



Annual Report 2018

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Letter from the CRC Committee Chair following the 2018 DGD

NATIONS UNIES
DROITS DE L'HOMME
HAUT-COMMISSARIAT



UNITED NATIONS
HUMAN RIGHTS
OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER

29 November 2018

Dear colleagues at Child Rights Connect,

On behalf of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, I would like to extend our deep appreciation for your work in organizing the 2018 Day of General Discussion (DGD) of the Committee, held in Geneva on 28 September, under the theme *"Protecting and Empowering Children as Human Rights Defenders"*.

The Committee considers this DGD a major success. It was the first DGD benefiting from the active engagement of children in all stages of the planning, implementation and evaluation process, thanks to the valuable advice and energetic support of your Children's Advisory Team. The participation of the Child Advisors ensured an innovative format for the DGD, with children participating in all its aspects, including as speakers and moderators, on an equal basis as Committee members and other adults. The themes discussed were relevant and timely, and brought together a wide range of stakeholders to discuss the role of children as human rights defenders and to commit to ensuring their protection and empowerment. We believe that this DGD, as the first global discussion on this topic, has made an important contribution to promoting a deeper understanding about the role of children as human rights defenders, and in promoting the right of the child to be heard in all contexts, including at the international level. This was also demonstrated by the impressive level of attention the DGD received, with more than 400 participants, of which 60 were children, who attended in person, and 800 additional participants in 66 countries followed the DGD through the United Nations' webcasting service, and a significant following on social media.

We are also grateful for your efforts to establish the Children's Advisory Team through a consultative and inclusive process and engage with them on a regular basis through the online platform Basecamp, as well as through the Child Advisors' workshop in March 2018. Your work in supporting the national and regional consultations known as "DGD Hubs," as well as in organizing the preparatory and debriefing workshops for Child Advisors, child speakers and child moderators, is also very much appreciated.

This DGD was truly exceptional and innovative, and the level of participation of children was unprecedented. Such an accomplishment would not have been possible without your expertise in children's human rights and child participation, as well as your commitment to upholding human rights values in all stages of the process. We are extremely grateful for the dedication, passion and contributions of each member of your team, namely Beatrice Schuler, Ilaria Paolazzi, Emma Grindulis, Fanny Chappuis, Enzo Tabet Cruz, Jessica Pierobon and Anna Pascale.

We hope this DGD will serve as an inspiration to future DGDs of this Committee and to other meetings organized by international human rights bodies. Thank you very much for inspiring us with your dedication to promoting the human rights of children and to ensuring the active engagement and support of children. We count on your continued collaboration with the Committee to follow up on the key lessons of this DGD and to strengthen of the Committee in general.

Thank you very much again.

Yours Sincerely,

Renate Winter
Chair

Committee on the Rights of the Child

About us

Child Rights Connect is a non-governmental organisation founded in 1983 as the Ad Hoc Group for the drafting of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. With its network of more than 80 member-organisations, it has a worldwide reach spanning all regions. Through Child Rights Connect, children's rights defenders can address the international community with one global voice and have a stronger influence on political decisions.

Vision:

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

What makes Child Rights Connect unique?



The expert organisation on the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, empowering children's rights defenders, including children, from around the world for more than 30 years



The largest child rights network in Geneva and platform for joint civil society advocacy at the Human Rights Council



The leading organisation bringing global attention to child participation and the rights of children as human rights defenders



Michelle Bachelet,
UN High Commissioner for Human Rights



Great strides have been made towards realizing children's rights since the Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopted 30 years ago, and it remains by far the most widely ratified of all human rights treaties. Yet as the international community celebrates its thirtieth anniversary, millions of children around the world continue to have their rights denied each and every day. Renewed commitments to the Convention are required to reverse this worrying trend.

The contribution of civil society is vital to protecting and promoting children's rights on the ground, including their right to be heard on all matters affecting them and to have their views taken into account at all levels of society. Child Rights Connect plays a central role in bringing the voices of children into the work of my Office and the United Nations human rights mechanisms, in particular the Committee on the Rights of the Child. Its impressive work in organizing the Committee's 2018 Day of General Discussion on the theme of 'protecting and empowering children as human rights defenders' – an important area of work also for my Office – has raised the visibility of child human rights defenders at the international level. I truly value this partnership, and believe that by working together we strengthen our efforts to make human rights a reality for all children, so that no child can be ignored or left behind."

Strengthening our Network

Broadening our reach: eight new members joined the network in 2018

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

In 2018, eight new members joined and are greatly enriching the network by contributing their expertise on important topics such as child protection, early marriages, early pregnancy, child labour, violence, access to justice, street children and children in humanitarian situations. Their membership also strengthens our outreach in Asia and Africa.

Embedding child participation within Child Rights Connect: the Children's Advisory Team

In 2018 Child Rights Connect established for the first time a Children's Advisory Team of 21 Child Advisors, from 19 countries across all regions of the world, thanks to the support of its members and partners. The Child Advisors worked closely with the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC Committee) in the development of its 2018 Day of General Discussion (DGD). They contributed to the children's consultation methodology, a child-friendly concept note and the Committee's Working Methods for child participation in DGDs. They also participated in the DGD itself as speakers and moderators.

The Children's Advisory Team is currently being institutionalised as a permanent body of Child Rights Connect.

The DGD Children's Advisory Team



**Aishwarya, 17,
Asia-Pacific**

"I strongly believe in Gender Equality and child rights."



**Akanksha, 15, Western
Europe and others**

"I am very passionate about children rights and female rights."



Ankit, 17, Asia-Pacific

"Poor people do not have rights. So, basically, it depends on money."



**Ariadna, 15,
Eastern Europe**

"Anyone who thinks children are the leaders of tomorrow is only procrastinating."



Brighton, 12, Africa

"I am pleased to see many children from other parts of the world."



**Cameron, 12, Western
Europe and others**

"A children's human rights defender is a child who's willing to stand for his/her own and other children's rights."



**Christina, 16, Western
Europe and others**

"A child's voice is not meant to be shut out from the public."



**Diana Melissa, 17,
Latin America and
the Caribbean**

"Me encuentro muy emocionada por poder representar como defensora a muchos NNA."



Dieudonne, 16, Africa

"I am happy to have been trained to be a child rights advocate."



**Hannah, 12, Western
Europe and others**

"I hope that I've gotten through to adults that children can do as much as adults can do."



Haya, 16, Asia-Pacific

"I really love studying and my dream is to do something important in the future."



Josephine, 16, Africa

"Je suis très heureuse que je rencontrerai des activistes comme moi."



**Konstantinos, 16,
Western Europe
and others**

"Child participation is more urgent than ever."



**Kurt, 16,
Latin America and
the Caribbean**

"Ser defensores de los derechos humanos es una posibilidad increíble."



**Mariana Nicol, 14,
Latin America and
the Caribbean**

"Me interesa mucho aprender sobre los derechos de los niños."



Maxwell, 15, Africa

"People need to realize that children can make meaningful contributions to the society."



Mazidath, 18, Africa

"J'ai hâte de voir les autres enfants pour des échanges fructueux et constructifs."



**Nayeli, 17,
Latin America and
the Caribbean**

"Espero compartir muchas experiencias con todos ustedes."



**Sameer, 13,
Asia-Pacific**

"I am a strong believer of meaningful child participation."



**Sigurd, 17, Western
Europe and others**

"Why have we done nothing up until now?"



Stella, 17, Africa

"I always love to see my peers attending school though this is challenging in most cases."



We wanted to make sure that children's views were central to the DGD, so we set up an advisory group of 21 children from around the world. We would like to thank Child Rights Connect and the Centre for Children's Rights at Queen's University Belfast, without which this would not have been possible."

Mikiko Otani and Luis Ernesto Pedernera,
members of the CRC Committee and DGD coordinators

From Mission to Realisation

Children's rights can only become a reality for every child if all States fulfil their obligations under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC Convention) and its Optional Protocols and if children are empowered to claim and exercise their rights.

This represents the impact goal of the work of Child Rights Connect and its partners. Children's enjoyment of their rights is made possible – and is largely determined – by the actions of States, civil society and the UN human rights system.

Mission

Child Rights Connect advocates for and supports the universal adoption and full implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols, for the realisation of children's rights worldwide. Child Rights Connect does this by convening and engaging with civil society and other relevant actors, by fostering cooperation and collaboration, and by empowering children's human rights defenders, including children, to meaningfully participate in global advocacy for children's rights at different levels.

Child Rights Connect sketch of a results-based theory of change

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|--|
| <i>Impact –</i> | Realisation of children's rights | | | <i>– the enjoyment of their rights by all children –</i> |
| <i>is achieved through the</i> | Actions of States and other duty bearers | | | <i>to respect, fulfil and promote child rights</i> |
| <i>The actions of duty bearers for children's rights are influenced through three strategic target groups –</i> | States | The United Nations system | Civil society | <i>Strengthening accountability for child rights</i> |
| <i>towards key long-term Outcome-level results –</i> | Influenced political actions affecting children's lives | Strengthened human rights mechanisms and standards for children | Empowered children's rights defenders, including children | <i>through a child-rights based approach</i> |
| <i>by Child Rights Connect, through:</i> | A strong and effective global Network | Key partnerships at national, regional and international level | A well-functioning organisation | <i>– creating synergies and connections</i> |

Three key achievements of 2018



1

Child Rights Connect became the leading civil society organisation raising the voices of children human rights defenders

- We mobilised and empowered around 3000 children globally, strengthening their understanding of their rights as human rights defenders and their capacity to protect and promote human rights.
- We initiated a collaboration between the CRC Committee and the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders, who are now working together to empower and protect the rights of children human rights defenders.
- We put forward the topic for and led the organisation of the 2018 DGD, which was a milestone in demonstrating to the UN that children who are empowered as human rights defenders have a huge potential to enhance the realisation of human rights by offering concrete solutions based on their unique perspective.



2

Child Rights Connect reinforced the participation rights of children with disabilities

- We successfully advocated for the alignment of CRC and CRPD standards recommendations relating to child participation by strengthening States' obligations in the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD Committee) General Comment n°7.
- We successfully reactivated the strategic collaboration between the CRC and the CRPD Committees, which will lead to further coherence of standards and jurisprudence and will ultimately strengthen the impact of the Treaty Bodies on the ground.
- We initiated a Taskforce of members to engage in the Human Rights Council 2019 Annual Day and Annual Resolution on the Rights of the Child on Empowering children with disabilities for the enjoyment of their rights, including through inclusive education, which led to children with disabilities at national level sharing their views and experiences to inform UN discussions.



3

Child Rights Connect enabled children to engage in the UPR on an equal footing with adults

- We renewed our partnership with UPR Info which led to children now having the possibility to participate in UPR pre-sessions as panellists and directly influence States' priorities and recommendations.
- We empowered children and their supporting organisations from Senegal and Nigeria to speak at the UPR pre-session and we drew lessons from these experiences to ensure more regular and meaningful child participation in the UPR.



The Committee on the Rights of the Child 2018 Day of General Discussion on Protecting and Empowering Children as Human Rights Defenders



Children are already acting as Human Rights defenders. It is us who have not paid attention to their activities, their experiences, their roles, their contributions, their potential, their voices, their needs and their challenges. This is why the Committee on the Rights of the Child decided to dedicate the DGD this year to the theme of Protecting and Empowering Children as Human Rights Defenders.”

Mikiko Otani,
CRC member coordinating the DGD, opening speech of the DGD

On the 28th of September 2018, more than 400 participants, of which 67 were children, gathered in the Palais des Nations in Geneva for the first ever global discussion on children human rights defenders - the 2018 Day of General Discussion of the Committee on the Rights of the Child. For a full day, adults and children discussed topics ranging from the protection of child human rights defenders in armed conflict and humanitarian situations, to the work of indigenous child human rights defenders, and the empowerment of children through digital media.



The DGD was the most empowering experience we have ever had.”

Collective feedback from DGD debriefing with child participants

Child participation was at the heart of the DGD and when children are part of designing a public event at the UN, things happen differently: half of the speakers and moderators of the event are children, all 400 members of the audience participate in a live Kahoot survey, accessible and user-friendly information is made available and the speakers’ interventions are more dynamic and inspiring. The children’s innovative suggestions made the UN meeting more inspiring, inclusive and accessible.



The DGD has been a milestone in the history of child participation.”

Patricio Cuevas,
child participation expert of World Vision

Child Rights Connect and the Children’s Advisory Team, which was specifically set up for the event with 21 children from 19 countries, were the engine of this unprecedented and innovative DGD.



We are grateful to the Committee for having selected our proposal for the DGD. This has allowed civil society and children worldwide to put children human rights defenders on the UN agenda for the very first time. Most importantly, it enabled us to do it with a greater legitimacy and stronger safeguards, within increasingly politicized and polarized debates about human rights defenders.”

Ilaria Paolazzi,
Programme Manager, Child Rights Connect

The more than 3000 children who engaged in the DGD from around the world have, through this, clearly stated to the international community that they too are human rights defenders, that they want and need to understand their rights as human rights defenders and that the human rights defenders’ framework is key to ensuring their recognition, empowerment and protection.

Child Rights Connect was the catalyst for the mobilisation and empowerment of these children and the adults supporting them or their cause.

Child Rights Connect was the bridge between the child rights community and the actors in the human rights defenders' movement. This was well reflected in the composition of the DGD Expert Advisory Team, which was instrumental for the development of the DGD concept note – the main substantive document that facilitated an unprecedented dialogue between children, children's rights defenders and adult-centred mechanisms and organisations that have the potential to significantly enhance the realisation of children's rights, in particular the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders.



A real child participatory event, where we talk about children with children."

Renate Winter,
Chairperson of the CRC Committee

Through the DGD, the Special Rapporteur and the CRC Committee initiated a joint collaboration which influenced the narrative and the initiatives around the 20th anniversary of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders. **2018 was in fact The Year of Human Rights Defenders and without the DGD children would most likely not have been part of it.**

What is at stake?

In addition to being affected by the global crackdown on civil society space with increasing restrictions imposed on human rights defenders and rights-based organisations – which are increasingly perceived as “political opposition” – **children human rights defenders are saying that they face additional challenges to adult defenders and need specific recognition and support** to act as defenders in an informed and safe manner, both online and offline.

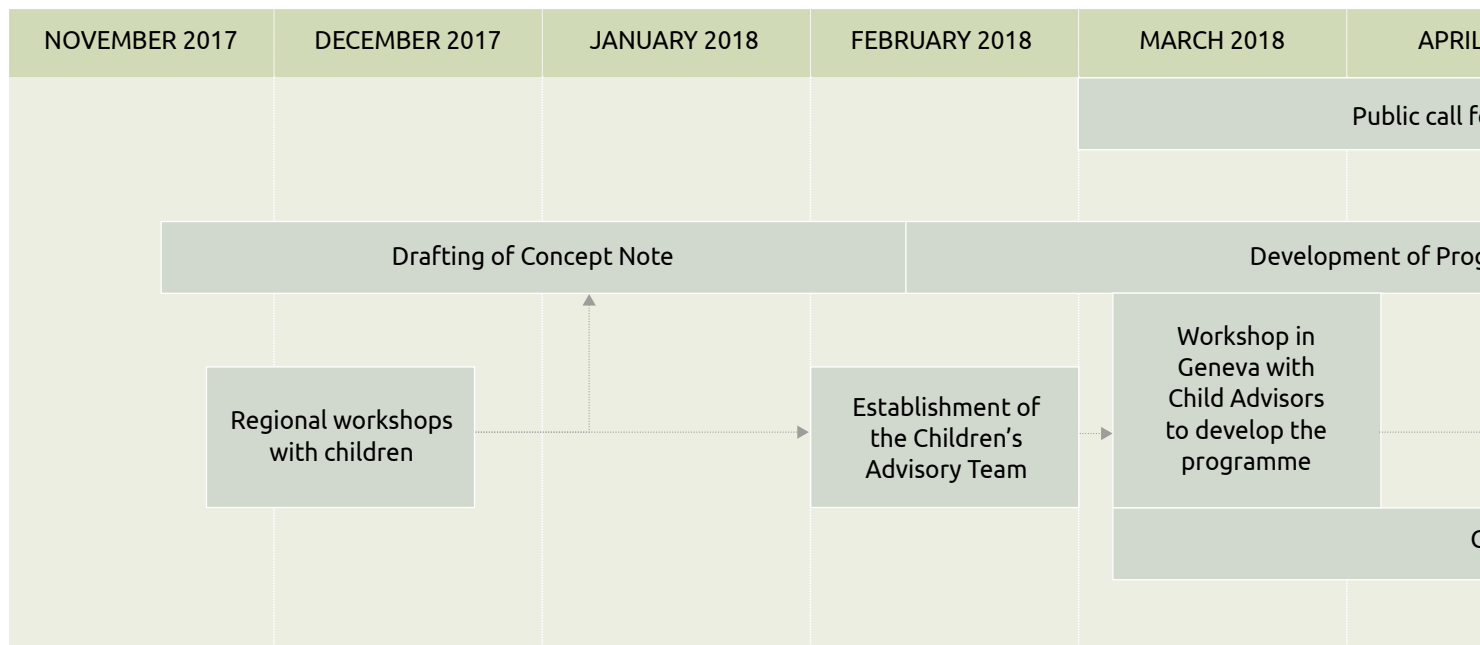
Children are in a more complex and more vulnerable situation than adults and their safety is threatened in multiple direct and indirect ways: by State or private actors who want to oppose their actions as defenders, by those who want to support them but do not know how, or even by their peers through bullying, for example. Moreover, children have fewer means than adults, including economic ones, to defend themselves from human rights violations and this increases the need for children to be effectively supported by adults.

Too many children have their rights violated, including their right to speak out and be heard. Children are the experts in their own lives and must be empowered and supported to share their unique insights in order to further the protection and promotion of their rights and those of their peers.





DGD 2018: Protecting and Empowering Children



I was ridiculed for seeking change or helping others to make their lives better by some of my friends. They said our country was different from others, so children shouldn't share things freely. It is also difficult for us to help children facing domestic violence speak out."

Child from Asia-Pacific

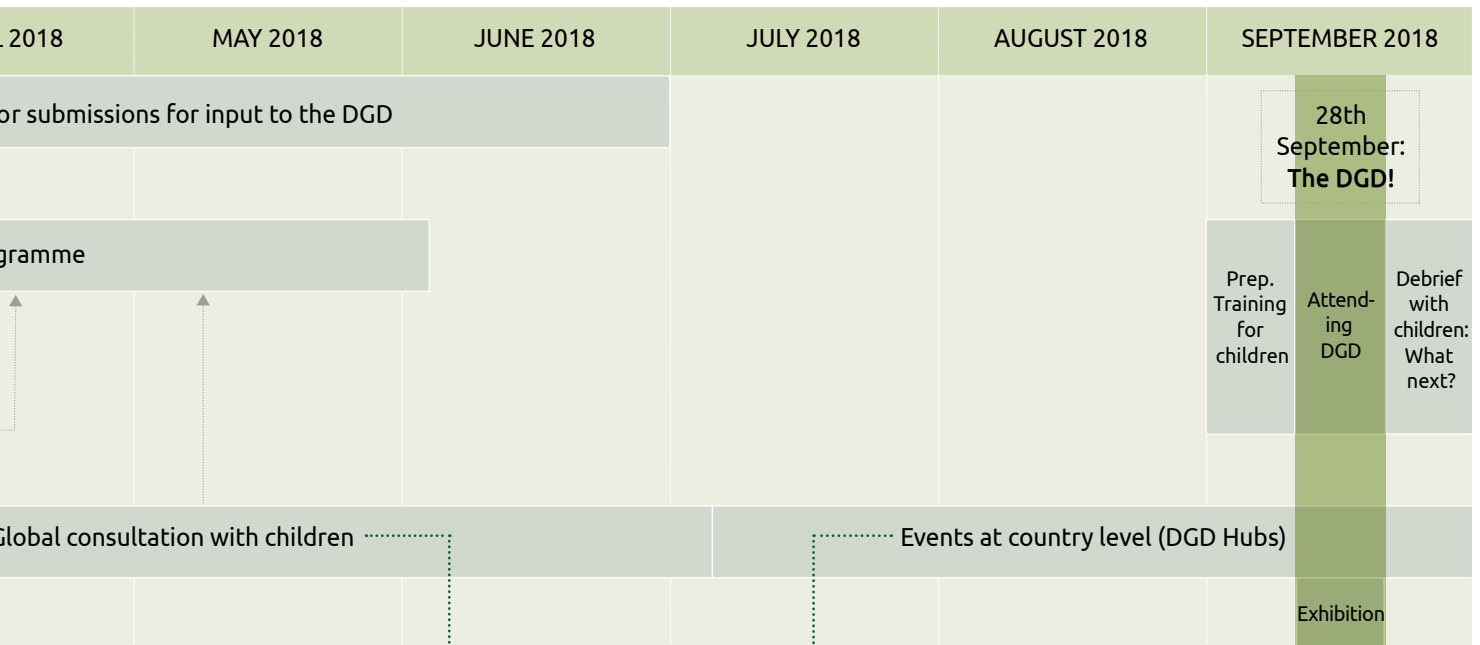


Some of the challenges we face [as human rights defenders] are related to the location of the activities and their difficulties to get there, the violence in our communities, the traffic of our country and the lack of money to mobilise."

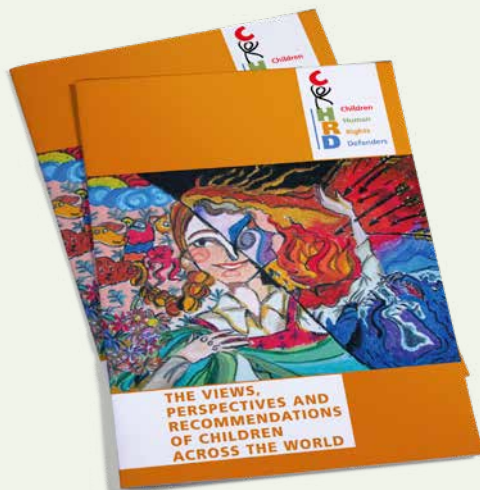
Child from Latin America and the Caribbean



as Human Rights Defenders – Process Timeline



Global consultation with children



Child Rights Connect led a worldwide consultation with around 2700 children and published the findings in a public report, which was drafted by the Centre for Children's Rights at Queen's University Belfast. The report includes children's views from 53 countries on:

- The role that children can and do play as human rights defenders;
- What helps children to act as defenders;
- What the barriers are and what risks children face when acting as defenders;
- How to protect and empower children human rights defenders.

DGD Hubs



Child Rights Connect supported its members to take forward 'DGD Hubs' to help raise awareness and understanding of the theme in the lead up to the DGD. There was, for example, a regional Hub in Asia and a national one in Scotland, where children and young people from Scotland and Wales linked up through the Scottish Parliament and Welsh Senedd to discuss what support they need to act as human rights defenders. They concluded that the incorporation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child into law is key for the protection of their rights.

How can we ensure that the DGD is not just a one-day show?

This was the provocative question that Kate Gilmore, Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights, asked the child advisors during a private meeting with them at the DGD. The children's answer was as straightforward as the question: "we all have the responsibility to follow-up to the DGD as well as to put in place a mechanism to monitor and assess what will happen after the DGD. **The DGD is just a start.**"

Indeed, many initiatives have happened since the DGD:

- On the 29th of September, the day after the DGD, Child Rights Connect organised a debriefing for all the child participants, including child advisors, speakers and moderators. This was a unique opportunity for them to exchange their views on the day and give feedback to Child Rights Connect, the CRC Committee and OHCHR. The children had a lot to say and while their general feedback was extremely positive, they had several specific recommendations on how to improve DGDs in the future, in order to make them more accessible and child-friendly.
- The Meeting of the Executive Council of the Inter-American Children's Institute (IIN-OAS) took place in October 2018 and included a session on children human rights defenders. This was the opportunity for children, including Kurt, the DGD child advisor from Argentina, to put the DGD topic on the agenda of the 34 States from the Americas who are members of the Executive Council. Children and States engaged in an

Intergenerational Dialogue Table which ended with the adoption of a Declaration on "Children and Adolescents as Human Rights Defenders". It was disseminated in the Americas and the Caribbean and will serve as input for the III Pan American Forum on Children and Adolescents.

- On the 13th of December, for Human Rights Day celebrations and to commemorate the 70th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, OHCHR organised a roundtable discussion with the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet. Konstantinos, a member of the Children's Advisory Team, delivered an inspiring speech and directly asked the High Commissioner how OHCHR was planning to enhance meaningful child participation in the UN. Michelle Bachelet referred to this exchange in the opening of the 80th CRC session, highlighting the important role played by children human rights defenders and the collaboration with Child Rights Connect.



Finally, another way we ensured that the DGD is not just a one-off experience, was to support the Committee in adopting specific working methods on child participation in DGDs. This happened in May 2018, creating an institutional framework for child participation before the actual 2018 DGD. **Child Rights Connect has long encouraged the Committee to embed child participation in all its areas of work and advocates for this also in the context of other UN meetings and processes.** We are happy that in the document, the Committee states: *“while specific to the participation of children in days of general discussion of the Committee, these working methods contain principles and guidelines that can be used [...] for the organisation of other meetings at the regional and international levels.”*



Civil society can only be strong, diverse and independent if all members of society have a space to engage and exercise their rights, including children.”

DGD Child Advisors

Conclusion

The DGD created a unique momentum: the global movement for children human rights defenders is taking shape, the necessary partnerships are developing and the global recognition of children human rights defenders is in progress. Child Rights Connect has been and continues to be pivotal to this ground-breaking process.



High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet talks with DGD 2018 child advisor Konstantinos and others on their dreams for human rights. Palais des Nations, 13th December 2018

“

Children Human Rights defenders have become visible but not only visible, children have been involved and played important roles in the whole process of the DGD. Your work impressed us. I want you to know that you made a change to the way, how you can work with us here at the United Nations. I'm so proud to be with you, with all of you. This DGD 2018 will make its mark in the history of the child rights. Three decades ago the United Nations adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child and recognised children as human rights holders. Today the United Nations will witness the transformative power of children to promote and protect human rights in their daily life, families, schools, communities, countries, regions and globally.”

Mikiko Otani,

CRC Committee member coordinating the DGD, opening speech of the DGD

Highlights from Child Rights Connect's 2018 programmes

1. Reporting to the Committee on the Rights of the Child

- As the CRC Committee started to implement the Simplified Reporting Procedure (SRP) in 2018 – an optional mechanism offered to State parties in reporting to the UN treaty bodies – Child Rights Connect empowered children's rights defenders from Croatia, Hungary and Poland to engage in the reporting cycle and share feedback with the Committee on the challenges of the SRP and their recommendations on child participation.
- In a follow-up to Guinea's pre-session and the DGD, we coordinated with the child rights coalition in Guinea in order to include references to the CRC and the protection of children human rights defenders in the country's draft law on human rights defenders. We initiated the dialogue between the child rights coalition and the human rights coalition supported by ISHR – a good example of connecting the child rights and the human rights constituencies at national level.
- Feedback from child participants in the Committee's pre-sessions was collected for the first time ever through a survey. This is a crucial step taken by the Committee in order to achieve one of its key requirements for meaningful child participation: being accountable to children.

2. Enhancing civil society space for children

Thanks to our advocacy, the Human Rights Council (HRC) resolution on civil society space specifically referred to the diversity of civil society and recognised children as an under-represented group. This resolution strengthens the basis for our long-term advocacy for the recognition, empowerment and protection of children as human rights defenders and civic actors.

"Civil society can only be strong, diverse and independent if all members of society have a space to engage and exercise their rights, including children." This is what the DGD child advisors told the core group of States leading on the resolution. Through their own advocacy letter, the child advisors recommended that the States focus their efforts on three aspects: expanding civil society space for the most marginalised children, leaving no one behind, mainstreaming a child rights-based approach across all the issues they are working on, and promoting child participation, especially at local level. Strategically linking the DGD to the advocacy on this resolution was a powerful way to empower children – in particular the child advisors – to engage with one of the most inaccessible and unknown UN mechanism, the Human Rights Council.

3. Empowering children with disabilities



Child Rights Connect was instrumental for mainstreaming the CRC child participation standards into the CRPD General Comment n°7. The CRC decided to endorse Child Rights Connect's submission in view of reactivating a collaboration with the CRPD Committee and creating a good practice within the Treaty Bodies system. Treaty Bodies need to cooperate more in the development of their General Comments and organisations like Child Rights Connect and other members of TB-Net do play a key role."

Jorge Cardona,
Member of the CRC Committee



2018 was an important year for the advancement of the protection and empowerment of children with disabilities. Child Rights Connect fostered connections and synergies between different stakeholders and processes which led to concrete results on different levels:

- The CRPD's General Comment n°7 on the participation of persons with disabilities integrates all CRC standards and requirements for meaningful child participation and recognises child-led organisations as Organisations of Persons with Disabilities.
- The collaboration between the CRC and the CRPD Committees was reactivated and discussions started around the revision of the CRC General Comment on children with disabilities, thanks to coordination with IDA, UNICEF and OHCHR.

- Expert NGO Lumos has applied to become a member of Child Rights Connect's network and is actively supporting child participation in the 2019 Annual Day on the Rights of the Child which will focus on the empowerment of children with disabilities and inclusive education.

4. Building a framework for child participation in the UPR

This year, children were once again offered the opportunity to participate in the UPR pre-sessions, after some years of these meetings involving adults only. We warmly welcomed this and sought to strengthen our partnership with UPR Info to ensure that children can meaningfully engage and set a positive precedent.

Josephine, our child advisor from Senegal, and Peace, a girl from Nigeria, experienced this unique opportunity, with their supporting organisations (CONAFE and the World Council of Churches). We all mutually empowered each other to ensure that the recommendations of the two girls and the broader groups of children they represented, could be taken on board by States and impact the UPR process. We also collected their impressions of the experience itself, in order to improve the current practices, develop child-friendly information and build a better framework for the – still limited – engagement of children in the whole reporting cycle of the UPR. Josephine and Peace became friends thanks to this experience and recommended that children who have engaged in the UPR should play an active role in the empowerment of other children. Recommendation well noted!



Josephine speaking at the UPR pre-session for Senegal

5. Defending the rights of children in humanitarian situations

The 2018 Annual Day and Resolution on the Rights of the Child focused on the "Protection of the rights of the child in humanitarian situations". Child Rights Connect actively pushed the international human rights community to reaffirm that international humanitarian law and international human rights law are complementary and

mutually reinforcing. While the CRC Convention provides for this, children's increasing suffering from the effects of armed conflict, civil unrest, displacement and environmental disasters makes it difficult to translate this affirmation into reality. To prevent further crises, promote peace and ensure that the 2030 Agenda leaves no one behind, human rights, including children's rights, must be at the heart of humanitarian action.

Child Rights Connect used its key position as a global network and credible UN partner to advance this message and influence the Annual Day and Resolution, urging States to take concrete measures to implement international obligations. With the support of its members, and in collaboration with OHCHR and UNICEF, Child Rights Connect organised an inter-sessional event prior to the 37th session of the HRC, bringing together the humanitarian and human rights communities and sending a powerful message to the UN community on child rights in humanitarian situations. The resolution reflects the consensus of the 47 member States of the HRC and constitutes a powerful advocacy tool used by our members to push their governments to respect their international obligations.

6. Improving the Treaty Body election process

In 2018, one year after its creation, TB-Net (the Network of NGOs working with the Treaty Bodies, of which Child Rights Connect is one of the founders) decided to step up its advocacy efforts to promote independent, diverse and quality Treaty Body membership. Child Rights Connect took an active role in coordinating TB-Net's actions with regard to the 2018 elections, including the CRC's, and on-going advocacy with States. The unthelections.org website was used to promote transparency and information on the candidates, and the joint questionnaire was for the first time accompanied by video messages where the candidates responded to substantive questions.

Diplomats both in New York and Geneva welcomed this initiative and called for more advanced information on the candidates and on the composition of the Treaty Bodies, including through more informal and regular collaboration with civil society. The report from the meeting on Treaty Body elections that TB-Net and Amnesty International organised in November 2018 with selected States in Geneva, outlined concrete ways forward for such collaboration, including with regard to the sensitive issue of vote-trading.



Having engaged in Treaty Body elections discussions for the last 10 years, I can say that the TBNet-AI meeting was the best discussion I've ever been involved with, due to its objective and action-oriented approach."

Bob Last,
UK mission

2018 in numbers

The DGD

4

DGD Hubs on
three continents

21

child advisors
from 19 countries

67

children attended the
DGD in Geneva of which
34 were speakers
or moderators

1,500

readers of our DGD
External Newsletter

800

DGD remote
participants from 66
different countries

536

page views on Facebook
between the 27th and
29th of September

5,000

Likes reached on our
Facebook page on the
28th of September

20,000

Nearly 20'000
impressions on Twitter
on the day of
the DGD

CRC reporting

92

children's rights
defenders empowered
to report to the
Committee

17

reports based on
consultations with
children were
submitted

155

submissions to the
Committee from
37 countries

OPIC

1

First inquiry
completed
under OPIC

3

First three decisions
finding human
rights violations
under OPIC

5

new countries
accessed to or
ratified OPIC

Working Groups

Child Rights Connect's Working Groups advance the discussion on six different themes at the UN.

Ending the Sexual Exploitation of Children

There are no precise statistics for the sexual exploitation of children. Nevertheless, evidence shows that children's vulnerability to sexual exploitation has increased in recent years, and that no region, country or child is immune.

Our Working Group was officially established in May 2017 during Child Rights Connect's General Assembly and seeks to define a way forward to end all sexual exploitation of children. During 2018 we contributed to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, notably goal 16.2 on ending violence against children. We pushed for more attention to be given to the sexual exploitation of children in the legal and political agendas of human rights mechanisms and for the sexual exploitation of children to be integrated into the SDGs. For that purpose, we supported input to the Treaty Bodies and Special Procedures from national partners. In addition to this, we collaborated with global partnerships and alliances in order to make taking action on this issue a priority on stakeholders' agendas.

Co-conveners: ECPAT International, Internet Watch Foundation

Members: Centre of Excellence in Alternative Care of Children India, International Catholic Child Bureau, Terre des Hommes International Federation

Investment in Children

It is widely understood that tackling poverty and social exclusion in childhood is an important investment as it can lead to more inclusive and cohesive societies in the long-term.

Our Working Group aims to translate international and regional commitments on investment in children into national advocacy strategies for change. Insufficient, inequitable and ineffective public resource mobilisation, allocation and spending remain one of the biggest barriers to the effective realisation of children's rights in many countries.

Therefore, in 2018 our Working Group focused on advocating to improve international, regional and national commitments to investing in children, capacity building of Working Group members and civil society partners to influence public finance to support more and improved investment in children and building global partnership with key international stakeholders to improve investments in children.

Co-conveners: Eurochild, REDLAMYC

Members: African Child Policy Forum, Child Rights Coalition Asia, DCI Costa Rica, IBFAN-GIFA, Plan International, Save the Children, Terre des Hommes International Federation, World Vision International

Strategic partner: UNICEF

Children of Incarcerated Parents

Our Working Group seeks to ensure that children of incarcerated parents are given greater prominence at the United Nations, so that the rights and welfare of these children are better promoted and protected.

In 2018 our joint work focused on *The Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty*. The Global Study will contain a focused chapter on children detained with their parents in the context of the criminal justice system, for which the Working Group acted as a reference group. In this role we contributed to the bibliography, supported work on the questionnaire and encouraged State replies to the questionnaire. We shared ideas on the core issues of this topic and channelled expertise from those working directly with children of prisoners to this Study. We look forward to seeing the recommendations of the Global Study and working together to make sure the attention the Global Study will bring to this issue translates into improvements in the visibility and protection of the rights of children in these circumstances.

Co-conveners: Friends World Committee for Consultation represented by the Quaker United Nations Office Geneva

Members: Children of Prisoners Europe, Defence for Children International, International Catholic Child Bureau, NNAPes Platform, Relais Enfants Parents Romands

Observers: Action for Child Rights International, International Coalition for Children with Incarcerated Parents, Penal Reform International



Child Rights Connect's 2018 General Assembly

Children and Violence

In 2018 the Working Group on Children and Violence embarked on an important endeavour to strengthen our advocacy efforts with member States and the CRC Committee

We initiated the development of a desk review to identify key actors, achievements, trends and gaps related to ending violence against children, in the work of the Human Rights Council (HRC) and the CRC Committee. The review looked into 15 countries over the last five years, including their Universal Periodic Reviews and CRC reporting cycle, as well as the HRC Resolution on Violence against Children, and will be expanded in 2019 to 50 countries in order to develop a comprehensive report on the findings. The results of the research will improve our advocacy work in Geneva and promotion of better accountability on these issues. As a result we will develop advocacy pieces and messages and launch some of the materials in November 2019 as part of the celebrations of the 30th anniversary of the CRC Convention. In 2018 the Working Group also co-sponsored an event in the lead up to the 2018 Malta High Level Global Conference, entitled "Towards childhood free from physical and humiliating punishment: challenges and opportunities in ending punitive violence against children", led by Save the Children and co-sponsored by various missions.

Co-conveners: Arigatou International, World Vision International

Members: Defence for Children International, Global Initiative to End Corporal Punishment, International Catholic Child Bureau, Plan International, Save the Children, SOS Children's Villages International, Terre des Hommes International Federation, War Child Holland, Women's World Summit Foundation, World Organisation Against Torture

Strategic partner: World Council of Churches



Since 2014 we have seen an increased awareness and mobilisation of the Geneva community to address the issue of children and violence, particularly in view of the SDGs. It has been very rewarding to see the articulation of advocacy through the Working Group. It has allowed us to better interact with stakeholders, bring visibility to the issue and strategize our advocacy goals here in Geneva. The Working Group not only provides a platform for knowledge exchange but is also a unique space to raise awareness and help accelerating actions."

Maria Lucia Uribe,
Director, Arigatou International

Children without Appropriate Parental Care

Millions of children are in, or in need of, out-of-home care. They live with relatives, in foster care, in residential facilities, in child-headed households or on the street. They reside in their own countries or are displaced internationally. Sometimes, care is provided under conditions that violate their rights: they face abuse, lack of efforts towards family reunification, or are deprived of liberty

Our Working Group seeks to improve the situation of these children worldwide and was founded in 2006 to write and advocate

for the Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children (2009) which were written to complement the CRC Convention. The Working Group is now responsible for helping to promote the Guidelines globally and advocate for the specific needs of children without appropriate parental care.



In 2018 we ran a second round of the successful Alternative Care Massive Open Online Course and various initiatives were undertaken by our members. In preparation for the 10 year anniversary of the Guidelines next year, SOS Children's Villages, with the support of the Working Group, successfully lobbied for the next UN General Assembly child rights resolution to address alternative care. In addition, RELAF piloted the use of the tracking tool, which we developed last year, to monitor the progress of implementing the Guidelines in Costa Rica. In 2019, the Working Group will focus on supporting events to celebrate the 10 year anniversary of the Guidelines and advocate on the wording of the child rights resolution related to alternative care.

Co-conveners: Hope and Homes for Children, Save the Children

Members: Family for Every Child, Friends World Committee for Consultation represented by Quaker United Nations Office Geneva, International Federation of Social Workers, International Foster Care Organisation, International Movement ATD Fourth World, International Social Service, Plan International, RELAF, SOS Children's Villages International

Observers: Better Care Network, CELCIS

Strategic partners: Oak Foundation, UNICEF

Children and Armed Conflict

Millions of children caught up in armed conflicts witness atrocities and may even become targets. They lose parents and loved ones or are forced to flee, making them vulnerable to more rights violations including violence, sexual abuse, trafficking, denial of humanitarian support and deprivation of liberty.

Our Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict advocates for the protection of the rights of children affected by conflict and seeks to ensure that the HRC, the CRC Committee and other stakeholders are better equipped and informed on this issue.

In 2018 we consolidated our collaboration with the new Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) on Children and Armed Conflict, Ms. Virginia Gamba. The Working Group implemented its annual action plan whilst regularly exchanging with the SRSG and its newly created office for Europe (Brussels) covering also Geneva. The areas of work went beyond monitoring and advocacy of the six grave violations, to include prevention, rehabilitation for children involved in armed conflict and specific work on education and deprivation of liberty in link with *The Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty*.





















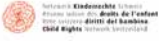


Co-conveners: Defence for Children International, War Child Holland

Members: Arigatou International, Child Rights International Network, Child Soldiers International, ECPAT International, Humanium, Plan International, Save the Children, Women's World Summit Foundation, Terre des Hommes International Federation, World Vision International

Observers: Geneva Call, Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack, Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict



Child Rights Connect Members

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

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

Executive Committee

Delia Pop,

Hope and Homes for Children,
President

Eylah Kadjar,

Terre des Hommes International
Federation,
Vice President

Annabel Trapp, Child to Child,
Secretary

Alan Kikuchi-White,

SOS Children's Villages International,
Treasurer

Anita Bay, Save the Children Sweden

Caroline Ford,

Consortium for Street Children

Chris Derksen-Hiebert,

World Vision International

Dorothy Rozga, ECPAT

Maria Herczog, Eurochild

Rozanne Chorlton, Together Scotland

Rut Feuk, Plan International Sweden

Smiljana Frick, CRIC Moldova

Théophane Nikyèma,

African Child Policy Forum

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Agnes Nakyeyune, Angelica Pinzon, Anna Pascale, Carla Chojeda, Catarina Tavarela Mendes, Diana Siado, Elénore Evéquoz, Enzo Tabet Cruz, Francesca Camilleri, Gilles Guignard, Helena Howen, Jecinta Kamau, Jessica Pierobon, Jitka Kantova, Kristina Kolibova, Laura Di Pasquale, Linda Asamoah, Lucie Concorde, Lynn Van Wey, Marie Berger, Martina Carlino, Martina Simoni, Michael Storey, Nana Afari, Nazli Turkmen, Oksana Yakovenko, Quentin Fayet, Rebecca Xia, Ryan Wait, Stephanie Catelani, Valentina Giachino, Vanessa Scialfa

Consultants and service providers

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(Web Design)

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Beatrice Schulter, *Director*

Ilaria Paolazzi, *Programme Manager*

Emma Grindulis, *Programme Officer*

Fanny Chappuis,

CRC Reporting and Programme Support

David McAdam, *Communications Officer*

Fanny Pauwelyn Baert,

Director Resource Development

Emilie Dubois,

Finance and Administration Officer

2019 staff



Alex Conte
Executive Director
(Since July 2019)



Stephen Langton
Interim Director
(To July 2019)



Ilaria Paolazzi
Programme Manager



Emma Grindulis
Programme Officer



Agnès Gràcia Corberó
Programme Officer



Olivia Solari Yrigoyen
Legal Officer



Fanny Chappuis
CRC Reporting and Programme Support



Leire Ibáñez Larrea
Network Assistant

Our Donors and Supporters

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

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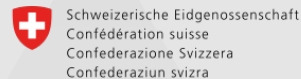
Save the Children



Sida (Swedish International Development Agency)



SOS Children's Villages International



Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs



Switzerland UN mission



Paul Schiller Stiftung



UNICEF

Supporters and Pro Bono partners



Baker and McKenzie



IINOE



Queen's University



I am also very glad to see among us many representatives of UN agencies and the Child Rights Connect network. This example of cooperation in action is exactly what we need, as we strive together to make our work more relevant and better connected, so that no child can be ignored or left behind.”

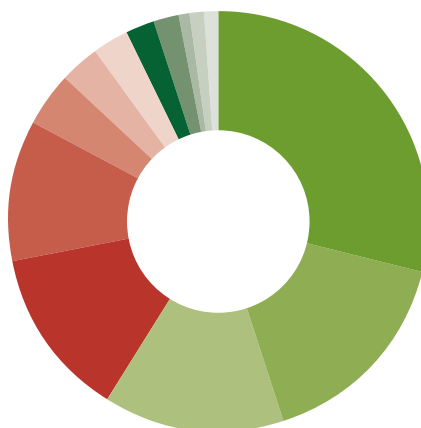
Michelle Bachelet,
statement at the opening of the
80th CRC session

Balance Sheet on December 31, 2018

| ASSETS | 2018 CHF | 2017 CHF |
|------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Liquidities | 103,824 | 236,965 |
| Prepaid | 6,902 | 36,874 |
| Current assets | 189,726 | 273,840 |
| Cash deposit Visa Card | 5,002 | 5,001 |
| Financial assets | 5,002 | 5,001 |
| Computers | 1,712 | 2,853 |
| Tangibles assets | 1,712 | 2,853 |
| Fixed assets | 6,714 | 7,854 |
| Total assets | 196,440 | 281,694 |

| LIABILITIES | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Project balance carried forward | 0 | 161,242 |
| Payables | 16,321 | 12,160 |
| Accruals | 41,762 | 11,404 |
| Current liabilities | 58,083 | 184,806 |
| Non-current liabilities | 14,634 | 0 |
| Free capital | 59,759 | 84,873 |
| Restricted capital | 37,130 | 37,130 |
| Profit / (Loss) of the year | 26,835 | -25,114 |
| Capital of the organisation | 123,724 | 96,889 |
| Total liabilities | 196,440 | 281,694 |

Income 2018



| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| SIDA | 29% |
| OAK Foundation | 16% |
| Plan International Sweden | 14% |
| Switzerland FDFA HSD | 12% |
| Global Revenue | 11% |
| Save the Children | 4% |
| City of Geneva | 3% |
| Canton of Geneva | 3% |
| Ireland | 2% |
| Liechtenstein Development Service | 2% |
| Switzerland UN Mission | 1% |
| Children's Commissioner Scotland | 1% |
| SOS Children's Villages | 1% |

Income

| | 2018 CHF | 2017 CHF |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Membership fees | 84,368 | 60,867 |
| Grants/donations from members | 139,536 | 81,399 |
| Grants/donations from governments | 415,347 | 456,411 |
| Grants/donations from foundations | 150,000 | 81,535 |
| Other income | 1,827 | 7,383 |
| Total income | 791,077 | 687,594 |

Operating expenses 2018 by cost centres

| | 2018 CHF | 2017 CHF |
|---|----------------|----------------|
| Overhead | 217,675 | 184,010 |
| Personnel Costs | 97,816 | 93,115 |
| Office costs | 69,627 | 51,666 |
| Professional Services | 50,232 | 39,229 |
| Staff training | 0 | 0 |
| Team development | 0 | 0 |
| Communication and Networking | 112,091 | 125,667 |
| Communication and Networking implementation costs | 84,655 | 105,960 |
| Communications Administration Costs | 3,407 | 1,247 |
| Publications and website development | 24,029 | 9,640 |
| Networking | 0 | 8,820 |
| Network Management | 74,575 | 73,467 |
| Network implementation costs | 65,698 | 60,115 |
| General Assembly | 7,556 | 11,996 |
| Executive Committee | 1,321 | 1,356 |
| Working Groups | 0 | 0 |
| Programmes | 333,629 | 330,870 |
| Programme implementation costs | 255,225 | 299,277 |
| Programme Development | 58 | 934 |
| Capacity building | 3,198 | 1,087 |
| Technical assistance | 21,089 | 25,538 |
| Advocacy | 54,059 | 4,034 |
| Total Costs | 737,970 | 714,014 |

What's on in 2019?

30th Anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child

2019 is an important year for the CRC Convention as it marks its 30th anniversary. It will be the opportunity to reflect on the past 30 years and look forward to plan how to further promote and protect the rights of children across the globe. Child Rights Connect and its members will continue to push for universal ratification and implementation of the convention and its three optional protocols and are involved in various events and initiatives throughout the year. This includes a project we are leading to empower children to develop UNICEF's official child-friendly version of the Convention.



5th Anniversary of the Optional Protocol on a Communications Procedure

As 2019 marks the 5th anniversary since the entry into force of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a Communications Procedure (OPIC), we will be pushing to put OPIC back on everyone's agenda. The treaty empowers children by allowing them to submit complaints directly, and for the first time ever, to the CRC Committee on alleged violations of their rights. Child Rights Connect will celebrate OPIC's 5th anniversary through various activities to engage with stakeholders and promote the universal ratification of the treaty.

Sustainable Development Goals: listening to the views of children

In 2019 children will have the opportunity to provide input to OHCHR's report on SDGs and children's rights to the High-Level Political Forum at the UN in New York. We are supporting OHCHR in holding global consultations with children and gathering their views and recommendations to inform the report.



2018 DGD follow-up: empowering children human rights defenders



In 2019, we will continue working with our DGD Children's Advisory Team and building on the momentum of the DGD to push for the recognition, protection and empowerment of children human rights defenders through our network. Our advocacy will be marked by various activities including a DGD Technical

Follow-up roundtable on children human rights defenders. Our Children's Advisory Team will continue to be involved in our activities and external engagements, and help to develop our long-term child participation strategy.

Engaging with the Human Rights Council to promote children's rights

We will continue engaging with the UN Human Rights Council throughout 2019 to promote children's rights and advance spaces for children's participation. Specific activities will include advocating for the recognition of children human rights defenders and supporting child-led initiatives in the environmental human rights defenders resolution in the March session, engaging with the core group on civil society space and their stock-taking exercise in June and implementing in Moldova a follow-up project to the 2019 Annual Day and Resolution on the empowerment of children with disabilities for the enjoyment of their human rights, including through inclusive education.



“

2019 is an important year for the CRC Convention as we it marks its 30th anniversary. It will be the opportunity to reflect on the past 30 years and look forward to plan how to further promote and protect the rights of children across the globe.”



In November 2018, after four years of service, Beatrice Schuler

left her post of Director at Child Rights Connect. We would like to thank Beatrice for her tireless efforts and commitment as Director and wish her every success for the future.

Stephen Langton,
On behalf of Staff and the Executive Committee



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Young Filipinos with painted slogans on their faces protest the increasing number of child victims of human rights violations across the country during International Women's Day near Malacañang Palace, the official presidential residence, in Manila City, Philippines.

DGD photos (p. 9-13): © 2018 Roland Schnetz

Drawings (p. 14, 19, 25) from children
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