

Name

Kenya Alliance for Advancement of Children (KAACR)

Country

Kenya

Geographical Region

Africa

Background and History of the Alliance

The need for consolidated efforts by NGOs started in 1988 with the formation of a National NGO Liaison Committee on the rights of the child. The Primary goal of the committee was then to popularize the draft convention on the CRC and to lobby the Government of Kenya to adopt and ratify the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child when it come into force.

The Committee facilitated regional seminars attended by children and youth, NGOs and government officials on the draft CRC. The regional conferences accumulated into a national Conference on the Promotion and Implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in December 1989. This conference was attended by National NGOs, international NGOs, Government representatives UN bodies, children and young persons from all the provinces in Kenya. The conference resolved to establish a national body to be known as the *“National Alliance for Advocacy on Children Rights”* to *monitor and evaluate the implementation and non-observance of the principles and provisions of the Convention within Kenya on a continuous and permanent basis.*

The conference further mandated the liaison committee to :-

- Transform itself into the founding members under the leadership of Child Welfare Society of Kenya;
- Ensure the establishment of the *“National Alliance for Advocacy on Children Rights (NAACR)”*. The given name by the conference was later changed to Kenya Alliance for Advancement of Children (KAACR).
- Establish mechanisms to monitor and evaluate the implementation and non-observance of the principles and provisions of the Convention within Kenya on a continuous and permanent basis.

Achievements made since it's inception

The alliance since its launching in 1989 has:

- Mobilized NGO participation in the development of the National Plan of Action to implement the World Summit Goals for children;
- Advocated for inclusion of the girl child section in the Beijing Platform for Action during 4th UN World Conference on Women;
- Lobbied for an improved Children Bill to enhance the domestication of CRC in Kenya;
- Translated and printed CRC into Kiswahili through Christian Children Fund - a founder member;

- Encouraged and supported the formation of Children Right Clubs in schools;
- Developed common materials for use in the establishment of Child Right Clubs;
- Reviewed of the bill on disability with the intention of incorporating rights of children with disabilities;
- Lobbied for recognition of children rights during the process of reviewing the Constitution of the Republic of Kenya;
- Lobbied for recognition of non formal schools by the Ministry of Education;
- Facilitated NGO participation in the production of the first Kenya country report on implementation of the CRC;
- Facilitated a research on education of girls in collaboration with unicef KCO and member organizations leading to a national conference on the Girl Child. This resulted in the establishment of Girl Child Desk and Gender Task Force in the Ministry of Education and eventually the establishment of the Girl Child Network;
- Produced the first directory of agencies working with children in Kenya;
- Produced the second edition of the directory jointly with SNV Street Children Programme, a members of the CRC committee.

How the Alliance works

The alliance has a secretariat whose primary responsibility is to encourage networking for maximum result in lobbying and furthering the implementation and monitoring of the CRC and its observance in Kenya. The alliance works through Committees hosted by members or the secretariat, and through issues based networks.

The alliance does not attempt to coordinate or supervise activities of its members, but rather encourages cooperation through discussion and dialogue.

A number of committees have been formed to meet specific needs in realizing the rights of children in Kenya such as : –

1. The Working Committee on NGO CRC - was formed in 1997 to facilitate the compilation of the first Kenya Country report on implementation of the CRC and later the development of the supplementary report presented during the pre-session of the 28th Session of the UN Committee on the CRC in June 2001. The Kenya Country Director of Save the Children Canada, who is also a board member of KAACR, presently chairs this committee.

2. The Working Committee on Legal and Policy Reform - this committee was established in 1994. It's mandate is to monitor all new legislations to ensure they are child-friendly, lobby for the review of 65 acts of parliament, which touch on children matters to be in compliance with CRC, lobby for child friendly policies to ensure full implementation of CRC.

This committee has been responsible for lobbying for an improved Children Bill since 1995 and establishment of the gender taskforce in the Ministry of Education.

3. The Working Committee on Child Rights Clubs - This committee is composed of child rights clubs facilitators. The purpose of this committee is to organize club activities including celebrations for the Day of the African Child and Universal Children's Week.

4. The Working Committee on Training and Capacity Building – This committee works at regional levels to identify training needs for agencies working for and with children, and conducts the trainings. This committee has in past organized training for police officers, in-service training for teachers on understanding gender related violence, in-service training on counselling for frontline workers since 1996.

5. The Working Committee on Preparations leading to UNGASS – this is a temporary committee formed to facilitate preparation and discussion of the draft outcome document. The committee will dissolve once UN General Assembly Special Session on Children (UNGASS) is over.

6. The Working Committee on Children and HIV/AIDS - The primary goal of this committee is to lobby for Child-friendly Policy on children affected and infected by HIV/Aids. This committee is currently chaired by a board member of NGO Council, and housed by Young Muslim Association, a member organization.

7. Children Caucus for Constitution Reform in Kenya - is a temporary initiative whose primary objective is to market the children's agenda in the Constitutional Reform to civic educators. The caucus' aims is to produce civic education materials on children rights and the constitution, encourage member organizations to assist and ensure children's active participation in the debate on constitutional review. The caucus will dissolve itself once the review process is completed.

8. Networks and Issues Specific Committees

The secretariat sits on various committees focusing on specific matters on children such as: -

- End Child Prostitution in Kenya coordinated by Child Welfare Society of Kenya.
- Forum for Human Rights Education in Schools coordinated by the Legal Resource Foundation.
- Girl Child Network under CARE Kenya
- Gender Taskforce in the Ministry of Education
- National committee on policy on children in the Ministry of Home Affairs and National Heritage.

Planned activities for the next five years

- Lobby the government to enact the Children's Bill and review other 19 acts of parliament to comply with the UNCRC;
- Advocate for implementation of CRC and other treaties/policies on children;
- Empower partners to enable them implement rights-based programmes;
- Lobby the government to ratify the special protocols on the Convention on the Rights of the Child;
- Produce the NGO newsletter on child related activities;

- Jointly with member organizations offering legal aid to children, sensitize judicial officers on use of CRC in their work;
- Strengthen networking among CSO/NGO/CBOs;
- Establish CRC monitoring committee in 8 provinces;
- Facilitate the production of timely CRC report to CRC committee in Geneva;
- Compile bi-annual progress report on CRC implementation for presentation to members;
- Undertake research on subjects suggested and recommended by members;
- Produce CRC materials for use by members;
- Establish and maintain a Website on CRC activities for use by all members;
- Maintain an updated resource centre.

Membership

The alliance has an open membership to all NGOs and agencies working with and for children in Kenya driven by their interest in the CRC.

Achievements & Partnership

- Our first and major achievement is the production of the first Kenya country report on the implementation of the CRC and a supplementary report;
- Active participation in improving on the children bill which is currently in Parliament;
- Production of training manual on the Convention on the Rights of the Child;
- Production of a directory of agencies working with children in Kenya;
- Production of training manual on counseling for front line workers;
- Establishment of Children Rights Clubs in school by member organizations and teachers;
- Translation of CRC in Kiswahili by CCF which is a member organization;
- Simplified CRC in child friendly material for use by members and children clubs in schools;
- Production of material on children on shared bases with children and national and international development organizations such as SNV Street Children Programme - a Dutch development agency in Kenya, Save the Children Canada and Action Aid Kenya.

Current Situation

Our mission is to ensure domestication of the CRC through legislation, policy formulation, improved service delivery, strengthened networking among CBOs/NGOs/CSOs and production of monitoring report on CRC. The biggest challenge we are facing is that children issues are not high up on the political agenda at the moment. We are also too dependent on donors for financial support to do our work.

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