

**Reporting to the UN Committee
on the Rights of the Child**

**A Starter Pack for
Country Programmes**

Acknowledgements

This paper was prepared by Damon Barrett on behalf of the Child Rights Supporting Strategy, headed by Jennifer Grant.

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We would also like to thank for their input, tips and suggestions Laura Theytaz Bergman from the NGO Group for the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Carla Garnelas from Children's Rights Alliance England (CRAE), Clare Feinstein, Child Participation Consultant and Peter Dixon, Child Rights Programming Consultant. From Save the Children, we are most grateful to Louise King, Kevin Byrne, John Errington, Nayeem Wahra, Bharti Mepani, Duncan Trotter, Louisa Gosling, Julia Sherwood, Marcia Hanson, Gema Vicente, Selina Fairclough, Estefania Jover, Rachael Gibbons and Najia Ahmad.

Child Rights Supporting Strategy

This strategy represents the institutionalisation of a commitment by Save the Children UK to working with external actors towards the enforcement of child rights worldwide. It is concerned with the accountability of duty bearers, primarily governments, and is focused on the enforcement of child rights worldwide through national, regional and international mechanisms and structures and in providing spaces for children to advocate for their own rights. It is imperative that we look at structures and mechanisms to promote and protect child rights for all children at all times. If we can manage to convince governments to recognise and then enforce child rights we may reduce general levels of vulnerability and prevent children from falling into specialist categories of high risk.

We will support country programmes to advocate for the creation of national child rights mechanisms and structures in country such as children's ombudsmen and/or Independent Human Rights Institutions and work to reform legislation/constitutional provisions where they are not in line with the UN Convention of Rights of the Child (UNCRC). We will also support country programmes to use existing regional and international mechanisms and structures to promote and protect children's rights such as the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, the European Convention on Human Rights, the European Social Charter, the Inter-American Convention on Human Rights, the Human Rights Council and, of course, the UNCRC.

NGO Group for the Convention on the Rights of the Child

The NGO Group for the Convention on the Rights of the Child has been in existence since 1983 when the drafting of the Convention began. It was then known as the Informal Ad Hoc Group for the Convention on the Rights of the Child and was actively involved in the drafting process. After the Convention came into force in 1990 the Group changed its name to the present one and currently has a membership of more than 70 NGOs.

The NGO Group's mission is to facilitate the promotion, implementation and monitoring of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. One of the significant areas of its work is to enable national NGOs and coalitions to participate in the reporting process to the Committee on the Rights of the Child. Contact details for the NGO Group may be found on page 52.

The NGO Group for the CRC has produced "*A Guide for Non-Governmental Organisations Reporting to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child*". The 3rd Edition is on the CD(10) and was of great use in drafting this paper, particularly relating to the format and procedures of the reporting process.

Acronyms & Abbreviations

CAT – Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment of Punishment

CEDAW – Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women

CRC/UNCRC – UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

CRAE – Children’s Rights Alliance England

CRP – Child Rights Programming

CRSA – Child Rights Situational Analysis

ECOSOC – Economic and Social Council

GIM – Global Impact Monitoring

ICCPR – International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

ICERD – International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

ICESCR – International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights

ICPMW – International Convention for the Protection of Migrant Workers and Their Families

IGO – Inter-Governmental Organisation

INGO – International Non-Governmental Organisation

NGO – Non-Governmental Organisation

NGOC – NGO Coalition

OHCHR – Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

OPAC - Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict

OPCAT – Optional Protocol to CAT

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

SRSG – Special Representative of the Secretary General (of the UN)

SCUK – Save the Children UK

TPP – Thematic Programme Plan

UDHR – Universal Declaration of Human rights

UN – United Nations

Foreword

The reporting process to the Committee on the Rights of the Child: A tool deserving attention

The Committee on the Rights of the Child is the body established by the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Its members are elected by States Parties to monitor progress achieved by each State in the implementation of children's rights (art. 43 UNCRC). In other words, it is the monitoring body that, apart from hailing achieved progress, tries to understand how States view their obligations towards children; what mechanisms they set up to ensure respect without any discrimination for the core principles and of the subjective rights enshrined in the UNCRC; what action plans they elaborate in national policy; what resources they allocate to involved ministries and agencies; what promotion and training they provide in the matter of children's rights; to what extent their judiciary or administrative bodies refer to the UNCRC...In short, the Committee is the body that supervises the implementation of this exceptional, holistic, universal and ground-breaking instrument, the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

However, as everyone knows, the control exercised by a Treaty Body remains a difficult and delicate task, being based foremost on the State Party report submitted via the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. Although most reports are satisfactory, it happens that reports are submitted with a delay, lack sufficient detail, or omit certain issues set out in the reporting guidelines. Some State Party delegations dodge questions from Committee members during the dialogue and in such cases, examination proves to be problematic. Moreover, one must keep in mind that the State Party report is a self-assessment, with all the flaws inherent to this kind of information.

Consequently, the Committee on the Rights of the Child needs additional reliable, objective and carefully processed information, if possible prepared in inter-institutional dialogue. In this respect, the Committee on the Rights of the Child pays particular attention to links established with the main agencies of the UN family, foremost UNICEF, but also with numerous NGOs, be it at the international, regional or national level. Information gathered through these sources is of primary importance and ensures that the Committee gains a more realistic vision of the situation for children, rather than one based solely on the State report. It guarantees also to reach relevant, precise and up to date recommendations.

The reporting work to the Committee does not only serve the interests of the monitoring body. In our view, it is of high value for the author, being for the State an opportunity to take stock of its action, to define its achievements, failures and flaws. Moreover, it represents a working tool for NGOs and NGO groups or national coalitions, since it gives an indication as to what has been carried out, and what still remains to be done. It should be used as a real basis for a plan of action.

Institutions and persons that have worked together in a reporting process are highly privileged: they know precisely where children's rights stand in a given country. This is fundamental to give direction to any action, and to improve the situation for children in the field. Save the Children is one of the organizations with which the Committee is pleased to collaborate. This document was born from a desire to ensure more effective engagement in the reporting process. The initiators of the project must therefore be thanked for understanding that the reporting process of the Committee on the Rights of the Child must not remain a neglected tool, but rather that tremendous benefit can be found in it.

Jean Zermatten, Member of the Committee on the Rights of the Child

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Introduction: The reporting process as a basis for action

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is the most widely ratified and comprehensive of the UN human rights treaties. It forms an international framework for the protection and promotion of child rights and underpins all of Save the Children's work as well as the work of other agencies, donors, and others involved in bringing improvements to the lives and prospects of children. On 20th November 2007, the UNCRC will reach its 18th birthday. However, whilst the UNCRC itself has "come of age" and has achieved almost universal ratification, children continue to experience violations of their rights all over the world.

The periodic reporting process to the Committee on the Rights of the Child is the primary international mechanism for monitoring state obligations under the UNCRC and mobilising civil society to press for change. It is not merely a report, submission or attendance at a meeting in Geneva every few years. This mechanism serves as an important basis for action on addressing the imbalance between state obligations on paper and implementation on the ground. The process provides a framework for awareness raising and mobilisation, analysing national policy and practice, national and international linkages and advocacy, capacity building of local NGOs, monitoring state obligations, facilitating child participation and more.

Purpose of this "Starter Pack"

In 2003, Daniela Baro, former child rights adviser at Save the Children UK, undertook an in depth study of engagement by eight Save the Children country programmes with the periodic reporting process. Her report, "*A Tool for Change? Reporting to the Committee on the Rights of the Child*", showed the many benefits of engagement in the reporting process as well as some of the drawbacks and difficulties. It also highlighted that there was significant scope for strengthening Save the Children's role.

This "Starter Pack" follows on from Daniela Baro's report. It is intended for country programme staff and aims to provide an introduction to the periodic reporting process and the importance of NGO and civil society involvement to illustrate the potential to lever change using the reporting process as a basis for action. It aims further to give some practical advice and suggestions on engagement in the reporting cycle.

It is not intended to provide a definitive formula for engagement. The advice and suggestions given are drawn from the experiences of SCUUK staff, the NGO Group for the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Committee on the Rights of the Child, and other sources. Each country programme must formulate its own appropriate methods and approaches based on their particular circumstances.

The pack is divided into three sections, each beginning with a detailed contents page:

What is it all about? – Provides an introductory background to the Convention, the Committee, the reporting process and the obligations of the state.

Why should we get involved? - Looks at the strengths and weaknesses of the process, the importance of engagement for NGOs and Save the Children and the impact on child rights

How can we engage? – Looks at key objectives and activities, provides some advice and suggestions for engagement at the various stages, as well as tips on child participation, follow-up advocacy, NGO coalitions and funding.

Resources and References

Further reading and support in the form of documents, toolkits websites etc are identified throughout using text boxes.

A CD is provided containing copies of all of the documents referred to along with other useful resources. A table of contents for the CD may be found below at page 55

Note: When reference is made to the CD, a number in brackets refers to the relevant CD folder where the relevant resource may be found.



Kullwadee Sumnalop/Save the Children

Grade six students from Grogol School in the south of Yogyakarta, Indonesia, which was destroyed by the 2006 earthquake

Country specific documents, training and ongoing technical assistance are available from the Child Rights Supporting Strategy. For more information, please contact **Jennifer Grant, Child Rights Advocate, on +44 207 012 6777**
j.grant@savethechildren.org.uk

Part I: What is it all about?

The Convention, the Committee and the Reporting Process

This section provides an overview of the UNCRC and key concepts within the Convention, introduces the Committee and details the various stages of the Reporting Process.

Contents:

Save the Children and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

The Convention on the Rights of the Child

- Key Facts
- General Principles
- Evolving Capacities
- Stakeholders/Duty bearers

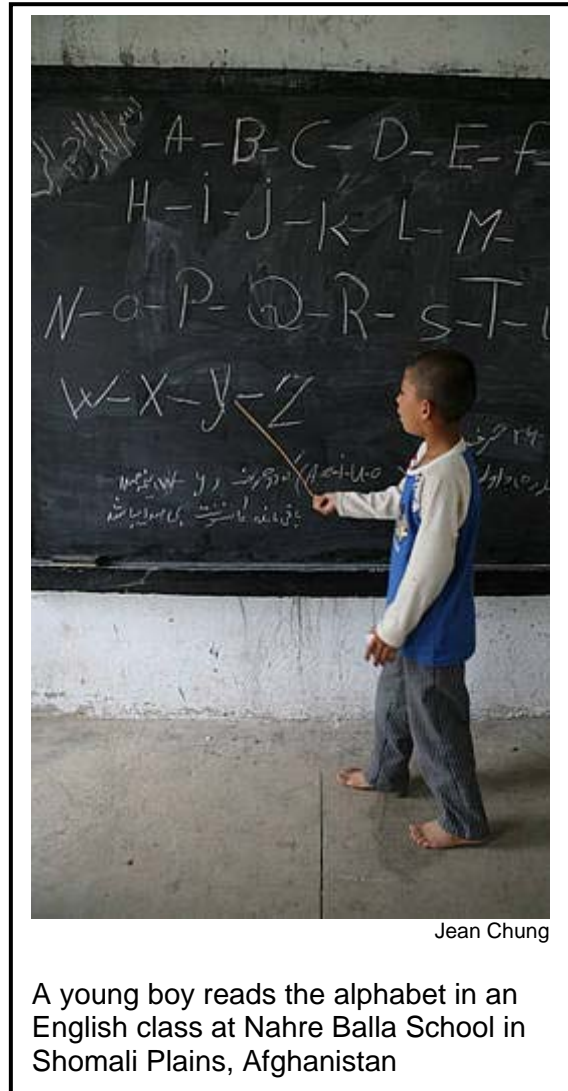
The Committee on the Rights of the Child

- Composition
- Purpose and Mandate
- The Committee in the UN human rights system

An overview of the reporting process

- Outline of the various stages
- Aim and Approach

The cycle of reporting to the Committee on the Rights of the Child



Jean Chung

A young boy reads the alphabet in an English class at Nahre Balla School in Shomali Plains, Afghanistan

“...that luminous living document that enshrines the rights of every child without exception to a life of dignity and self-fulfilment”

Nelson Mandela speaking about the UNCRC in 2000

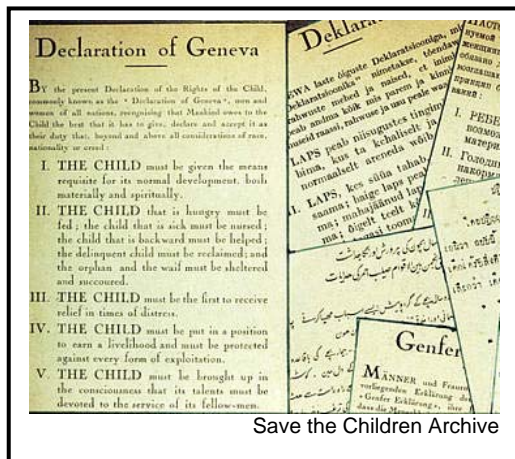
Save the Children and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

Save the Children was founded in 1919, as a response to conditions in Europe immediately following the First World War. The Save the Children Fund was publicly launched at London's Royal Albert Hall in May 1919 by sisters Eglantyne Jebb and Dorothy Buxton and began a fundraising campaign to raise money to send to children in Europe in the areas devastated by war.

In 1923, believing that “*we should claim certain rights for children and labour for their universal recognition*”, Jebb drafted her Declaration of the Rights of the Child, containing five welfare-based rights for children. It was adopted by the International Save the Children Union in 1923 and by the League of Nations in 1924, some 24 years before the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It became known as the Declaration of Geneva.



Save the Children Archive



Save the Children Archive

In 1946 following the Second World War, the International Save the Children Union was dissolved and succeeded by the International Union for Child Welfare (IUCW). One of its first tasks was to persuade the newly formed United Nations to adopt the Geneva Declaration. In 1948, the IUCW drafted the 1948 Declaration on the Rights of the Child, adding two points to the Geneva Declaration that introduced the concepts of non-discrimination and the protection of the family.

Over ten years later, in 1959, the UN adopted the 2nd Declaration on the Rights of the Child. It contained ten articles and introduced a number of new concepts, such as the best interests of the child, the right to play and recreation, the right to name and identity, and the right to free and compulsory education.

1979 was the UN's International Year of the Child (IYC). In 1978 the Polish government had submitted a draft convention on the rights of the child to the UN Commission on Human Rights hoping to see it adopted during the IYC. In 1979 a working group was set up by the Commission to consider the question of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Once again, the Save the Children Alliance was involved in the drafting of a revolutionary international document for children as a member of the Ad-Hoc NGO Group for the Convention on the Rights of the Child. NGOs had a significant impact on the Convention, with at least 13 substantive articles being a direct result of their input, including Art 39 on the rehabilitation and reintegration of child victims of exploitation, and Art 24 on the health implications of harmful traditional practices.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopted unanimously by the UN General Assembly in 1989. It is the most comprehensive and most ratified of all human rights treaties and now forms the basis of Save the Children's work worldwide.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

Key Facts

- The UNCRC took ten years to draft. Save the Children played a significant role in the drafting process
- It was adopted unanimously by the United Nations General Assembly on 20th November 1989 and entered into force in record time on the 2nd September 1990 after receiving the required 20 ratifications
- 193 countries have now ratified (or acceded to) the UNCRC, leaving the United States and Somalia as the only exceptions. No other human rights treaty has received this level of ratification.
- A large number of states have, however, entered reservations and declarations on certain articles, particularly those relating to children's civil and political (or "participation") rights
- The UNCRC represents a significant departure from the traditional view of the child in international law. Children are seen not as mere recipients of welfare, but as rights bearers and as having a vital role in the promotion and protection of their own rights
- It is the most comprehensive human rights treaty ever written
 - There are 54 articles guaranteeing over 40 substantive rights for children
 - It covers civil and political rights, economic, social and cultural rights, as well as aspects of humanitarian law
 - It creates a number of rights that are unique in international law and specific to children, including the right to know and be guided and cared for by one's parents (art. 7.1), to have one's emerging capacities taken into consideration, to have their interests afforded the status of a primary consideration in any decision that may effect them, to the maximum available resources for their survival and their development and, crucially, the right to be heard in any decisions that might affect them. (art.12)
- The UNCRC has two Optional Protocols both adopted by the General Assembly on 25th May 2000.
 - Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography (OPSC)
 - Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict (OPAC)
 - The Optional Protocols add to the CRC and strengthen the rights of the child in their specific areas
 - As of 1st January 2007 each Optional Protocol had 110 States Parties



The General Principles

Underpinning the UNCRC are the four mutually reinforcing “General Principles” identified by the Committee on the Rights of the Child. These principles provide a framework for the interpretation and implementation of all of the rights contained within the UNCRC and should be reflected in all relevant policy and practice.

Non-discrimination (art. 2)

Addressing discrimination requires changes in legislation, resource allocation and education to change attitudes. This obligation requires the application of all of the rights in the Convention to all children at all times. However, States must also actively identify individual children and groups of children who may require special measures for the full implementation of their rights. For example, girls, children with disabilities or children from minority or indigenous groups being excluded from education.

The best interests of the child (art.3.1)

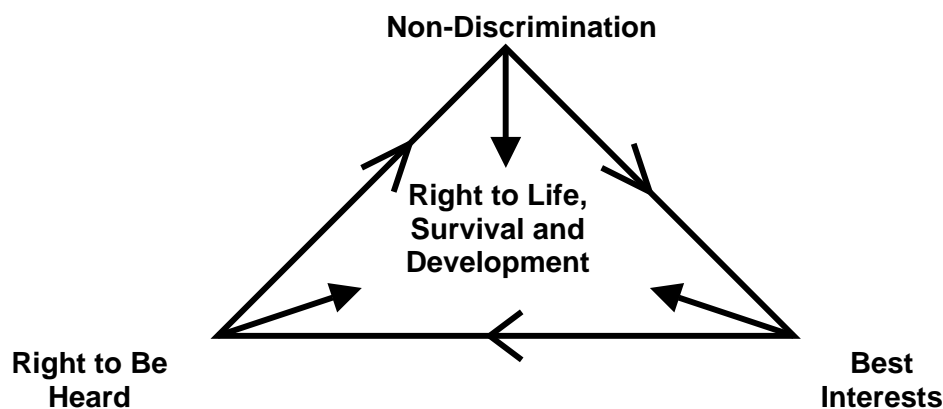
The best interests of the child must be “a primary consideration” in all actions concerning children. “Public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative bodies or legislative authorities” are required to apply the best interests principle by considering how children’s rights and interests will be affected by their actions, including those actions that indirectly affect them.

The right to life, survival and development (art. 6)

In its Concluding Observations the Committee tends to focus on the right to life when it deals with Art. 6 – so, for example, it raised concerns in relation to extra judicial killings in Colombia in 2006, and landmines in Kyrgyzstan in 2004. However, the Committee has also made clear that States must interpret “development” in its broadest sense to take into account the physical, psychological, emotional, social and spiritual development of the child. For example, the right to play (art. 31), to an adequate standard of living (art. 27) and the right to know and be cared for by one’s parents (art. 7.1) are all essential to the right to life, survival and development.

The right to be heard (art.12)

Children’s opinions must be sought in matters that affect them and their views must be given due weight. This right requires consistent and ongoing arrangements for meaningful and effective child participation in the implementation of the rights guaranteed in the Convention. Children must have their views taken into account, for example, in judicial proceedings, custody hearings, in school etc. They should also be consulted in relation to proposed policies and legislation that affects them.



The Evolving Capacities of the Child

Also of fundamental importance to the understanding of the rights contained in the UNCRC is the recognition of the “evolving capacities” of the child (art. 5). The UNCRC was the first human rights treaty to recognise the fundamental importance of children’s developing maturity. Gerison Lansdown, in her report “The Evolving Capacities of the Child” summarises evolving capacities as follows:

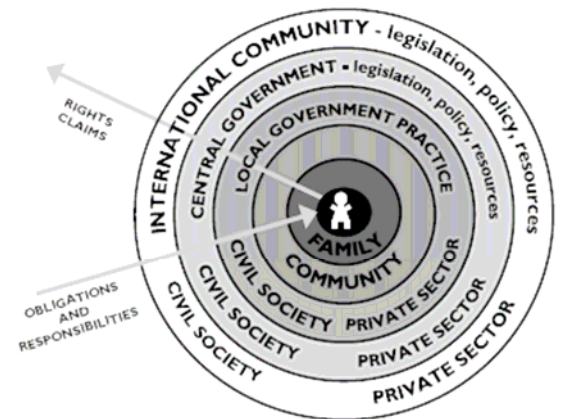
“The concept of evolving capacities is central to the balance embodied in the Convention between recognising children as active agents in their own lives, entitled to be listened to, respected and granted increasing autonomy in the exercise of rights, while also being entitled to protection in accordance with their relative immaturity and youth” The full report is on the CD(1)

Though not a “general principle”, evolving capacities also permeates the entire Convention. The principle is specifically mentioned in Art. 12 relating to the right to be heard, as well as other articles, and is also very closely connected to another general principle, the best interests of the child.

Stakeholders/Duty Bearers

The primary duty bearer under any human rights treaty is the State. The same applies to the UNCRC. Each of the articles in the Convention places some sort of obligation on the State, using language such as “shall undertake to”, “shall recognise”, “shall ensure” etc. Art 4 sets out the state’s overarching obligations, stating that they *“shall undertake all appropriate legislative, administrative, and other measures for the implementation of the rights recognized in the present Convention”* (See further below page 19)

However, the State is not the only duty bearer. Parents and carers, civil society, the judiciary, the media, UN agencies, local and international NGOs and others all have duties to promote and protect the rights of the child. This may be illustrated in the “circles of influence” diagram shown here.



Taken from “Child Rights Programming: A Handbook for Save the Children Alliance Members” pg. 36.

Art 43 of the UNCRC sets out the process established under the Convention to assess the implementation of the UNCRC. This is the periodic reporting process. It is the main chance to involve all of these stakeholders in a constructive and co-operative dialogue to improve the situation for children in each country. In order to manage this process and make recommendations, the Committee on the Rights of the Child was established under Art 43.1.

- **Copies of the Convention and the Optional Protocols, lists of ratifying States and details of reservations are available on the CD (5) and online at:**
 UNCRC <http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/k2crc.htm>
 OPSC <http://www.ohchr.org/english/law/crc-sale.htm>
 OPAC <http://www.ohchr.org/english/law/crc-conflict.htm>
- **The Convention is available in 50 languages online at:**
<http://www.unicef.org/magic/briefing/uncorc.html>
- **A child friendly version is on the CD (5) and online at:**
http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/pdfs/NCD-poster_e.pdf
- **Further reading on General Principles and Evolving Capacities are on the CD(1). See in particular “Child Rights Programming: A Handbook for Save the Children Alliance Members” pp 27-33**

The Committee on the Rights of the Child

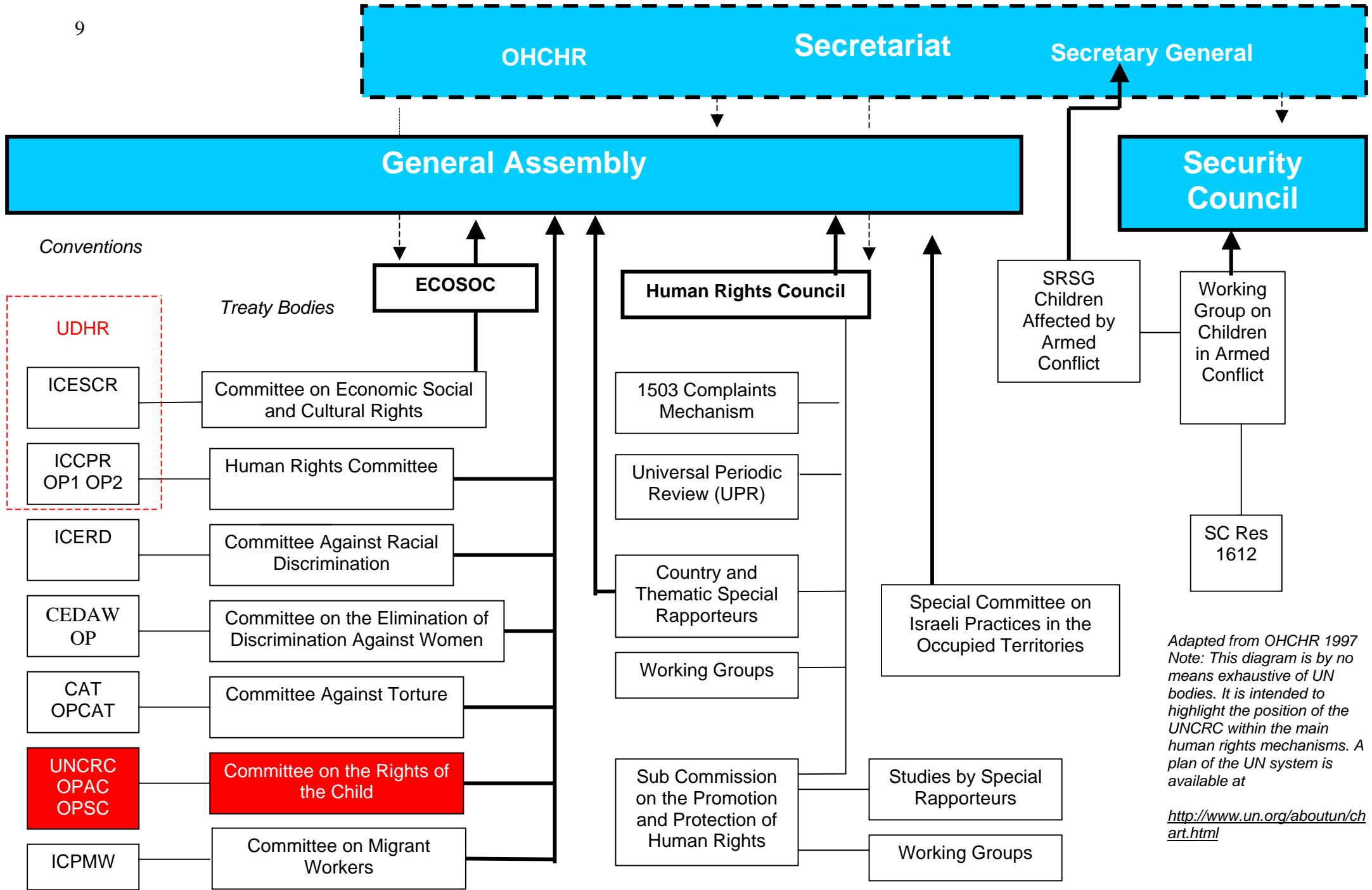
Composition

- The Committee on the Rights of the Child was established in 1990 as required by art. 43.1 of the Convention and is the body responsible for monitoring state obligations.
- It sits in Geneva for three sessions of three weeks every year. Sessions are held in January, May/June and September/October
- The Committee is made up of 18, independent, unpaid members, acting in their personal capacity
- Committee members are elected by States Parties for four-year terms. They must be of “high moral standing and recognised competence” in the field covered by the Convention (art. 43.2)
- Other factors taken into account in elections include, geographical distribution, expertise in the field of human rights, the ability to devote sufficient time, representation from a wide variety of professional backgrounds and legal systems and fluency in one of the three working languages (English, French, Spanish)
- The diagram on the next page shows where the Committee sits in relation to the UN system

Purpose and Mandate

- The primary role of the Committee is to monitor state compliance with their obligations under the UNCRC through the periodic reporting procedure.
- It also plays a significant role in developing our understanding of the content of the rights contained within the UNCRC through *Days of General Discussion*, (yearly public meetings to discuss specific rights), and *General Comments*, (official statements clarifying the content of certain articles)
- The approach of the Committee is non-confrontational. Its aim is to assess, through constructive dialogue, the child rights situation in the various states parties; to raise areas of concern; and to provide recommendations for full implementation of the Convention.
- The Committee may not consider individual complaints or “communications” from individuals, nor to undertake inquiries into gross violations.

- **An OHCHR Guide to the UN Treaty Body System is on the CD (10)**
- **The working methods of the Committee are covered in more detail below. See also the Committee’s own working methods document on the CD (4) and at**
<http://www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/workingmethods.htm>
- **General Comments and details of previous Days of general discussion are available on the CD (4) and online at the Committee’s website**
<http://www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/>
- **A list of current Committee members along with their CVs is available at**
- <http://www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/members.htm>



Adapted from OHCHR 1997
 Note: This diagram is by no means exhaustive of UN bodies. It is intended to highlight the position of the UNGRC within the main human rights mechanisms. A plan of the UN system is available at

<http://www.un.org/aboutun/ch art.html>

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was adopted on 13th December 2006 and the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance was adopted on 6th February 2007. They each require 20 ratifications to enter into force

An Overview of the Reporting Process

1. The State Report

The reporting process begins with the development of the State Report. The Committee on the Rights of the Child has provided guidelines indicating good practice as to process and providing detail as to the nature of information sought. Critical to Save the Children is the need for the Government to use this as a periodic opportunity to re-invigorate interest in, and commitment to child rights.

The initial report is due 2 years after the UNCRC enters into force in the country (this occurs 30 days after ratification). Thereafter, periodic reports are due every 5 years. Upon receipt, the Committee will set a date for consideration of the state report at the next available session. If the state does not submit on time, the Committee will send a reminder.

The state report should provide the Committee with a comprehensive review of the child rights situation in the country, covering legislative, administrative, judicial and any other measures undertaken to implement the Convention, backed up with detailed disaggregated data. States must also report on how they have responded to the Committee's recommendations from the previous reporting session.

State reports should be no longer than 120 pages and divided into 8 thematic "clusters" of rights as required by the Committee's Reporting Guidelines.

- I. General Measures of Implementation** {Arts 4, 42, 44.6}
- II. Definition of the Child** {Art 1}
- III. General Principles** {Arts 2, 3, 6, 12}
- IV. Civil Rights and Freedoms** {Arts 7, 8, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19, 37(a)}
- V. Family Environment and Alternative Care** {Arts 5, 9, 10, 11, 18, 20, 21, 25, 27.4, 39}
- VI. Basic Health and Welfare** {Arts 18, 23, 24, 26, 27}
- VII. Education, leisure and Cultural Activities** {Arts 28, 29, 31}
- VIII. Special Protection Measures** {Arts 22, 30, 32, 33, 34, 35, 37, 38, 39, 40}

Within each of these "clusters" the following information must be provided:

Follow-Up

The first paragraph in each cluster should detail measures undertaken with regard to the Committee's previous Concluding Observations.

Comprehensive National Programmes – Monitoring

Subsequent paragraphs should provide sufficient information to provide the Committee with a full understanding of the implementation of the Convention in the country as well as the mechanisms established to monitor progress.

Allocation of Budgetary and Other Resources

States must provide information on the amount and percentage of the national budget and other resources devoted annually to children.

Statistical Data

Disaggregated by gender, disability, geographical area, age etc. indicating trends and highlighting groups requiring special attention

Factors and Difficulties

The last paragraph in each cluster should describe any factors and difficulties affecting the fulfilment of the state's obligations as well as information on targets set for the future.

- *A chart containing a summary of the UNCRC's provisions arranged according to the eight "clusters" is on the CD (5)*
- *For full details of the content of State Reports, see the Committee's reporting guidelines and examples of previous state reports on the CD (4) and (7)*

This “cluster” format is adhered to throughout the reporting process. This method avoids undue repetition (few policies or laws will address only one specific right, but may well come under these broader headings). More importantly, it allows for continuity throughout the process and easier analysis of all of the relevant submissions and meetings. State and NGO reports, the Pre-Sessional Working Group and Plenary Session meetings, Lists of Issues and Written Replies and the Committee’s Concluding Observations all follow the same thematic format.

Following submission, the report is edited, translated into the three working languages of the Committee, distributed to specialised agencies and made available to NGOs.

2. NGO Supplementary/Alternative Reports

The UNCRC specifically allows for reports from “other competent bodies”, including NGOs and children’s groups, to gain a more detailed understanding of child rights in the country. These reports help to fill in the gaps in the State Report and clarify misleading or incorrect information. They also provide other perspectives which may assist the Committee in understanding the climate of rights enjoyment, both resistances and obstacles, and also forces for change.

The NGO report is an opportunity to include children’s voices in the reporting process (this should also be achieved through the state report) a stimulus to create of NGO coalitions (NGOCs), to engage with processes of change, and, if necessary, to raise concerns and make recommendations at the international level.

Supplementary/Alternative Reports should be submitted within 6 months of the state report and three months prior to the Pre-Session to ensure they are taken into account, translated etc.

3. The Pre-Sessional Working Group (“The Pre-Session”)

The Pre-Sessional Working Group is a private meeting between the Committee, NGOs and other international organisations. It takes place around 4 months prior to the Session with the Government to discuss the State Report and the alternative reports. The Pre-Session is a chance for NGOs/NGOCs and children, in person and in a safe forum, to highlight the main areas of concern, give their opinions of the State Report and add any information since the submission of their alternative reports.

Only NGOs that have submitted written information will be invited to attend. Meetings are confidential and no summary records are produced. All parties should therefore be able to speak freely.

4. List of Issues

The Pre-Session enables the Committee to identify a “List of Issues” which identifies further information required from the Government. This frequently focuses on the need for disaggregated data on violations of rights, and lists the key areas of concern that the Committee will address at the Plenary Session (see below). It therefore allows the Government to prepare for the questions that may be asked.

5. Written Replies

As implied by its name, this document contains the written answers to the List of Issues and must be submitted at least 1 month prior to the Plenary Session. NGOs may feed into the Written Replies or they may submit their own supplementary information. Information from the State and NGO reports, the Pre-Session and the Written Replies will frame the discussion between the Committee and the Government.

6. The Plenary Session

This is the main meeting between the Government and the Committee that takes place over a full day (two 3-hour sessions). The Committee will ask a series of questions in the same thematic format as the State Report and the Government will be given the opportunity to respond. Although this meeting is public, NGOs may only attend as observers – they may not make representations.

7. Concluding Observations

This is the outcome document of the reporting process. Following again the thematic structure of the state report, the Committee first highlights positive aspects, then goes on to outline its concerns and its recommendations. The final paragraph of the Concluding Observations sets the date for the next periodic report.

Important: The Concluding Observations end the session, not the process. The Concluding Observations should set an **Agenda for Action** over the coming five years until the next report is due. NGOs have an important role to play in ensuring the recommendations are advocated for and implemented.

Monitoring State Obligations

The state is the primary duty bearer for the implementation of rights contained in the UNCRC.
The only international mechanism to monitor the state's obligations is the reporting process to the Committee on the Rights of the Child

**To
Ensure**

Progressive Implementation of the UNCRC

Each reporting session should not be seen in isolation or as a one off event. Rather, it is a cycle that should set realistic agendas to affect change for children and build upon the previous reporting sessions

Through

Constructive Dialogue

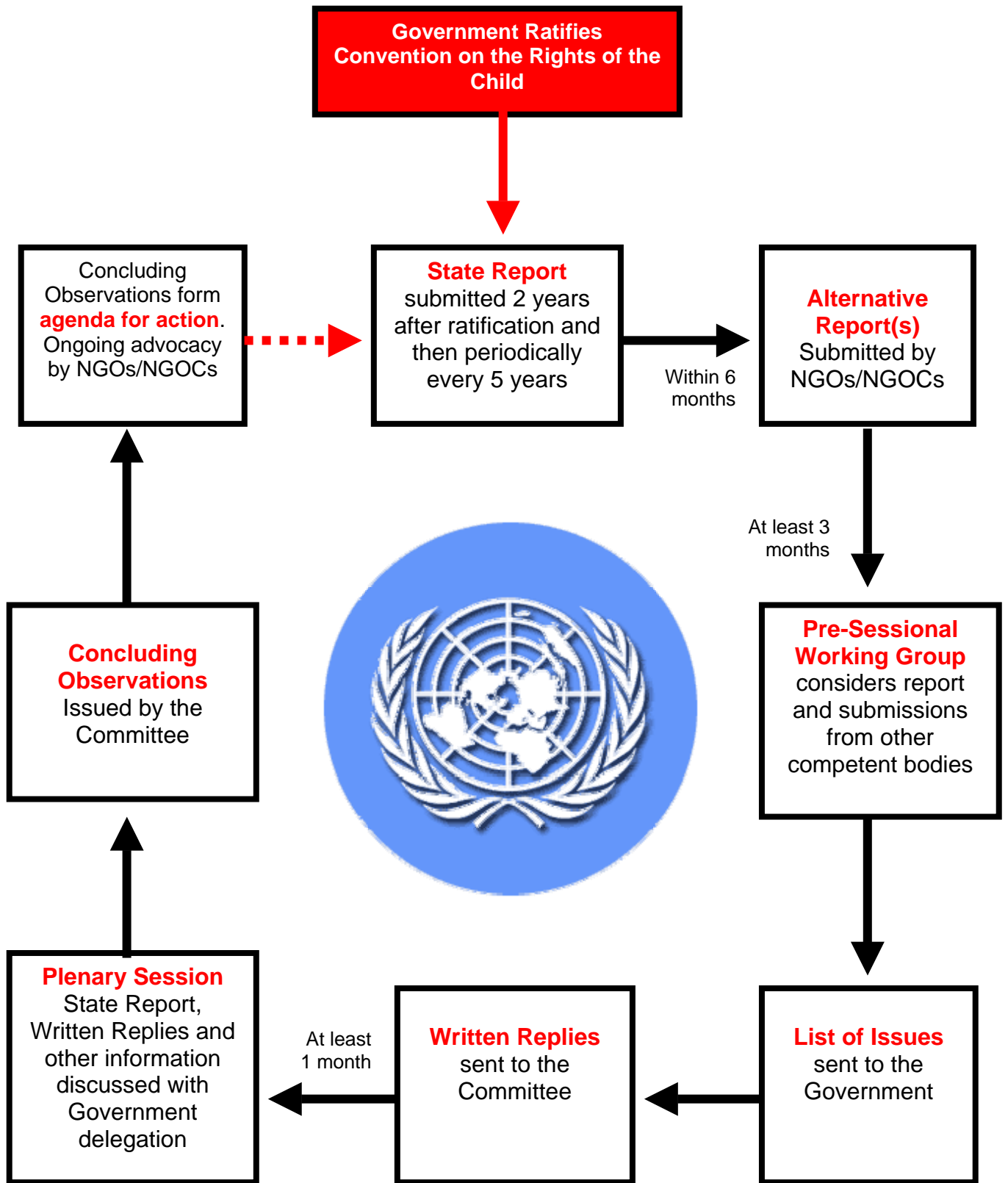
Reporting is not intended to name and shame or to pass judgement. It is about improving the implementation of the UNCRC in the country through the creation of an ongoing, constructive dialogue between the Government, the Committee, children, NGOs and other relevant international organisations

The Aim and Approach of the Reporting Process

“The periodic report should provide the Committee with a basis for constructive dialogue with the State party about the implementation of the Convention and the enjoyment of human rights by children in the State party”

Committee on the Rights of the Child

The Cycle of Reporting to the Committee on the Rights of the Child



A sample timeline of the reporting process may be found on page 38



Leticia Valverdes

Young people look through Save the Children publications at a Save the Children project, Projeto Peixearte, which trains young people to monitor and influence how local governments funds are allocated and spent.

- **Copies of the Committee's guidelines for initial and periodic reports are available on the CD (4) and also online at:**
Initial
[http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/\(Symbol\)/CRC.C.5.En?Opendocument](http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/(Symbol)/CRC.C.5.En?Opendocument)
Periodic
[http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/\(Symbol\)/CRC.C.58.Rev.1.En?Opendocument](http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/(Symbol)/CRC.C.58.Rev.1.En?Opendocument)
- **Documents dating back to the first reporting sessions in 1992/93, including State Reports, Lists of Issues, Written Replies, and Concluding Observations, may be found on the Committee's website at**
<http://www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/sessions.htm>
- **Note:** The reporting process for OPAC and OPSC is slightly different that that of the main treaty, which is the focus of this Starter Pack. Following an initial report, information on the relevant Optional Protocol should thereafter form a part of the main report every five years. Unlike the UNCRC's near universal ratification, the Optional Protocols currently have 110 States Parties each (as of 1st January 2007). Only those states that have ratified the Optional Protocols are subject to their reporting procedures. Guidelines for states reporting under OPAC and OPSC are available on the CD (4) and at
OPAC
[http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/\(Symbol\)/CRC.OP.AC.1.En?Opendocument](http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/(Symbol)/CRC.OP.AC.1.En?Opendocument)
OPSC
<http://www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/docs/CRC.C.OPSC.2.pdf>

Part II: Why Should We Get Involved? The Importance and Benefits of Engagement



Tom Pietrasik

Girls inside a tent of the Safe Play Area organised by Save the Children in Thuri Park Relief Camp, Pakistan

“If only those with power...would listen and incorporate the experience of those who have first hand knowledge of the reality of the situation on the ground – the results would transform the ideas of leadership and decision making”

Mary Robinson
Former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights

The Reporting process is an important tool for change that may be used as a basis for action on child rights. It can help to bring government, children, civil society, and the public together, on a periodic basis, to reflect on progress in implementing the UNCRC and to identify needed change. Key is the way in which it can bring agents of change together in a country.

Save the Children has a role to play in this. For example, we can assist in building local capacities, where they are weak, support NGO coalitions and facilitate child participation. This section looks at the importance of engagement for civil society and Save the Children, as well as some of the main benefits.

Contents:

The Importance of NGO/Civil Society Engagement

- Advocating for Change
- Strengthening the Work of NGOS
- Monitoring Implementation
- Strengthening the Process

The Importance of Save the Children’s Involvement

UNCRC reporting and Child Rights Programming

The Impact on Child Rights...So Far

- General Measures of Implementation
- UNICEF Implementation Study

UNCRC Reporting and the Five Dimensions of Change

Case Study 1: Lesotho

The Importance of NGO/Civil Society Engagement in the Process

Civil society and NGOs have a vital role in the periodic reporting process. Article 43 specifically refers to the participation of “other competent bodies” in the process, which includes NGOs and NGO coalitions. There are many aspects to NGO’s and civil society’s role, adding significant benefit not only to child rights reporting and monitoring, but to advocacy, the work of NGOs and the reporting process itself.

Advocating for Change

The reporting process is not an ad hoc international exercise. The ultimate aim is on the ground improvements in children’s enjoyment of their rights and thus the improvement of their lives and prospects. It should not be seen as separate from the ongoing advocacy of NGOs. One of the most important roles for NGOs/NGOCs is to maintain the momentum that has been built during the formal information gathering and report construction process and to continue to advocate for change based on the Committee’s recommendations. A key role for Save the Children is to work with and support local NGOs to build capacity to continue with rights-based advocacy and research following on from the reporting process.

Strengthening the Work of NGOs

NGO involvement in the reporting process can strengthen the work of those NGOs in many ways. For example, the reporting process requires a detailed child rights situational analysis, providing vital programmatic information for evidence-based advocacy. The process helps focus dialogue on child rights and raise awareness of the issues at local and national level. Membership of coalitions creates new partnerships, capacity building opportunities, and an environment that helps with information sharing and new methods of working. The reporting process can also help with the development of co-ordinated approaches and strengthening child participation in advocacy.

Monitoring Implementation

Reporting to the Committee and monitoring implementation of the UNCRC go hand in hand. NGOs have an important role to play in monitoring the situation of child rights in a country. During the course of their programmatic work and advocacy NGOs are well placed to see how the Government is implementing the Committee’s recommendations and child rights challenges generally. It is important to continue to share information with local partners throughout the process and in follow up. Adding this information to annual reviews and impact assessments will make compilation of the next NGO report far easier!

Strengthening the Process

NGO engagement is crucial to addressing some of the perceived weaknesses in the system, such as the historic lack of child participation and the Committee’s dependency on external information due to its lack of a fact finding mandate (*This is dealt with in more detail below pp 25 & 26*).

- **CRIN and the NGO Group for the UNCRC have produced a paper on “*The Use of Concluding Observations for Monitoring the Implementation of the CRC*”. A copy is on the CD (10) and online at http://www.crin.org/docs/resources/publications/ngocrc/CRIN-NGOCRC_WP2_en.pdf**

The Importance of Save the Children's Involvement

Child Participation

- Children have the right to be heard and have their views given due weight
- The reporting process enables SCUK to increase child participation in advocacy and hold duty bearers to account.
- Child participation provides a vehicle to strengthen capacity amongst Governments, Committee Members, Partners, including children, to ensure children are heard
- Facilitating child participation is a core value for Save the Children
- The process provides potential for a highly visible and practical demonstration of child participation that can and has changed attitudes at the local and national level

Programming

- Reporting requires a detailed child rights situational analysis
- It offers the chance for Save the Children to measure its own contribution to child rights
- It involves aspects of all three pillars of child rights programming (*see diagram below pg 18*)
- It addresses the five dimensions of change (*see diagram below pg 21*)
- Our programmes have benefited from reporting in the past (*See "A Tool for Change" pg 30*)
- Concluding Observations help set an agenda for action in the coming years

As a Child Rights Organisation

- Save the Children's work is underpinned by the UNCRC, a Treaty we helped to draft. Engagement in the reporting process is fundamental to any clear commitment to children's rights
- We have a responsibility to ensure children are able to express their opinions and influence decisions that affect their lives
- Save the Children should be systematically involved in ensuring States live up to their international obligations to children
- A consistent presence in the reporting process in each of the countries we work will help to strengthen Save the Children's position as the leading child rights organisation, speaking out for all children at all times, nationally and internationally

Advocacy

- The reporting process provides a framework and timeline for long term advocacy, addressing systemic changes for children
- It provides an opportunity for local, national and international advocacy
- The reporting process serves as a legitimate means to challenge government performance on children's rights and to identify ways to work with government to achieve change
- It helps with access to those in positions to affect change – eg the departments responsible for the State Report
- It helps raise fundamental issues over and above those that are theme-specific

Building and Strengthening Alliances

- The reporting process helps build and sustain national coalitions– Save the Children is well placed to support this
- It allows for wide stakeholder consultations
- It helps develop a broad constituency of support
- It helps strengthen bonds with other Alliance members and civil society partners through joint working on alternative reports, advocacy and monitoring
- Assisting with the government report can build links with key officials
- Regular attendance at the Pre-Session and Plenary Session allows for closer working with the Committee

UNCRC Reporting and Child Rights Programming (CRP)

Child Rights Situational analysis (CRSA)

Child rights programming is based on a detailed understanding of the child rights situation in the country gained through a child rights situational analysis. *The reporting process requires a child rights situational analysis from the Government and NGOs every 5 years – see again the Committee’s reporting guidelines. CD (4)*

With this information as a basis, child rights programming is shaped around three “pillars” of work. Engagement in the reporting process involves aspects of all three, but primarily pillars 2 & 3.

1. Practical Actions on Gaps and Violations of Rights

Children’s right to be heard is not often guaranteed. Child participation in the reporting process provides a significant opportunity for children to have a voice. Save the Children has a core role in facilitating children’s meaningful involvement.

Having a voice at this level helps with self-esteem and personal empowerment for the children directly involved

The reporting process can help with the production of evidence to identify violations of children’s rights and gaps in the enjoyment of rights.

Disaggregated data helps to assess how discrimination applies to these violations and gaps.

2. Strengthening Structures and Mechanisms

Identifying weaknesses in mechanisms and structures is one of the primary aims of the reporting process (see again, General Measures of Implementation)

States must report on progress on:

- Law reform
- Budget allocation and monitoring
- National co-ordinating bodies
- Education and training for professionals working with children
- National Plans of Action to manage changes

The Committee will also address specific mechanisms and structures under the separate thematic headings, eg benefits payments, juvenile justice, free primary education etc.

Proposing options for change/advocacy based on the evidence. This may form a part of the NGO report presented to the Committee and national level advocacy plans.

3. Building Constituencies

NGO coalitions are a key element of the reporting process, creating national platforms for child rights

Reporting allows for wide consultations and develops a broad constituency of support

Throughout the process, publicity and wide dissemination of the relevant documents promotes “ownership” by civil society and raises awareness of child rights in local communities.

Concluding Observations can form an agenda for action for civil society to mobilise behind.

The media is specifically mentioned in the UNCRC as having an important role in building support for children’s rights in society.

- **Child Rights Programming: A Handbook for Save the Children Alliance Members is on the CD (3) and on the Intranet at <http://intranet/Policy/Policy%20and%20Learning/CRP%20resources.htm>**

Impact of the Reporting Process on Child Rights...So Far!

“States Parties shall undertake all appropriate legislative, administrative, and other measures for the implementation of the rights recognised in the present Convention. With regard to economic, social and cultural rights, States Parties shall undertake such measures to the maximum extent of their available resources and, where needed, within the framework of international co-operation”

Article 4 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

The UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre recently undertook a three-year study of the impact of the UNCRC. It focused on the “**General Measures of Implementation**” of 62 countries that had reported to the Committee at least twice over a 15 year period.

The General Measures of Implementation are eight systems related measures identified by the Committee that must be undertaken by States to fulfil their obligations under the UNCRC. They represent structures, systems and initiatives that are extremely important for the full implementation of the UNCRC. The Committee looks for these specifically during the reporting process (*see the first “cluster” above pg 10*)

The General Measures may be summarised as follows:

- **Law reform:** Requires States Parties to ensure compatibility of new and existing legislation and judicial practice with the UNCRC. This includes: constitutional amendment, amendments to legislation and development of new laws, responding to new issues relating to children’s rights and by considering effective remedies for children and their representatives.
- **Independent National Institutions for Children’s Rights:** such as children’s ombudsman offices, child rights commissioners and focal points within national human rights institutions
- **National Plans of Action:** Comprehensive national agendas or strategies for implementation of the UNCRC are needed; their relationship to the follow-up process to the World Summit for Children and UN General Assembly Special Session on Children is critical
- **Children’s rights-focused permanent institutions and structures within Government** are required to ensure coordination and pursue implementation
- **Allocation of resources** to the maximum extent of their availability
- **Systematic monitoring of the implementation of the UNCRC**, through effective child-related data collection, analysis, evaluation and dissemination
- **Education, training and awareness raising** on children’s rights should be steadily promoted
- **Involvement of civil society, including children, in implementation**

See further *General Comment No. 5* on the CD(4) and online
[http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/\(symbol\)/CRC.GC.2003.5.En?OpenDocument](http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/(symbol)/CRC.GC.2003.5.En?OpenDocument)

Two initial summary reports from the UNICEF study have been released with full results forthcoming once all of the information has been analysed thoroughly. The summary report reveals a broad process of social change for children, across many of the General Measures, through ratification of the UNCRC and involvement in the reporting process. The study also identified the many challenges that lie ahead.

Law Reform

The role of the UNCRC is most evident in law reform. In at least 50 of the countries studied the Convention has been incorporated to various degrees into the national legal framework by legislative reform, including constitutional amendment. Incorporation into the national legal system is almost universal in the Eastern European and Latin American Countries studied. Many important advances for children and families have been achieved because of these reforms. In Belarus and the Czech Republic, for example, Constitutional Courts found parts of the family codes invalid as they were incompatible with the UNCRC. In some countries comprehensive codes on children have been developed, for example, the Childhood and Adolescence Code adopted by Paraguay in 2001 and the Romanian Law on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of the Child.

National Independent Human Rights Institutions for Children

The establishment of national independent human rights institutions for children has accelerated since the entry into force of the CRC. The first model for a children's ombudsman was developed by Radda Barnen (SC Sweden) in 1979. Until the adoption of the UNCRC, however, only 2 such offices existed. Today there are over 60 in around 38 countries worldwide. These institutions act as a voice for children and as champions for the realisation of children's rights.

National Co-ordinating Mechanisms

Many countries have developed new bodies or mechanisms for children near the very heart of government. These have been in the form of children's units in the president/prime minister's office; dept.s for children; national councils; national co-ordinating committees etc. Their aim is to make children visible in government action; to ensure co-ordination of relevant activities; to monitor progress and to promote and comprehensive and integrated agenda for the realisation of children's rights. Examples include National Council for Children in Ecuador and the National Council for the Rights of the Child in Timor-Leste.

Awareness Raising and Education

All of the countries reviewed had undertaken activities to promote awareness of the CRC through education and capacity building of professional groups and through campaigns on public health issues such as HIV/AIDS.

Child Participation

Both thinking and practice with respect to child participation have evolved considerably since the entry into force of the UNCRC. The study highlights this evolution, with particular reference to NGOs. The Save the Children Alliance is mentioned as a leader in this field.

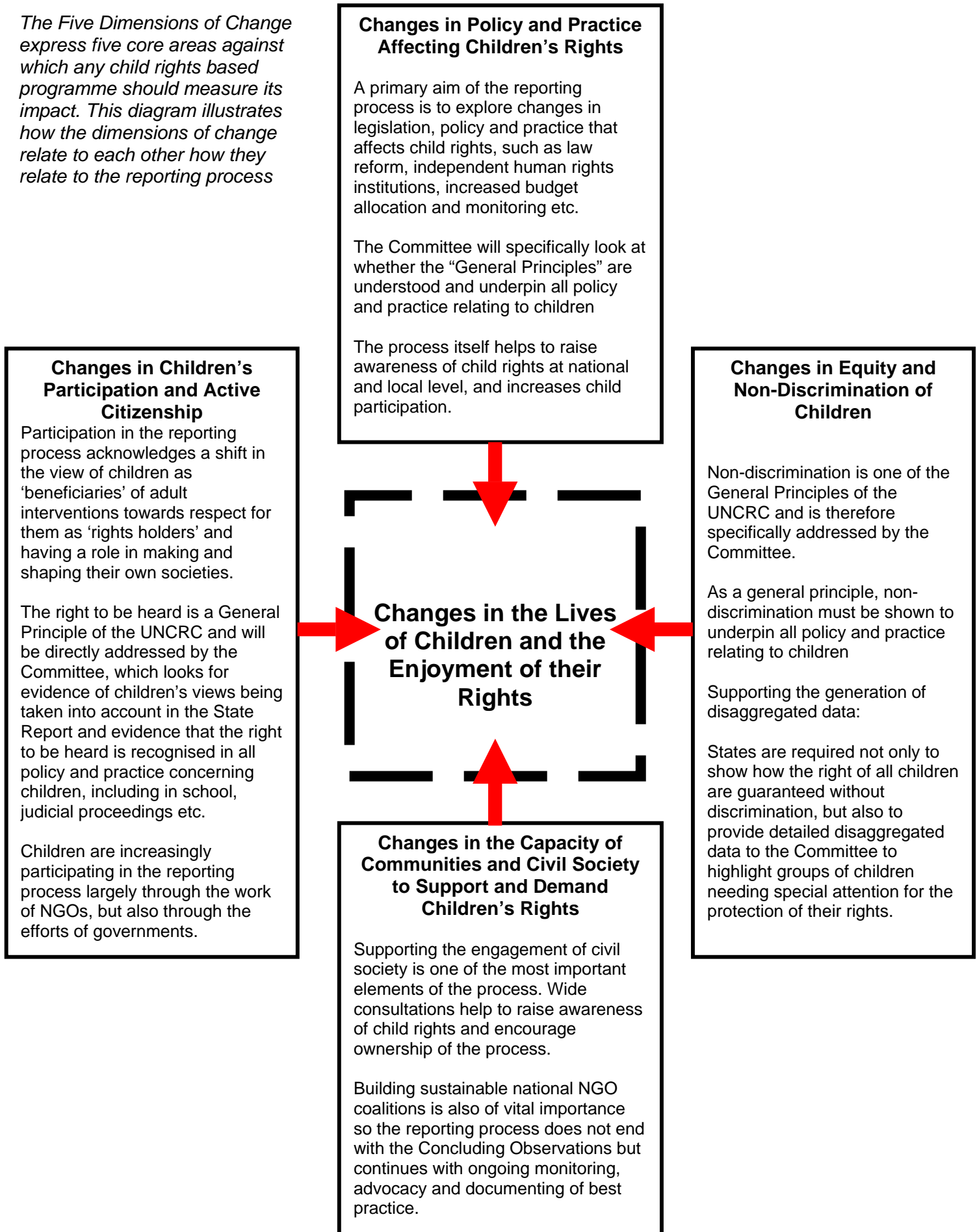
The main challenges identified in the study include the need for

- **Greater resource allocation**
- **Agreed indicators**
- **Better co-ordination between ministries**
- **The General Principles to underpin National Plans of Action**

- **Two initial UNICEF reports have been released, both relatively brief (c. 30 pages). They are on the CD (6). A full report is forthcoming.**
- **For more on the benefits for children see "A Tool for Change" pp 21 – 28, with examples from 8 country programmes. CD (10)**

UNCRC Reporting and the Five Dimensions of Change

The Five Dimensions of Change express five core areas against which any child rights based programme should measure its impact. This diagram illustrates how the dimensions of change relate to each other how they relate to the reporting process



Case Study 1: Lesotho

Kevin Byrne, now Programme Director for Indonesia, describes the benefits of the reporting process in during his time in Lesotho

“

Our work in Lesotho involved bringing together a fairly weak civil society sector and developing and supporting an NGO Coalition to respond to the government report to the CRC. I found that working within this model had a number of advantages – for children, for local civil society and for Save the Children.

Responding to the report allowed us to develop a collaborative, locally owned and child-focused framework for multi agency planning. It put children on the socio-political agenda and allowed taboo issues like abuse and exploitation to be raised in a safe way. It also allowed children, and particularly vulnerable children, to speak out in safe but prestigious forums. Two sectors of Basotho society previously excluded and invisible - NGOs and children - were suddenly able to speak directly with donors, UN agencies, government and the media and they made the most of the opportunities.

This process introduced the concepts of child rights and child participation in a very practical and visible way to a wide audience, disproving entirely the commonly held belief that child rights and child participation were too radical to be acceptable in Lesotho's conservative, hierarchical and patriarchal society. In fact, Lesotho was the first African country to send child representatives to the UNCRC and they made a significant and positive impact on the Committee. All of this raised the status of children generally in Lesotho and led to a major change in agencies' thinking, their programme design and planning processes.

Children benefited directly from the process. It led to review of all child legislation and the inclusion of NGOs and children in the development of a comprehensive Children's Act. It also led to an increase in child-focused work by in-country agencies, increased allocation of funds to child related activities and improvements in several child welfare agency practices. It led further to the establishment of child led organisations.

Local agencies benefited from increased profile that translated, for some, into increased funding and organisational growth. They also learned a lot from each other and felt that participation in producing the report enhanced their status and gave their staff morale a boost.

Save the Children benefited from the increased profile too and the expanded constituency of support. The NGO Coalition facilitated national advocacy and policy development work and gave us opportunities to develop more projects through local partners. It created a stronger and more open dialogue between Save the Children and local agencies.

It was also great fun! Events around the report launch such as the Children's Day and take-over of Parliament gave everybody a shot in the arm and probably did more for children's rights than the dozens of reports that spelt out Lesotho's problems annually.

Lastly it gave staff and partners a new way of thinking and interacting with children that has continued to pay off for children in practical programme development and implementation, even after Save the Children's withdrawal

”

Part III: How Can We Engage?

Advice and Suggestions for SCUK Programme Involvement in the Reporting Process

This section gathers together learning and advice from many sources to provide practical suggestions for country programme involvement in the reporting process. It begins with overarching considerations, then moves on to address the specific stages of the process. Finally, it provides some advice and suggestions on child participation, advocacy, coalition working and funding.

Contents:

Strategic Context

Strengths and weaknesses

- Addressing weaknesses

Specific Objectives and Activities Involved in Child Rights Monitoring and Reporting

- UNCRC reporting and the “Model for Impact”

The State Report

The NGO Supplementary/Alternative Report

- Child and young people’s submissions to the Committee

The Pre-Sessional Working Group

- Child Participation at the Pre-Session

The Plenary Session

Case Study 2: England

Child Participation

- What is the value of child participation
- Save the Children Practice Standards
- Dos and Don’ts

Advocacy

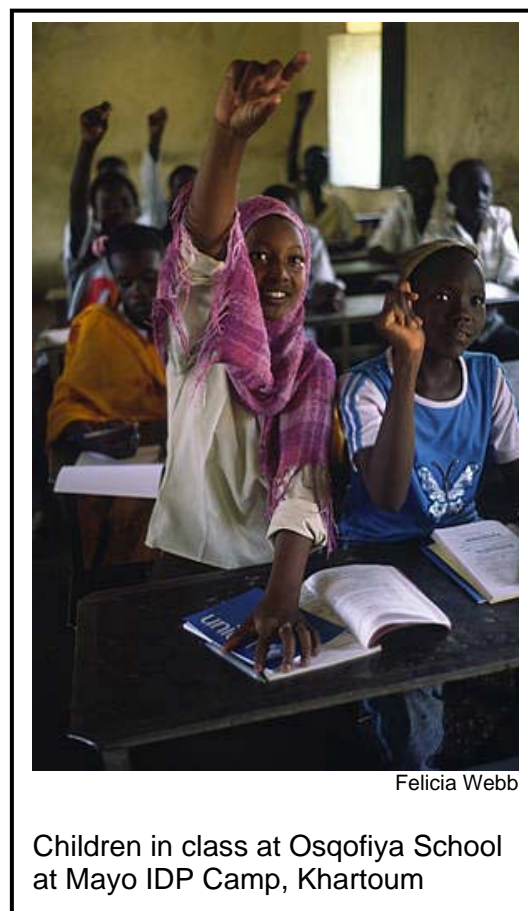
- What changes are we advocating for?
- Who can make those changes?
- How can we influence those in power?

Coalition Working

- Compelling Rationale
- Best Practice

Case Study 3: Yemen

Funding



Felicia Webb

Children in class at Osqofiya School at Mayo IDP Camp, Khartoum

“I believe we should claim certain rights for children and labour for their universal recognition”

Eglantyne Jebb, Founder of Save the Children, 1923

Strategic Context

It is important for any programme to periodically review systems and processes of change as a part of the process of developing a child rights situational analysis. The analysis should consider both the capacity and motivation of government and of aspects of civil society, the NGO community, media, religion, academia and the business sector. On the basis of this analysis the programme should consider the strategic importance of engagement in the reporting process.

The process cannot be easily absorbed into tight schedules, budgets and work plans if seen as a one off or ad hoc event. It requires planning, resources and ongoing commitment, especially in relation to child participation, coalitions and advocacy. It should complement programmatic work if planned properly.

A number of important questions need to be asked when deciding *if* and *how* to engage in the reporting process.

Should we engage as a matter of principle? i.e. as a child rights-based organisation.

What is the value of involvement in the process? What value is added through engagement in the process, aside from the actual implementation by the State of the UNCRC – i.e. building coalitions, raising awareness, child participation etc. Consider the bigger picture beyond just the report and attending the Pre-Session.

What is the potential impact for children? Consider whether the Government is willing to engage effectively and implement the Concluding Observations. Assess the capacity of local NGOs/coalitions to press for change.

What are the risks involved? Carry out risk assessments. Involvement in the reporting process presents numerous risks that need to be assessed, from speaking out against governments to child protection. Are the negative consequences of getting involved in the process? Is there potential for undermining local civil society?

These risks are inevitable but may be mitigated if considered well in advance and the method of engagement tailored accordingly.

Is there enough time? Start early! Ensure that engagement is well planned, from preparations for child participation and the alternative report, to advocacy and monitoring.

Is it affordable? Consider funding capabilities when planning activities – What funding opportunities are available? (*see further below pp 50 & 51*) Are there any Alliance partners we could work with? What is the financial capacity of local partners?

How can it fit in with the current TPP/programmatic work? Can involvement in reporting be integrated into strategic planning and operational plans – link to CRP and GIM

What is Save the Children's role and responsibility in the country? This factor relates mainly to *how* Save the Children should engage and raises a number of questions. What is the capacity of other NGOs/agencies to engage effectively? Should we take a leading role? What responsibility do we have when there are no other agencies capable of reporting? Does Save the Children have close relationships with Government and local communities that would improve the process and its impact? Is Save the Children best placed to facilitate child participation? Etc.

Strengths and Weaknesses

It is important to highlight the strengths and weaknesses of the reporting process, not only to focus on the positive aspects, but also so that weaknesses may be identified and planned for. A number of these weaknesses may be addressed to an extent through effective civil society and child participation and this will be dealt with below.

Strengths

- The reporting process provides a means to build a wide constituency of support at national level and creates national platforms for child rights
- It provides a means to engage Governments, the Committee, civil society, NGOs and other organisations in child rights-based dialogue
- It provides NGOs and children with an opportunity to raise their concerns and make their recommendations at international level (But governments should also be encouraged to facilitate this in compiling the State Report and attending the Plenary Session)
- NGO reports and the Pre-Sessional Working Group are confidential allowing participants to speak freely
- Concluding Observations can serve as a basis for National Plans of Action and concrete agendas for change
- The reporting process is non-confrontational and therefore should be seen as a support and not a threat to Governments
- It highlights, in an international forum, the situation of child rights in the State Party – it therefore carries significant political and moral weight
- It requires a detailed child rights situational analysis by the Government, NGOs and children

Weaknesses

- The reporting process is not aimed at addressing violations of individual children's rights. Immediate threats cannot be addressed. (Other UN Conventions do allow for this, however)
- Child participation has not featured in any systematic way, but is specifically required – see the Committee's Reporting Guidelines.
- The Concluding Observations are not legally binding and therefore may be seen as “lacking teeth”
- Due to lack of in-country expertise Committee sometimes asks questions and makes suggestions that are not appropriate for certain country situations. Civil society participation can help to address this, see below page 26.
- The Committee is dependent entirely upon external information, including disaggregated data, which are often not available. It has no mandate to conduct fact-finding missions.
- The Concluding Observations are often seen as being rather vague, using phrases such as “make every effort to” and “take steps to address” without specifying what those efforts or those steps might entail. Over the years, however, many recommendations have become more detailed, with specific measures or reforms being set out. *Compare older Concluding Observations and newer ones on the CD (7), e.g. Uganda 1997 vs Colombia 2006 to see this development.*

Addressing Weaknesses

As mentioned briefly above the active involvement of civil society and NGOs can help to strengthen the reporting process by addressing some of the perceived weaknesses in the system.

- The reporting process cannot address individual violations**
 Unfortunately, due to the nature of the reporting mechanism, NGOs cannot help with this gap in the powers available to the Committee. However, NGO reports can help to bring the individual experiences of children and young people to the attention of the Committee to provide a clearer picture of the real lives of children behind the statistics and laws contained in the State Report.

- Lack of child participation**
 Child participation is increasing in the reporting process and this is due to a very large extent to the work of NGOs like Save the Children. NGOs have helped children and young people not only to participate in the supplementary/ alternative report, but also to meet with Committee members in Geneva and at home, to take the issues directly to Government, hold awareness raising events etc. Some examples are provided in the case studies in this paper. There are, however, also examples of Governments striving to include children's perspectives. For example, the UK government has developed a website to gather and include children's views in its 2007 report.



Jenny Matthews/Network Photographers

Young people in Um Nasser village, occupied Palestinian territory, involved in work relating to Rights of the Child awareness.

- Reliance on external information**
 The Committee cannot conduct fact-finding missions, but information from NGOs in alternative reports and at the Pre-Session helps to fill the gaps in State Reports and clarifies incorrect or misleading information. (See further below pp 31 to 33)
- Contextually inappropriate questions and recommendations**
 The Committee cannot be experts in every country situation and members need input from NGOs and civil society to ensure that their recommendations are contextually relevant. As Lucy Smith, Committee Member from Norway states "*The Committee tries of course not to ask questions or make suggestions that are not appropriate for certain countries. The Pre-Session and the written information we get should help us to avoid this*"
- Concluding Observations "lacking teeth"** (being non-legally binding)
 Advocacy and campaigning by NGOs in follow-up to the reporting process, wide dissemination of the Concluding Observations and the mobilisation of civil society behind them, can help to add political and moral weight to the Committee's recommendations

Specific Objectives and Activities Involved in Child Rights Monitoring and Reporting

In Part II we looked at the theory surrounding the importance and benefits of the reporting process. This section addresses some of the specific, achievable objectives that may be aimed towards and the key activities that may be undertaken to reach those objectives. The list below is, of course, not exhaustive and these activities are certainly not compulsory. This section is intended to reflect the breadth and quality of the work that can be involved in UNCRC reporting and to provide some practical suggestions. Later sections will provide specific tips and suggestions for the various individual stages of the process.

Objective: Supporting the creation/strengthening of an effective civil society coalition or network for child rights

Activities

- Supporting baseline surveys on awareness of child rights, the reporting process etc.
- Workshops on child rights, participation, child rights programming and UNCRC reporting with relevant actors and stakeholders
- Produce UNCRC information packs
- Translate and disseminate relevant documents
- Develop shared child rights strategy with key civil society actors
- Capacity building on advocacy and research (including child-led research)
- Child rights awareness activities (across all objectives!)
- Commission and undertake research in priority areas
- Develop research strategy with key actors
- Compile comprehensive child rights situational analysis
- Produce alternative report

Indicators of success

- Active coalition of civil society actors – meets regularly and continues beyond the immediate reporting cycle
- Production of an alternative report based on shared information and an accurate analysis of child rights
- Committee's Concluding Observations include NGOs and children's concerns
- Increased awareness among the public and civil society of child rights, the reporting process and the Government's obligations

Objective: Increasing the role of children as advocates for change and reform

Activities

- Training for civil society and government actors on child participation
- Workshops to develop strategies for promoting child participation in the monitoring and reporting process
- Support the development of children's groups and support creation of new groups and networks of children and children's groups
- Support Children's workshops and focus groups on child rights, the UNCRC etc.
- Production of cutting edge, locally appropriate and relevant child friendly materials about the reporting process
- Facilitate and support child-led research

- Support and provide space for children to interact with the monitoring process, for example to provide forums to facilitate interaction between adult civil society and children's groups
- Involve children directly in UNCRC reporting including meeting Committee members if appropriate and if possible

Indicators of success

- Action plans for the promotion of child participation produced
- Increased children's groups and networks
- Children's views and experiences taken into account (through child led research, consultations etc.) in the governments report, supplementary/alternative reports and the Committee's Concluding Observations

Objective: Increasing engagement between Government and civil society in monitoring, reporting and implementing national commitments in accordance with its UNCRC obligations

Activities

- Advocacy and lobbying (and throughout the process)
- Workshops on child rights, participation etc. with government actors
- International and national study visits re civil society participation
- Activities to engage with government departments and ministries responsible for UNCRC reporting and implementation – eg co-operative forums analysing the Committee's recommendations
- Bringing Government and civil society together to make plans for implementation of the UNCRC and the Committee's Concluding Observations

Indicators of Success

- Co-operation between government and civil society on implementation of the UNCRC
- Government engages constructively with civil society in reporting to the Committee and in monitoring and implementation (of the UNCRC and the Committee's Concluding Observations)

Objective: Improving the quality of child rights monitoring and reporting and enabling replication

Activities

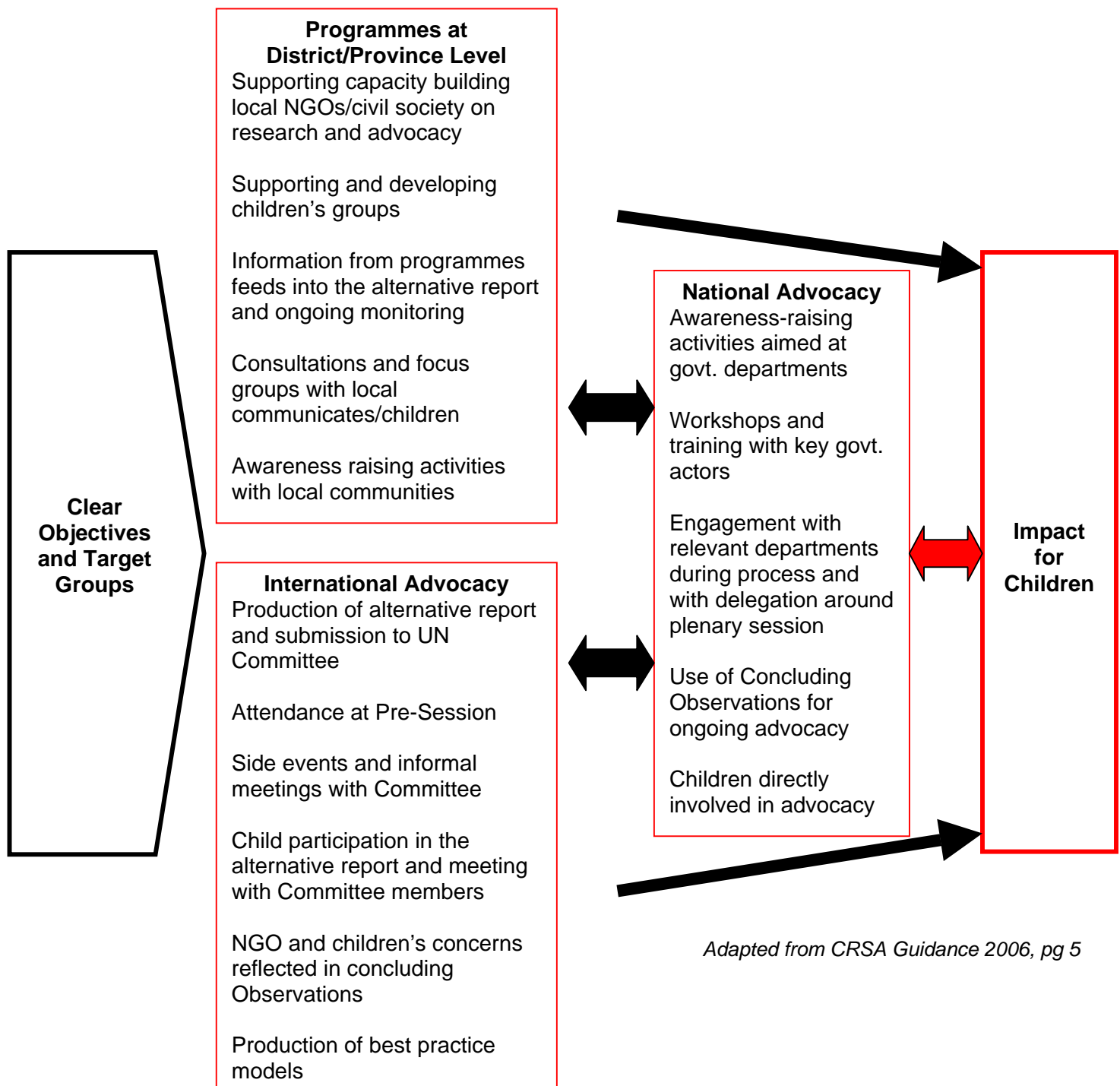
- Develop baselines and child rights indicators
- Undertake and publish appropriate research
- Stage regional conferences as opportunities for learning and advocacy
- Conduct mid-term and final evaluations and disseminate reports
- Publish case studies/best practice models and disseminate
- Ongoing dialogue with the Committee on the Rights of the Child, NGO Group for the Convention on the Rights of the Child, child rights academic institutions, donors etc.

Indicators of Success

- Clear recommendations based on project experiences communicated internally, to civil society, Governments and the Committee on the Rights of the Child
- Baselines and child rights indicators developed to monitor progress
- Donors and other stakeholders see the UNCRC reporting process as an important opportunity to promote human rights

UNCRC Reporting and the “Model for Impact”

In delivering on its organisational strategy Save the Children UK seeks to make a contribution to the achievement of child rights through the *Model for Impact*, which has been adapted below to show where some of the main activities surrounding UNCRC reporting, highlighted above, fit in.



The State Report

It is important for NGOs to remain independent in the reporting process. However, it is possible to take part in the compilation of the State Report while remaining independent. For example, through supporting consultations with children and communities, providing data, attending preliminary discussions and maintaining contact with key ministries/departments throughout. The ultimate aim is for an open and transparent reporting process. It is for each individual programme to decide on the balance necessary to achieve this.

A number of activities may take place at this stage:

Desk Research

- Check the UN Treaty Body Database to see when the State Report is due
- Find out which department is responsible for compiling the state report
- Track progress in compiling the report – this allows for adequate preparation for the NGO report and engagement at the Pre-Session
- Look at the State Report and Concluding Observations from the last reporting round (if any) to assess progress

Advocacy & Awareness Raising

- Encourage timely submission of the report – put the report on the radar of the government well before the due date
- Encourage adherence to the Committee’s reporting guidelines
- Meet with the relevant department to discuss the key issues – make recommendations/raise concerns ie open up the dialogue!
- Advocate for an open and consultative process – encourage child participation through workshops and forums with government actors
- Encourage the publicising of the reporting process by the Government
- Raise awareness among civil society – promote “ownership” of the process
- Involve the media (*see further below, page 43*)

Supporting the Government Report (*where appropriate*)

- Facilitate child and community consultations - If the Government is not in a position to include children and communities, or lacks the relevant expertise, assist them. If facilitating consultations, ensure that it is understood that it is a Government initiative with Save the Children’s support.
- Provide statistics and data that the Government may not have - A comprehensive, open and honest Government report is the most important element of the process. Providing information does not affect the independence of the organisation/coalition

Don’t write the State Report!

It is the state’s obligation. The state is guided to consult with civil society and NGOs may have a role to play, but they must retain their independence in order to engage effectively in the rest of the process.



- **The reporting status of each state may be accessed at the UN Treaty Body Database** <http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf> (click “reporting status” in the left hand menu, then click on the CRC and select the relevant country from the list)
- **Sample State Reports are on the CD (7)**
- **The Committee’s website also contains information about upcoming Sessions and which State Reports will be considered** <http://www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/sessions.htm>

The NGO Supplementary/Alternative Report

Format and Submission

- If possible, the NGO report should be no more than 30 pages in length
- Include an executive summary in bullet point format
- The report should follow the same thematic structure as the state report (*see above, page 10*)
- It should be in one of the three working languages – English, French or Spanish
- 25 copies should be submitted (one for each member and for the secretariat) as well as an electronic copy at least 3 months prior to the Pre-Session to ensure it is taken into account
- In a covering letter, State if you wish the Committee to keep any information or sources confidential and indicate if you wish to attend the Pre-Session
- Reports may be submitted directly to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights or to the NGO Group for the Convention on the Rights of the Child who will ensure it reaches the Committee

There are two main elements to the NGO supplementary/alternative report: an independent analysis of the child rights situation in the country and a section-by-section analysis of the State Report. These should not be separate sections of the report, but both elements should be covered under the different thematic headings.

1. Comprehensive analysis of the implementation of the CRC in the country

This should include:

- Children's views and suggestions – representative of the diverse range of backgrounds in the country
- An analysis of law and policy relating to child rights
- An analysis of the practical implementation of legislation
- An investigation of budget allocation
- A review of relevant research, reports, judicial decisions etc
- Relevant statistics/disaggregated data
- Areas of concern & NGO recommendations

Research & Analysis

- Conduct comprehensive child rights situational analysis in conjunction with coalition partners
- Analyse and disseminate findings – share information with coalition partners
- Conduct a mapping exercise to identify duty bearers and decision makers *See also Advocacy Toolkit pp 28-31 on CD (10)*

Consultations with children and local communities

- Conduct baseline surveys, focus groups, workshops etc. in conjunction with coalition partners – analyse and share finding
- Work with children and young people as researchers to assess progress since last reporting, UN Special Session on Children etc.

Advocacy & Awareness Raising

- Raise awareness of the consultations among civil society partners and relevant government departments
- Hold events with children to publicise the process and raise important issues (*see for example case studies 1 & 2*)
- Disseminate the results of the consultations, surveys and focus groups

Other Tips & Suggestions

- Share the workload among coalition partners
- Adopt a rights-based approach. Connect issues to relevant UNCRC articles
- Refer to other relevant human rights standards, if appropriate, such as ILO Convention 182 on the worst forms of child labour. The Committee will encourage adherence to or ratification of these instruments. *See Annex I to General Comment No. 5 on the CD(4)*
- Address issues not previously dealt with in previous sessions with the State - the Committee is interested in the most up to date information
- Refer to as wide a range of sources as possible – legislation, statistics, NGO, UNICEF and Government reports, consultations with children etc.
- Supplement the report with previous specific studies the NGO has undertaken – these may also be submitted to the Committee.
- Don't wait for the state report. Begin the preparation for and compilation of the NGO report in plenty of time for the due date of the state report.
- Be concise, relevant and objective in the information provided.
- Liaise with the Children's Ombudsman/Commissioner or the National Human Rights Institution if there is one

2. Section-by-section analysis of the State Party report

Once the State Report has been produced it should be made available by the government. If not, a copy may be obtained from the CRC secretariat in Geneva (*contact details below, page 52*). The report should be used to fill in the gaps in the State Report and to clarify misleading material or any errors.

Research & Analysis

- Analyse the State report for gaps, errors or misleading information
- Compare to the child rights situational analysis undertaken by Save the Children/local NGOs etc
- Compare to the earlier State Report and Concluding Observations (if any) to track trends between reports

Other Tips & Suggestions

- Read the Committee's reporting guidelines. In order to fully assess the state report it is important to know what the Committee is asking for.
- Don't finalise the NGO report until the state report has been assessed
- Avoid personal opinions and insulting or overly political language.
- Point to legislation, statistics and other factual information to supplement, support or contradict the state's comments
- Refer to other commitments made by the government, eg, the Millennium Development Goals, "A World Fit for Children" etc.
- Build on your experience over time. Incorporate the Concluding Observations into annual reviews and impact assessments – this information will be extremely valuable in feeding into future reports.
- The State Report should be a broad and consultative process - provide the Committee with an overview of how the state report was prepared:
 - Did the Government consult with NGOs in the preparation of the report?
 - Did children participate in the preparation of the report?
 - If so, is the report reflective of their concerns and those of NGOs?
 - Was the report made widely available in the country?

Make compiling the report as inclusive, dramatic and fun as possible

The activities during and around the report's production are as important as the report itself - Hold events at key stages in the process. Take advantage of the opportunity to promote ownership of the process among civil society stakeholders. Involve children throughout!



Children and Young People's Submissions to the Committee

Between 1998 and 2004 around 16 reports representing statements directly from children and young people were submitted to the Committee on the Rights of the Child. Prior to this, reporting of children's views to the Committee was more indirect, with their comments "filtered" through adults' perspectives or not represented at all.

Broadly, the reports fit into 3 categories:

- The results of surveys carried out with children and young people
- Children's direct and unedited comments with NGO commentary
- Reports compiled and edited by young people

Dr. Wiebina Heesterman has conducted an analysis of the impact of children and young people's views and recommendations on the Concluding Observations of the Committee. Her analysis shows that whilst some of the children's concerns have been directly influential, others have been missed entirely.

"The Committee recognises the importance of child participation...and encourages children and youth representatives to submit information in the context of periodic reviews..."

Committee on the Rights of the Child

For example, all of the young people's reports stressed the importance of the right to play, but "play" was never dealt with by the Committee beyond references to the therapeutic elements of "recreation".

On the other hand, young people from the UK requested information to support gay and transgender young people, which was not raised by the State Report or other NGO reports, but taken on board by the Committee in its recommendations.

The Committee, therefore, has not always been consistent in taking children and young people's views and recommendations into account. There is clearly room for improvement. Children's views are essential to the reporting process and judging by children's submissions to date, they also display a high level of competence. NGOs have an important role to play in ensuring that children's views continue to be brought to the Committee's attention and given their due weight. SCUK is well placed to lead in this work.

"An Assessment of the Impact of Youth Submissions to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child" by Dr. Heesterman is available on the CD (7)

Samples of the three types of children and young people's submissions referred to in the report are also on the CD (7)

- **Previous NGO Alternative reports may be found on the CRIN website at <http://www.crin.org/docs/resources/treaties/crc.25/annex-vi-crin.asp>**
 - Sample alternative reports are on the CD (7)
- **For more information on consultations with children, see "So You Want to Consult With Children: A Toolkit of Good Practice" Save the Children Alliance 2003. See in particular pp 23-39. On the CD (2) and online at www.savethechildren.net/alliance/resources/childconsult_toolkit_final.pdf**
- **For further information on the content of certain rights the following resources may be of use:**
 - General Comments of the Committee - on the CD (4) and online at <http://www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/comments.htm>
 - General Comments from the other UN Treaty Bodies <http://www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/treaty/comments.htm>
 - Reports from the various thematic Special Rapporteurs <http://www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/chr/special/themes.htm>

The Pre-Sessional Working Group

What to expect

The Pre-Sessional meeting takes place over a half-day session (3 hours) and begins with opening statements from the NGOs, followed by IGOs and National Independent Human Rights Institutions. Delegates should signal to the Chair that they wish to speak and will then be invited to take the floor. This opening statement should be no longer than 10 minutes and should highlight the main issues facing children and any new information that has arisen since the NGO report was submitted. It should not summarise the NGO report or explain the work of the NGO (Information on the NGO may be submitted in writing separately, however). It is advisable to submit a transcript of your presentation in advance.

Following the opening statements the Committee asks its questions. It tends to ask 20-30 at a time, rather than one by one. NGOs and other participants then have the opportunity to respond following a short break. The Committee prefers answers by theme (again, the same 8 clusters as in the state report) and by the person with the most expertise in that area. Again, answers to questions should be concise and kept under 10 minutes. If more information is required the Committee will ask follow up questions.

Preparation

- Select the NGO/NGOC delegation - The NGO Group for the CRC recommends that, in order to answer the broad questions asked by the Committee, an NGO/NGOC delegation should ideally comprise, at least, a lawyer, a specialist in one of the key areas of concern and someone with a comprehensive understanding of the implementation of the UNCRC in the country
- Identify issues and questions to be raised with the Government at the Plenary Session
- Ensure the children's delegation, if any, is fully briefed and involved in preparations - contact the child participation adviser for assistance
- Arrange a private meeting with Committee Members – the Committee prefers this and children have reported that such meetings were the most beneficial part for them. (*See Child Participation below*)
- Attend an earlier pre-session before your own to see how the system works

Before the Pre-Session

- Meet with government officials to discuss the issues you intend to raise. ie keep up the dialogue!
- Involve children in the build-up. Children from Lesotho, for example, took the issues straight to Parliament (*See Case Study 1, page 22*)
- Use the media, eg, radio broadcasts, to publicise the session and the NGO alternative report Contact the NGO Group for advice on attending the pre-session

At the Pre-Session

- Bring copies of any research, statistics etc. referred to in your presentation
- Speak clearly and slowly to allow the interpreters to translate
- Allocate responses to Committee questions by theme and to those delegation members with the most expertise in those areas
- Choose key issues to discuss – be concise and objective

After the Pre-Session

- Contribute to the Written Replies or submit further information separately
- Provide feedback to the Committee – they are always interested in ways to improve their working methods
- Hold a debriefing for children – some children have been unsure or unconvinced about the benefit of their involvement in the process or their meeting with Committee members. It is essential to explain what happens next.
- Raise awareness of the upcoming Plenary Session – if possible, make arrangements to attend

Make recommendations

The Committee specifically encourages recommendations from NGOs with the relevant in-country expertise. It is an opportunity to influence the Concluding Observations of the Committee. See for example the Norway NGO Group report 1994 CD(7)



Show how NGOs can help to address the issues raised

The Committee often advises the Government to seek help from NGOs. Informing them of how the NGO can help may be beneficial for advocacy/programmatic work going forward



Palais Des Nations, Geneva

UNECE

Child Participation at the Pre-Session Stage

The Pre-Session meeting itself is a formal process and may not be the best point of engagement for children. Children from Lesotho, for example, who attended with Save the Children, complained that the Committee asked too many questions in too short a time and used jargon they could not understand. Children can and have, however, participated in this session, but events around the pre-session might provide better forums for child participation.

- Contact the Child Participation Advisor at the London office for advice
- As always, ensure robust child protection systems are in place – the pre-session involves taking children away from their home environment
- Obtain the necessary consents from children and parents/carers

- Ensure that the children are well briefed, that they understand the issues and the aims and outcomes reporting process
- Consider the age/capabilities of the children on your delegation. Younger children, for example, have been known to fall asleep a the pre-session!
- Manage expectations – some children have been unsure or unconvinced of the benefit of their involvement in the process. Make sure the process is properly understood and that the children and young people know this is the beginning of lots of advocacy work afterwards!
- Ensure that children’s own views are presented, not simply NGO concerns coming from children’s mouths
- Include children who have taken part in the preparation of the NGO report
- The children’s delegation should be representative of the broad range of children in the country
- Include children in the election of the child delegation – For example, in 2007, Child Rights Alliance England (CRAE) is running a “Get Ready for Geneva” competition to decide which children go
- Ensure adequate translation is available, including into child friendly language
- Brief the Committee on avoiding jargon, acronyms and overly complicated language

Try to arrange a private meeting with Committee members in Geneva

“We prefer to have separate meetings with the children, where we sit among them and have a very informal session. Usually we have to do this during the lunch break. It is also possible to have the meeting with the children at 9 am. Time is short during the pre-session dialogue - only 3 hours per country, often several people reporting - and there will not really be time to make the pre-sessional meeting very child friendly. In the last pre-session we had a meeting with children from Kenya that was very useful” - Lucy Smith, Committee Member for Norway

Following the UK’s last report, children and young people from England said that their separate meeting with Committee Members was the most rewarding part of the experience.

Arrange for the Committee’s Country Rapporteur to meet children and young people in their own environment prior to the Pre-Session

Lucy Smith was the Rapporteur for Ireland in 2006. She explains *“I was invited to Ireland by the Children’s Ombudsman before the pre-session together with another member of the Committee. The Ombudsman arranged meetings with different groups of children, and this was very useful, as was the whole visit. We also had meetings with NGOs, UNICEF and other organisations. As long as it is not the Government that invites, the Committee is very positive to such visits, but we get no funding for this from the UN, so it will have to be an invitation from the Ombudsman, UNICEF or NGOs.”*

- **In September 2006 Save the Children UK facilitated 30 children and young people from all over the world to participate in the Committee’s Day of General Discussion on the right to be heard held in Geneva.**
Preparatory materials for this event, guidance for accompanying adults, child protection guidance, and various checklists and consent form are all on the CD(2)
- **For tips on child delegations and creating an enabling environment, see “So You Want to Consult With Children” pp 47-63. CD (2)**
- **For some experiences of children in the reporting process see “A Tool for Change” pp 38 and 39, CD (10).** people at this event

The Plenary Session

The Plenary Session is also structured following the 8 clusters of rights. This forms the agenda for the discussion between the State delegation and the Committee. NGOs may attend the Plenary Session but are not allowed to speak. There are, however, other ways to participate and influence the process. Once the Concluding Observations have been issued, follow up advocacy and monitoring begins.

Advocacy and Awareness Raising

- Promote attendance by the Government – in the past some Plenary Sessions have been poorly attended by Government delegations
- Try to influence the make up of the delegation. Representatives with the relevant experience and knowledge should be included as well as senior officials with the authority to speak for the Government
- Meet with the delegation to discuss the issues and your recommendations
- Include children in the build-up – arrange a meeting between the children’s delegation and the Government delegation
- Meet with the Committee members informally between the Pre-Session and Plenary Session
- Publicise the Plenary Session – hold events at home such as a children’s Plenary Session, issue press releases, make the state report and the NGO report widely available etc.
- Publicise the Concluding Observations when they are issued

Research & Analysis

- Ensure that the Committee has all the up to date information prior to the session – provide written updates if necessary

Follow-Up Strategy and planning

- Hold a coalition meeting to discuss the Plenary Session and the Concluding Observations
- Undertake an evaluation of the project so far – have children engaged effectively, has civil society’s capacity been built upon to advocate for change, have NGO concerns been included in the Concluding Observations?
- Provide feedback to the children that were involved – were their recommendations/views reflected in the Concluding Observations?
- Work with children and young people to help develop of plans of action
- Begin implementation of monitoring procedures and advocacy strategy

If possible, attend the Plenary Session!

Although NGOs may not speak at this session, it is important to attend for a number of reasons:



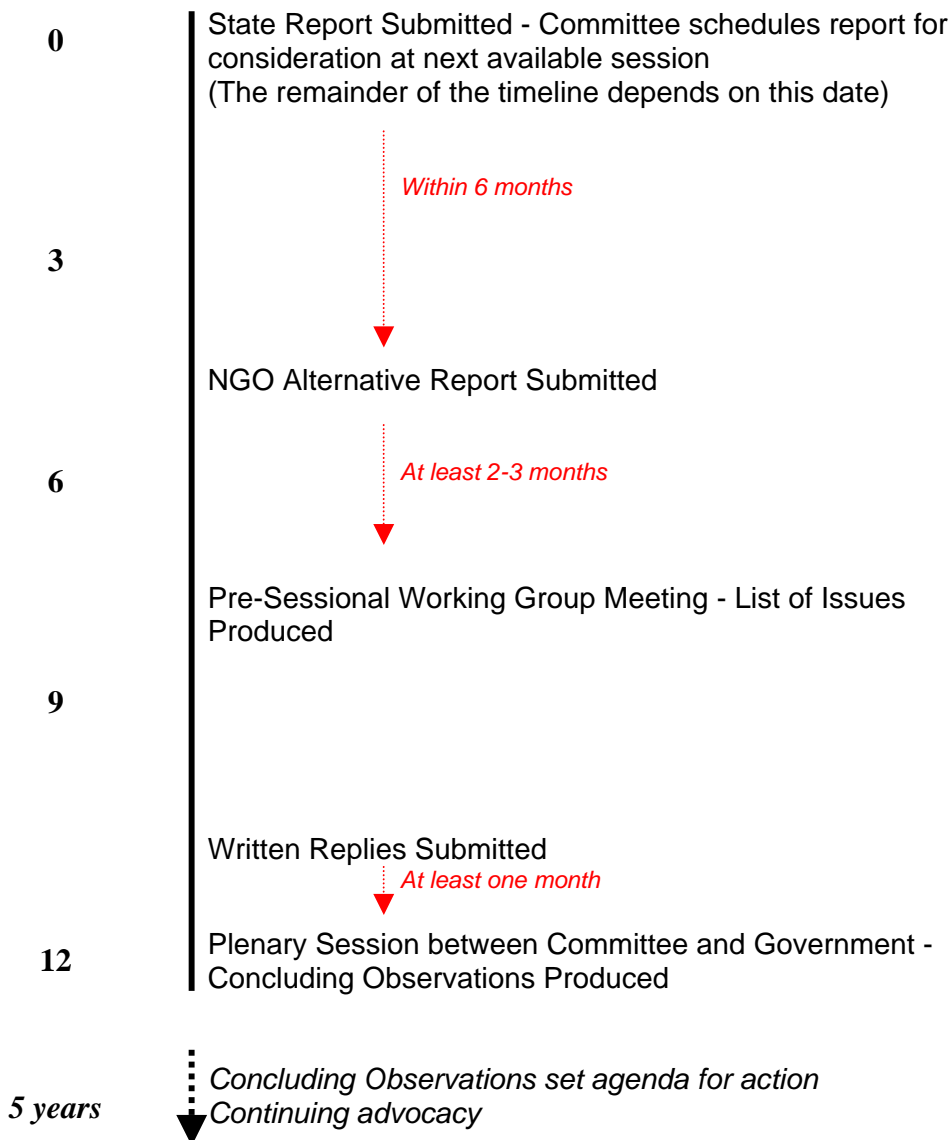
- It maintains the NGO/NGOC presence through the entire process, showing the Government that they are committed and monitoring events – it is an excellent opportunity for lobbying
- The Summary Records do not cover everything that is said at the session. It is therefore important to attend to gain a full picture of the dialogue between the Committee and the Government

- **Summary Records of Plenary Sessions are available on the UN Treaty Body Database, online at <http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf> (Click on the CRC, from the drop-down list click “Summary Record” and choose the relevant country)**
- **Unofficial summaries are available through the NGO Group for the Convention on the Rights of the Child <http://www.crin.org/resources/infoDetail.asp?ID=7599andflag=report>**
- **Documents on child rights indicators (as opposed to well-being indicators) are on the CD (6)**

Sample Timeline of the Reporting Process

The timeline of reporting process varies. In the past it has taken up to 2 years from state report to Concluding Observations, but recently turnover has been very fast leaving little time for NGOs to prepare. It depends on submission of the State Report, the date of the Committee Session, and also, crucially, on the workload of the Committee. Ideally, the Committee would like a one-year turnover.

Months



- | **Keep track of progress in the compilation of the State Report.** Will the report be on time? Find out when the State expects the report to be submitted. !
 - | **Anticipate the pre-session date.** eg, if the State Report is submitted in August, pre-session will not likely take place in September/October, but it may be in January.
 - | **Contact the NGO Group for the Committee on the Rights of the Child** to find out the current rate of turnover and for advice on when the pre-session might take place
 - | **Be prepared for an early pre-session.** Have the alternative report and any oral submissions drafted, awaiting only the analysis of the State Report.
 - | **Start preparations early for work with children and young people** in genuine and respectful ways to support their participation.

Case Study 2: England

John Errington, Programme Director for England, describes his experience of involving children and young people in the reporting process in England

“

In England we pushed from a very early stage to get government to engage with children and young people, but the report did not seem to be a priority. It took a year to get their agreement and funding to carry out the consultation to ensure that children's views were included.

We went into partnership with CRAE (Children's Rights Alliance England) to complete the work. Save the Children did the fieldwork involving 50 groups, which included 500 children and young people. The majority were in community projects etc. to gain excluded groups' views and the rest were a cross section of schools. We provided three sessions to each group where possible. The first was on children's rights and the UNCRC. The second was a focus group with a very open agenda to pick up their issues and concerns, and the third was a feedback session where they saw the report and were told what would happen next. This process worked well. Many of the groups were quite inspired after the first session and started, for example, to do their own consultations with peers to get more ideas for the focus groups. When all the reports came in they were analysed by our lead worker along with CRAE who we asked to provide an independent element in the process. This proved to be very useful to ensure objectivity, as we would have been vulnerable to claims that we were just pushing our agency agenda otherwise.

We identified the main issues from the consultation as listening to children, lowering the voting age, tackling racism and discrimination, promoting the UNCRC, conditions in children's homes, rethinking benefits for young people, protection for refugees, teacher training and selection, violence against children, promotion of healthy lifestyles, and community safety and bullying. 50 children from the groups were invited to a seminar in Westminster where they worked on these issues in much more depth, made recommendations and were addressed by the Speaker and an Education Minister.

Framing the final recommendations was difficult and we again relied on CRAE to formulate that section and check the quality of the evidence. It was finally presented to John Hutton MP by a group of children and young people. He looked terrified but responded well to their issues.

Due to the Committee's backlog at the time, two reports were submitted by the Government, the second being an update. The children and young people's consultation was not mentioned in either. In the end we sent the consultation report to the Committee directly. In the lead up to the Geneva hearing we invited the Chair of the Committee to visit London to meet a children's group. This was really successful. He was met at the airport by two very young children who took him to their home area in London, walked around with him illustrating their views by showing him the conditions and asking him to take pictures with a camera they gave him. In the afternoon he went to a conference centre where children from a wide range of backgrounds ran a mock trial of Tony Blair to highlight violations of children's rights. The only adults present were called as witnesses by the children who ran the whole event with considerable humour!

The Chair of the Committee was very impressed and reserved private time for the children at the subsequent NGO session in Geneva with the Committee. He said that this had been the first such event in the world and that he would like to see it followed in other countries. It was evident that some of the Concluding Observations were based on input from this session.

We also took a group of children and young people to Geneva and helped them to present their evidence. This was a positive experience too although very rushed.

”

Child Participation

Child participation is a core element of Save the Children's involvement in the reporting process. Participation can mean a range of things: to take part, to be involved in, to influence, to contribute, to share. However, for the purpose of this document child participation is defined as the child's fundamental right to influence processes, decisions and matters affecting his or her life. Child participation is not only a matter of moral obligation but is also a legal right and a General Principle of the UNCRC.

What is the value of child participation in advocacy initiatives?

- Children have the right to be heard and to have their views taken into account
- It improves the relevance and appropriateness of public and organisational decision-making on children's issues by ensuring that those with the direct experience of a situation are able to have their voices heard
- It brings particular benefits to the poorest and most marginalised groups of children who, even more than most children, have often been excluded from the social, cultural, political and economic life of their communities and societies
- It acknowledges children as rights holders and protagonists in the protection and promotion of those rights
- It is a means by which children can be included in their society as active and responsible citizens
- It increases the visibility of children's issues and helps to improve the accountability of adult institutions for what happens to children
- It allows children a platform to advocate for change

Save the Children Practice Standards

When planning and supporting children and young people's participation in advocacy the 7 basic Save the Children practice standards for participation should be considered:

An ethical approach: transparency, honesty and accountability

Adult organisations and workers are committed to ethical participatory practice and to the primacy of children's best interests.

Children's participation is relevant and voluntary

Children participate in processes and address issues that affect them – either directly or indirectly – and have the choice as to whether to participate or not.

A child friendly, enabling environment

Children experience a safe, welcoming and encouraging environment for their participation.

Equality of opportunity

Child participation work challenges and does not reinforce existing patterns of discrimination and exclusion. It encourages those groups of children who typically suffer discrimination and who are often excluded from activities to be involved in participatory processes.

Staff are effective and confident

Adult staff and managers involved in supporting/ facilitating children's participation are trained and supported to do their jobs to a high standard.

Participation promotes the safety and protection of children

Child protection policies and procedures form an essential part of participatory work with children.

Ensuring follow-up and evaluation

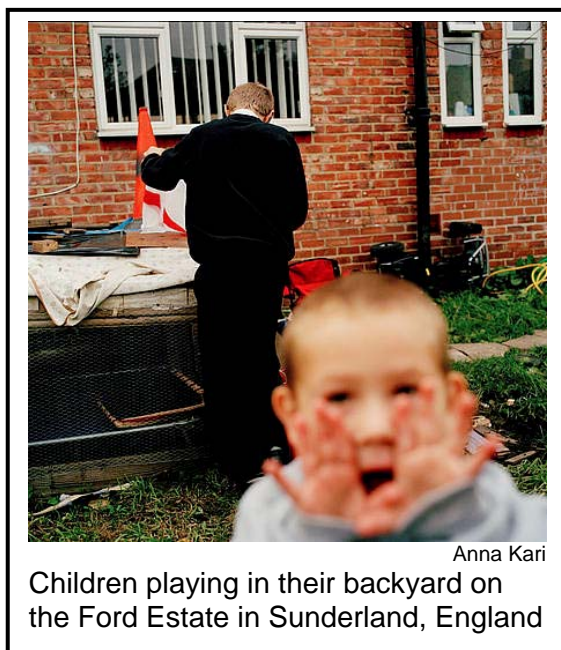
Respect for children's involvement is indicated by a commitment to provide feedback and/ or follow-up and to evaluate the quality and impact of children's participation.

When involving children and young people in advocacy initiatives don't...

- Involve the children and young people as tokens
- Speak on behalf of the children and young people without their consent
- Try and change or influence their contributions

When involving children and young people in advocacy initiatives do...

- Get a commitment by everyone involved – children and adults – to respect each others' views and to work together for a positive outcome
- Recognise the stage of development and maturity of the children involved and use of methods and approaches that respect and build upon that recognition
- Be sensitive and responsive to the context in which children live
- Be able to provide meeting places and facilitate activities and events aimed at encouraging children's involvement
- Know when and how to intervene to support the process while at the same time encouraging children's growth and development
- Allow the necessary time for children to work together and come up with their own opinions
- Advise children of the reasons for participation and the possible consequences of different alternatives, thereby offering them the possibility not to participate (which is as important as the right to take part)
- Ensure access to relevant information prepared in a child-friendly way



- **Be prepared to listen to children's priorities**
- **Be clear about what you are trying to achieve**
- **Be clear about the boundaries of the proposed initiative**
- **Do the necessary research**
- **Be willing to consult with children on methods of involving them**
- **Remember that children are not a homogenous group**
- **Be prepared to make the necessary time and resources available**
- **Remember the importance of working with adults as well as children**
- **Be prepared to be challenged**

“The Committee remains committed to exploring means of furthering participation...in particular it encourages more participation of children during Pre-Session country briefings”

Committee on the Rights of the Child

Resources on child participation are included on the CD(2) - The folder is divided into two sections:

- **Guidance and Tools** – contains toolkits, SCUK guidance, practice standards and important checklists, forms etc.
- **Learning** - contains reports, articles and case studies

Advocacy

Advocacy is a key NGO contribution throughout the reporting process. It is vital that a clear advocacy strategy is implemented which incorporates this process. That means being clear about **what** policies and actions need to be changed; **who** is in a position to make the changes; and **how** to influence those decision makers.

What changes are we advocating for?

- Identify key issues and desired changes through CRSA and TPP development
 - What rights are not realised?
 - Why are these rights not realised?
 - Who is the primary duty bearer?
 - What obstacles are there?
 - What measures can address the violation?
 - How can we ensure the meaningful participation of children?
- Select specific policy measures that lend themselves to advocacy rather than programming approaches
- Connect issues to UNCRC articles (eg discrimination – art. 2, education – art. 28)
- Check to ensure the State has not entered a reservation on the relevant articles!
- Is there sufficient movement for change? ie is policy change on the relevant issue a realistic goal?
- Consider long term and short term goals
 - A long term goal is a realisable vision
 - A short term goal is a concrete step towards that vision
- Ensure advocacy objectives are **S.M.A.R.T.** - Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound.
- Ensure objectives are change-oriented – ie directed towards a desired change for children to address a violation of their rights
- Consider the following questions when setting goals and objectives:
 - *What am I trying to achieve?*
 - *What is stopping me?*
 - *What am I going to do about it?*

Who can make the changes?

Targets

- Be as specific as possible – identify individuals and departments rather than ministries
- Research decision-making processes and duty bearers
- Think where the real power lies. Identify those with responsibility for the relevant issues and individuals with the power to make policy changes – refer to any mapping done during the preparation of the Alternative Report (*See also SCUK Advocacy Toolkit, pp 33 & 34*)
- Identify those who may influence decision makers such as politicians, teachers unions, parents etc.
- Remember to keep this information up to date as people, departments and responsibilities change!

Allies

- Who has the will or the power to assist in advocating for change? Think beyond those you already or usually work with
- Would advocating together as a coalition achieve better results or should the issues be divided among coalition members according to areas of expertise?
- Involve children in advocating for their own rights! At the planning stage, work with children and young people to consider how and when children might be involved.

How can we influence those in power?

Focus on key issues throughout the entire reporting process

The reporting process is *the* opportunity for leveraging change open to civil society and Government. It involves national and international advocacy, awareness raising on a local and national level, capacity building, coalition building and child participation. All of these factors lend significant weight to Save the Children's advocacy for significant changes for children.

Involve the media (It is relatively cost free but can be very effective!)

- Ensure that your media strategy is well planned
- Mobilise and work together with children's media initiatives
- Identify which media outlets will reach target audiences
- Prepare a contact list of journalists
- Have expert speakers ready on key issues
- Prepare messages for public dissemination
- When preparing press releases, remember that it must be "news" – What reason does the publication have to cover the issue?
- Include punchy quotes and avoid using jargon
- Be creative! Consider new and attention grabbing ways to get the message across. For example:
 - Invite journalists to events involving children, such as the mock trial of Tony Blair held by the England Programme and CRAE (*Case study 2*)
 - Collect quotes from children based on their experiences
 - Write an open letter to the Government

"...the media...are highly important in the efforts to make reality the principles and standards of the Convention...the media could also play a pivotal role in monitoring the actual implementation of the rights of the child"

Committee on the Rights of the Child

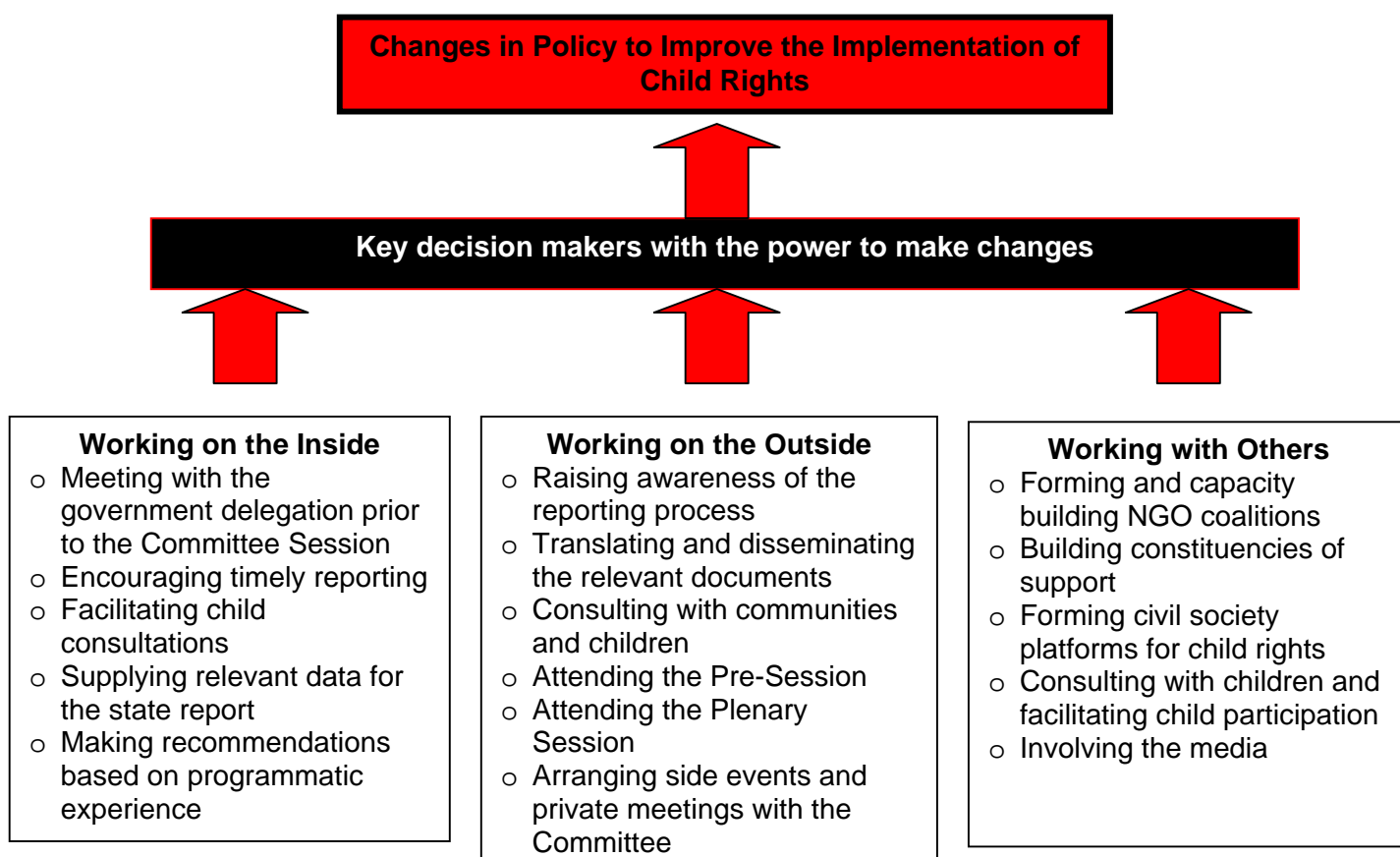
Other Tips and Suggestions

- Plan the advocacy strategy well in advance. Following on from the England case study above (page 39), John Errington said *"With hindsight we should have reserved capacity for the advocacy following the arrival of the Concluding Observations. The parliamentary debate was very superficial as the government wanted to bury the criticism. We should have had an action plan ready to press our advocacy calls"*
- Lobby decision makers (*For tips see Advocacy Toolkit pp. 58-60*)
- Conduct public campaigns based on key issues (*Advocacy Toolkit pp 61 & 62*)
- Be ready to respond to the Concluding Observations
- Use the Concluding Observations to identify advocacy goals – look for the main recommendations regarding the four thematic objective areas and the supporting strategies
- Carry out risk assessments – what may be done to minimise risk?
- Be proactive – identify advocacy opportunities such as elections, parliamentary debates, the release of key studies, key dates such as Human rights Day, World Aids Day or World Child Labour Day etc.
- Establish clear, simple messages – ensure they are accessible to all audiences including children (*Advocacy Toolkit p. 47*)
- Widely disseminate the State Report, the Alternative Report and the Concluding Observations – Highlight key areas of concern
- Translate the documents into local languages and child friendly language – ask children to help, for example, by highlighting areas they do not understand.
- Ensure you have the relevant facts and expertise and share information with coalition members
- Support children's own advocacy initiatives

Identify levers, opportunities and relationships throughout the reporting process

- Assisting with the State Report helps to build relationships with governmental departments
- Compiling the alternative report can help map out the relevant departments, ministries, duty bearers and decision makers
- Opening channels of communication with the Government in the run up to the Pre-Session, meeting with the Government delegation prior to the Committee session, arranging events with children etc. are all beneficial to future advocacy on specific issues
- UNICEF and other agencies are also involved in the reporting process - it is an opportunity also to lobby them

Advocacy opportunities in the reporting process



Adapted from Save the Children Advocacy Toolkit 2007 pg 54

- This section is largely based the Advocacy Toolkit developed by Louisa Gosling, Julia Sherwood, Constanza De Toma (January 2007). It is a detailed resource and extremely useful in preparing an advocacy strategy. A copy is on the CD (10)

Coalition Working

The SCUK coalitions strategy requires the following top line considerations to be met:

1. **There must be a compelling rationale for joining any coalition and clear objectives for involvement in a coalition in any given year**
2. **Staff should seek to demonstrate best practice in their conduct with coalitions**

This section will therefore work within this strategic framework by highlighting some of the rationale arguments for coalition working in UNCRC reporting and flagging up best practice issues to be considered.

Compelling Rationale

- **UNCRC reporting is strategically focused**
 - UNCRC reporting is a central element of the child rights supporting strategy and may be used to assess the State's performance in relation to all of SCUK's core themes at international level
- **Our objectives in the coalition are clear**
 - The objectives of the reporting process have been dealt with at length already – see also, however, “*we will achieve more than working alone*” and best practice suggestions below.
- **UNCRC reporting involves working with “preferred collaborators”, eg**
 - Child led organisations and campaigning children
 - Campaigning organisations (on children's issues)
 - Child rights organisations
 - Human rights organisations
- **We meaningfully add value and lead where it is a core issue**
 - Save the Children will often be the largest child rights organisation within the coalition, with the greatest resources and relevant experience
 - In the UK we have been the lead organisation, co-ordinating responses from England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland
 - In Ghana, Save the Children initiated the UNCRC coalition, and brought in Save the Children Sweden which financed the NGO report and provided training
 - In Lesotho, we provided secretariat support and led on child participation
 - NB – Save the Children may exert significant power, which must be sensitively handled – see further best practice below
- **UNCRC reporting encourages national platform building on child rights**
 - Save the Children can help to build the capacity of local NGOs/Civil Society, which continues to benefit children even if we withdraw
- **We will achieve more than working alone**
 - Coalitions have the potential to bring together a wide range of expertise and spheres of influence
 - Workload, resources and new working methods may be shared
 - A coalition report is more likely to be taken into account by the Committee and is more difficult for the Government to discredit
 - The delegation at the Pre-Session can represent a large number of NGOs, even if their individual members cannot attend
 - Coalitions may add increased authority and credibility in reporting and advocacy
 - Coalitions can share information from their areas of focus to improve monitoring going forward. This information feeds into future reports.

- **On the added value of Save the Children's involvement in the reporting process, see “A Tool for Change” pp. 30 – 38. CD (10)**
- **An evaluation of the NGO coalition for child rights in Lesotho, written by Kevin Byrne, is on the CD (6)**

Best Practice

In Daniela Baro's study, country programmes raised a number of key issues and challenges relating to coalitions. Some of these issues are dealt with below, with suggestions for addressing them provided beneath each heading. This list is, of course, not exhaustive, and some suggestions and issues are crosscutting.

- **Uncertainty about Save the Children's role**, for example if UNICEF or other Alliance members are already involved
 - Ensure capacity and wider organisational implications have been accounted for in advance. What is the precise role of Alliance members, UNICEF etc? How can we work together?
- **Questions of Ownership of the process**. Are certain members "in charge"?
 - Save the Children may be one of the larger and better resourced INGOs involved. It is important to avoid "taking control" as the main aim to facilitate and support active civil society engagement
 - Set up an elected co-ordinating committee
 - Observe decision-making processes
 - Ensure budgets and financial commitments are agreed – assign the role of budget monitoring and ensuring commitments are met to a committee/working group

Note: It is vital that Save the Children should be careful of its power relationships and think carefully about ownership and capacity building. Ultimately it is the state and civil society that has to engage with the changes needed. SCUK's role has to be in support of this process.

In order to avoid undermining local NGOs it is important to see the coalition less as a programme opportunity through which Save the Children could achieve change and more as an institution for child rights to collaborate with, and to offer contributions to.

With this in mind, it may sometimes be necessary to submit a separate report or to step back from the process and take a more supporting role. This will depend on the individual circumstances of each programme.

- **Inclusion and participation** of all coalition members, including children
 - Establish in advance and observe basic processes: agenda setting, note taking, decision making, use of logos/brands, fundraising agreements, communication between meetings, leadership and governance, approving public statements, membership criteria, good meeting behaviours and the frequency of meetings etc.
 - Sometimes the conditions may not exist for meaningful and ethical children's participation in a particular process and/or coalition partners are not in agreement. In some cases, if partners cannot be influenced or the process adapted, Save the Children may wish to withdraw from such coalitions or processes – saying no is sometimes a good way of showing what we mean by ethical and meaningful child participation.

- **Real representation of civil society**
 - Ensure a broad range of organisations, community groups and children are involved
 - Respect the diversity of views and ensure that all voices are heard – as a large, well resourced INGO, it is sometimes important that Save the Children is not seen as over-dominant or controlling.
- **Addressing internal competition/tensions between interests of members**
 - Create a clear vision, mission and strategy for the coalition
 - Ensure appropriate protocols are in place for sign off, media, dispute resolution etc. to avoid future problems
 - Ensure meaningful participation of all members
 - Focus on the objectives of the coalition, rather than outside objectives
- **Dealing with different levels of commitment/Limited participation**
 - Consider different levels/types of membership – eg Full membership, associate members, observers etc.
 - Ensure commitments are understood and agreed and regularly reviewed
- **Different ideological positions about children among members**
 - Ensure Save the Children’s interests and position are properly represented
 - Work must be Child Rights Programming based
 - Children are key stakeholders in the process
 - Child Protection Policy discussed, agreed and adopted
 - Documentation and learning integral to any collaborative relationship
 - Ensure that “preferred collaborators” are actively sought
 - Agree on key messages and the objectives of the coalition
 - Ensure procedures are in place for handling conflicts over decisions, for dealing with violations of agreements made among the partners, and for making decisions when there is insufficient time for full consultation.
- **Too many networks and too many members can reduce effectiveness**
 - Place a limit on membership if necessary – ensure size of the coalition is sufficiently tied in to objectives
 - Ensure members’ roles are clear and agreed
 - Appropriate division of labour is essential for effective working – establish working groups etc. within the coalition
- **Ensuring institutional memory**
 - Address the imbalance between “information rich” and “information poor” members - Share access to information
 - Involve all members in project evaluation and follow-up
- **Building on momentum gained during the reporting period - including a commitment to follow up**
 - Agree on a strategy for the coalition beyond simply drawing up the alternative report
 - Ensure agreed objectives account for follow-up
 - Arrange for regular update meetings
 - Continue to share learning and experiences
 - Assign issues from the Concluding Observations for members to monitor - include developments in Annual Reviews and share these
- **Balancing transparency with the fear of negative reaction from the authorities**
 - Highlight the non-confrontational nature and aim of UNCRC reporting
 - Communicate with the Government throughout the reporting process
 - Ensure messages, publications etc. are not politically partisan or based on personal opinion

- **Finding ways for constructive dialogue and co-operation with the government**
 - Share contacts and working methods with coalition members
 - Include suggestions in the Alternative Report for how NGOs can help with the issues raised
 - Begin dialogue with the Government before the Pre-Session to discuss key issues

Support the Capacity of local NGOs to Advocate for Child Rights

One of the main benefits of the UNCRC reporting process is that it helps local

NGOs to undertake sustainable child rights advocacy

- Produce advocacy toolkits and distribute information packs
- Hold training workshops on the CRC, participation and advocacy
- Disseminate key advocacy materials to local NGOs, eg State Report, Concluding Observations, relevant legislation etc.



- **The NGO Group for the CRC has published a detailed guide on coalitions for CRC reporting entitled “*Networking for Children’s Rights*”. CD (10)**



Louise Dyring Nielson/Save the Children Denmark

Children at the playground in Cuale, Angola, built by Save the Children

Case Study 3: Yemen

Save the Children Sweden's use of the reporting process as an advocacy tool in relation to violence against children

The following case study is taken from the report of the **Global Capacity Building Workshop on Community and Child Centred Advocacy** held by the International Save the Children Alliance in March 2006 in Kathmandu. *The report is on the CD(10)*

Yemen ratified the UNCRC in 1991 and its third periodic reporting process took place during 2004/2005. A major shortcoming of the two previous reports, however, had been that issues of violence against children were not sufficiently addressed by either the government or NGOs and no serious follow up plans for implementation of the Concluding Observations had been made.

Save the Children Sweden worked with the Yemen Coalition for Child Rights Care to submit an alternative report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child and included the issue of violence against children. In addition, a social worker's report emphasised children's voices. Workshops and training on child rights as well as awareness raising activities also took place during this time. In February 2005, the Coalition discussed the issue with the Committee at the pre-session meeting in Geneva.

The Committee's Concluding Observations from the third reporting process included:

- Revision of existing legislation and explicit prohibition of all forms of physical and humiliating punishments
- Training of teachers and parents on alternative practices
- Undertaking awareness raising campaigns on the negative impact of physical and humiliating punishments

Although Concluding Observations are not legally binding, they are recommendations from the international body mandated to monitor state obligations and therefore carry significant political and moral weight. The more knowledge of them and mobilisation behind them, the greater that weight. Save the Children Sweden suggested that a follow-up plan to the Concluding Observations would be a strong platform for future advocacy.

Some of the benefits of this work included:

- The Yemen Coalition for Child Rights Care, the Child Protection Network and The Violence against Children Network carrying out programmes to follow up on the UN Committee's Concluding Observations. They now follow a child rights approach.
- Other partners in civil society, including the Yemen Coalition, being mobilised to make use of the Concluding Observations in their advocacy and awareness raising efforts
- Save the Children Sweden, along with its partners, convincing the media to report about the Concluding Observations, including issues of violence against children
- The Children's Parliament discussing the Concluding Observations and preparing a plan of action for follow-up in its session in August 2005.

Because of NGO involvement in the reporting process, the Yemeni government was more aware and willing to listen on child rights issues, including violence against children. In March 2005, for example, the Higher Council for Motherhood and Childhood and the Arab Resource Collective, supported by Save the Children Sweden, organised a training workshop on advocacy for the rights of the child; and in September 2005, the Yemeni Government developed a plan of action emphasising that Yemen should address violence against children in schools and other settings.

The Coalition subsequently prepared a booklet containing the Concluding Observations to be disseminated at local and national levels, for follow-up and implementation. Save the Children Sweden has also translated into all important documents to Arabic to ensure future follow-up actions.

Funding

As we have seen above, good governance, capacity building, civil society engagement and child participation are some of the main elements of the reporting process and it is these aspects that should be focused upon when seeking funding.

Below are some brief introductions to the various sources of funding available and the teams that may be able to help in accessing them.

European Commission (EC) European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR)

From 2007, the European Commission has new "*Financial Perspectives*" (or budgets) for the next 7 years. They have restructured their budget lines and there will be an instrument for "Human Rights and Democracy". A communication from the EC about the New Human Rights and Democracy Programme ("Thematic Programme 2007-2013") is on the CD.

Within this, specific objectives of most relevance for CRC reporting may be:

- *"To strengthen the international framework for the protection of human rights, the rule of law and the promotion of democracy"*
- *"To strengthen the role of civil society in promoting human rights and democratic reform, in supporting conflict prevention and in developing political participation and representation"*

Guidelines for 2007 onwards are not yet available, but guidance notes for EIDHR funding 2005-2006 are included on the CD as an example. Up to date information will be available from the **Programme Funding Unit** in Head Office once it has been released.

UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) Global Opportunities Fund (GOF)

The UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office is increasingly focusing on international mechanisms and has expressed an interest in funding CRC reporting. A new GOF Human Rights Programme has been created which will have around £3.5 million per year. One of the core areas of funding is child rights and the indicators they have identified include the following, which are of specific relevance to UNCRC reporting:

- Child rights policies with mechanisms for meaningful participation from children developed
- Reform of policies and laws which discriminate against children and increase their vulnerabilities
- Government and NGOs reporting under international instruments in a timely manner
- Legislation reviewed for conformity with international standards including enforcement measures
- Mechanisms for monitoring child rights in place e.g. establish children's ombudsman, national human rights mechanisms
- Improved understanding of relevant international child rights instruments amongst key stakeholders including their capacity and responsibility to implement such instruments

Although the FCO has priority focus countries (Myanmar, India, Colombia, China, Brazil) it will also consider funding proposals from other countries that have a clear regional impact or have a global demonstration value. Ensuring institutional learning and enabling replication is therefore extremely important.

GOF funding proposals follow a strict format involving a two-step process. Initially a concept note is submitted through the FCO country or regional representative which must then be approved in London. It is extremely important that the FCO representative is first contacted to discuss the proposal as their approval is essential for the grant to be considered in London. If the concept paper is approved the proposal moves on to a full, detailed bid.

A sample proposal form is on the CD along with guidance notes. The **Programme Funding Unit** can also provide technical advice and guidance.

Charitable Trusts and Foundations

There are a number of charitable trusts and foundations that fund work on human rights, capacity building, governance and participation, all of which are integral to UNCRC reporting. An example is the Ford Foundation, based in New York, which has funded Save the Children UK in the past for projects such as human rights education and frequently funds human rights advocacy initiatives. Some trusts and foundations fund UNCRC reporting specifically. For example, the Big Lottery Fund in the UK has recently awarded a large three-year grant to the Children's Rights Alliance England (CRAE) for child participation in the CRC reporting process.

Trust fundraising is based heavily on developing working relationships with the relevant trusts and foundations. All Trust applications are dealt with through the **Trusts Development Team** based in Farringdon who will be happy to discuss proposals and potential donors.

Collaboration with Alliance Partners

There are national institutional donors aside from the UK that Save the Children may access through collaborative working with Alliance partners. For example, SIDA through Save the Children Sweden. Some members, such as Italy, have no programmatic presence and are focused on fundraising, so Save the Children UK may be the "implementing organisation" for funding purposes, though the grant would be through the Alliance partner.

Please contact the **Alliance Development Team** who may be able to discuss this option further and put you in touch with the relevant members and staff for discussions.

Other

The other teams at Head Office that may be able to help are **Corporate Development** and **Leadership Development** (Major Donors). However, these funding options might be less likely due to the types of projects individuals and companies tend to fund. They also look for quantitative impacts such as numbers of children accessing education or numbers immunised etc. which are not the direct outcomes of the reporting process.

To discuss any of the options above, or to suggest funding avenues we may not have considered, please contact **Jennifer Grant, Child Rights Advocate**.

The Key Objectives and Activities section above may be amended to form a concept note for institutional donors
 Many of the details used in that section were taken from funding proposals for UNCRC reporting



- **Contact details for funding teams are on the People Directory of the Intranet <http://intranet/directories/people/search.asp>**

Useful Contacts

Child Rights Supporting Strategy
Jennifer Grant, Child Rights Advocate
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Save the Children Alliance Office, Geneva
 1 Rue de Varembé, CH-1202 Geneva, Switzerland
 Ph: +41 22 919 1200
 Fax +41 22 919 2001

NGO Group for the Convention on the Rights of the Child
 1 Rue de Varembé, CH-1202 Geneva, Switzerland
 Ph: +41 22 740 4730
 Fax: +41 22 740 1145
 Email: ngocrc-lup@bluewin.ch
www.crin.org/NGOGroupCRC

Secretariat, Committee on the Rights of the Child
 Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights
 UNOG-OHCHR, 1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland
 Ph: +41 22 917 9000
 Email: infodesk@ohchr.org
<http://www.ohchr.org/english/>

Child Rights Information Network (CRIN)
 C/o Save the Children UK, 1 St. John's Lane, London, EC1M 4AR, UK
 Ph: +44 207 012 6400
 Email: info@crin.org
www.crin.org

Online Resources

Child Rights Information Network (CRIN)
 Massive amounts of child rights information and regular email updates.
www.crin.org

Database of NGO Alternative Reports
<http://www.crin.org/docs/resources/treaties/crc.25/annex-vi-crin.asp>

High Commissioner for Human Rights Website
 Access to all UN Treaty Body websites and other UN human rights information
<http://www.ohchr.org/english/>

UN Treaty Body Database
 Documents relating to all UN Treaty Bodies, including the CRC
<http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf>

Raoul Wallenberg Institute Human Rights Theme Map

Ratification status and links to each country's page on the OHCHR website
<http://www.rwi.lu.se/tm/ThemeMaps.html>

Committee on the Rights of the Child website
 Access to documents ordered by Committee session as well as General Comments, Days of general discussion etc.
<http://www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/>

University of Minnesota Human Rights Library
 Human rights documents and materials by theme and region
<http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/>

International Journal of Children's Rights
 Subscription and free academic articles on child rights
<http://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/mnp/chil>

Glossary of Terms

Accession/Accede

When a State ratifies a Convention without having previously signed it – see further “signature” and “ratification” below

Adoption

A treaty is adopted when it is accepted by a vote at the General Assembly. The CRC was unanimously adopted on 20th November 1989 – as opposed to “Entry into Force” - see below.

Declaration

1. A statement made upon ratification that clarifies the state’s interpretation of a certain article.
2. A non-binding legal instrument, such as the Universal Declaration on Human Rights or the Declaration on the Rights of the Child.

Duty Bearer

The person or body responsible for guaranteeing a right

Entry into Force

A Treaty/Convention enters into force when it has received the requisite number of ratifications as set out within the document itself. The CRC required 20 ratifications and entered into force on 2nd September 1990.

International Law

Rules aimed at regulating the behaviour of states towards each other and towards the people within their territories

Legal Mechanisms

Structures implemented to enforce or monitor implementation of the law. The Courts are an example of a legal mechanism, as is periodic reporting to the Committee on the Rights of the Child

Member State

A state belonging to a particular international body or organisation, such as the UN, the EU or the AU – as opposed to “State Party “ or “Signatory” - see below.

Optional Protocol

A separate legal document adding to the Convention/Treaty and requiring separate ratification

Ratification, Ratify

The process of adopting a treaty by the legislature – as opposed to “Signature” – see below

Reservation

A proviso entered upon ratification of a treaty which limits the state’s obligations under a certain article

Rights Bearer

The subject of the rights contained within a treaty

Signature/Sign

Signing a treaty signifies an intention to ratify. A signatory to a treaty is not bound by its terms but must not do anything that would run counter to its “object and purpose”

Signatory

A state that has signed a treaty. Somalia and the US are signatories to the CRC. All other states are States Parties.

State Party

Once a state has ratified a treaty it becomes a “State Party”. The plural is “States Parties”

Treaty Body

The body established to monitor a particular treaty. The Treaty Body for the UNCRC is the Committee on the Rights of the Child

Treaty/Convention

Interchangeable terms for a legal contract between states. “Covenant” also means the same thing e.g. the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)

CD Contents

1. Academic Articles

- Various articles and reports for further reading on the UNCRC, the General Principles, evolving capacities and related issues

2. Child Participation

- Guidance and Tools – toolkits, checklists and guidance on participation and protection
- Learning – articles, reports and evaluations on child participation

3. Child Rights Programming (CRP)

- Handbooks and toolkits on CRP

4. Committee on the Rights of the Child

- The Committee’s Reporting Guidelines, General Comments, Days of general discussion, Recommendations, Working Methods, Rules of Procedure etc.

5. Convention and Optional Protocols

- The UNCRC and Optional Protocols, UNCRC in 50 languages and a child friendly version
- UNCRC summary provisions arranged according to the 8 “clusters” of rights
- Reservations to the UNCRC
- Links to other international legal instruments

6. CRC Implementation and Impact

- UNICEF Implementation Handbook
- UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre Implementation Studies
- Child rights Indicators papers
- Evaluation of Lesotho NGO Coalition by Kevin Byrne
- “Laying the Foundations for Children’s Rights” by Philip Alston

7. CRC Reporting Sample Documents

- Sample Concluding Observations, Lists of Issues, Written Replies, Concluding Observations and NGO Alternative Reports from: Azerbaijan, Belize, Colombia, Kyrgyzstan, New Zealand, Norway, Uganda
- Compilation of Concluding Observations 1996 – 2005
- Children’s submissions
- Save the Children alternative reports

8. Funding

- Information on FCO and EC funding streams

9. Starter Pack Documents

- Pdf of this paper (Hyperlinks within the document may then be used)

10. Toolkits and Guides

- “A Tool for Change? Reporting to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child” by Daniela Baro
- Save the Children Advocacy Toolkit by Louisa Gosling, Julia Sherwood, Costanza De Toma
- External and internal toolkits and guides that were of use in preparing this Starter Pack plus others that may be of further assistance.

