Child Rights Information Network

Annual Report 2006
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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 Mayya Assaad, Paolo Barbaglia, Camino Garcia, Giulia Girardi, Anggreini Kasanan, Miriam Keith, Helen Parker, Marie Ripoll, Rosa Sanz Delgado de Molina, Natalia Streuli and Airlie Taylor.

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Sven Winberg, Save the Children Sweden
Youssef Hajjar, Arab Resource Collective
1. Introduction

More than 1,700 members in over 140 countries have joined the CRIN network since its launch ten years ago. In response to the needs of those members, CRIN has established, strengthened and expanded a set of core services that aim to satisfy an ever-increasing thirst for accurate, up-to-date information on children’s rights. CRIN works in four languages (English, French, Spanish and Arabic) and provides information both electronically and in hard copy.

Overtime, CRIN has developed a more proactive approach in its activities, focusing on key issues that reflect the interests of its members. As such, CRIN has provided greater in-depth coverage and analysis of key UN events and processes (such as the UN General Assembly Special Session on Children), including the incorporation of children’s rights into the UN human rights system.

CRIN’s growth has also been fuelled through partnerships with key actors in the child rights arena, including UNICEF, INGOs and the NGO Group for the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

A recent priority for CRIN has been the provision of a civil society gateway for the UN Secretary General’s Study on Violence Against Children. Work included the development of a thematic website on children and violence, with a particular focus on civil society and the involvement of children and young people in the Study process. This involved reporting on regional consultations for the Study and other events.

Other issues covered by CRIN have included the drafting of the new disability Convention, the on-going sessions of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, annual sessions of the UN Commission on Human Rights, UN Reform processes (with a particular focus on the negotiations of the new Human Rights Council), HIV and AIDS and its impact on children, child rights and emergencies, and Security Council debates on children and armed conflict.

In 2006, the most significant development for CRIN’s services was the February launch of the new website, which prompted a substantial increase in website traffic. The revamped site makes use of emerging technologies and has new sections in French, Spanish and Arabic.

2. CRIN strategic priorities 2006 – 09

During the course of 2006, CRIN reviewed its aims and objectives and agreed a new strategy to take CRIN forward for the next three years.

CRIN will continue to expand its coverage of children’s rights by focusing on international events or campaigns that address threats to children’s rights, or that invite the opportunity to promote children’s rights.

CRIN’s overall strategic priority for the coming years is to become stronger and more influential in supporting the
promotion of children’s rights. This will be achieved by:

a) Taking a more proactive approach to information management in order to encourage and support the advocacy activities of others
CRIN will build upon the existing provision of information to identify, develop and feed an active child rights advocacy network. The choice of advocacy activities will be made according to CRIN’s overall aim of promoting the fullest possible implementation of the CRC, its Optional Protocols and other relevant instruments.

b) Focusing on ‘neglected’ and ‘new and emerging’ children’s rights issues
The size of CRIN’s membership means huge quantities of information pass through the network daily, offering insights into the issues faced by members. CRIN can identify ‘new and emerging issues’ and help bring them to the attention of those who can use this information for the promotion of children’s rights. Similarly, there are issues raised by children themselves that CRIN could give more attention to, thus promoting children’s right to participate

c) Developing a more explicit focus on key audiences, identified by their ability to achieve greater recognition of children’s rights
The responsibility for promoting and advocating for the effective implementation of children’s rights does not lie solely with NGOs. CRIN already works with many child rights ‘champions’, but there are other sectors and groupings, as well as new networks, whether regional, thematic, or language-based, that are not using CRIN. CRIN will develop a proactive process to recruit and engage such participants, while continuing to work with existing networks and partners. CRIN will also continue to develop its services in languages other than English (French, Spanish and Arabic so far).

3. CRIN Activities 2006

New website
As mentioned in the introduction, CRIN’s biggest development in 2006 was the launch of the new website. The old CRIN website was functional but required some changes in both the user interface, to make the diversity of resources on the site easier to access, and the content management system, to enable more efficient data entry.

Improvements to the new website include a new design, a new homepage highlighting latest information added to the site, improved navigation, more entry point options and a series of new features and tools to increase Member participation in the network.

1. New features
In practical terms, some of the new features have included:
- CRINMAILs are now managed and generated using the website content management system instead of through an external source. This ensures they are stored on the site, enabling users to search CRINMAIL archives.
- Country pages that can be accessed from the homepage and which display latest resources, events and news related to that country. Each country page also displays a list of CRIN Members in that country.
- Themes: each theme desk displays latest items related to that theme, and lists a number of CRIN Member organisations that work in that area.
- A ‘latest’ section on the homepage, which shows latest news, events or publications added to the site. This feature also links to individual search pages for all types of resources.
- A For Children section: a new page where children can find links to helplines, information about children’s rights and the Convention, links to games and other tools, information about reporting online abuse, etc.
- Feature boxes: for staff to display on various homepages to highlight a specific event or theme, etc.
- A new look: new colours, photos, etc.

2. An interactive website
As the website is CRIN’s most used service, it was important to offer more interactive tools for Members and all users of the site. Some of the new
features that have been developed on the site include:

- 'Have your say': allows visitors to the site to comment on any resource added to the website
- Subscribers to CRINMAIL can manage their own accounts on the website with a username and password
- Organisations can apply for membership online
- Organisations can submit resources online
- CRIN Members all have access to the Content Management System of the CRIN site, which means that they can log in and change their profile in the CRIN directory, and add their own resources.
- RSS, which stands for 'Real Simple Syndication', is a tool used by media companies that gives users the option to select what information they are interested in and get that information delivered to them, without having to log onto the CRIN site and search.
- Quizzes: weekly quizzes are now prepared by CRIN staff on the site for users to find out about latest developments on child rights issues. Answers include references and links to further information elsewhere on the site.

3. A multilingual website

In an effort to be more regionally sensitive, but also reach out to more potential users, the website now includes separate sections for each language that CRIN works in. Accessible from the homepage, users can now go to a French, a Spanish and an Arabic homepage. Features unique to each language homepage include:

- A separate menu with links to relevant pages and sections
- Links to the latest CRINMAIL and the CRINMAIL archives (in each language)
- An RSS for French and Spanish
- Latest information
- A search option
- Feature boxes for special events, etc.

These are available at the following links:
- Español: http://www.crin.org/espanol/
- Français: http://www.crin.org/francais/
- Arabic: http://www.crin.org/arabic/

4. CRIN as portal

CRIN has been hosting and managing the website of the NGO Group for many years now. In recent years, several networks have been developed which could have a thematic focus, a regional focus or bring together similar types of organisations. In an effort to engage with such networks that share similar aims, CRIN has offered to host these sites, enabling new networks to link in to CRIN’s existing databases, thus sharing the information already available. Called 'microsites’, the aim is for these sites to be developed along the lines of the Children and Violence and Rights Based Programming microsites, offering more detailed information and search options for specific themes or areas of work.

New microsites developed in 2006 include:

1. Better Care Network (BCN), hosted by CRIN, but developed and managed by BCN
2. The European Network of Ombudspersons for Children (ENOC), hosted and managed by CRIN
3. The European Children’s Network (EURONET), developed and managed by EURONET (launch in January 2007)

5. Facts and figures

![Website Visits and Pageviews](chart)

4.1. CRINMAILs

CRINMAIL is a regular email news and information service, produced in different languages and 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.
CRINMAIL has become our flagship publication; sent out in four different languages, with over 8,000 subscribers for eight different lists. Anyone can subscribe to the list for free and submit items to be included.

The development of the new CRIN website has been complemented by an improvement in the design and delivery of CRINMAILs. With the exception of the CRINMAIL Arabic*, CRINMAIL lists are now being sent from the website which means they are archived on the website and searchable. Items in the CRINMAIL now link directly back to the full story on the website, the CRINMAIL now contains many more links to the CRIN site and external sites, and the moment a CRINMAIL is sent to subscribers, it is automatically published on the CRIN website.

CRIN now offers eight different lists:

1. **CRINMAIL English**: sent out twice a week. This is CRIN’s original list, with over 800 editions and 4000 subscribers (see box for further details)
2. **CRINMAIL Spanish**: monthly, plus special editions
3. **CRINMAIL French**: monthly, plus special editions
4. **CRINMAIL Children and Armed Conflict**: monthly
5. **Rights CRINMAIL**: monthly on rights based programming
6. **CRINMAIL Violence**: An update on the UN Study on Violence Against Children. Sent out monthly, with special editions when required
7. **CRINMAIL CRC**: sent out during sessions of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, or when necessary
8. **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’)
9. **CRINMAIL Arabic**: The Arabic CRINMAIL is a joint project between CRIN and the Arab Resource Collective (ARC). Issues contain news updates, resources and events relevant to the Arab speaking world.

### CRINMAIL in figures

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</table>

### CRINMAIL content

In line with CRIN’s new strategic priorities, special editions of the CRINMAIL have been improved in content to offer more useful information for advocacy purposes. E.g. a series of special thematic CRINMAILs were produced on forms of violence as defined in the Violence Study, offering links to existing international standards, useful reports, and other resources. Produced more like a factsheet, these are also linked from Theme pages on the website. They were:

- Children and Torture
- Children without parental care (with BCN)
- Harmful traditional practices
- Children in conflict with the law
- Violence in schools
- Neglect

Other special CRINMAILs were produced when CRIN attended key international events on children’s rights, or in collaboration with partners, for instance:

- Sessions of the CRC and the HRC, in collaboration with the NGO Group for the CRC and its subgroup on the HRC
- Children and HIV and AIDS
- The Day of the African Child
- A series of editions on Children and the new Disability Convention, in collaboration with Save the Children
- Launch of the Violence Study (in English, French and Spanish)
- Special edition of French CRINMAIL on the DRC and the launch of the Violence Study
- Special Edition of the Spanish CRINMAIL on child rights at the Inter American Commission and the launch of the Violence Study

4.2. Membership

1. Facts and figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Europe</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oceania</td>
<td>2%</td>
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</table>

CRIN Members by region

2. CRIN’s strategic priorities

As illustrated above, CRIN is the largest network of child rights organisations of its kind, and has already recruited a significant number of members from around the world who have shown an interest and commitment to children’s rights and the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. However, CRIN’s current members are mainly NGOs, with a smaller number of UN agencies, academic and educational institutions, government and private sector members.

As mentioned in its strategic priorities, CRIN needs to engage with all those with the ability to influence children’s rights. There are other sectors, groupings and networks, whether regional, thematic, or language-based, that CRIN has not yet reached.

In 2006, CRIN thus started by recruiting new members in specific areas, including:
- Children’s Commissioners and other independent human rights institutions responsible for children’s rights
- Youth led organisations, with a focus on youth networks
- Media organisations
- Law firms and human rights lawyers
- Representatives of Regional Human Rights mechanisms, such as the African Commission and Committee of Experts, the Council of Europe and the Inter American Commission

4.3. Newsletter

The CRIN Newsletter is a thematic publication that examines a particular theme in depth. It is published yearly in English, French and Spanish (partly in Arabic). It is distributed to all CRIN Members as well as a mailing list of another 2,200 organisations and individuals that have subscribed. An average of 270 newsletters were downloaded from the website every month.

The CRIN Newsletter 19: Children and Violence was published in May 2006. Four hundred copies were sent to the African Child Policy Forum in Addis Ababa. There has been huge demand for further copies, including from the South African government and the African Union. This was also the first time that the newsletter was [partly] translated into Arabic.

CRIN Newsletter 20: Child Rights and Emergencies published in February 2007. The aim of this edition was to examine rights based approaches to working in emergencies with articles and case
studies from NGOs, the private sector, the media, UN agencies and government.

Previous editions of the newsletter included: rights based programming and children, child rights and the private sector, children and young people’s participation, mainstreaming child rights, the General Assembly Special Session on Children, children and macroeconomics, and children and education.

4.4. The development of language services

As mentioned in previous sections, we have continued to develop our output in French and Spanish, with the development of French and Spanish websites as well as improved CRINMAIL content. In 2006, CRIN began officially working in Arabic. We developed a new CRINMAIL email list in collaboration with the Arab Resource Collective and developed a section of the website in Arabic.

4.4.1. Arabic Website

As the new CRIN website was developed, three language sections were developed alongside, including Arabic. The Arabic homepage links to latest resources added to the site in Arabic, to the Arabic CRINMAIL (see below), and to information about CRIN and external websites where relevant information is available in Arabic.

4.4.2. CRIN Publications in Arabic

With the help of an intern and a translator, CRIN produced a number of publications in Arabic, including:

- CRIN Newsletter 19: Children and Violence
- CRIN FAQs
- The Rights Based Programming Guide
- A guide to using CRIN Arabic service
- A summary of the Guide to Networking (from the NGO Group)
- Information sheet on the UN Human Rights Council, the UNCRC and the new Disability Convention and children.

Our intern produced a pack from these resources which was published in hard copy for a workshop on networking with Iraqi child rights organisations.

4.4.3. Arabic CRINMAIL

The email list in Arabic was produced in collaboration with the Arab Resource Collective (ARC). ARC manages the subscriptions and dispatches CRINMAILs, while CRIN posts them on the website and sends them out via other lists. SC Sweden funded the production of six editions for 2006. By the end of 2006, there were over 1700 subscribers. This service is scheduled to continue throughout 2007.

4.5. Enquiry services

Over the years, the number of information requests received by the CRIN Coordinating Unit has been rising sharply. The number of emails received in 2006 reached an average of one hundred per day. In an effort to reduce the amount of time staff spend responding to queries, standard responses and an FAQ section on the website have been developed to provide answers to some of the more straightforward questions.

An automatic reply is also sent to all those who email info@crin.org giving guidance on where further information can be found, as well as links to where people can submit information online or apply for membership.

4.6. Other publications produced in 2006

- CRIN Directory of Child Rights Organisations (Members only)
- Annual Report 2005
- CRIN postcards for marketing purposes
- Webtrends report: a one year statistical report on the use of the new website.

5. Special Projects

5.1 UN Study on Violence Against Children

In 2004, CRIN started preparing work on the UN Secretary-General’s Study on Violence Against Children. In collaboration with the NGO Group for the CRC subgroup on children and violence.
and the NGO Advisory Panel for the UN Study, CRIN put forward a proposal to develop a specialised website creating a gateway for civil society participation to the Study.

Funding was received from the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with smaller contributions from Save the Children Norway, Sweden and UK, World Vision Canada and WV International. The project included setting up a new microsite, a specialised email list to report from Regional Consultations and a special CRIN Newsletter on Children and Violence (published in 2006). This second microsite was launched in early 2005.

The aim of the website is 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.

CRIN was in New York for the launch, reporting in three languages. Our input has clearly been recognised as there are several mentions of CRIN in the Violence book, in the GA report, and CRIN joined three other NGOs singled out for their important contribution to the Study process during the presentation to the Third Committee of the General Assembly.

In October 2006, Paulo Pinheiro’s mandate was extended for another year, which coincides with the end of the funding that was received from the Swedish Ministry of Foreign affairs. CRIN will continue to maintain and update the core part of the Violence work (CRINMAIL more or less once a month and the website), including supporting the communications work of the NGO Group Subgroup on children and violence and the soon-to-be established new NGO Advisory Group.

See: www.childrenandviolence.org

5.2. 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. It also supports the work of the UK based Inter-Agency Group on Rights Based Approaches to Programming, which strives to influence UK development policy through advocacy and information sharing.

The microsite was initially created as a resource for various rights themes. However, following a meeting with Netherlands-based NGO Equalinrights, which provides a similar general service for rights based approaches, it was decided that CRIN would focus its efforts primarily on child rights based approaches to programming.

See: www.therightsapproach.org

5.3. International and regional mechanisms

One of CRIN’s plans for the next three years is to offer comprehensive information about international and regional mechanisms for children’s rights. This will include a new section to the database, special coverage of sessions and events of the different mechanisms, analysis on how these have been used and guidelines on how to use the mechanisms.

The first phase of this project is to develop information pages on the different systems and include reports, news and events on our website and in email updates. As this has to be incorporated into CRIN’s daily work, one regional mechanism will be studied at a time.

Inter-American Commission on Human Rights

New information pages were created in English and Spanish on the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights in March 2006. The aim of these pages is to centralise all information relating to child rights in this system as part of CRIN’s wider initiative of providing information about child rights in regional human rights mechanisms.

The information available on the Inter-American Commission pages includes: a
Q&A on child rights in the Inter-American system; information about some of the landmark cases of violations of child rights which have been presented to the Commission and the Court; and relevant extracts of annual reports, country reports, special reports and reports published following on-site visits.

A news page was set up to accompany the static information pages. Through this, CRIN publishes updates on child rights at the Commission sessions as well as information produced by NGOs and other civil society organisations about relevant advocacy initiatives, hearings etc.

6. Working in partnership

6.1. CRIN and NGO Group

As well as hosting the website of the NGO Group, CRIN has continued to work in partnership with the NGO Group and its subgroups in the following areas:

1. Covering sessions of the CRC, adding Alternative Reports to the website, sending out special CRINMAILs, etc.
2. Together with the Secretariat of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, putting up submissions for the General Day of Discussion on the CRIN website and reporting on debates and outcomes (further information below)
3. Supporting the communications work of the various thematic subgroups of the NGO Group, with a particular focus this year on:
   - The Subgroup on Children and Violence, in light of the launch of the UN Study in New York. This involves updating the website of the subgroup and including information about the subgroup’s work in the Violence CRINMAIL.

6.2. ENOC: website and annual meeting, global network

The new ENOC website, hosted by CRIN, was presented at ENOC’s annual conference in September in Athens. The website was developed to enable all ENOC Members to update their own information, add publications and general country information. Since the website was launched, about two thirds of all ENOC members have contacted us with questions on how to add and update information on the website.

Subsequently, we have developed a forum for members only. Members of ENOC have been active at submitting information and changing their details with their usernames and passwords. While ENOC does not have a Secretariat, CRIN offered to continue to update the website and offer a limited support in communications work for a sum of £2,000 for 2007.

6.3. General Day of Discussion 2006

In September 2006, CRIN teamed up with the Inter-Agency Group for Children’s Participation at the 2006 Day of General Discussion on Article 12 of the Convention - the Right to be Heard. The group’s immediate aim was to facilitate children’s meaningful participation in the discussions and recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child regarding this Article, with a view to involving children in the Committee’s work more generally. The day itself was preceded by a two-day forum for 33 young people from around the world, convened to discuss the recommendations they wanted the Committee to make to States.

CRIN helped to compile media guidelines for young people talking to the press at the event, wrote press releases for the group, and documented the whole process - including the preparatory forum and the discussions on the day itself - in three languages. The documentation was made available on the CRIN website and distributed to all the young people involved for comment. The group is now working to follow up young people’s participation at this event by drafting a General Comment, among other activities.

Right Now: To coincide with the GDD, CRIN launched a new section of the website called ‘Right Now!’, offering resources and analysis on child
participation. The project was founded on three rights: children’s right to access information (online access, censorship, school textbooks, etc.), the right to have their opinions taken into account on decisions affecting their lives (parental custody, judicial procedures, care, etc.) and the right to participate in political life (for instance looking at existing campaigns for lowering voting age, etc.).

7. Structure and governance

There are currently three full time members of staff: one Coordinator and two Communications Officers. The office is based at the Save the Children UK head office in London, UK, although CRIN currently operates as an autonomous unit with its funds accounted separately but audited within those of Save the Children.

The CRIN Coordinating Unit is supported in its work by a Management Team composed of representatives of donor organisations and other experts within the field of child rights. The role of the Management Team is to oversee the activities of the CRIN coordinating unit and provide advice for strategic planning, development of annual workplans and budgets, and for fundraising.

8. Income and Expenditure 06/07*

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* CRIN’s financial year runs from April to March.
** funds received in the financial 2004/2005 (total amount £ 52,265.50) to cover 3 years
***CRIN is hosted by SCUK
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 1,700 organisations that have formally joined as members of the Child Rights Information Network.