and was used to provide information to support a grant application
- Case study on leading a civil society advocacy campaign on the third optional protocol to the CRC – this documented the work carried out on OP3 CRC and again was used to support a grant application

- An internal “lessons learned” document on the process of advocacy carried out in 2013-14 on the protection of the family at the Human Rights Council.

While these documents provide valuable information, it still proved difficult during the evaluation to unravel exactly what Child Rights Connect had done when and what the outcome had been on certain topics.

Being a small organisation with few staff

This has meant that Child Rights Connect has been susceptible to staff overload and burnout, particularly when there has been a need to react to pressing developments, rather than following operational plans or prioritising. Staff efforts have often ended up being spread too thinly. Priority was given to responding to external pressures and internal priorities and deadlines tended to be neglected – for example publications often came out later than planned. Due to the lack of long-term financial stability and insufficient clarity of the distribution of tasks both within Child Rights Connect and in cooperation with OHCHR, it was decided in 2015 to stand back, reflect and take stock. Time has been taken to review priorities, tasks and responsibilities and revise the operational plan and the profiles of the staff needed to deliver it, in order to get the organisation on a more stable footing, with clarity about future ways of working. As at late 2015 this review has been concluded and an increase in staffing is underway.

7 CURRENT AND FUTURE CHALLENGES Plethora of UN Mechanisms relevant to child rights

There are now several UN mechanisms focusing, and not always in a coherent way, on children’s rights (for example the HRC, UPR, Special Procedures). There are also myriad interventions and initiatives from different NGOs and other organisations with differing priorities, often completely uncoordinated. Child rights NGOs are often not coordinated enough in the new areas to maximise their impact and influence. It is a challenge to make strategic choices about when and how to intervene without being drawn in too many directions at once. One member INGO noted:

There is probably too much material on children's rights pouring through Geneva in one week for anyone to keep track of it, let alone prioritise and summarise and communicate it all.

A clear advocacy strategy is needed.

Ongoing threats to human rights and child rights

Child Rights Connect is engaging with a changing global and political scene. New and unexpected issues arise due to political agendas and pressures, as seen with the debate on the protection of the family in 2014. A certain number of States have been using the treaty body strengthening process to try and undermine the work of the treaty bodies, such as the CRC Committee. On some issues the NGO sector is clearly divided. Some respondents to the survey noted the challenges they face in their own country, such as the risks of reprisals from working on controversial issues. These points need to be borne in mind when developing work plans, which should include analysis of risk. Time needs to be allocated for dealing with unforeseen events.

Child Rights Connect acts as a sort of “entry point” to the CRC Committee for civil society. The decision to have “focal points” to coordinate in-country preparations for CRC pre-sessions has encouraged coalition building and empowered NGOs to organise amongst themselves, but has led to questions about how the NGO coalition is selected from some quarters. One interviewee noted

“there could be slightly more transparency on how groups are selected, as I know it has caused some concern among some NGOs that they are effectively the ‘gatekeeper’ to the Committee without there being (nor should there be) an official mandate to do so”.

This kind of comment reinforces the need to improve communications on this issue so that members and non-members alike are aware of who does what and where Child Rights Connect’s role starts and finishes. It may also be worth considering differentiating the Child Right Connect Secretariat from the OHCHR Secretariat with a different name (office, headquarters or similar) – at present both are referred to as the “Secretariat” and it is not always be clear which is the Secretariat in question.

Follow-up to recommendations from the CRC Committee and UPR

In many countries UNICEF and INGOs such as Plan and Save the Children are present to support national coalitions – but they may have other priorities and are likely to work with their own local offices and partners. Much progress has been made on advance preparation for presenting information to the CRC Committee, but very limited follow-up has been possible due to resource constraints, meaning that all the effort that has gone into getting key recommendations from the CRC Committee which, if implemented, could change the lives of children on the ground, can be wasted due to missed opportunities for follow-up afterwards. It is also important for national coalitions to be aware of linking their follow-up with reviews of their country at the UPR, including recommendations from the UPR on child rights. National coalitions often operate on a shoe-string budget and rely on the efforts of local NGOs. These in turn have their own priorities and may be exhausted after the intensive process of preparing an alternative report and presenting it. Comments from national coalitions included the following:

“As you know, the INGO can do this because they have enough funds and they can follow up activities but (national) CSOs can do this quite short term only 1 year which they follow up by the small grants. And after finished 1 year project they have to find more donors for to apply the new project to them. It is the big challenge for (national) CSOs.” (Coalition from Asia, member) *“In terms of challenges, Child Rights Connect should organise training on specific themes such as the OP3 CRC and also see how to put a stop to the invasion of new coalitions put in place in certain countries by international NGOs, which weaken existing networks. This can weaken the work of civil society”.* (National NGO from Africa) *“The challenges includes it lack of visibility at country level as well as members not having much information about its structures, their different roles and how they all contribute towards the success of the organisation. We recommend for a creating of more coherent links and interaction between Child Rights Connect and civil society organisations working in the area of child rights, especially those in Africa”* (Coalition from Africa, non-member) Child Rights Connect is not in a position to resolve all these problems, but there is a role to play in promoting best practice through provision of relevant materials and setting up of online training platforms and exchange fora to promote mutual learning, working closely with a better coordinated Child Rights Connect membership.

Implementation of OP3 CRC

Child Rights Connect has been an acknowledged leader in the development of the third optional protocol to the CRC and contributed to its early entry into force. There is still work to be done on ratification, including supporting the CRC Committee to make sure that it has the appropriate procedures in place to deal with complaints effectively, as well as training and capacity building for actors at national level to understand the new mechanism, undertake advocacy and monitor progress in their own country. It is also necessary to be prepared for offering advice on how to present cases to the CRC Committee and how to make them receivable.

What next with child participation?

There are further challenges related to how best to continue to support and enhance the role of children in the meaningful way, so that all children’s views are always part of the state reviews carried out by the CRC Committee (and more widely in the whole UN system) and children are supported to be involved in follow-up back in their country. As yet it has not proved possible to begin a discussion on specific working methods of the HRC on child participation, but the CRC Committee principles and working methods are a good basis. This could also be informed by concluding the work which Child Rights Connect started on standards for child participation international processes. One European-wide NGO (member organization) issued a caveat in a comment in the survey:

“I do not see children participation as a goal of Child Rights Connect. This should be done by national organizations with direct contact to their own people. Children should participate in areas where they have acquired knowledge and expertise. On the international level there is always the risk of using children for purposes of adults (i.e. manipulation, decoration or tokenism)”

While the comment about the risks is valid, this also points to the need to communicate more effectively with member NGOs, so that they understand what has been achieved and realise that child participation can be meaningful at international level too. They can also be involved in the development of the standards. The approach that Child Rights Connect is taking is clearly supported, as the survey responses, as well as other contributions to the evaluation, rated improvements in child participation in the CRC very high on the list of “most significant changes”.

Children who provided input to the evaluation noted the importance of their engagement with the CRC Committee, for example this comment from a child from Cambodia:

“Participate in this meeting is very important because we show the suffering of child abuse, violation of the child to the International level to let them see and help us to find a good solution”.

Another child advocate noted the results of his follow-up with others back in Cambodia:

“The Commune Council and local authorities committed to pay more attention to children and create intervention to protect children. As the result, the children’s situation is much better”.

The nature of membership

Is Child Rights Connect a membership network for big NGOs which want to work together to influence the UN on child rights and collectively support organisations and coalitions at national level, or should it be a wider membership organisation with proper representation from all parts of the world? The large INGOs with a focus on children already have great influence and resources. Getting an enhanced voice in Geneva for organisations in developing countries addressing major challenges in child rights at national and regional level has always been one of the priorities of Child Rights Connect. The involvement of regional and national coalitions tends to have remained limited to the moment of the CRC Committee sessions. A great deal of information goes out to members and contacts, but not as much comes back. The survey has shown that many members remain distant from the network – a significant number did not respond to the survey and those that did demonstrated that there were many aspects of Child Rights Connect’s work that they did not know much about. No staffing resources have been devoted to servicing the membership specifically. There is therefore the potential to do much more with the current network and take advantage of its untapped potential, even before considering getting more organisations to join. One INGO member suggested:

It might be interesting for Child Rights Connect to define better its role as a network serving in particular grassroots organizations.

At the same time there is a need to differentiate between what should be offered specifically to members and what services should be available to non-members. This would also include defining what membership means and what the responsibilities of members entail. There could be different types of membership according to the type of involvement of the organisation. The criteria for membership need to be reviewed and may need to address more clearly the approach to working with different types of organisations – for example faith-based organisations, corporate foundations, and even private companies, which may have a greater role in future in the context of initiatives such as those being set up for funding the Sustainable Development Goals. Overall this points to the need for the development of a membership strategy through a consultative process.

Members with different priorities and expectations

Issues have arisen over inclusion of some organisations, as well as positions on particular topics. Some members have objected to the involvement of certain faith-based organisations, while others have recognised that many are doing good human rights work. Misunderstandings can arise, especially when working at a distance. A national NGO from Latin America (non-member) commented

“Our organization has been discriminated when participating in civil society reports. Only because we are a Christian based organization. They only promote civil society organizations aligned with their ideological positions”

While further investigation proved this assertion to be unfounded, it demonstrates the kind of issues that may arise and have to be managed in a disparate network. Some members reported concerns that some others did not necessarily have child rights at the centre of their work and that the contributions of some participants at the General Assembly had made them reluctant to attend again. Generally there was a wish to attend the General Assembly to keep up-to-date with developments and exchange with others. The concerns raised about the General Assembly focused on a few specific issues:

- Participants wanting to talk about their own specific projects or particular messages
- INGOs sending junior staff members or volunteers who were not well versed on child rights
- Heated discussions about potential members which should have taken place elsewhere
- The expense of attending the General Assembly and wanting to be sure that it would be worth it in terms of learning and sharing experiences

In addition the evaluation found that some member organisations may have unrealistic ideas about what support can be provided for taking forward their particular areas of concern, for example:

“They got our reports through, but may have needed some urging at times. Some of the technical aspects of this are still a mystery to me - I know they are changing the processes with Treaty Bodies right now. I was disappointed with the CRC Committee’s response to an issue we raised (they ignored it), and I wanted Child Rights Connect to be more pro-active in taking this up with the CRC - they weren't, and ignored my request” (comment from member INGO).

This again points to the need for clear communications about what Child Rights Connect can and can't do – it is clearly not appropriate to take up the specific issues of individual members. These kind of tensions could also be addressed as part of the membership strategy.

What kind of role in advocacy should Child Rights Connect take?

Child Rights Connect has status at ECOSOC but on whose behalf should it intervene? How far should it go in taking political positions without consulting members? After Child Rights Connect gained ECOSOC status a “Sign-off procedure for statements” was developed in 2013 which includes guidance on arrangements for speaking on behalf of the organisation. However it was suggested that this is still not completely clear in relation to consultation with the membership. Active members sometimes want to do joint statements, sometimes want to be co-sponsors with Child Rights Connect and sometimes want a statement to be in the name of Child Rights Connect. This is an ongoing dilemma in a network which includes large INGOs which are themselves very involved in their own advocacy. Some members stated that advocacy could be more effective if there was a closer working relationship and more consultation on key issues. It is inevitable that some members will not agree with all positions - it is in the nature of being in a network that organisations will sometimes have to make compromises to enable to them to work in partnership. Again this suggests the need for a clearly communicated advocacy strategy.

Funding

Funding challenges continue and the current range of core grants does not allow Child Rights Connect to take on the extra initiatives foreseen in the 2015-19 Strategic Plan. In addition the organisation is still susceptible to the impact of exchange rate variations and delays in decisions about grants from the main funding organisations. Donors like collaborative funding projects where organisations partner with each other to achieve added value: Child Rights Connect offers a partnership approach due to its nature as a network, which in itself is a strategic advantage. It would be good to use ExCo members for contacts with donors to emphasise the partnership approach. Collaboration over joint projects with individual members of Child Rights Connect can present some risks, as demonstrated in the joint grant with CRIN (please see joint evaluation report). However it could be possible to define specific projects in the future, linked to the strategic plan, for example for piloting a new approach or delivering a clearly defined time-limited project with specific objectives.

Governance and organisation

There is a need to consolidate governance and finalise initiatives already underway to clarify roles, including the reorganisation of the Secretariat after the period of transition in 2015. Closer attention is needed at ExCo level to the scrutiny of finances and risks. Working Groups need to be more accountable for their plans and activities, linked to the strategic plan. Improvements are needed in the arrangements and agenda of the General Assembly to make it more inclusive and encourage attendance, as part of improving network communications.

Communications

Whilst communications have dramatically improved in the last two years, there remain ongoing challenges in a number of different ways. Child Rights Connect does not necessarily have contact point in all member organisations. A few members commented that they sometimes felt out of the loop because they could not afford to attend the General Assembly every year. Even INGOs noted that information could be difficult to understand for a “non-UN professional” and that sometimes they needed a bit more explanation. There is a need to keep up with the latest technological developments and take advantage of tools that can support network coordination and ways of working at a distance.

The dangers of being too Geneva/Europe-based

Several interviewees noted that Child Rights Connect had done well to retain its independence and not fall into the overfamiliarity and cosiness of the “Geneva club”. Retaining this in future means ensuring a clear democratic membership base which would be more solid with increased membership from national coalitions around the world. Taking opportunities to make the staff more diverse would also be valuable. Some people suggested the need to have a presence in New York as well, but this was considered and ruled out during discussions about the strategic plan; it is unlikely to be possible without a huge increase in resources and could detract from other priorities, as well as risking the perception of a northern /UN club approach. One option for this could be to partner with another organisation in order to have some links to the UN in New York at critical times.

8. IMPLICATIONS FOR THE 2015-2019 STRATEGIC PLAN

The strategic plan for 2015-19 was developed through process of consultation with the membership during 2013-2014. The Director led the process and consultations were carried out through staff and ExCo retreats, as well as interviews of ExCo members, convenors of the Working Groups, and key external partners. A consultant was recruited to assist with gathering information from different stakeholders and defining future directions. An online survey was distributed in October 2013 to members and contacts to get views about strategic priorities, with 24 responses. The final plan was presented to the General Assembly in March 2014 and adopted without discussion, with the following strategic priorities:

- i. National, regional and international NGOs, children’s rights coalitions, children, child-led organisations and NHRIs effectively engage with the Committee on the Rights of the Child
- ii. Children’s rights are addressed in strategic areas of work of the UN human rights system and other international processes.
- iii. The Optional Protocol on a Communications Procedure is used by children, NGOs, children’s rights coalitions and NHRIs to seek redress for children’s rights violations.
- iv. Children’s views influence the work of the Committee and the broader UN human rights system to advance children’s rights at national, regional and international levels.

The following observations can be made as a result of the evaluation:

- **The plan sets clear strategic directions but is quite broad and very ambitious.** It is necessary to prioritise when putting it into operation and to set milestones for what is expected to be achieved at different stages. This has not been done adequately in the past. Many of the results could not be achieved by Child Rights Connect on its own; some are rather vague and not very measurable. It is therefore necessary to set SMART objectives and outcomes for what Child Rights Connect itself will aim to do and achieve, as well as indicators to measure success. The Director has already led a review of the plan with staff during 2015. This confirmed its overall directions and looked in more detail at what it meant in practice for the work of the Secretariat. An operational plan has been produced which can be regularly reviewed.
- **Promoting the realisation of child rights at national level** is no longer expressed as a strategic priority (as it was in 2010-14) but is partially in strategic objective (i), which refers to providing support to NGOs and coalitions “*on all the phases of the reporting cycleincluding implementation of the Committee’s Concluding Observations*”. It is also mentioned in strategic objective (ii). Those interviewed for the evaluation, and respondents to the survey from national NGOs and coalitions, gave very high priority to this area of work. It seems likely that if there had been wider membership involvement in the strategic plan from the global south and from Central and Eastern Europe, this work would have been particularly highlighted. Child Rights Connect has strategic opportunities to take this forward, through the links which are being developed with national coalitions, as well as their potential to become members of Child Rights Connect.

- **A coordinated approach to raising children’s rights** issues in the UN human rights system: this is referred to in strategic priority (ii). During the evaluation the large number of separate NGO initiatives and submissions was regularly referred to, including those from members of Child Rights Connect. This could be an opportunity to define specific topics to target for more coordination and for ExCo to provide leadership to the network.
- **Enhancing effective child participation** is now a strategic objective in its own right and Child Rights Connect can build on its successes with the CRC Committee. However it is very risky to continue this work without proper safeguarding measures in place: Child Rights Connect urgently needs its own safeguarding policy. There is also the opportunity to finalise the work on minimum standards for child participation in international processes.
- **The section on strengthening the organisation** is no less important and could also be formulated as an objective. Ongoing organisational development, including effective systems of governance, a strong Secretariat and a truly international membership, is key to future success.
- **Effective communications and information systems** will be a prerequisite for the delivery of many of the activities and results described in the plan. This means ongoing investment in technology and information sharing platforms, as well as adequate human resources to manage the systems and produce the content.
- **Increased funding and staffing** is needed to implement the plan. It includes activities and initiatives which the organisation has struggled to carry out in recent years due to limited resources.
- **Given that 2015 has been a year of transition**, limited work has been done in some areas during this time. Core work has continued but there has been more of an internal focus to put the organisation on a more stable footing for the future. This means that some expected results may need to be adjusted on account of starting late.

9. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 Conclusions

Child Rights Connect has grown and developed over the last six years and consolidated its key role in civil society interaction with the UN CRC Committee, providing a unique way of connecting the CRC Committee’s activities and initiatives with the regional and national level, with a two-way flow of information. NGOs from around the world, including from small states and from countries with difficult or risky political environments, have been empowered to report at international level on the realities relating to child rights in their country. From small beginnings it has become a highly respected organisation – as one interviewee noted “*if Child Rights Connect did not exist, it would have to be invented*”. The additional focus on the Human Rights Council as well as the CRC Committee has the potential to lead to a long-term positive impact on children’s rights, by facilitating and encouraging children’s rights NGOs’ involvement with this mechanism. Overall Child Rights Connect has been fully engaged in its core work and at the same time has taken many new opportunities to advance the rights of the child. Major highlights have included the successful campaigning which led to a strong new optional protocol to the CRC on a complaints mechanism (OP3); as well as working with the CRC to enhance the contribution of children to the reporting process. It has also facilitated changes to some of the core processes associated with NGO engagement with the CRC Committee, encouraging the setting up of national focal points and fundraising at national level for attendance in Geneva, as well as the use of webcasting and other technology to promote enhanced communications and participation. All this has contributed to the empowerment of national actors and to the future sustainability of civil society involvement with implementation of the CRC, to the benefit of children worldwide.

Child Rights Connect has also met the challenge of developing from a loose network of child rights NGOs into a professional organisation with its own governance and staff. Consolidating this role and adapting to the changing international landscape is the main challenge for the coming period.

The SIDA core funding has been a vital part of this development and enabled the organisation to have a secure working base, rather than spending valuable time on chasing potentially artificial project funding for the basic tasks of running the organisation and its key activities. By the nature of the organisation, as a network, the main purposes are increasingly to link people and organisations in a way that creates synergies

and ensures that the final result is more than the sum of its parts. This labor is intensive and requires sufficient core funding. Much has been achieved with a small staff and very limited resources – many people interviewed commented on the amazing output and impact of a “tiny organisation”. At times the ambitious work programme has overloaded the staff and this is not sustainable for the future.

The following are a selection of comments received during the evaluation which show the value of the work of Child Rights Connect.

- *Child Rights Connect is very important key structural organization. Its progress and achievements are brilliant and really evident. It truly deserves to have continuing support of its key members as well as donor community* (NGO Coalition from former Soviet Union)
- *Great Work and Achievements. Please Keep Up. More Efforts are Needed. Children are the Future of the Nation* (NGO coalition in Middle East and North Africa)
- *Our Deep Gratitude to the Child Rights Connect* (NGO coalition from former Soviet Union)
- *Just keep up the excellent work!* (NGO from Europe)
- *During the past five years you have done a very good job. Congratulations!* (NGO coalition from Latin America)
- *It contributed a lot in expanding the Treaty Body and the Optional Protocols. It helped a lot of different CSOs working with and for children. It facilitated and took part in sending CSO delegates to support the shadow reports and to survey the States’ reports about the International Child Rights Convention and its Protocols. It also contributed to the Child participation at the Pre-session of the Child Rights Committee. It shared many tools, documents and information about Child Rights in order to take up the challenges to realize the Child Rights* (NGO coalition in Africa)
- *“One of the few organisations which has remained grassroots driven – works for the benefit of members not for the organisation itself – Child Right Connect is grounded in what it gets from partners on the ground”* (INGO member)
- *“Very important as it gives us a link in Geneva”* (INGO member)
- *“They are our number one contact on the rights of the child..... they are expert not only on the wording of resolutions but also on the people and how things can be implemented effectively”* (UN mission in Geneva)

9.1 Recommendations

- a. **The SIDA funding of core activities should continue**, as a separate grant rather than jointly with CRIN (see joint evaluation report for more information). SIDA should consider increasing its grant so that it continues to fund an agreed percentage of the core budget bearing in mind that increased core funding is essential for the delivery of the strategic plan.
- b. **Investigate new ways of supporting national coalitions** in following up the implementation of CRC and HRC recommendations at national level. Develop capacity-building tools ready for their involvement with the new optional protocol (OP3). Promote the integration and further strengthening of the involvement of children. Consider offering training and capacity building online, possibly in conjunction with a member organisation which has a learning platform in place. Set up systems to allow national actors to be actively involved in exchanging experience and good practices.
- c. **Develop and communicate a clear advocacy strategy** which defines priorities and roles, including membership involvement in decision making and advocacy activities. Consolidate the role of Child Rights Connect in coordinating NGO input to the Human Rights Council on child rights issues on behalf of members.
- d. **Continue to facilitate the strengthening of child participation:** this should include finalising the standards for child participation in international processes, as well as finalising Child Rights Connect’s own child safeguarding policy. Develop website space and materials as well as social media options, to support

local organisations working with children and young people to follow up recommendations from the CRC Committee and other treaty bodies in their own country.

- e. **Review membership arrangements and develop a membership strategy** to reinvigorate the membership network, clarify membership criteria and benefits and involve the membership more closely in future strategy and activities. As part of this consider the nature of partnerships with different groups and what Child Rights Connect will in future offer to members and non-members. Consider whether the organisations Child Rights Connect works closely with should, if they so wish, become members of the network (for example national coalitions) or whether to retain a different relationship with these organisations. Consult with and use regional members to reach out and involve the wider membership. Consider how to involve and interact effectively with faith-based organizations that continue to have significant impact on the reality of children in some parts of the world.
- f. **Agree a fundraising strategy and diversify funding**
Involve ExCo in fundraising meetings with donors to help explain the network and collaborative approach. Consider entering into strategic alliances with other non-member organisations for specific projects, which could include projects of Working Groups (see below), including administrative costs as part of the grant application.
- g. **Clarify governance and organisation:** this is already underway, led by the new Director. Revise the statutes to clarify the respective roles and responsibilities of the ExCo and the staff and put in place the necessary policies to guide the work. Set up a Finance sub-committee of ExCo for closer attention to financial issues. Develop a system for declaring conflicts of interest. Undertake Board training in the role of board members. Continue to diversify the membership of ExCo and use the facility to co-opt ExCo members from outside the organisation to bring extra skills and different perspectives.
- h. **Working Groups:** need clearer terms of reference and objectives, with work plans, time-frames and regular reporting to ExCo. Integrate their planning and reporting with the planning and reporting of the secretariat, linked to the strategic plan.
- i. **Clarify the role of the General Assembly:** Given that many members seem to have a limited understanding and involvement in the work of Child Rights Connect, consider a two-day meeting with more time for exchange and discussion, as well as fostering a sense of belonging and collaboration. A budget should be allocated with agreed criteria for funding a certain number of members who are unable to fund themselves and to allow the meeting to be less Geneva-dominated. ExCo should take decisions on admission of new members to the network based on clear criteria agreed by the General Assembly rather than potential new members being considered at the GA. Provide space for presentations by members and other organisations and promote the exchange of experience and good practices.
- j. **Systematise knowledge management, including results-based planning and reporting.** Ensure that operational plans have clear objectives and success criteria which can be monitored and measured. Increase documentation, evaluation and drawing out of “lessons learned” to inform future priorities and interventions. Use the strategic plan to make strategic choices when necessary, to allow the delivery of quality work and avoid burnout of staff.
- k. **Further strengthen external and internal communications.** Good communications are key to the effectiveness of Child Rights Connect as a membership network. Clarify the role of Child Rights Connect to overcome the confusion with the CRC Committee and OHCHR and manage the expectations of members and non-members. Further invest in tools and content for network management, as well as coordination with members and other partners. Continue to explore opportunities for civil society engagement through social media and other technological platforms, including technical tools for working with members/partners at a distance.

APPENDICES TO EVALUATION REPORT ON THE WORK OF CHILD RIGHTS CONNECT

APPENDIX A

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ADRC	Annual Day on the Rights of the Child (at Human Rights Council)
CAGI	Centre Accueil Genève Internationale – Geneva Welcome Centre
CoCo	Coordinating Committee (of NGO Group on the CRC, precursor to ExCo)
CRC	UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRIN	Child Rights International Network
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DGD	Day of General Discussion (CRC Committee)
GC	UN Global Compact
HRC	UN Human Rights Council
ECOSOC	UN Economic and Social Council
ExCo	Executive Committee (board) of Child Rights Connect
ICC	International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights
ILO	International Labour Office
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NHRI	National Human Rights Institution
OHCHR	Office of the High Commission for Human Rights (UN)
OP3	Third Optional Protocol on the Convention on the Rights of the Child
OPAC	Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict
OPSC	Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography
ROC	Rights of the Child
SIDA	Swedish International Development Corporation
UN	United Nations
UPR	Universal Periodic Review (of the Human Rights Council)

APPENDIX B

LIST OF PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONS WHICH CONTRIBUTED TO THE EVALUATION

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 Anne-Sophie Lois, Plan International
 Asger Kjaerum, International Rehabilitation Council for Torture
 Audrey Rinaldi, CRC Secretariat, OHCHR
 Barbara Fontana, Permanent Mission of Switzerland at the UN
 Benyam Dawit-Mezmur, Chair of CRC Committee; member of African Committee of Experts
 Bill Bell, Save the Children
 Cedric Foussard, International Juvenile Justice Observatory
 Conchi Ballesteros, Plataforma de Infancia, Madrid (ExCo member)
 Davinia Ovet-Bondi, Save the Children
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 Eylah Kadjar, Terre des Hommes International Federation (ExCo member)
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 Imma Guerras Delgado, OHCHR
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 Katharina Rose, Intl Coordinating Committee for National HR Institutions (ICC)
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 Muriel Dreifuss Blsson, Administrative Officer

List of countries of origin of online survey respondents

Austria	Macedonia
Azerbaijan	Madagascar
Bangladesh	Mauritius
Belarus	Mexico
Belgium	Myanmar
Benin	Namibia
Bulgaria	Nepal
Cambodia	Netherlands
Chile	Norway
Costa Rica	Peru
Croatia	Poland
Cuba	Russia
Czech Republic	Senegal
Denmark	Spain
East Timor	Sweden
Egypt	Switzerland
Finland	Switzerland
France	Thailand
Gabon	The Gambia
Ghana	Togo
Haiti	United Kingdom
Honduras	USA
Ireland	Venezuela
Jordan	Yemen
Kenya	Zimbabwe
Laos	

APPENDIX C: TABLE OF PROGRESS ON OBJECTIVES FOR CHILD RIGHTS CONNECT FROM SIDA PROPOSALS

OBJECTIVES	Key expected results / outcomes / indicators of success	Progress and achievements
<i>For both funding periods (2010-12 and 2013-15) the objectives proposed were similar to those in the 2010-14 strategic plan.</i>	<i>These are taken from the “results framework” in the 2013-15 proposal which included planned results but not indicators. The 2010-12 proposal did not specify results or indicators but envisaged broadly similar activities.</i>	
Objective 1: Enhance the effective engagement of NGOs and others in the work of the Committee on the Rights of the Child (2010-15)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An up-to-date database of NGOs • Good quality alternative reports on 85% of countries, • Better knowledge and influence from national NGOs, • More systematic and influential participation of children, • Qualified Committee members; • Improved working methods of the Committee • A range of tools to strengthen NGO engagement. 	<p>Over 600 contacts on database; work in progress Alternative reports for 98% of states reviewed in 2014 All NGO participants briefed and supported; training workshops; webcasting sessions; webinars Child participation became part of CRC working methods Child Rights Connect gathered and provided information about candidates for election to CRC; provided induction to new CRC members Contributed to CRC amended rules of procedure, child participation; advised on simplified reporting procedure Publications, factsheets and toolkits produced</p>
Objective 2: Mainstream child rights in other UN human rights mechanisms and procedures (2010-15)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NGOs priorities in the agenda and resolution on child rights • Child rights coverage for most States under UPR, including on areas covered in advocacy briefs; • NGOs have the tools and information they need to engage with other mechanisms; • The treaty body strengthening process reflects best practices from the CRC and other treaty bodies. 	<p>Supported CRC Committee’s Days of General Discussion, lead partner for CRC General Comments on investment in children Submissions to UPR from Child Rights Connect Working Groups; child rights issues consistently and concretely included in UPR recommendations UPR factsheets produced, training module and workshops; included training at NGO Forums & events; capacity building and webinars on HRC & UPR Confidential pre-sessions for national civil society actors and meetings with children preserved in treaty body strengthening process</p>

OBJECTIVES	Key expected results / outcomes / indicators of success	Progress and achievements
Objective 3: Promote the realisation of child rights at national level through the effective implementation of outputs of the Committee and other mechanisms (2010-15)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NGOs receive outputs in a timely manner; • NGOs have a better understanding of how to follow-up and develop their own follow-up activities; • NGOs use other mechanisms and their outputs to strengthen child rights in their countries. 	Country summary reports produced after session until 2015, but very resource intensive, so now focussing on disseminating “concluding observations” and case studies. Advice provided on linking with UPR and HRC recommendations. Plans for more systematic follow-up of the CRC recommendations with further support for national NGOs and coalitions proved difficult to realise but are a priority in the new strategic plan
Objective 4: Pursue and support international advocacy on priority child rights issues (2010-15)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusion of key child-friendly principles in the Committee’s rules of procedure and working methods on OP3; • Entry into force of OP3 CRC by the end of 2013; • Adult-friendly and child-friendly tools for ratification campaign • Submission of a communication in working languages of the Committee. • HRC and other UN mechanisms influenced by coordinated action of the working groups. 	Advocacy led to CRC Committee new working guidelines on engagement with children demonstrating that child participation is a key principle in their work; Child Rights Connect gathered and presented views of 310 children to contribute to working methods relating to the new optional protocol (OP3). OP3 adopted with strong text; entry into force in April 2014 Advocacy Toolkit in 3 languages (English, French, Spanish) produced with campaign partners and regularly updated Advocacy calls and template letters in English, French and Spanish, sometimes in Arabic and Russian. Press release about OP3 ratification in national languages for national media work Working Groups have raised awareness through inputs on HRC resolutions, providing information to the CRC, UPR and other special procedures – eg WG on children of incarcerated parents, WG on investment in children. Co-organiser of HRC Annual Day on the Rights of the Child
Objective 5: Integrate and strengthen child participation in the work of the NGO Group, Committee and other bodies. (2013-15 only)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New standards for meaningful and effective child participation in international meetings; • Children increasingly involved and Committee has expertise in meeting with children; • Children are prepared and influence international meetings. 	Guides produced for NGOs for supporting child participation. Work started on minimum standards for child participation and on developing a child protection policy but not yet finalised. Organisation of a retreat for CRC Committee members on child participation, which became part of CRC working methods; support provided to national NGOs facilitating child participation; advance briefings for children by Skype from 2012 and children’s forum at pre-sessions from 2014; children gave positive feedback on the support they received and felt they had been listened to.

OBJECTIVES	Key expected results / outcomes / indicators of success	Progress and achievements
Objective 6: Strengthen the NGO Group and the services it provides to NGOs (2013-15 only)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NGO Group has a strategic approach to communications and tools that it needs for its work; • Key developments in CRC are communicated to the child rights community; • The website provides all the necessary information on our work and how NGOs can interact with the international system • Training is provided in key regional and national NGO meetings, resulting in better understanding and use of the UN human rights mechanisms by NGOs. • The NGO Group is a strong and effective network. 	<p>Communications strategy drawn up after consultations with members and wider network; new website set up in 2013</p> <p>Regular online weekly newsletter for members; dissemination of CRC concluding observations</p> <p>New website has sections on child rights issues, how to connect with the UN, publications and resources, members and partners</p> <p>Training and capacity-building on CRC, HRC and UPR carried out on request in various countries and through webinar but limited by resources constraints; proactive programme of training on OP3 CRC.</p> <p>Network now has 84 members; work in progress to update the statutes, clarify leadership roles and build wider membership involvement</p>

APPENDIX D: MAIN ADVOCACY PROJECTS AND OUTCOMES

Compiled by Child Rights Connect Programme and Policy Manager, November 2015

No	Project	Outcomes	Relevant SIDA objective(s)
1	Achieving formal child participation in the reporting process of the Committee on the Rights of the Child (see specific advocacy table for dates and more specific information)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal retreat organised by Child Rights Connect for Committee members, OHCHR staff and child participation experts • Formal working methods of the Committee of the child participation adopted based on Child Rights Connect's recommendations • Also first working methods of a UN human rights body formally integrating child participation • Increased participation of children in the CRC reporting process • More influential participation of children, including remotely • Committee members have strengthened their expertise in consulting directly with children and do so in a more child-friendly way (formal letter to children having participated to the reporting process, ...) • Child Rights Connect's publication: child friendly guide for children who want to report and guide for NGOs who want to assist children in reporting 	Objective 1 Objective 5
2	Advocating for a new simplified reporting procedure in line with the CRC and special participation of civil society and children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members and national coalitions with experience in the CRC reporting process were consulted on points to be raised to ensure a good simplified reporting procedure (2015) • The Committee has invited Child Rights Connect to submit inputs on the new simplified reporting procedure (2015) • The Committee has invited Child Rights Connect to be part of their working group for the development of the new simplified reporting procedure (2015) 	Objective 1 Objective 5
3	Advocating for the best candidates to the elections of the Committee on the Rights of the Child	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key UN missions get information from national actors through Child Rights Connect on candidates and can make an informed decision (regular activity every time there is an election (2010, 2012, 2014)) 	Objective 1
4	Using the UPR to get international recommendations on children's rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct advocacy on the ratification of all UN treaties on children's rights and the lifting of reservations to those treaties by Child Rights Connect (since 2012) • Members and partners reporting on child rights have a coordination platform organised by Child Rights Connect Secretariat to share information and prepare joint advocacy on UPR (since 2012) • Child Rights Connect also encourages and assists members/national actors to use the UPR: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ UPR factsheets done in collaboration with UPR Info (between 2011 and 2014) ○ Presentation of the UPR, case studies and how it is relevant to child rights actors in all NGO forums of Child Rights Connect (since 2010) 	Objective 2

No	Project	Outcomes	Relevant SIDA objective(s)
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Specific trainings delivered by Child Rights Connect to members and national actors (including ECPAT International Secretariat (Dec 2010), Latin American offices of PLAN and Latin American child rights actors (April 2012)) ○ National coalitions and members requesting technical assistance from Child Rights received support for their UPR submission and advocacy (in 2012 to NGOs in Pakistan, Algeria, the UK and the Republic of Korea). 	
5	Preserving the Committee's specificities, including the confidential pre-session for national civil society actors and the meetings with children, during the treaty body strengthening process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Joint NGO written and oral statements acknowledged the specificities of the Committee and the importance to avoid getting the lowest common denominator for all treaty bodies throughout the treaty body strengthening process (2010-2013) ● Key UN missions were informed of the Committee's specificities that should not be touched in the treaty body strengthening process (2012-2014) ● The GA Resolution A/RES/68/268, which is the outcome of this process, does not touch upon the confidential pre-session of the Committee and its meetings with children (NB: the Committee on the Rights of the Child is the only treaty body to have this in place) (2014) 	Objective 1 Objective 4
6	Improving NGOs engagement in the CRC reporting process and State parties' engagement by webcasting CRC sessions, as part of an NGO project covering all treaty bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The GA Resolution A/RES/68/268, which is the outcome of the treaty-body strengthening process, decided that official webcast of all treaty bodies' sessions will start as soon as feasible (2014). 	Objective 1
7	Integrating child participation in the work of the HRC (see specific advocacy table for dates and more specific information)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Specific reference to Child Rights Connect's survey with children and key outcomes was made in the official OHCHR report for the 2014 annual day on the rights of the child of the HRC ● A prezi summarising that same survey was displayed at the HRC during the 2014 annual day on the rights of the child ● The related HRC resolution contained issues raised by the children ● A video summarising the consultations with children and their main outcomes of was shown at the HRC during the 2015 annual day on the rights of the child ● A copy of the report compiling children's views was disseminated to UN missions ● Child Rights Connect delivered oral statements to the HRC on the importance of child participation at the HRC 	Objective 4 Objective 5
8.	Preserving children's rights against controversial initiatives on the protection of the family at the HRC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Led to a wide spectrum of actors joining forces and speaking with one voice to defend children's rights, and the inclusion of a child rights perspective in the final resolution ● <i>(NB key points were summarised in "Lessons learned » document)</i> 	Objective 2 Objective 4

No	Project	Outcomes	Relevant SIDA objective(s)
9.	Preserving the annual day on the rights of the child against HRC President's initiative on streamlining the HRC's work (2015)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiative put on hold by the HRC (2015) • Joint position of the network shared with key UN missions (2015) 	Objective 4
10.	Inclusion of key-child friendly principles in the Committee's rules of procedure and working methods on OP3 CRC (2012-ongoing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Committee integrated our main recommendations in its rules of procedure (2012) • Child Rights Connect successfully advocated for the Committee to develop working methods integrating children's views (2012) • Child Rights Connect submitted recommendations for the Committee's working methods based on the views of children consulted (working methods still in progress by the Committee) (2014) 	Objective 4
11.	Entry into force of OP3 CRC by the end of 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entry into force of OP3 in April 2014 (10th ratification in January 2013) (Several of the 10 States parties needed for the entry into force were directly targeted by Child Rights Connect and partners) 	Objective 4
12.	Advocating for mainstreaming children's rights in the HRC and OHCHR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of the WG on Mainstreaming (in 2012: change of name of the previous WG on the Human Rights Council) • Written submissions and oral statements delivered by Child Rights Connect targeting the OHCHR 2014-2017 strategic management plan (2013) • Meetings held by Child Rights Connect and partners with key stakeholders in OHCHR to inform the WG's strategy (2014) 	Objective 2 Objective 4
13.	Influencing the HRC annual day on the rights of the child	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The concept note, panellists and main points of the related resolutions of each annual day were influenced by Child Rights Connect's recommendations (2010- 2015) • Expert members and partners' suggestions and recommendations were voiced by Child Rights Connect and taken into account by the main sponsors of the annual day and OHCHR (2010-2015) • Child Rights Connect successfully advocated for an annual day on children's access to justice in 2014 (2013) • Space was provided for hearing children's views during the 2014 and 2015 annual days 	Objective 4 Objective 5
14.	Providing a child rights perspective to human rights resolution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selected HRC resolutions contain the language proposed by Child Rights Connect 	Objective 2 Objective 4

APPENDIX E: ASSESSING ADVOCACY OUTCOMES & IMPACT: CAMPAIGNING ON OP3 2007-2015

Outcome category	Advocacy activities	Evidence and examples of successful outcomes and impact from the advocacy
1. Heightened awareness about an issue	<p>DRAFTING OF OP3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wide dissemination of information on the campaign, the drafting process, how to engage and advocacy calls and template letters in English, French and Spanish at least, and sometimes in Arabic and Russian (2010-2012) • Continuous reporting on the process and issues involved in the campaign to help people stay informed and involved. (Child Rights Connect Secretariat would brief the Working Group regularly on developments for WG members to share updates; CRIN would attend the negotiations rounds to do daily reports; interns of WG members (in particular Child Rights Connect and TdH interns sometimes helped CRIN for their daily reports by sharing their notes) • Revised existing advocacy documents and briefs for NGOs and government representatives (2010) • Developed a new Advocacy Toolkit that was translated into French and Spanish and updated after each development of the drafting process (2010-2011). Drafting led by Child Rights Connect, CRIN provided edits, glossary and helped with translation. • CRIN and Child Rights Connect both had a dedicated page on the campaign on their websites that were regularly updated (2010-2012); CRIN's website documented the campaign and provided up-to-date news and information on activities, events and campaign landmarks <p>RATIFICATION OF OP3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coalition 'Ratify OP3 CRC - International Coalition for the OP3 CRC' formed for the ratification of OP3 and to continue raising awareness amongst the child rights community; this replaced Child Rights Connect's Working Group. The aim of having a separate international coalition was to create an advocacy campaign for 	<p>DRAFTING OF OP3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Coalition to stop the use of Child Soldiers (now called Child Soldiers International) and the International Coordinating Committee of National Human Rights Institutions joined the campaign (2010). • Throughout the campaign, more national, regional and international actors became involved in advocacy activities and child rights organisations were increasingly aware of the drafting of OP3 CRC. <p>RATIFICATION OF OP3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The French NHRI did a press release based on the one produced by the Working Group just in time for the day of the signing ceremony • ARD Television (Germany) did an interview of Child Rights Connect's Director just after the ceremony (http://www.tagesschau.de/multimedia/sendung/ts32452.html click on UN-Kinderrechtskonvention on the right hand side). Several German media outlets (press, radio) also reported on it • EFE agency (the Spanish news agency) that was contacted did an article that was used by a number of Latin American web news sites (http://www.abc.com.py/nota/veinte-paises-reconocen-que-los-ninos-pueden-buscar-justicia-en-la-onu/; http://noticias.latino.msn.com/politica/articulos.aspx?p-documentid=32637588; http://www.publimetro.com.mx/noticias/veinte-paises-reconocen-que-los-ninos-pueden-buscar-justicia-en-la-onu/elbB!1727514/) • Spanish, Italian and Norwegian media referred expressly to the press release

Outcome category	Advocacy activities	Evidence and examples of successful outcomes and impact from the advocacy
	<p>ratification that would be more visible and seem more inclusive, by not being directly under Child Rights Connect. (Jan 2012-June 2012)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch of the new coalition at an official event during the June 2012 HRC session, to call all States for a speedy ratification of OP3 (12 members in its Steering Committee including Child Rights Connect and CRIN until 2015. • Joint media strategy (joint embargoed press release disseminated in English, French and Spanish to journalists covering UN events in Geneva and translated into national languages for national media work by members and partners (including into German, Bahasa Indonesia, Thai, Khmer, Japanese, Dutch, Italian and Arabic); members present at the ceremony available for media interviews, etc.(February 2012). The joint press release was also shared with partners to support them in raising awareness about the signing of OP3 in their respective media. • Training and awareness raising about the OP3 and the ratification campaign in each Child Rights Connect forum (3 times a year) (2012-2014) • Redesign and launch of the website for the ratification campaign (CRIN and Child Rights Connect were part of the Coalition’s Steering Committee taskforce with Plan Geneva Office) (2013-2014). (Child Rights Connect had developed the first website alone in 2012 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Several NGOs posted the press release on their websites (members and non-members such as HREA, CRC Asia, a Philippines based website of human rights advocates) • Dissemination of the membership form in English, French and Spanish • Membership around the world for the Coalition which grew to 55 members by the end of 2012.
2.Contribution to debate	<p>DRAFTING OF OP3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Networking among key NGOs to gather support • First UN side event held (March 2008) • Petition in support of establishing complaints procedure for CRC • Joint advocacy to ensure that key provisions were included in the treaty (2010-2011) through joint NGO position papers and oral statements (2010-2011) and the dissemination of such positions and actions proposed through the WG members and CRIN especially • Throughout the process, Child Rights Connect mobilised and strengthened the capacity of national, regional and international 	<p>DRAFTING OF OP3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of NGO Group Working Group for a Communications Procedure - to push for complaints mechanism (2008) • <u>19 States attended UN side event, direct conversation and engagement with States needed to push process forwards.</u> (March 2008) • 4934 signatures including on behalf of leading human rights organisations – however petition was hacked so numbers may not be accurate

Outcome category	Advocacy activities	Evidence and examples of successful outcomes and impact from the advocacy
	<p>NGOs under its Working Group for a Communications Procedure, as well as other partners.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publication of editorials on CRIN website at key moments in campaign (entry into force, for example) <p>RATIFICATION OF OP3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The International Coalition had a twelve-member Steering Committee of international and regional child rights NGOs from its inception (2012). • Interview with ESCRNet upon entry into force (a network working on economic and social rights) • Joint side event of the Coalition during the 2014 March HRC session to celebrate the entry into force of OP3, brief UN diplomats about reasons to ratify (including through the participation of State parties to OP3 during the discussion) • Joint call to action in September 2014 disseminated on the Coalition’s website and through Steering Committee members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The mobilisation and capacity building activities resulted in a strong and coordinated advocacy approach both during the negotiations and the adoption of the treaty at the HRC in Geneva and at the General Assembly in New York. <p>RATIFICATION OF OP3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coalition representatives were invited to speak at key events around the world. • Debate among NGOs and advocates about how to best use the new complaint procedure and what would be tactical for its development. • Discussion ensued with potential partners about how to make best use of OP3 and related procedures
3.Changed opinion	<p>DRAFTING OF OP3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lobbying of the Committee on the Rights of the Child to support campaign for the complaints procedure.(prior to June 2008) • Advocated for the OP3 text to have the strongest provisions of other similar complaints procedures, as well as stronger or specific provisions needed to ensure an adequate protection of child complainants and an accessible mechanism for children through joint position papers and oral statements during the negotiations as well as bilateral advocacy meetings with missions in Geneva (2010-2011) 	<p>DRAFTING OF OP3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee on the Rights of the Child endorses campaign(2008) • Throughout the negotiations, several States echoed the Working Group’s position on key provisions. (2010-2011) • The final version of OP3 includes a number of the provisions and language that was advocated for. (2011) • Several States also rejected the package proposed by the Chairperson of the Working Group on the last day of the negotiations after intensive lobbying (2011).
4.Changed policy	<p>DRAFTING OF OP3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous involvement with UN Working Group (submissions, statements, lobbying with States) • Systematically contacted all UN missions to open dialogue and gauge interest in ratification of OP3.Joint advocacy to ensure the 	<p>DRAFTING OF OP3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UN Working Group on the communications procedure formed, meets, reports and <u>eventually develops final text of the optional protocol</u>

Outcome category	Advocacy activities	Evidence and examples of successful outcomes and impact from the advocacy
	<p>adoption of OP3 by the HRC in Geneva (April 2011 – June 2011) and the UN General Assembly in New York (September/October 2011)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child Rights Connect’s Secretariat did direct advocacy with selected UN missions in NY in May and September 2011 <p>RATIFICATION OF OP3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Priority countries identified for ratification Lobbying and further discussions with States Joint letters to 72 UN missions in NY in English, French and Spanish calling for their signature and ratification at the UN treaty event following the opening to signature of OP3 (September 2012) Joint letters send to 182 UN missions in NY calling for their signature and ratification at the 2013 UN treaty event (July 2013) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Chairperson of the WG that drafted OP3 personally thanked one of the WG’s convenors and Child Rights Connect’s Advocacy Officer for their work and support during the drafting process. <p>RATIFICATION OF OP3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 20 States signed OP3 on the day of the signing ceremony [28 February 2012] (Slovakia, Slovenia, Costa Rica, Portugal, Serbia, Uruguay, Brazil, Chile, Germany, Morocco, Montenegro, Spain, Austria, Belgium, Finland, Italy, Luxembourg, Maldives, Mali, Peru) - all of which had been specific targets of the advocacy (linked to the work done under point 5 to “implement” the adoption of OP3 by the UNGA After the signing ceremony: 15 States signed in 2012 (Albania, Andorra, Argentina, Cabo Verde, Cyprus, Liechtenstein, Madagascar, Malta, Mauritius, Paraguay, Romania, Senegal, Thailand, FYRM and Turkey) including 9 during the 2012 UN treaty event. Thailand also ratified and Gabon acceded to OP3 at the same event In 2013, 10 States signed (Benin, Côte d’Ivoire Croatia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Mongolia, Poland and Seychelles) including 7 during the 2013 UN treaty event. 7 other States ratified or acceded to OP3 in 2013 (Albania, Bolivia, Germany, Montenegro, Portugal, Slovakia and Spain) including 2 during the same event. In 2014, 3 States signed (France, Ireland and Ukraine) and 5 States ratified (Andorra, Belgium, Costa Rica, Ireland, Monaco) In 2015, 2 States signed (Czech Republic and Lithuania) and 6 States ratified (Argentina, Chile, Denmark, El Salvador, Mongolia and Uruguay)

Outcome category	Advocacy activities	Evidence and examples of successful outcomes and impact from the advocacy
5. Policy change implemented	<p>RATIFICATION OF OP3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lobbied to have the official UN signing ceremony as soon as possible after the UNGA adoption (which meant that at least 8 signatures had to be secured for the day of the ceremony), to have an NGO speaker as one of the official speakers and to present children’s views on OP3 and co-organised it to ensure high visibility (January 2011) Prepared and disseminated template letters in English, French, Spanish, Arabic and Russian calling for the signing of OP3 on the day of the ceremony for national NGOs to use with their ministries (January/February 2012) Identified key States for international NGOs to focus efforts on, with a wider coverage of countries: co-sponsors of the OPCRC resolution at the HRC and/or at the GA, former group of States supporting the drafting of OP3, also States that usually sign international complaints procedures in the first year) Updates on advocacy activities undertaken by members and partners were shared amongst the group to enable those with country presences to support national efforts and Child Rights Connect’s Secretariat to follow up with the missions in Geneva. (January/February 2012) 	<p>As of November 2015: 20 States parties and 50 signatories ¹</p> <p>RATIFICATION OF OP3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members and partners sent letters calling for the signing of OP3 to relevant government representatives in at least, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, Viet Nam, Hong Kong, Belgium, Denmark, the Netherlands, FYROM, Scotland, Cyprus, Malta, Greece, Romania, Costa Rica, Spain, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Panama, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, Cote d’Ivoire, Senegal, Mali and Zambia, and followed up with meetings in most of those States. <u>Third Committee of the UN General Assembly adopts resolution approving OP3, followed by official UN adoption .</u> Official signing ceremony was held on 28 February 2012 in Geneva, 3 months after the UNGA adoption of OP3
6. Positive change in people’s lives	All the above activities and initiatives are relevant	OP3 entered into force and is gradually being ratified by countries around the world. As a result children and children’s rights advocates can bring complaints about violations of children’s rights. It will take time before a complaint is resolved by the CRC Committee, because it is necessary to exhaust domestic remedies before it can be considered by the CRC.

¹ OPICESCR (similar protocol for violations of economic, social and cultural rights and last one to be adopted before OP3) entered into force one year earlier (May 2013) and has as of today: 21 States parties and 45 signatories); also it was adopted by the UNGA in December 2008 but only open for signature in September 2009.

Appendix F: ASSESSING ADVOCACY OUTCOMES & IMPACT: CHILD PARTICIPATION IN CRC AND HRC (Child Rights Connect)

Outcome category	Advocacy activities	Examples and evidence of outcomes and impact
1. Heightened awareness about an issue	<p>CRC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy for the Committee to develop working methods on child participation (bilateral meetings with influential Committee members between 2009-2012, inputs to the Committee's General Comment on the right to be heard – adopted in 2009; confidential draft working methods shared with the Committee) • Child participation as a standard topic in meetings between ExCo and the Committee (in September each year) and in dinners between ExCo and the Committee (in June each year) between 2009 and 2012 • Assist children and NGOs supporting them to produce relevant information for the Committee as evidence of the relevance of their participation in the CRC reporting process (guides, technical assistance) (2010-2011) • Advocacy to include children's views in the Committee's rules of procedure on the third Optional Protocol (2011-2012) • Child Rights Connect Forum: include children in adults' forum to have them share their experience and inspire other participants to facilitate child participation in advocacy activities + discussion during the forum with adults (September 2014, February and June 2015) and trainings (2013, 2014) • Children who had met with the Committee presented their experience to adults themselves • Bulgaria training on child participation in the CRC reporting process (April 2014) 	<p>CRC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee agreed to participate to a retreat organised by Child Rights Connect • Dissemination of our guides on child participation in the CRC reporting process (for children and NGOs accompanying children) and provision of technical assistance (since 2011) • Inclusion of the views of one group of children in our official suggestions and recommendations on the Committee's rules of procedure on the third Optional Protocol submitted to the Committee (August 2012) • Informal agreement with the Committee Chairperson that the Committee will further develop working methods on the third Optional Protocol after we can consult with more children and send them the results of the consultation (2012) → the Committee decided to develop working methods on the third Optional Protocol after the adoption of its rules of procedure • Agenda of Bulgaria conference and outcome report of Bulgaria (2014) • Agenda of our forums (2014 and 2015)
	<p>HRC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lobbied to include youth participants as panellists of the HRC annual day on the rights of the child (2010) • Raised awareness about the importance of child participation during a side event with diplomats at the HRC (March 2014) 	<p>HRC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The participation of youth panellists was included in the concept note for the HRC 2011 annual day • Youth representatives participated to the HRC 2011 annual day on the rights of the child

Outcome category	Advocacy activities	Examples and evidence of outcomes and impact
2. Contribution to debate	<p>CRC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brought key experts to the retreat to show child participation feasible and relevant for the Committee (Laura Lundy) (2013) • Developed the agenda of the retreat to trigger Committee's action (2013) • Developed and disseminated a survey for children on the Committee's rules of procedure on the third Optional Protocol (2013) • Bulgaria training on child participation in the CRC reporting process (April 2014) <p>HRC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinated members to ensure the production of videos with children's voices for the annual day (2012-2015) • Provided technical assistance to members to ensure that the videos could be shown at the HRC (2015) • Developed and disseminated a survey for children on access to justice (2013-2014) • Advocated for the inclusion of the findings of our survey during the 2014 HRC annual day (2013) in the form of ongoing quotes • When the original concept for child participation in the 2014 HRC annual day got dismissed, we developed a Prezi with the key findings and quotes of the survey conducted with children on access to justice to be shown at the HRC (2014). When the possibility of displaying an automated Prezi with voice over was dismissed (the day before the annual day), we lobbied for the Prezi's content to be displayed at least. • Shared information on how child participation can work and be meaningful at international level during a side event with diplomats at the HRC (September 2014) 	<p>CRC and HRC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 310 children from all regions responded to our survey (it was one survey on both the Committee's rules of procedure on the third Optional Protocol and access to justice in general) • More than 2,650 children from all regions were consulted for the 2015 annual day and CRC General Comment on investment • Children's voices were included in the concept note of the HRC 2013, 2014, and 2015 annual days on the rights of the child in the form of videos and quotes <p>CRC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agenda of retreat for Committee Sept 2013 • Outcome report of the Committee's retreat with ways forward (adoption of internal working methods and publication of guidelines to ensure that children and child-led organisations seeking to engage with the Committee can find out how and when to do that) <p>HRC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Videos and a Prezi presentation were displayed during the HRC 2013, 2014 and 2015 annual days on the rights of the child (UN webcast)
3. Changed opinion	<p>CRC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow up advocacy after retreat (2014) • Assist children and NGOs to produce relevant information for Committee as evidence of the relevance of their participation in the CRC reporting process (guides, technical assistance) 	<p>CRC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For the 25th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Committee decided to focus on child participation. It issued a call to children to send in short stories, poems, pictures, photos and/or videos and posted

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forum: include children in adults' forum to increase importance of child participation + working groups in forum re child participation to encourage NGOs to integrate 	<p>them online. They also had an online discussion with children from different parts of the world thanks to our technical support, notably in identifying some of the children. Our work and support was specifically acknowledged.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 25th anniversary google hangout on child participation initiated by Committee in October 2014 The statement of the Chairperson of the Committee during the official UN event for the 25th anniversary of the CRC focused on child participation. Feedback from NGOs during the forum that they will think about better integrating children in the next reporting cycle
4.Changed policy	<p>CRC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inputs for draft, advocacy with individual Committee members ExCo dinner with Committee in June 2013 (advocacy to finalise their working methods, ensure meaningful and safe child participation throughout the Committee's work, give feedback to children; ask appropriate questions to children). ExCo meeting with Committee in January 2014 (advocacy to push the Committee to adopt the working methods on child participation by the end of the 65th session and elaborate further documents on child participation as well as child-friendly materials) <p>HRC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocacy towards securing the showing of videos with children's opinions at the HRC annual day (2014/2015 – to avoid last minute decisions of the Council not to show a "video" [for political reasons unrelated with child participation] as they did in 2014 [which led to the showing of a Prezi presentation without the voices nor automation of the slides]) 	<p>CRC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Committee starts drafting working methods (2013) <p>HRC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Main sponsors of the HRC annual day (EU and GRULAC) include child participation as a standard element of each annual day with no lobbying/advocacy needed anymore Main sponsors of the HRC annual day (EU and GRULAC) secured the showing of a video in 2015 but could not secure an official decision from the HRC for future years Child participation was included in the annual day in 3 consecutive years during one of the panels and discussions are ongoing about including it in both panels in 2016. Child participation shifted from physical participation (child representatives attending the panel) to other types of participation that are more representative/represent a wider range of children (Prezi with quotes and analysis of survey on the issues discussed that was conducted with over 300 children across the world in 2014; video showing

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocacy towards establishing new working methods of the HRC on child participation with the President of the HRC 	<p>consultations all around the world with children on the issues discussed and with interviews with some of them)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussions are currently ongoing to allow children to comment and ask questions to panellists during the 2016 annual day [decision to be taken in Dec/Jan 2016]
5. Policy change implemented	<p>CRC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow up advocacy based on the feedback collected from children meeting with Committee to advocate to strengthen/improve the process (2014-2015) Advocacy for the Committee to thank children participating to children's meetings and pre-sessional working groups, with a reference of how their inputs were taken into account Prepared a draft thank you letter and shared it with the Committee Secretariat to trigger discussions about this and launch the drafting process (2015) Advocacy to the Committee's Secretariat to ensure that the human rights officers for each country to be reviewed by the Committee also assist to children's meetings (2015) 	<p>CRC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Committee's Secretariat asked Child Rights Connect to prepare a draft thank you letter and showed interest in sharing it with the Committee for discussion (2015) Several human rights officers assisted to the children's meetings of June and October 2015. Organisations which engaged in the CRC reporting process included children after we disseminated information to them and supported them to do so Working methods of the Committee adopted in June 2014 [specific reference to the role of Child Rights Connect]. These provide the first international standards on child participation in UN human rights processes. Template thank you letter from the Committee to children drafted Children invited to private meetings with the Committee at each pre-session Children invited to attend the pre-session Committee members attend children's meeting despite lack of interpretation, ask questions and integrate some issues in review of State and concluding observations
6. Positive change in people's lives	<p>All the above activities were ultimately aimed at this</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children interviewed for the evaluation reported positive experience of participating and some were undertaking follow-up in their country

G: TIMELINE	Pre 2007	2007-2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Milestones, events, successes	1983 Ad hoc group for the drafting of the CRC formed (20 NGOs approx.,) First alternative reports Formation of national coalitions	First NGO Forums 2008-9 OP3 Advocacy toolkit	Guidelines for child participation in reporting process First children's report Training module on UPR Training on UPR for ECPAT in Thailand Influencing OP3 text	Influencing OP3 text (continued) Launch of factsheets on UPR Awarded ECOSOC status Guides for NGOs and children on CRC reporting OP3 guides Thai initiative at UN GA defeated (re. transfer of UN CR staff to UNICEF) Regional workshop - child participation in child rights monitoring for Plan in Cambodia	Advocacy on OP3 ratification National advocacy & training Thailand Regional training on OP3 Indonesia Regional training OP3 with Plan on UPR, HRC, OP3 in Panama Morocco and Thailand sign OP3 Official recognition of NGO Group work on OP3 CRC rules of procedure on OP3 influenced OP3 FAQ brochure OP3 ratification coalition created & launched at UN	Advocacy in New York on OP3 ratification OP3 ratification training at CSO Forum in Addis 30 th anniversary USB keys OP3 child friendly brochure Retreat with CRC Committee on child participation Launch of new website (Sept) Children's consultation agreed for 2014 HRC and ADRC Children's consultation for CRC working methods re OP3 Virtual event on OP3 with CRC Committee Germany ratifies OP3 CRC Successful advocacy for HRC Day in 2014	Revised OP3 info pack printed 1 st UN GC with child participation pilot process 1 st cooperation with CAGI 1 st Skype children's meeting (Mauritius) Ref to children's views in ADRC (OHCHR report) OP3 enters into force OP3CRC coalition conference in Addis (E and S Africa) Costa Rica and Slovenia ratify OP3 OP3 website re-designed / launched 1 st Forum for children 7 th meeting European children's rights coalitions Begin online report collection and registration for CRC Child participation working methods adopted	1st training on NHRIs Creation of task force on protection of the family Professional webcast starts Retreat with OHCHR and UNICEF 1 st funding application for PS

G: TIMELINE	Pre 2007	2007-2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
					OP3 coalition website created and launched "Webcast" starts	on access to justice	Joint position on children's rights in family environments Revised NGO guide on CRC	
Internal/ organisational milestones	1992 Charter with "CoCo" set up 1998 Founding Assembly NGO Group Secretariat set up in 2000(?)	2006-7 Big financial crisis; most staff left 2007 Extraordinary General Assembly	June: General Assembly and amendment to statutes Roberta Cechetti ExCo President 2010-12	Terminated membership for c. 12 members who did not pay subscriptions		30 th Anniversary of NGO Group General Assembly & name change Opening of social media accounts Ernst and Young report on finances Alan K-White ExCo President	Member news email starts New strategic plan developed 2015-19 Anne-Sophie Lois ExCo President Internal training on child participation Financial crisis at end of year	Interns for HRC & UPR programmes Interns start work on pre-session coordination CAGI funding Currency issues Delia Pop ExCo President
Joint with CRIN	16 Sept 2005 joint reception to mark 10 years of working together (after CRC day on children without parental care)	2007 Start of joint SIDA funding with CRIN CRIN hosts NGO Group web pages CRIN hosts database of alternative reports OP3 toolkit	CRIN helped to cover CRC session (Ed) Advocacy briefing on OP 3	Joint discussion on HRC/UPR mainstreaming strategy with CRIN (unsuccessful)		Mainstreaming working group Alternative reports database down		Joint SIDA evaluation
Staff	Lisa 2005	Muriel 2008; Anita	Tim (fundraiser) Anita (advocacy)	Severine (Interim Director)	Laure & Laura start; Tim leaves	Ilaria starts Roisin Interim Director	Roisin leaves	Beatrice starts New staffing structure & jobs

G: TIMELINE	Pre 2007	2007-2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
		(consultant) 2009	Roisin starts					Lisa leaves
External events	1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child 1996 1 st World Congress on Sexual Exploitation; 2002 2 nd World Congress 2006 HRC created	3 rd World Congress HRC decides to talk about OP3 Strategic litigation conference for 20 th anniversary of CRC CRC session in two chambers 2009	CRC session in two chambers HRC decides to draft OP3 Allegra joined CRC Secretariat	OP3 CRC adopted	OP3 signing ceremony	CRC Committee elections – new members start	Entry into force of OP3 (April) 25 th anniversary of CRC HRC Access to Justice day Virtual event of CRC Committee for 25 th anniversary Protection of family discussions in HRC Treaty body streng- thening resolution CRC simplified reporting procedure Day of General Discussion on digital media	New chair of CRC (Benyam) CRC committee elections - new members start CRC session in two chambers

- Key**
- ADRC Annual Day on the Rights of the Child (at HRC)
 - CAGI Geneva welcome centre
 - CoCo Coordinating Committee
 - CRC Convention on Rights of the Child
 - GC UN Global Compact
 - HRC Human Rights Council
 - NHRI National Human Rights Institution
 - OP3 Optional Protocol to CRC on Communications mechanism