Child Rights Information Network

Annual Report 2005
Coordinating Unit staff
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Volunteers and Interns
We are thankful to the volunteers and interns who work within the coordinating unit and who contribute their many of hours of work. This includes Jennifer Thomas, Mounir Kanoubi, Nick, Joy + current volunteers

CRIN Management Team
Bill Bell, Save the Children UK
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Youssef Hajjar, Arab Resource Collective
Peter Crowley, UNICEF, Office of Public Partnerships
Andres Guerrero, UNICEF, Office of Public Partnerships
Introduction

The Child Rights Information Network (CRIN) celebrates its tenth anniversary this year. In the last decade, awareness of the importance of the rights of children has rapidly risen on the international development agenda. Not only has the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) been ratified by virtually all the world’s governments but there has also been a huge international effort by NGOs and international organisations to persuade governments to take this commitment seriously through following up on the implementation of the CRC and through monitoring and advocacy in order to assess and promote real change in the lives of children.

Notwithstanding these efforts - and some real improvements in children’s lives as a result - there is little room for complacency. The rights of millions of children continue to be ignored, their plight exacerbated by unforeseen disasters. 2005, for example, opened with the Tsunami disaster which disproportionately affected children. However, the greater part of children’s suffering is avoidable. Through the last decade, more and more violations of rights have been exposed and addressed. Indeed, one of the impacts of the CRC has been to broaden the focus of attention to many different aspects of children’s rights and lives.

Information - researching, disseminating, sharing - is critical in the process of making public violations of children’s rights in all their guises. In its ten years of operation, CRIN has established itself as one of the key information providers on child rights globally. We are proud of the role and recognise that it would not be possible to perform it without the participation of many individuals and organisations across the world, nor without the support of a small number of sponsoring organisations (see the financial statement at the end of the report). Thank you!

2005 has been an important year for CRIN through diversification into new project areas. Attention has been focused on four main activities: the consolidation and improvement of existing information products and services; the launch of a new information service on rights based programming; the creation of a civil society gateway that accompanies the UN Study on Violence against Children; and the redesign and modernisation of the CRIN website.

CRIN has become one of the largest networks within the global child rights community. 1547 child rights organisations in 137 countries have joined CRIN as members. About 86 per cent of those organisations are NGOs and 60 per cent are located in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. CRIN services the needs of another 2,200 organisations and individuals who have joined its mailing lists without becoming members. Subscriptions to CRIN’s email news and information bulletins (CRINMAILs) exceed 8000 addresses.
CRIN at a glance

Reginal Distribution of CRIN Members
Total 1547 organisations

- Africa: 26%
- Americas: 14%
- Asia: 29%
- Europe: 29%
- Oceania: 2%

Membership distribution

Five countries with most members

Growth in CRIN membership since 1995

Services to Members

- Thematic newsletters (English French and Spanish)
- CRINMAILs (twice weekly English, monthly others)
- Directory of Child Rights Organisations
- Annual reports and working papers
- Child rights information support
- Organisation and resource pages on [www.crin.org](http://www.crin.org)

The Website contains information on:

- **Resources**: Publications catalogue | News on child rights | Newsletters | Events | Email lists | **CRINMAIL**: Organisations: Directory of child rights organisations (CRIN Members) | About CRIN section | Website of the NGO Group for the CRC.
CRIN Activities 2005

1. Directory of members

The CRIN website carries essential information on children’s organisations around the world who have become members of CRIN and who are committed to promoting child rights and the full implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

As can be seen from the graph in the ‘CRIN at a glance’ section above, membership of CRIN continues to grow. By the end of 2005, 1547 organisations in 137 countries were registered with CRIN, representing a growth of 9 per cent over the previous year, the highest growth rate since 2001.

During 2005 steps have been taken to increase membership in: the Arabic speaking region, in Latin America and in the former Soviet states.

The Directory of Members includes non-governmental organisations (NGOs), United Nations agencies, inter-governmental organisations, government agencies, educational institutions and other child rights practitioners.

It is a key resource for organisations wishing to link up with others that are working in the same country or region or that want to make contact with child rights organisations further afield. It provides a means for child rights organisations to share information, document good practice and to network. Inclusion in the directory helps organisations to position themselves within the child rights community at large.

For more detailed information about members you can consult the on-line Directory of Child Rights Organisations on the website. (www.crin.org/organisations/). This can be searched according to: Region in which CRIN members work | Country where the office is located and countries in which the organisation works | Areas of expertise such as child labour, sexual exploitation, etc. | Organisational mandate | Contact details including a “main CRIN Contact”

2. CRINMAIL

A regular e-mail news and information service, produced in different languages and covering both general and specialised topics. CRINMAILs provide news bulletins about child rights issues, new publications and upcoming events and courses, and job announcements. Anyone can join the mailing list for free from the CRIN website. There are currently over 8000 subscriptions to CRINMAIL.

Two new CRINMAILs were introduced in 2005: Rights CRINMAIL covering rights based programming and Violence against Children (in conjunction with the NGO Group’s subgroup on Children and Violence) to accompany the development of the UN Study on Children and Violence.

CRINMAIL subscribers and total messages
December 2005

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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>8411</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Changes to CRINMAIL in 2005 included:

- The introduction of two new CRINMAILs on Rights Based Programming and on Children and Violence;
- In conjunction with the NGO Group for the CRC and the Secretariat of the Committee on the Rights of the Child in Geneva, coverage of the sessions of the CRC has been made more thorough. CRINMAILs now cover the preparations for each session (including all details of the resources submitted to each session), the sessions as they are taking place, and information of the outcomes of each session.
- A shift of focus of French and Spanish CRINMAILs to include more relevant international news and information;
- Owing to a high growth in the amount of information submitted to CRIN by members and other individuals, not all items can now be included in CRINMAILs. Instead, new specialist areas of the website have been set up to carry such items (see the website section below).

A good example of innovations introduced to CRINMAIL and related web resources is CRIN’s coverage of the 61st. meeting of the Commission on Human Rights (14 March - 22 April 2005). Working closely with the convener of the NGO Group subgroup of the CHR, CRIN assembled a package of materials on the CHR and, for a period of two weeks, daily updates on the CHR. The package included:

1. A web page for the CHR carrying resources and links relevant to child rights in English, French and Spanish (see www.crin.org/chr);
2. Daily reports on Morning Briefings, Side events and plenary sessions at the CHR in English, French and Spanish (see www.crin.org/chr/reports.htm).
3. CRIN produced daily reports of the CHR drawing on different sources and providing a readable summary of events each day, sent as a CRINMAIL to nearly 600 subscribers, posted on the CRIN website and then Save the Children UK intranet, and distributed in Geneva and SCUK in hard copy. See http://www.crin.org/CHR/news/index.asp

The following CRINMAILs are now produced on a regular basis:
- CRINMAIL English: Regular news bulletins about child rights issues as well as information about new publications, events, jobs and courses. At least half of the source material for CRINMAIL is provided by members.
- French and Spanish CRINMAIL: Covering similar issues as English CRINMAILs but tailored to information needs in Francophone and Spanish speaking regions.
- Children and Armed Conflict CRINMAIL: Covering issues that include child soldiers, landmines, small arms, refugees and internally displaced children, HIV/AIDS, gender, and conflict.
- CRINMAIL Child Rights Caucus: The NGO Group for the CRC’s subgroup on the Commission on Human Rights brings together NGOs working to promote the rights of the child at the annual United Nations Commission on Human Rights. In order to enhance the co-operation and efficiency of child rights NGOs at the Commission on Human Rights, it created the Child Rights Caucus to ensure coordinated action on children’s rights through daily meetings and permanent up-dates during the Commission.
- Rights CRINMAIL: Covering all aspects of rights based programming with a particular, but not exclusive, focus on children.
- Children and Violence CRINMAIL: Providing regular updates on the UN Study on Children and Violence with a particular emphasis on civil society organisations involved in the study including the regional consultations for the study and subsequent representations to UN bodies.

To contribute to any of the above, write to info@crin.org. To subscribe visit www.crin.org/email.

3. The Website

The website (www.crin.org) is at the heart of CRIN’s work. Updated daily, it is a leading resource on child rights issues; containing references to thousands of reports, recent news and upcoming events, as well as an online directory of child rights organisations. The site also includes the NGO
alternative reports submitted to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child - the only site where they are available on the internet.

The importance of the website is reflected in the growth in its use over the last three years. Whilst web statistics need to interpreted with caution, the overall trend of growth of use is clearly illustrated in the graph of visits and pageviews between 2003 and 2005 below.

![Website visits and pageviews](image)

New introductions to the website in 2005 have included:

- Frequently asked question pages in English, French, Spanish and Arabic;
- The launch of the Rights Based Programming and Children and Violence sites (see below);
- Specialised news pages including: Members news, Disability news, MDG news, CHR coverage, and CRC news
- A page covering the 15th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child;
- Additional pages in French and Spanish, and a set of pilot pages in Arabic. All can be accessed from the home page.

Two completely new areas of the website were made live in 2005 representing a new direction in the treatment of thematic topics in child rights. These are detailed below.

**Rights–based programming**

The site was operational at the start of 2005 (see www.therightsapproach.org). It contains sections on:

- **Documents**: a library of key documents, each with an introduction, that is added to regularly.
- **Information**: announcements, events and courses and links.
- **The Guide**: a set of introductory pages on rights-based programming for those new to the area. Links to further readings are provided for each page. The Guide is available in English, French and Spanish.
- **Themes**: all the information on the site is sorted by different themes for quick and easy access. Current themes include: Budgets | Children | Education | Emergencies | Gender | Health | HIV/AIDS | Monitoring and Evaluation | Overviews of Rights-Based Approaches | Participation | Poverty and Livelihoods | Water
- **Search**: by author, title and summary text. Advanced search adds other variables to help locate the exact resource you want.
Children and Violence Civil Society Gateway
The second website to be launched in 2005 was the civil society gateway on the UN Study on Violence (www.childrenandviolence.org). It was created as a response to the information needs of civil society organisations involved in the study.
Integrated with resources on the rest of the CRIN website, the violence site already carries several hundred reports, news items and events. It contains the following features:

- A home page updated daily with news and resources relevant to the study;
- Regional coverage of the study with detailed information from the nine regional consultations that took place in 2005 (six of which were attended by a CRIN staff member);
- A Q&A page on the study;
- A page for children interested in the study holding child friendly resources;
- An indexing system and advanced search facility to allow easy location of resources by subject, keyword, region, etc.

Website redesign
On the basis of the experience gained in the above additions to the CRIN website, the whole of the site has undergone an overhaul in the course of 2005. The administrative system has been revamped to facilitate the greater volume of work and to increase the efficiency of data inputting. This includes the integration of previously separate CRIN products into the website, for example latest CRINMAILs and archives are now available on the site.

The presentation of the site has also been re-designed with improved navigation, a clean design, a new search engine, rapidly loading pages and other many other new features. The new site will be available in early 2006.

4. Newsletter
Newsletters are published in English, French and Spanish, and examine a specific theme in depth as well as summarising news, events, campaigns and publications; It is distributed in hard copy to all members plus another 2200 organisations and individual subscribers. The Newsletter is the most popular download from the website.

In 2005, Newsletter 18, “Rights Based Programming with Children: an introduction”, was published (available at www.crin.org/about/newsletter.asp). Accompanying the new web area on the topic, the newsletter is written by experts in the field and is aimed at an audience of practitioners new to the area who wish to incorporate child rights programming into their work.

Contents:
Editorial
Where we are now?
Finding the RBA way - four international views
Achieving a common understanding at the UN
New moves for bilateral aid agencies
Introducing rights based programming - regional insights from South Asia and Latin America
Warnings and ways forward
Challenges for a rights based approach
Factfile: Questions and Answers
Factfile: Reviews of five essential books and what they offer
Factfile: Glossary
A resource CD is distributed as an insert to the Newsletter.

CD contents
The Guide, an introduction to rights based programming for those new to the area. The Guide is available in English, French and Spanish.

A catalogue of over 100 documents with extended summaries and catalogued according to document types (training and ‘how to’; analysis and discussion; reviews and evaluations; human rights references; links) and themes (overviews; budgets; children; education; emergencies; gender; health; HIV/AIDS; monitoring and evaluation; participation; poverty and livelihoods; water).

French and Spanish resources on the CD are presented on separate pages, and several parts of the CD are translated into French and Spanish to aid a wider usefulness.

5. Other Publications
Since 2001 when CRIN’s current website was launched, details of 5000 full text and bibliographic materials on child rights have been collected and posted on the website. This includes books, working papers, conference proceedings, journal articles and more, on a range of issues relating to children and their rights. It also covers the latest research on emerging areas. Most of these resources are available to download as full text.

Owing to an increase in requests on specialised areas, CRIN is continuing to produce specialised readers on aspects of child rights. These are short annotated bibliographies with a selection of the best resources freely available on the topic. In 2005, three new readers have been produced on: Children in Armed Conflict; Child Rights Based Programming and Children and HIV/AIDS. See http://www.crin.org/resources/viewResourcesP.asp?projID=17.

6. Events
As with publications, events are posted on the CRIN website and announced in CRINMAILs. The events calendar provides details of key events in child rights, including conferences, workshops and United Nations meetings including sessions of the Committee on the Rights of the Child.
Throughout 2005, a monthly Events CRINMAIL has been produced highlighting upcoming events internationally.

7. Public enquiries
The CRIN Coordinating Unit processes an average of 70 emails per day, as well as enquiries by telephone, post and fax. These are from members, the media, other organisations or individuals working on child rights, and members of the public including a growing number of children and young people. Some emails are specific requests for information and others are submissions of information for wider circulation. Responding to information requests from members and public enquiries is an important, and time consuming, aspect of the work of the CRIN office.
The subject of enquiries includes general information about child rights, specific enquiries about child rights in different countries, membership enquiries, legal assistance for custody issues, complaints about child rights abuses, child abuse, etc, financial assistance, and membership information.

Coordinating Unit staff have produced a set of standard responses to common queries. These can be sent as emails or by post and are in three languages (English, French and Spanish). They have also been posted on the website as FAQs (in English, French, Spanish and Arabic). See www.crin.org/faqs.
CRIN’s Objectives 2004 – 2006

In late 2003, CRIN underwent a review of its core values and of its activities. It involved a range of stakeholders past and present and resulted in a Business Plan for the period 2004 to 2006. The main outcomes of the review are presented here.

CRIN is an independent forum for the exchange of information about child rights. We assist the work of all those people and organisations committed to the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).

CRIN aims to democratise information on child rights and to encourage information sharing between different parts of the world and different actors in the implementation of the CRC. CRIN seeks to empower the child rights community and to accelerate implementation of the Convention. It does this by providing a central clearinghouse for such information and by making information available in a variety of formats and media.

CRIN’s strives:

- To meet the information needs of organisations and individuals working for children’s rights;
- To support and promote the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child;
- To support organisations in gathering, handling, producing and disseminating child rights information.

These objectives are expressed in CRIN’s core values, namely:

- Children have rights as laid down in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. CRIN plays a part in the international effort to implement the CRC
- The CRC is the centre of our work as reflected in both the content of our products and in the criteria for membership of CRIN. The implementation of the CRC remains a huge challenge facing governments and civil society, including more specific targets as reflected in A World Fit for Children and, more generally, the Millennium Development Goals.
- Information is an important tool for empowering children and the organisations that work directly with children
- CRIN acts as a clearinghouse for information on child rights. Improving and increasing global and regional access to good quality, dispassionate and accurate information on child rights is a central concern of CRIN’s work.
- CRIN is product oriented. The product is information
- CRIN has gained its good reputation by getting things done. Maintaining our quality products and services for members and others interested in child rights will ensure our usefulness and continuity.
- CRIN has a bias towards meeting the information needs of the resource poor
- Whilst CRIN members are spread across the world, we maintain a particular focus on redistributing from the “information rich” to the “information poor”. In this sense CRIN democratises information. This focus also puts an onus on CRIN to translate information such that it is useful to the widest possible audience in Asia, Africa and Latin America.
- Because of inequalities in access to information media, especially electronic, CRIN uses mixed media and multiple formats
- There are still many barriers to access to ICTs, despite a growth in Internet use. Slow connection speeds, limited access time, expense and other negative features of the digital divide make it essential to continue to provide a choice of media to our members wherever practicable. Print media is still the preferred alternative to electronic communication.
- CRIN is responsive to members’ needs but strikes a balance between listening and leading
- CRIN is responsive to the expressed needs of members and plans its activities accordingly. CRIN also seeks to take a lead in information provision and sees the translation of information into knowledge and learning as an important role.
### Financial information April 2004 to March 2005

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### Notes
1. Save the Children UK hosts CRIN Coordinating Unit with office space and facilities, IT and Human Resources support.
The Child Rights Information Network (CRIN) is an independent, non-partisan forum for the exchange of information that assists the work of all those committed to the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. CRIN aims to democratise information on child rights and to encourage information sharing between different parts of the world and different actors in the implementation of the UNCRC. CRIN was formally established in 1995 but has a history dating back to 1991.

Information is disseminated to thousands of individuals and organisations around the world, including over 1,500 organisations that have formally joined as members of the Child Rights Information Network.