

CHILD RIGHTS NOW!

Toolkit for Country Planning and Delivery

The world's six leading child-focused agencies (CFAs) – Child Fund Alliance, Plan International, Save the Children, SOS Children's Villages, Terre des Hommes and World Vision – agreed in 2017 to come together to collaborate on the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals and the realisation of children's rights. This collaboration, called '**Joining Forces**', centres on **two key projects**:

- 1) **Ending Violence Against Children** – a national-level effort, focused on 5 pilot countries¹, to increase our programme impact in protecting children from violence (SDG 16.2)
- 2) **Child Rights Now!** – a national and international level advocacy push in up to 20 countries to renew political commitment to children's rights, reflected in SDG implementation and support for the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

These two projects each have an international Steering Group made up of senior staff from the six organisations, with a rotating Chair. Twice a year, this group reports to the international CEOs of the child-focused agencies. A full-time **Project Manager** drives the overall delivery of the Joining Forces Initiative, and leads the project management of both of these projects.

I. Purpose of this toolkit

This toolkit aims to help kick-start cooperation at national level for the **Child Rights Now project** and is addressed to the 21 selected countries.² It contains some initial guidance to help the representatives of the child-focused agencies in the selected countries to initiate their conversation on how to best organise themselves, approach the task at hand, and jointly agree a process relevant to their context.

II. Child Rights Now in brief

Timing of the initiative: 2018-2030, with the initial plan focused on 2018-19

Why us Why now:

In the last 25 years, the world has made unprecedented strides towards realising the right of children to survive and thrive. However, there is an urgent and unfinished agenda. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide a powerful framework for the full realisation of these rights. But at a time when States should be redoubling efforts, many are stepping away from their responsibility for children's rights. Some states are actively undermining the rights of the child. There is a real risk that this backlash will erode the progress made for children, and jeopardise achievement of the SDGs.

¹ Mexico, El Salvador, Uganda, Indonesia and Philippines.

² The provisional list of 20 countries has been established based on a review of existing CFA presence, collaboration and activities on SDG/child rights. These countries are: Bangladesh, Bolivia, Brazil, Cambodia, Canada, Colombia, Guatemala, India, Kenya, Malawi, Mexico, Nepal, Peru, Philippines, Romania, Senegal, Spain, Sweden, Thailand, Uganda and Zambia.

As the largest child-focused agencies, we have a responsibility to ensure that this does not happen. We need to use our collective power and global reach to push for renewed political commitments to child rights at all levels, both through the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and through the reaffirmation and leverage of commitments to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). 2019 will mark the 30th Anniversary of the CRC and presents a unique opportunity for us to take our collaboration to the next level and be more intentional so together we can deliver greater results for children in the next 15 years and beyond.

Goal for 2030:

The world makes substantial progress towards the realisation of children's rights, including through implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Major deliverables:

Three Global Child Rights Progress Reports: one in 2019, one in 2024 and one in 2029/2030. These reports will be done based on the joint national Child Rights Situation Analyses conducted in up to 20 countries.

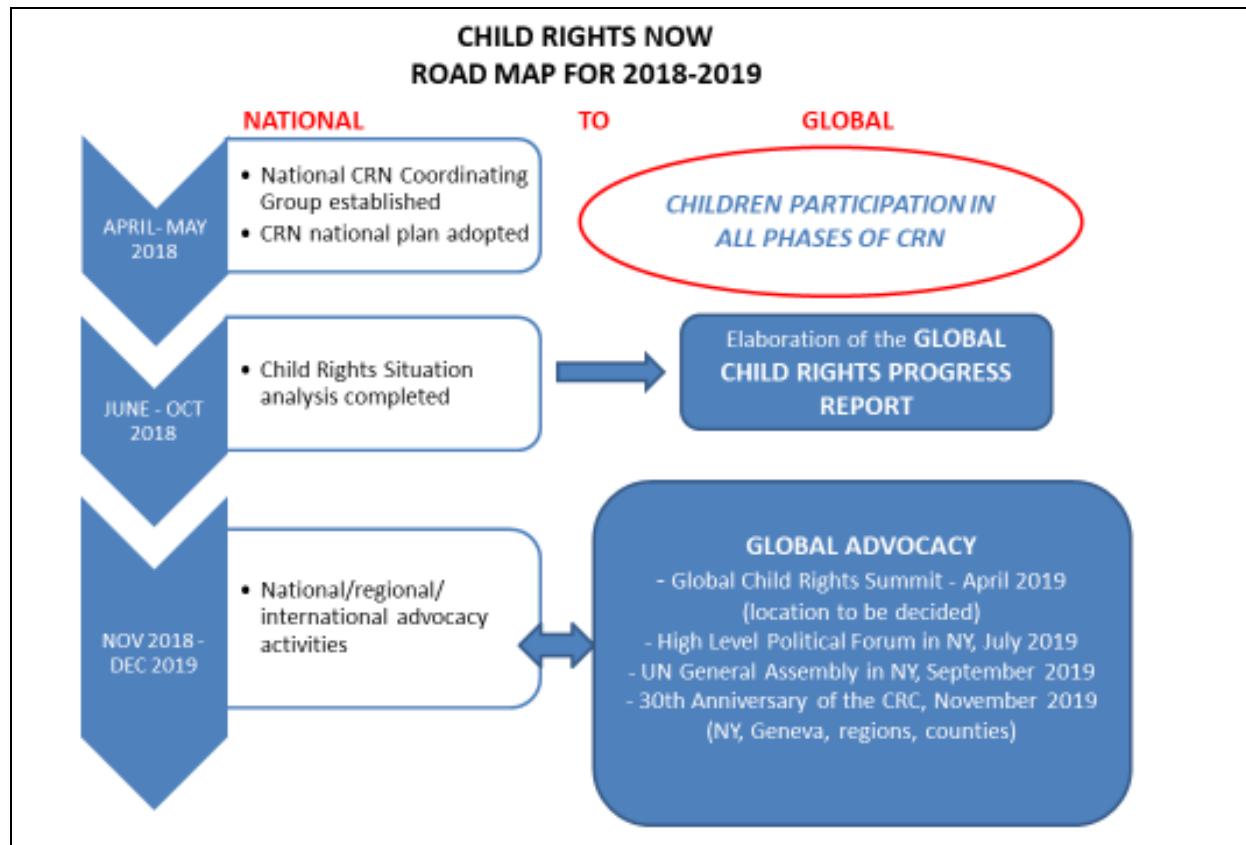
Main activities for 2018-2019:

- 1) National **Child Rights Situation Analysis** (CRSA) done jointly in up to 20 countries by a minimum of three child-focused agencies per country. This will be done with the participation of children and be based on previous reports submitted through CRC and UPR mechanisms, where appropriate. The CRSA will serve as an input to the **Global Rights Now Progress Report** consisting of a trends analysis on both the SDGs and child rights. The CRSA and the final report will be used to advocate at the national and international level. The Global Child Rights Progress Report will be prepared by an external consultant and be launched at a major meeting jointly organised by the child-focused agencies in April 2019 (location to be determined).
- 2) The drafting of the CRSA should prompt the establishment, or help to strengthen a **child rights body** (such as a forum, network, or coalition) that operates beyond the scope of this project and ensures meaningful participation of children in decision-making and implementation of national development strategies.
- 3) **National, regional and global advocacy activities.** These will vary depending on the countries and the opportunities that exist at sub-national, national and international levels. CFAs in countries could use existing opportunities and processes and collaborate on these using the work done as part of the Child Rights Now initiative. For example, they could collaborate on CRC and UPR reporting or participate in the preparations and advocacy around the SDG Voluntary National Reports (VNRs) when relevant. The national advocacy activities will complement the External Engagement plans elaborated at global/regional level, including in New York and Geneva. Coordination among relevant national, regional and international offices will be essential for these activities.

III. Values and visions of our collaboration

The Child Right Now project can only be successful based on a shared set of values characterized by mutual trust, humility, passion, courage and openness. These values should

be lived at all levels of the initiative. Nevertheless, with regard to the cooperation at country level they are of special importance between the six child-focused agencies and in relation to other stakeholders. It is also important to note that the focus of Child Rights Now! is on impact at the national level, supported and scaled up through global advocacy.



IV. Child Rights Now project's phases at the national level

a. Step 1: Establishment of the National CRN Coordinating Group (April 2018)

The first phase is to establish a core group of organisations to take ownership of Child Rights Now! in each country. The process starts with a joint message from the leadership of the child-focused agencies (CFAs) to their representatives in these countries inviting them to engage with the process, followed by the distribution of this toolkit by the international Steering Group. It is recommended that one of the CFAs in each country convenes the relevant counterparts from the other CFAs, in order to establish a National CRN Coordinating Group.

Membership: The National CRN Coordinating Group must be composed of a minimum of three child-focused agencies (out of the six) operating in the country. The National Coordinating Group may also agree to invite other interested international and/or local civil society organisations to join early on. To ensure the independence of the initiative it is important that the Coordinating Group be exclusively composed of members of civil society organisations and not of government or UN representatives.

The National CRN Coordinating Group may wish to consider including a member representing children as part of the group.

Coordination: A Lead Agency should be designated among the Coordinating Group members. This coordination role could be rotated among members, or each organisation could select to organise and lead on a specific deliverable. The Coordinating Group may decide coordination mechanisms based on experience, availability of technical and human resources.

Meetings and reporting: The Lead Agency should call for a Coordination Group meeting at least once a month to review plans and progress, as well as issues and challenges faced by the team. In case of issues and challenges needing external intervention, the Project Manager of the CRN initiative should be informed quickly.

b. Step 2: Elaboration of the CRN country plan (April-May 2018)

In the process of elaboration of the CRN country plan, the coordinating group may wish to consider:

- Further buy-in and expansion of the Coordinating Group to relevant stakeholders including children and youth and external experts, if appropriate.
- Assessment of existing processes/initiatives related to SDG implementation and child rights monitoring (CRC, Universal Periodic Review, CEDAW, other regional mechanisms), recent children's consultations and recent national child rights analysis/reports.
- Analysis of existing platforms/fora designed for children participation in decision making at local/national level.
- Identification of upcoming opportunities that could be used to jointly advocate around SDG and child rights implementation and drafting of an engagement plan.
- Building on existing CFAs country programs, methodologies and resources that are relevant for the implementation of the initiative.
- Establishing a timeline.
- Aligning existing human and financial resources to support the implementation of the initiative especially during the initial phases.
- Identification of potential additional local resources/support needed for the implementation

Here are some questions that the coordinating group could consider during their initial meetings:

- Where do you see opportunities to align your already existing work, resources and initiatives with Child Rights Now?
- Are you already using/part of SDG/child rights monitoring processes such as the CRC, CEDAW, UPR, Voluntary National Reviews, SDG national strategy, etc that could be used in the context of Child Rights Now?
- Initial thoughts on how to consult children for the Child Rights Situation Analysis
- What shall be the national advocacy goals of the activities and how to measure success, how does national success look like?

c. Step 3: Preparation of the Child Rights Situation Analysis (June-October 2018)

The key deliverable for Child Rights Now! at the national level is the preparation of a general Child Rights Situation Analysis (CRSA) that will be used for national and international advocacy. The CRSAs of the countries involved in the project will form the basis for the Global Child Rights

Progress Report to be issued in early 2019 (the international Steering Committee will lead on this process).

The objective of the national CRSA is to describe how well the country is progressing towards achieving the child rights goals to which it is committed and highlight the obstacles to, and enablers of, their realisation. The analysis will be informed by various perspectives, including those of children and young people (see step #4).

The content of the CRSA will vary depending on the country/context and will be discussed amongst partners in country. However, to ensure the CRSA conducted in the different countries are comparable and can be synthesised in the Global Child Rights Progress Report, they will need to follow a certain format. They will need to be rights-based, use a gender lens and be done in English. These are expected to include:

- methodology used
- country facts/statistics, with sources cited
- situation in relation to rights enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the SDGs
- cross-cutting factors, including gender, and key actors
- recommendations

A more detailed template and further guidance and resources for the CRSAs will be provided by the Steering Group and Project Manager.

Prior to engaging in the development of the CRSA, a review of existing data, research and analysis available within the CFA and outside (e.g. CRC report) is strongly recommended in order to capitalise on analyses already undertaken at country level and be able to identify trends over time.

The child-rights focused agencies should appoint a lead author for the Child Rights Situation Analysis. In the event that existing resources are not sufficient to undertake the analysis, the child-focused agencies may wish to consider financing jointly the hiring of an external consultant.

The final CRSA is expected to be sent to the Project Manager and international Steering Committee by 31st October 2018.

IMPORTANT NOTE: The preparation of CRSA should not be thought of as a separate exercise done within the exclusive realm of Child Rights Now! but rather as an integral part of ongoing advocacy and programmatic plans amongst the CFAs at national level.

d. Step 4: Children's voices in Child Rights Situation Analysis (all throughout the design and implementation of the project)

One of the stated objectives of the Child Rights Now initiative is to increase participation of children in the decision-making processes that affect their lives. The CRN initiative is therefore an opportunity to establish/strengthen mechanisms at local/national level that ensure children's participation in key processes on a long-term basis. Where these mechanisms exist, they should be used for bringing the voices of children in the elaboration of the CRSA.

Mechanisms to ensure children participation in the CRN initiative, in particular for the elaboration of the CRSA require resources. An assessment should be made of the possible tools and channels for ensuring child participation, particularly for reaching the most vulnerable and marginalised groups. Available resources need also to be considered. Children could be tasked, as appropriate and in accordance with relevant standards, with information-gathering, participating in the process of analysis and in key informant meetings guiding decision-making.

e. Step 5: Possible multilevel advocacy activities (throughout 2019)

Once the Child Rights Situations Analysis is completed in the country at the end of 2018, the Coordinating Group may wish to channel the findings through existing national/regional/global processes, including alternative reporting to human rights mechanisms (CRC, UPR) and to collaborate on the SDG Voluntary National Reviews and other regional review mechanisms. The advocacy strategies and priorities to take the CRN messages forward in 2019 and beyond in their countries may be elaborated in collaboration with relevant international offices (e.g. New York and Geneva). These will ideally have been discussed at the inception of the project and be integrated in ongoing activities.

The CFAs may engage in various national/regional/global events and opportunities to help amplify their national advocacy messages, including:

- A Global Child Rights high level event organised by the CFAs in April 2019 where the Global Child Rights Progress Report will be launched (location(s) to be decided)
- High Level Political Forum in New York, July 2019
- UN General Assembly, September 2019
- 30th Anniversary of the CRC, November 2019
- Any other events at the national/regional/global level relating to child rights and the SDGs.

V. Contacts for further information

Project Manager: Sian Platt Sian.Platt@plan-international.org

International Steering Group representatives:

Yukiko Yamada, Director of Programs, Educo, yukiko.yamada@EDUCO.ORG

Plan International: Sean Maguire, Executive Director of Global Influence and Partnerships, sean.maguire@plan-international.org

Save the Children, Patrick Watt, Global Campaign, Advocacy and Communications Director, patrick.watt@savethechildren.org

SOS Children's Villages: Sofia Garcia-Garcia, UN Representative in New York, Sofia.Garcia-Garcia@sos-kd.org

Terre des Hommes International Federation: Eylah Kadjar Head of International Secretariat, kadjare@terredeshommes.org

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World Vision International: Charles Badenoch, Partnership Leader- Advocacy and External Engagement, charles_badenoch@wvi.org