



# CRIN

CHILD RIGHTS INFORMATION NETWORK



# CRIN Annual Report 2009

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*Cover photo: Tanzania, John Henstock*

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## Introduction

20 years of the CRC – time to grow up

2009 heralded a period of reflection and preparation as the spectre of the 20th anniversary of the Convention of the Rights of the Child loomed large in all corners of the world.

Here at CRIN, 2009 was doubly significant because it was the year we emerged from our chrysalis to flourish as an independent NGO. Formerly based at Save the Children UK, we have now set up office in Waterloo, London. To mark both milestones, we were keen to reinforce our commitment to promoting strong child rights advocacy. We are always mindful that potent messages demanding long term, systematic changes in children's lives risk getting lost in a slurry of heartfelt, but toothless, rhetoric in which sentimentalised children appear as objects of pity. We believe that children must be respected as rights holders if the power structures that leave them marginalised are to be truly challenged.

What does this mean in practice? We have often alluded to the frailty of children's rights advocacy when compared to the advocacy that has brought such powerful changes to the lives of, for example, women and people with disabilities. The conference which took place in Geneva in November on 'strategic litigation', and the enforcement of children's rights in court, to which CRIN contributed time, and resources, including the production of a report, was an attempt to redress this imbalance. We know that passionate, dedicated children's advocates must often work with limited budgets and stretched resources, but working with lawyers, or even bringing cases, can be a powerful way of addressing inequality.

That said, we are not naive enough to believe all the answers lie in court. This is merely one possible outcome. But if children's rights are to be realised, and amount to more than mere window dressing, then new avenues must be explored and new partnerships forged. At CRIN, our goal is to build, support and strengthen an advocacy network with the capacity to effect real change for children whose lives may be blighted by rights violations.

Alongside these goals, we are also beginning to build on our own capacity for campaigning and advocacy. This year was particularly momentous for CRIN because we launched our first solo advocacy campaign. The Future of Children's Rights – In whose hands? was conceived in order to challenge the appointment procedures, some of which are grossly undemocratic and unchallenged, for selecting global child rights leaders. Roles such as the Executive Director of UNICEF hold huge power for affecting the lives of millions of children, and it is not right that such appointments are made at the whim of public officials, and without scrutiny or transparency.

Early signs suggest the campaign has been well received. Two members of UNICEF's Executive Board wrote to tell us they agreed with the principles of the campaign, and more than 250 organisations from around the world, small and large, signed our petition.

We have now moved into the next phase of the campaign, where we will be focusing on other children's rights appointments, including those to the African Committee on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, and to the Committee on the Rights of the Child, where we will be working in partnership with the NGO Group for the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Buoyed by the reception our first solo campaign received, we will be launching a campaign on 'inhuman sentencing' in 2010. Watch this space!

We are very pleased to be part of the ongoing effort to establish a complaints procedure to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. In 2008, we launched a petition, signed by more than 600 organisations from around the world, supporting the move. We are delighted that the Human Rights Council has now agreed to begin drafting the instrument establishing the

procedure, and we are looking forward to remaining closely involved as the project gets off the ground.

You can find out more about all of our activities below.

In a related development, we were also delighted to launch a new 'microsite' on children and non-discrimination. While discrimination against other social groups provokes widespread disapproval, unfavourable treatment towards children, whether as a group or among subgroups, seems much more acceptable. The aim of the website is to stimulate action, further understanding, and provoke discussion on this marginalised issue.

Our work on the strategic litigation conference complimented our involvement in 'child friendly justice' reform, where we have been advocating for children's rights to be taken into account before, during and after legal proceedings in which they are involved.

These latter developments, we hope, demonstrate the urgency of our desire to bring children's rights out of the closet, beyond pity and pithy rhetoric, and into a new phase of active, strong advocacy.

The CRIN Team

### **Our vision**

CRIN envisions a world in which every child enjoys all of the human rights promised by the United Nations, regional organisations, and national governments alike.

### **Mission**

Guided by our passion for social and legal change, CRIN is building a global network for children's rights. We press for rights, not charity, and advocate for a genuine systemic shift in how governments and societies view children.

Our inspiration is the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which we use to bring children's rights to the top of the international agenda. We launch advocacy campaigns, lead international children's rights coalitions, and strive to make existing human rights enforcement mechanisms accessible for all.

More than 2,100 organisations in 160 countries rely on CRIN's publications, research and information.

### **The values that guide our work**

- We believe that the only means of bringing long-term positive change to children's lives is through the strong and explicit promotion of their rights. We are not afraid to challenge harmful traditional beliefs and practices concerning children. We recognise this will often be controversial.
- We believe that information is a powerful tool, indeed a prerequisite, for effective advocacy in children's rights and that it must be freely available and widely disseminated.
- We believe that it is by working together with a broad range of actors committed to a similar vision that we will be most effective and influential.
- We believe that civil society, grass roots activists and children all have the right to participate and express themselves freely and openly in all matters affecting them

### **Our objectives include**

- To enable members of the child rights community, and others, to understand and implement the UN CRC
- To educate, enrich and inform, particularly on new and emerging issues in children's rights
- To support and fuel the advocacy initiatives of members and other child rights organisations, for example by hosting petitions and providing a platform for joint campaigns
- To lobby and advocate for the implementation of children's rights and their mainstreaming in all United Nations mechanisms

### **2010 and beyond**

CRIN has set strategic priorities that reflected a desire to evolve into a more proactive, agenda-setting organisation.

These involve:

1. Monitoring developments related to child rights across the globe and disseminating the information to a growing children's rights community;

2. Strengthening the network by identifying active child rights advocates (existing and potential members) in all regions; identifying how most effectively to support them;
3. Providing leadership by identifying key opportunities and threats, generating debate and facilitating global, regional and national advocacy;
4. In particular, increasing respect for and use of the Convention on the Rights of the Child as a legal instrument.

**During 2009, we met our objectives by:**

- Launching a campaign calling for greater transparency and scrutiny in key global child rights appointments
- Helping to lead the campaign to establish a complaints mechanism under the CRC
- Launching a new website on children and non-discrimination
- Publishing special edition e-newsletters on subjects including children with disabilities, and children and the media
- Co-organising a conference on children's rights in court, to mark the 20th anniversary of the CRC
- Lobbying for greater consideration of children's rights at the Human Rights Council
- Publicising the work of the Committee on the Rights of the Child
- Expanding our network – it now encompasses more than 2,100 members
- Informing, influencing and supporting a growing child rights community, thanks in part to thousands more subscriptions to our e-newsletters
- Publishing a hard copy Review on the subject of children's evolving capacities
- Increasing the number of documents available in other languages, including Arabic, Russian and Chinese

### **The Future Of Children's Rights – in whose hands?**

They wield considerable power and influence, and can change the lives of thousands, maybe millions of children. Those nominated to exalted positions within the world of child rights can make a massive difference. But who are they? How are they chosen? And, most importantly, are they the best people for the job?

We chose this important issue as the subject of our first solo child rights campaign. More than 250 organisations signed our petition demanding greater transparency and scrutiny in the appointment process to select the next Executive Director of UNICEF. The next stage of the campaign will concern elections to the African Committee on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.

We were delighted to gain so much support from organisations around the world, both large and small, for this campaign. We also felt that the level of support vindicated our decision to tackle what many saw as a controversial issue. In addition to the petition, we received letters and emails of support from child rights experts, grassroots activists and members of UNICEF's Executive Board.

### **The Campaign to Establish a Communications Procedure to the CRC**

A complaints or communications procedure allows individuals, groups or their representatives who claim that their rights have been violated by a State that is a party to the CRC to bring a complaint before the relevant committee, provided that the State has recognised the competence of the committee to receive such complaints.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child is the only international human rights treaty with a mandatory reporting procedure which does not have, in addition, an existing or draft communications procedure. This is a serious matter of discrimination against children.

As one of the first organisations to join the campaign, CRIN hosted a petition, now signed by more than 550 organisations, demanding that the UN redress this injustice and take the necessary steps towards establishing such a mechanism. We have also published a number of other materials online, including lobbying materials and information leaflets. The campaign is now coordinated under the umbrella of the NGO Group for the Convention on the Rights of the Child as a Working Group.

We were pleased to report that in December 2009, a UN Working Group met to discuss the possibility of developing a communications procedure. The meeting ended without any recommendations, however, it is hoped that a new Resolution will be adopted in March to revise the mandate of the group in order that it can begin drafting the procedure.

As well as hosting the campaign's web page, including the petition, we have kept abreast of developments throughout the campaign and issued news stories and reports. We have issued regular updates to the advocacy list established by signatures to the petition, and drafted and translated advocacy materials into French, Spanish, Arabic, Portuguese and Russian.

Find out more here: <http://www.crin.org/TakeAction/>

### **Children and Discrimination**

In October 2009, CRIN launched our much vaunted children and non-discrimination microsite. A grant from Save the Children Sweden enabled us to develop the web-based toolkit, which

materialised following many months of work and planning. The work is innovative, since children are still rarely considered the subjects of discrimination, reflecting attitudes towards children in society as a whole.

The toolkit explores how discrimination affects the full range of children's rights, with a particular focus on age-based discrimination. The goals of the site are to:

- promote understanding of how discrimination affects all children's rights
- shed light on age discrimination against children
- support the removal of barriers to all children's inclusion

The micro site includes: A guide to non discrimination and the CRC; sections on media, education, law, policy and programming; an A to Z of non discrimination and children; and a section on advocacy.

See: <http://www.crin.org/discrimination/>

### **Child-friendly justice**

We have been actively involved in child-friendly justice reform, advocating for children's rights to be taken into account before, during and after legal proceedings that involve them. Most notably, CRIN has taken a strong role in the drafting process for the Council of Europe's Guidelines on Child-Friendly Justice, which will be released this summer. We have attended hearings, made numerous written submissions, and more recently helped to engage children in the crafting of the guidelines.

CRIN also attended and served as a facilitator for the EU conference "Children in the Union: Rights and Empowerment", which focused on the rights of children as victims and witnesses in the criminal courts. In the same vein, we have just been asked to partner with the Institute of Public Policy in New Zealand, which will soon be releasing a report on best practices around the world in managing child victims' interaction with the criminal courts and making recommendations for systematic reform.

### **Legal reform**

We have begun a long-term project to look at national laws and responses to violence against children, with a particular focus on sexual exploitation. We have already produced several reports on the legal regimes that govern violence against children in individual jurisdictions, and – with the goal of producing a representative global survey – continue to make contact with advocates working in selected countries from around the world.

With this knowledge, we will eventually produce a guide to legal reform and suggestions for model laws and practices that strive to eliminate all forms of violence against children. Throughout the project, we hope and expect to have regular contact both with advocates seeking reform and governments wishing to better respect children's right to a life without violence, and have already been asked by one country to review plans for its introduction of a child protection system.

See: <http://www.crin.org/law/>

### **The CRC in Court**

We have launched a 'CRC in Court' database containing plain language summaries of international and high-level national judicial decisions that address children's rights, including the right to be protected from all forms of violence.

Although the Convention on the Rights of the Child has been around for more than two decades, it has in many places just begun to make its way into the courtroom. Many countries have taken steps to incorporate the Convention into their national laws and policies, and these accomplishments must not be overlooked. Nevertheless, CRIN believes that for children to enjoy the full benefits of their rights under the CRC, they must be able to enforce them directly in court.

To encourage children and their advocates to think about bringing violations of the CRC to the justice system, we have assembled a collection of case law where courts have used the CRC in their decision-making process. The CRC has not always fared well in legal decisions, but we hope that reviewing CRC case law will prove to be inspirational and help us learn about the potential for (and limits of) advancing children's rights through litigation.

This database contains judgments from high-level national and international courts around the world. Each decision is presented in summary form with plain English explanations of the background, significance, and lessons to be learned for children's rights. Case summaries also include excerpts from relevant judicial discussions of the CRC and, where possible, links to full text decisions.

See: [http://www.crin.org/law/crc\\_in\\_court/](http://www.crin.org/law/crc_in_court/)

### Ongoing projects

In March – CRIN launched its hard copy **child rights mechanisms guide**. The purpose of the guide is to help readers understand the 'mechanisms' working on children's rights, such as different parts of the United Nations, or regional bodies like the African Union.

The guide currently includes the following:

- An explanatory guide to all international, regional and domestic mechanisms that can be used to challenge breaches of children's rights. These include the African, inter-American and European human rights systems, as well as the Arab League and ASEAN.
- National and international decisions in which those mechanisms have been used successfully in the past.
- Analyses of States' implementation of the CRC
- A database of legal instruments, including international and regional Conventions and standards, national laws, case law, etc.

The guide is currently available in English, Arabic, Spanish and French online. It is being developed in Russian and we are hoping more languages can gradually be developed over the coming years.

We hope these tools will encourage understanding, and prompt advocates to make better use of the law and legal mechanisms in fighting for the rights of children.

We have continued to update our **legal database**, adding national laws and international instruments. We have also, thanks to a team of pro bono lawyers, continued to produce child rights country reports. We now have reports on England and Wales, Sweden, Israel, South Africa, Japan and Belarus.

## **Understanding Children's Evolving Capacities**

The CRIN Review is a hard copy publication that examines a particular issue in depth. Published approximately once a year in English, French and Spanish and Arabic, it is distributed to all CRIN members in hard copy and available to download on the website at this link: <http://www.crin.org/resources/infoDetail.asp?ID=7009>

The subject of the Review published in September 2009 was "**Measuring Maturity: Understanding Children's Evolving Capacities**". Children face a confusing array of minimum ages at which they are deemed capable of making decisions for themselves – some of them potentially life-changing. But are rigid age limits the best way of determining children's competence?

The concept of "evolving capacities", as set out in Article 5 of the CRC, addresses these dilemmas by introducing the idea that children should be able to exercise their rights as they acquire the capacity to do so, rather than when they reach a certain age. This issue of the Review explored what the concept of evolving capacities means in practice.

## **Emerging and neglected issues**

One of CRIN's core objectives is to identify neglected and new or emerging child rights issues. This is part of our intention, in line with our strategic priorities and mission statement, to avoid duplication of work being undertaken elsewhere, and to ensure that human rights violations experienced by the most vulnerable are brought to international attention. We therefore give priority to news, reports and other information that highlight such issues. We also undertake research and produce information pages to encourage, inform and inspire child rights advocates. During 2009, activities included:

- Compiling special CRINMAILs on topics such as non-discrimination, and disability
- Researching and compiling information pages on subjects including media, non-discrimination, and related issues.
- Producing CRIN's hard copy Review "Measuring Maturity: Understanding Children's Evolving Capacities"
- Sourcing stories and reports for CRINMAIL on subjects such as 'status offences' (i.e offences that would not be criminal if they were committed by adults), freedom of assembly, and the appointment processes for children's rights bodies/organisations

## **Follow up to the UN Study on Violence against Children**

CRIN's work on violence against children has been a priority since the idea for a Study was first mooted in 2001. At the time, CRIN was already involved in documenting and disseminating the work of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child among its growing number of members and users.

When the Study was announced, a number of NGOs who had been involved in lobbying for it expressed the need for a portal to enable civil society to collect relevant information in relation to preparations for the Study, and to monitor participation in the process.

The aim of the website was to offer up to date information on civil society participation in the Study process, including coverage of Regional Consultations (see section on Events) and a resource section containing NGO submissions to the Study and other relevant thematic publications.

Following the launch of the Study, CRIN was selected as a member of the NGO Advisory Council to follow up on the Study's recommendations and support the work of the UN Special Representative on Violence against Children – a post approved by a UN General Assembly Resolution in 2007, and finally filled in May 2009.

The violence study website continues to be updated and will undergo a revamp during the course of 2009, serving as a hub for the Council's work in following up on the Study's recommendations, and in collaborating with the UN Special Representative on Violence Against Children.

See: <http://www.crin.org/violence>

### **Rights based programming project**

The rights based programming microsite, which was set up in 2005, continues to offer specialised resources on rights based approaches to development including events, publications, practical tools and news. The project also includes an email list which updates subscribers on resources related to rights based approaches to programming

See: <http://www.therightsapproach.org>

## **Monitoring Children's Rights Globally**

### **The NGO Group for the CRC and the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child**

CRIN continued its cooperation with the NGO Group for the Convention on the Rights of the Child to provide coverage of the work of the Committee on the Rights of the Child and make alternative reports available. In addition, all Concluding Observations in English can be found on the CRIN website, and we post submissions to the General Day of Discussion.

We are in continuous contact with the NGO Group, always endeavouring to improve our working partnership, and occupy a seat on the Group's Executive Committee.

We have interviewed Committee members for our 'From the Frontline' series of interviews, published in CRINMAIL.

Finally, we produce a CRC CRINMAIL which contains information on the work of the Committee, including reports on, for example, elections to the Committee, as well as alternative reports, Concluding Observations and other relevant news.

### **UN Human Rights Council**

In cooperation with the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), CRIN advertises the upcoming visits of the UN Special Procedures to encourage members to submit information or get involved in other ways at the national level. CRIN follows up on visits and compiles reports of mentions of child rights.

CRIN continued to report on developments in the new Council's procedures, following its transformation from the Commission on Human Rights.

We are members of the Working Group for the Human Rights Council, which seeks to encourage the mainstreaming of children's rights at the Human Rights Council. This has included undertaking communications activities, and research and analysis. As part of our work, we have published reports on the integration of children's rights issues in the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process. We have also disseminated a toolkit to help child rights NGOs with submitting reports to the UPR process.

Alongside a group of other international NGOs, CRIN also produced an analysis of how children's rights had been addressed in the UPR. We will be continuing this research throughout 2010.

### **Child rights in regional mechanisms**

CRIN has monitored and reported on child rights in regional mechanisms, covering news unavailable elsewhere. This has included producing comprehensive briefings on children's rights in each system (Inter-American, European, African, as well as incipient efforts in Asia and the Middle East), and how NGOs can use these systems. These have been compiled as part of *CRIN's* "Guide to child rights mechanisms".

CRIN has also entered instruments from each system relating to child rights in a legal database, including treaties and protocols, advisory opinions, and case law.

CRIN has given particular attention to the African, Inter-American and European systems. Specific activities for each system are detailed below:

On the **African system**, CRIN:

- Worked with the Civil Society Organisations' Forum on the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child to provide coverage of their first meeting;
- Published the first State party reports submitted to the Committee on the website: Egypt and Mauritius (these were the only reports available in electronic format).

On **the Inter-American system**, CRIN:

- Produced briefings on sessions in English and Spanish;
- Contacted organisations presenting hearings on children's rights to publish their presentations;
- Produced updates on activities of the Inter-American Court, including the recent decision to confirm the CRC's prohibition on corporal punishment, which we published with others, in English, Spanish and Portuguese.

On the **European system**, CRIN:

- Reported on the Council of Europe's strategy meeting and other conferences related to violence against children and child-friendly justice;
- Worked with the Commissioner for Human Rights at the Council of Europe to publish an article on child-friendly justice for our hard copy Review;
- Monitored the Court's activities, publishing information on decisions and entering these in our case law database.

## **4. Information for Action**

### **CRINMAIL**

CRINMAIL is a regular email news and information list, produced in English, French, Spanish and most recently in Arabic, covering both general child rights issues as well as thematic subjects. Issues offer a selection of news items, events, reports, calls for participation and job announcements.

In addition to supplying information and support, CRINMAIL affords an excellent opportunity to

launch advocacy campaigns, highlight neglected or emerging issues, and promote the work of child rights advocates and organisations. It is our flagship publication with over 8,000 subscribers for nine different lists. Anyone can subscribe to the list free of charge and submit information for inclusion.

Subscriptions to CRINMAIL have historically increased by at least 10% each year, depending on the edition, and the trend continued in 2009.

Watch out, in 2010, for our new Strategic Litigation CRINMAIL!

CRIN offers nine different lists:

- **CRINMAIL English:** distributed twice a week. This is CRIN's original list, with more than 1000 editions and over 5,000 subscribers (see box for further details)
- **CRINMAIL Spanish:** monthly, plus special editions
- **CRINMAIL French:** monthly, plus special editions
- **CRINMAIL Children and Armed Conflict:** monthly
- **Rights CRINMAIL:** distributed when required
- **CRINMAIL Violence against Children:** An update on the UN Study on Violence against Children. Distributed when required
- **CRINMAIL CRC:** Distributed during sessions of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, or when necessary
- **CRINMAIL HRC:** On children's rights and the new UN Human Rights Council. Includes updates on the activities of the NGO Group subgroup on the HRC and coverage of the actual sessions of the HRC (sent out daily during sessions of the HRC, also called 'Children Have Rights Too')
- **CRINMAIL Arabic:** Issues contain news updates, resources and events relevant to Arabic speaking countries. This CRINMAIL is distributed in a different format from a separate database, but will fully integrated into the CRIN website during 2010.
- **CRINMAIL Strategic litigation:** Includes updates on global developments in strategic litigation for children's rights.

### **Email information service**

CRIN receives up to 100 email enquiries per week, mostly involving questions about children's rights and the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and questions about CRIN itself. Our target is to always respond to emails within three days of receipt. The enquiry desk also approves submissions and feedback posted on the website by members. About 20 to 30 resources are submitted to CRIN for publication each week, varying from press releases and calls for information to reports and job adverts.

### **Languages: French, Spanish, Arabic and more**

Ensuring key resources are available in as many languages as possible is central to the work of CRIN. As an information hub, it would be discriminatory and contrary to our core values to publish information in just one language. We are therefore always looking to broaden our dedicated team of volunteer translators.

In 2009, we ensured that materials for the campaign to establish a communications procedure to the CRC were translated into French, Spanish, Arabic and Russian. Similarly, documents related to the campaign to encourage transparent and robust appointment processes for key child rights positions were also translated into these languages.

We have also managed to secure the translation of a handful of additional key resources into Russian, Farsi and Japanese.

Our Media Toolkit, Strategic Litigation toolkit, and Guide to Child Rights Mechanisms are all available in English, French, Spanish, and Arabic. Work is also under way on translating the Mechanisms Guide into Russian and Portuguese.

## **Arabic programme**

Arabic became CRIN's fourth official language in 2007. In 2008, CRIN opened its first regional desk in Cairo, Egypt to improve coverage of child rights issues in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) and to recruit new members from the region.

By disseminating information on the rights of the child in a region where such information is scarce or completely lacking, our work has, we believe, raised the profile of problems affecting children. Organisations working on general human rights or welfare issues have been enlisted as members, and we expect that this will encourage them to systematically address children's rights in their overall work.

Encouraging organisations and activists in the region to sign up to CRIN petitions in Arabic, in particular those on ending the juvenile death penalty across the world and on establishing a complaints mechanism to the CRC, has given these campaigns greater coverage, more authenticity and a bigger impact. Iran, for example, has been encouraged to issue public statements about revising its laws on the death penalty – even if these statements were not always satisfactory, they demonstrate effect.

Nurturing a regional child rights network has also helped to draw child rights issues in general to the attention of national governments. By creating common ground, and encouraging organisations and activists to speak with a collective, and therefore more powerful, public voice, the situation of children has attracted greater political attention. Organisations and activists, as a result of CRIN's Arabic service, are able to achieve their goals with a greater understanding of the international legislative framework on children's rights, and with a better awareness of, for example, different thematic areas.

In 2009, CRIN was invited to work in partnership with Save the Children Sweden to develop a civil society network for children's rights in the MENA region. Watch this space for more news on the emerging 'Manara' network.

## **Events**

2009 was a huge year for events, with the 20th anniversary of the CRC being the focus for dozens, if not hundreds, of conferences and commemorative celebrations across the world.

CRIN helped to organise, and acted as rapporteurs for the innovative conference 'From Moral Imperatives to Legal Obligations: In search of remedies for child rights violations'. We also attended the conference organised by the Committee on the Rights of the Child, 'Dignity, Dialogue and Development', and authored a report. CRIN reported or presented at a number of other key international events in the course of 2009.

See our CRC at 20 page: <http://www.crin.org/crc20/>

## **Special features**

In 2009, we continued our *From the Frontline* interview series, which we hope give important issues a human face. Subjects included a former member of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, a member of the Afghan Human Rights Commission, and the CEO of ECPAT International.

We continued to produce *CRIN quizzes*, which aim to both entertain and inform. Quiz themes

included the 20th anniversary of the CRC, Ombudspersons, children and the media and the Human Rights Council.

## Toolkits

We added a toolkit on **strategic litigation** to our growing list of information/advocacy guides. Surveys and website traffic have demonstrated that such tools are the most read of all CRIN's resources. This guide was produced to help those working for children's rights to understand what strategic litigation is, and consider this as an option for effecting change for children by using the law. The guide is aimed at legal and non legal NGO staff and can be adapted to local settings and procedures.

We also updated our **Media Toolkit** to include a section on the use of images of children, by NGOs and others, and more information targeted at journalists.

CRIN, alongside a group of other NGOs, and in its capacity as a member of the Working Group on the Human Rights Council, helped produce, and then distributed, a guide to help child rights NGOs with their submissions to the **Universal Periodic Review** mechanism.

We have overseen the translation of these toolkits into French, Spanish, and Arabic.

See: <http://www.crin.org/resources/find.asp?categoryID=81&pagetitle=CRIN+Toolkits>

## 5. Cultivating a network: membership and partners

### Membership

To coincide with CRIN's new independent status and new and revised mission statement, we felt that we should also clarify the principles behind CRIN membership.

Some members and friends of CRIN have also expressed concern that there was little vetting of applications, that members' responsibility to participate in the network was not explained, and that CRIN's commitment to members was also not clear.

This means that we have written to all members asking them to agree to the new guidelines. As a result, growth in membership during 2008 was less steep than in other years.

Our new **membership guidelines** include:

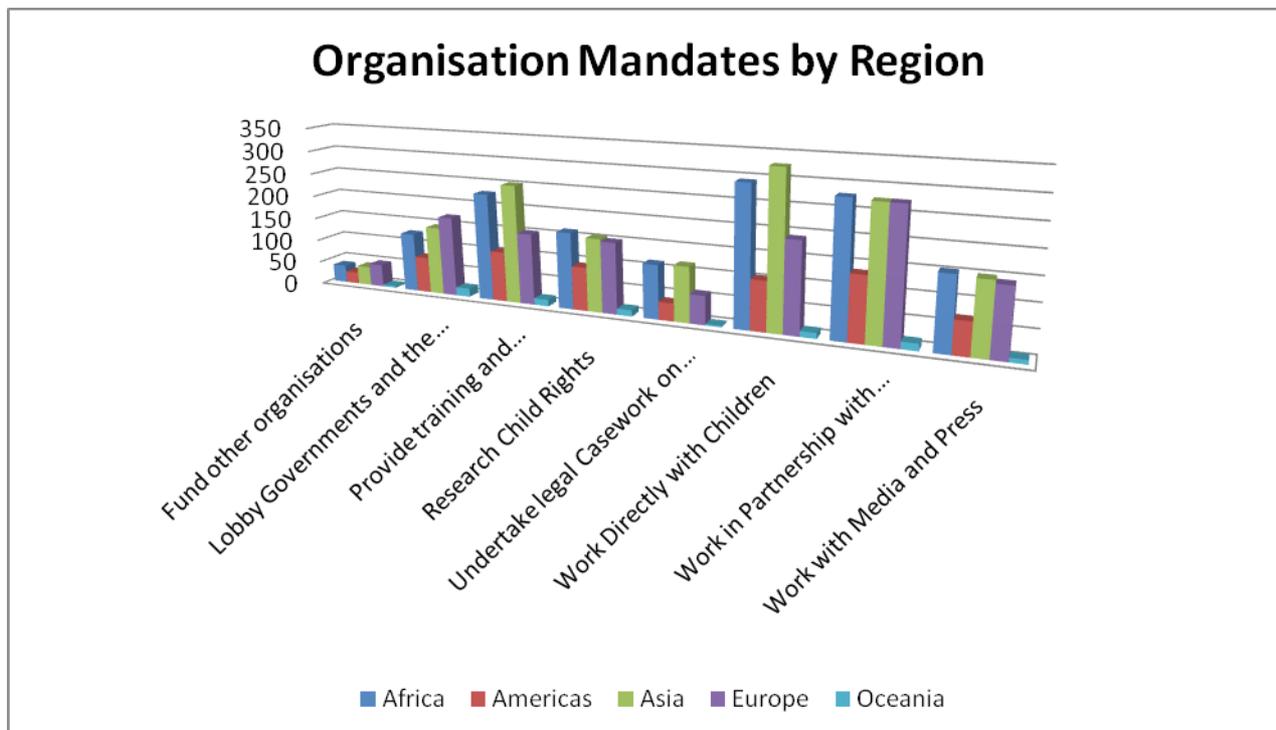
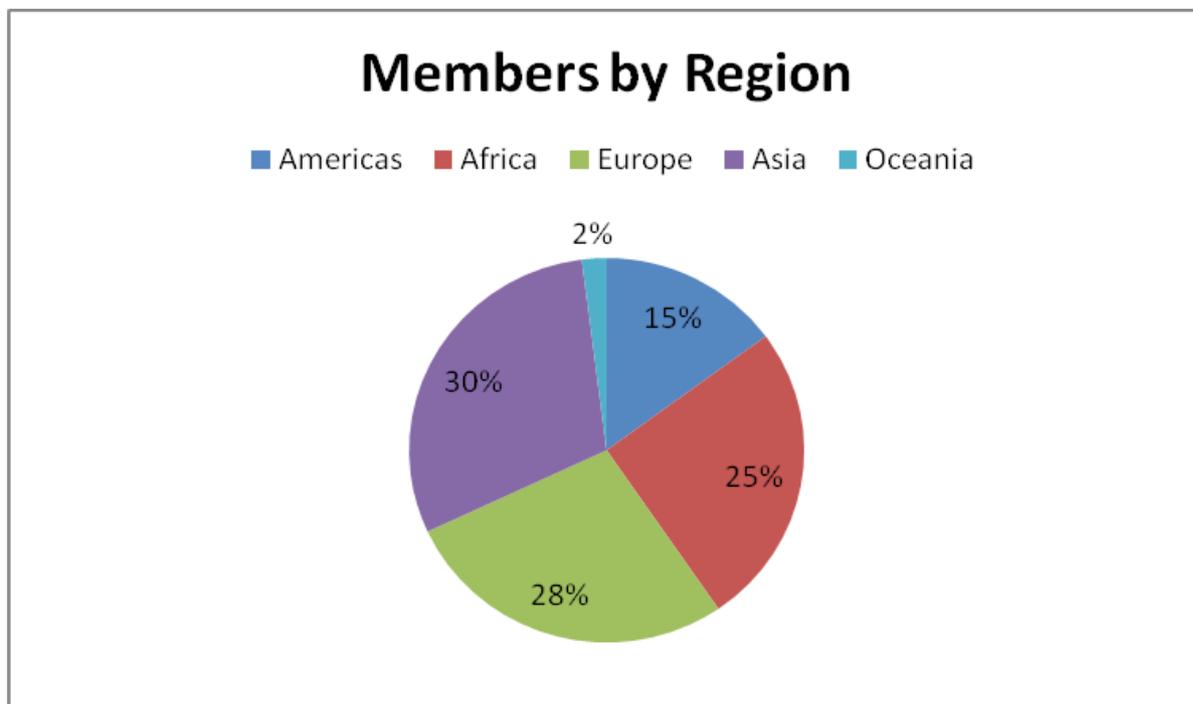
- Our new mission statement
- CRIN's commitments to members
- Members' commitments to children's rights
- Members' commitments to participation in the network
- Principles and ethics of being part of the network

Read our statement here: <http://www.crin.org/join>

Nonetheless, in line with our strategic objectives, which entail developing a more explicit focus on key audiences, identified by their ability to achieve greater recognition of children's rights, we have continued to invite and accept organisations that demonstrate a particular affinity

with these objectives. We have also continued to cultivate relationships with members, and encouraged their active participation in the network.

In the course of 2008, CRIN's membership grew to more than 2,100 organisations in almost 160 countries and included applications from new constituencies such as ombudspersons for children, legal aid organisations and media outlets.



## **Webhosting**

### **NGO Group for the Convention on the Rights of the Child (NGO Group)**

CRIN continued to host the NGO Group's website and developed plans to help launch their own stand alone site. CRIN has also continued to work in partnership with the NGO Group and its Working Groups in the following areas:

- Covering sessions of the CRC, adding Alternative Reports to the website, sending out special CRINMAILs, etc.
- Posting submissions for the General Day of Discussion on the CRIN website in partnership with the Secretariat of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, and reporting on debates and outcomes;
- Supporting the communications work of the various thematic working groups of the NGO Group, with a particular focus on the Working Group for the Human Rights Council and its work to put children's rights on the HRC's agenda and follow the establishment of the Council's new procedures to replace those of the Commission on Human Rights.

Visit their website at: <http://www.childrightsnet.org/>

### **European Network of Ombudspersons for Children (ENOC) and Ombudspersons globally**

As well as hosting the website, we continue to work closely with ENOC, participating in meetings and supporting their information needs. This included encouraging them to support the campaign for the creation of a complaints mechanism and co-writing a statement against violence against children.

Ombudspersons for children from other parts of the world have also become members of CRIN. Working with ombudspersons remains an important feature of our work, reflecting our strategic priority of focusing on key audiences.

Visit their website at: <http://www.ombudsnet.org/>

### **Better Care Network (BCN)**

CRIN has been hosting the website of the Better Care Network (BCN) since June 2006. The Better Care Network's website is a vital source of information for people working on issues related to children who lack adequate family care.

Visit their website at: <http://www.bettercarenetwork.org/bcn/>

### **EURONET**

CRIN began hosting the European Children's Network's (EURONET) website in January 2007. EURONET represented 35 children's rights national and transnational NGOs from across Europe. Unfortunately, EURONET folded in May 2009 due to a drop in funding. However, CRIN will continue to host the website as an online archive until 2011.

Visit their website at: <http://www.crin.org/euronet/index.asp>

## 6. Going Green

CRIN aims to promote children's rights through information sharing and networking in a manner consistent with our stated ethical values and principles. We believe we have a responsibility to act in an ethical way and be mindful of our environmental impact.

We recognise that our operations have an effect on the local, regional and global environment. As the aim of our work is to bring about change in society, in communities, in groups and in individuals, this should be linked to any impact we may have on the environment.

We therefore identified the following main interlinked guiding principles which are informed by our core values. CRIN is committed to practice that is transparent, accountable, honest, non-discriminatory and conducive to open communication with partners.

### 1. Ethical Financial Management

CRIN is committed to work with financial companies that are ethically driven. In light of this, we work with the following:

- Charities Aid Foundation (CAF) Bank

The Charities Aid Foundation is a registered charity that works to create greater value for charities and social enterprise. They do this by transforming the way donations are made and the way charitable funds are managed. CAF Bank focuses exclusively on delivering charity banking services.

- The Pensions Trust

The Pensions Trust is an occupational pension scheme providing pension arrangements solely for employees of organisations involved in social, educational, charitable, voluntary and not-for-profit sectors. The Pensions Trust is a not-for-profit organisation and it is not an insurance company.

- CaSE Insurance

CaSE Insurance returns 40% of its profits to the charity sector through Charities Aid Foundation (CAF) Bank.

### 2. Information Technology

CRIN strives to identify the most environmentally friendly technologies and whenever possible to adopt them.

- Open Source

CRIN decided to opt for using OpenSource and an operational system called Ubuntu, instead of the mainstream Windows. The term "open source" refers to software that can be freely redistributed, analysed and modified by anyone. Its fundamental features are to be free, open and collaborative. As CRIN believes information should be made freely available in a variety of formats, using OpenSource is entirely in line with CRIN's values.

- Solar Powered Website

CRIN has opted for environmentally focused IT solutions to reduce the environmental impact of its IT services and reduce its energy requirements. The Green IT Company has supported CRIN to move to a Solar powered Virtual Server.

Solar Energy Host is the conscious solution for green web hosting in an age of global warming and climate change. CRIN website is hosted by AISO (Affordable Internet Services Online) using solar energy that means the energy powering the CRIN website comes directly from the

sun!

AISO is a green web hosting company committed to help fight pollution and preserve our natural resources by owning and operating their own green data centre and network that is powered by solar panels, not energy credits.

### **3. Publications**

CRIN's activities are based on the belief that information is a powerful tool for realising children's rights. As information is CRIN's main tool to achieve its objectives, it is important that the ethos of copyrights adopted by CRIN reflect CRIN's overarching principles.

- **Copyrights**

In line with the OpenSource principles, CRIN has adopted the Creative Commons licensing. The non profit organisation Creative Commons was influenced by the OpenSource software movement, and released a set of free copyright licences in 2002. These tools enable creators, or authors, to publish their content more easily, to have their creative works found by others more readily, and most importantly, to have their creative works used on more flexible terms than the traditional "all rights reserved" approach of default copyright protection.

Creative Commons licensing provides CRIN with the dual function of keeping its copyrights and ensuring that CRIN's work is credited but also allowing free access to CRIN information materials and publications.

### **4. Green Policy**

CRIN endeavours to contract services that have a green policy or that are eco-friendly. Wherever possible and appropriate, for instance by purchasing recycled goods. These include:

- **Green Stationery Supplies**

CRIN strives to purchase recycled stationery supplies. One of CRIN's suppliers is The Green Stationery Company.

- **Recycled Furniture**

CRIN decided to furnish its new office with second hand furniture only. This has proved to be both environmentally friendly and cost effective. CRIN purchased all the furniture from First Fruit Warehousing, which works in partnership with Green-Works, to sell used, recycled office furniture and re-manufactured office furniture received from large corporate donors. . In addition, they employ people with a history of unemployment and/or homelessness and provide training and support to help them move into wider employment.

- **Local Council Recycling Scheme**

CRIN subscribes to the Southwark Council Recycling scheme that includes the collection of plastic bottles and cans, paper and card.

- **Printing**

CRIN encourages staff to minimise printing, use recycled paper, double sided printing, re-use paper and envelopes, etc. We are also reducing the amount of publications we print and limit them to those who do not have regular internet access.

- **Energy**

CRIN attempts to minimise energy consumption as much as possible, by for instance, ensuring computers are switched off and not using air conditioning. As mentioned earlier, the CRIN website is solar powered.

## Who we are

### CRIN in London

Veronica Yates, Director  
Jennifer Thomas, Child Rights Officer  
Simon Flacks, Child Rights Officer  
Patrick Geary, Legal Coordinator  
Stefania Ricci, Office Manager

### CRIN in Cairo

Eman Herzallah, Arabic Translator

### CRIN Globally

The extent of CRIN's reach would not be possible without the help of dedicated volunteers – whether as office interns or home-based translators around the world. In particular, we would like to thank: Nasser Atallah, Lora Sfeir, Ed Renshaw, Victor Sande Aneiros, Mariel Velázquez and Philippe Siedel. And also Catalina Briebea, Sandra Smiley, Michelle Gunaselan and Sarah Pugh.

Our **French** translators: Floriane Begasse, Juliette Rubenstein, Annie Rigler and Alex Matine. Our **Spanish** translators: Blanca García Puente, Susana Raffel, Manuela Villajos, Armando Arias, and Sandra Egea, Luis Reategui, Sara Crespo Vásquez, Maria Lidon Mateo, Pablo Almirón, Rosy Sánchez, Melisa Ogliastri, Mar Jimenez. Our **Russian** translators: Vica Schmidt, Irina van der Vet. Our **Portuguese** translators: Roberta Levy and Cris M. Saragoça.

### CRIN Trustees

CRIN is supported in its work by a Board of Trustees composed of representatives of international children's rights organisations and other experts within the field of children's rights. The role of the Board is to oversee the financial and strategic management of CRIN's work.

Peter Newell, Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children - Chair  
Mike Annison, Christian Aid - Treasurer  
Paul Bode, Plan International – Secretary (until end of 2009)  
Bill Bell, Save the Children UK  
Gema Vicente, Amnesty International  
Sven Winberg, formerly of Save the Children Sweden  
Eva Geidenmark, Save the Children Sweden  
Andres Guerrero, UNICEF  
Knut Haanes, Deputy Ombudsman for Children, Norway.

We would also, once again, particularly like to thank Graham Miles for his work on our website, Encryption Ltd, for kindly helping us to improve website security and Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP, for their pro bono legal services. Many thanks also to Sacha El Masry for setting up our IT system in our new office, John Henstock for his photos, and finally Omar and everyone else at NaganJohnson for making us feel so welcome in our new offices.

### Donors

CRIN's work is funded by: The Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Tides Foundation, the Oak Foundation, the American Jewish World Service, Save the Children Sweden, UNICEF, Plan International, and Save the Children Sweden Regional Office for the MENA Region.

**Finances: CRIN Expenditure from April 2009 to March 2010**

<b>Budget: Expend</b>	<b>Expend 2009 – 2010 (12 months)</b>
<b>Staff Costs</b>	
Salaries	169,612.00
Arabic Programme	5,721.86
Consultant: research, advocacy	2,645.00
Consultant: fundraising	-
Consultant: IT	4,220.00
Volunteer Expenses	399.07
Staff Development	-
Recruitment	-
Travel and subsistence	10,024.13
Payroll services	371.15
Pension	3,761.02
	-
<b>Office Costs</b>	-
Office Rent	14,400.00
Business Rates	1,728.00
Furniture	621.25
Office Supplies	1,368.17
Office Equipment	726.80
Postage	3,157.46
Office Cleaning	421.85
Bank Charges	237.00
Internet	824.49
Phone	710.77
	-
<b>Legal &amp; Professional fees</b>	-
Audit fees	4,076.75
Fees for Company House	15.00
Insurance	483.52
	-
<b>Board Costs</b>	-
Board of Trustees	1,482.86
	-
<b>Activities Costs</b>	-
Web development	7,781.00
Open Source server development	950.50
ISP Annual Fee	1,281.00
Publications: design and printing	6,932.11
Translations	4,527.79
Proofreading	137.50
CRC 20 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary Events	0
Marketing Materials	120.79
NGO Group for CRC	1,308.00
	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>250,046.84</b>

*"[This CRINMAIL] is great! It is amazingly useful, for those with busy work days...to be able to read about major happenings in the child rights world...Brilliant work!" (Palestinian NGO)*

*"CRIN has been playing an important role on the field of child rights information sharing worldwide and this review edition gives an added-value to the overall efforts [of] the secretariat team...to keep members updated on children issues." (Child rights NGO, Mozambique)*

*"I am a PhD candidate working here in Geneva on the right of the child to health and I was very happy to find your Case Law Database. It is very informative and useful. I just wanted to send my congratulations to you for this great initiative."*

*"The work of your organisation is very inspiring. How can I join?!" (Badar)*

*"Everytime I visit your website I'm astonished over how much interesting information you have collected, and if I start searching for one thing, I always find at least five more things to read about and be inspired by." (Child rights advocate, Sweden)*

*"When you do these kind of studies, you can fear that no one will read it, so I am grateful to CRIN for being so prompt in putting it on your site." (Child rights expert, Canada)*

## **Contact us**

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