CRC Accountability Consultation and Capacity Building Day

Saturday 25 January 2014 – Annecy, France

Report Executive Summary

Participants:
In attendance were 15 members of the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC), 6 members of the Global Reference Group on Accountability to Child Rights and Well-Being (GRGA), and 7 representatives of supportive agencies (OHCHR, UNICEF, ChildRights Connect).

Purposes:
Representatives of the CRC, GRGA and supportive agencies, in opening statements and plenary comments, agreed that advancing accountability to obligations of the Convention on the Rights of the Child is a central responsibility of the Committee. In this regard emphasis was given to the need for the Committee to better understand accountability, measurement and evaluation, to improve practical guidance to SPs, including the establishment of programs of summative and proxy indicators, and to encourage SPs to integrate accountability measures into everyday implementation. The Committee's momentous responsibilities and the heavy demands on its time were recognized to necessitate a configuration of dependable and sustainable internal and external supports to assist it on a continuing basis to advance SP fulfillment of obligations to the Convention.

Process:
The day was divided into the following major periods. (a) Opening statements and comments establishing the importance of accountability and highlighting some of the critical issues; (b) clarification and consideration of the vision and imperatives of the CRC Accountability Technical Meeting (10-11 February 2012); (c) presentations establishing the importance, identifying issues, and providing examples of associated work for three main themes/strategies for the way forward (see next section); (d) facilitated group work to explore and provide direction for each of the three themes for the way forward; (e) reporting back from the work groups in 'd' and general discussion on related topics, (f) wrap-up and determination of next steps.

Findings/recommendations for theme/strategies for the way forward

A. *Frameworks and models for indicators and tools:* Respect the full CRC; give priority to structure, process and outcomes domains and to CRC Reporting Guidelines clusters and the cross-cutting nature of Convention development/well-being domains (i.e., physical, mental, social, spiritual, moral); make the most of 'concluding observation' processes; consider inviting SP partnerships in development and piloting; accentuate clarity and simplicity.

B. *Establishing CRC institutional vales, intentions and memory:* Establish a permanent standing CRC Accountability Focal Group (AFG); Employ the GRGA and networks of expert persons and agencies in service to the CRC (OHCHR, UNICEF and ChildRights Connect support noted); increase accountability relevance for the Committee itself -- make accountability a CRC standing agenda item, strengthen presence in Reporting Guidelines, give selected indicators official status, consider organizing a CRC handbook of regularly asked Qs, employ follow-up to concluding observations, and construct a CRC accountability reference document.

C. *Establishing a work plan:* Map existing work (MICS, WHO, INGOs, Search Institute, WVI); explore synergies (e.g., UPR, MDG) and build on good indicator work already underway (e.g., GC7/13/12) and link to CRC reporting; encourage inclusion of indicators for General Comments; hold a series of strategic meetings

(and consider a 2015 Day of General Discussion on topic) as part of developmental path toward advances.

Next Steps:
CRC/AFG/GRGA to agree on terms of reference for mapping; mapping begins; AFG/GRGA drafts CRC Accountability Reference Document and presents for CRC review and adoption; CRC begins 'internal mapping;' GRGA consults with CRC on related developments in September 2014 session; accountability retreat considered for 2015

CRC Accountability Consultation and Capacity Building Day – Full report

Saturday 25 January 2014, Annecy (France)

Organised and facilitated by the Committee on the Rights of the Child Accountability Focal Group (AFG) and the Global Reference Group for Accountability to Child Rights and Well-Being (GRGA).

Participants

- **Committee on the Rights of the Child:** Amal ALDOSERI; Jorge CARDONA LLORENS; Sara DE JESÚS OVIEDO FIERRO; Bernard GASTAUD; Peter GURÁN; Maria HERCZOG; Olga a. KHAZOVA; Hatem KOTRANE; Gehad MADI; Benyam Dawit MEZMUR; Yasmeen MUHAMAD SHARIFF; Wanderlino NOGUEIRA NETO; Kirsten SANDBERG; Hiranthi WIJEMANNE; Renate WINTER (part attendance)

- **GRGA Secretariat:** Philip COOK (IICRD); Stuart HART (IICRD); Lothar KRAPPMANN (former CRC member); Ziba VAGHRI (HELP)

- **Rapporteur**: Marie WERNHAM (CREATE)

- **Others:** Carmen AREVALO (OHCHR); Rafael ALAMAR (CRC Intern); Sue BENNETT (University of Ottawa); James BOIT (OHCHR); Roisín FEGAN (ChildRights Connect); Allegra FRANCHETTI (OHCHR); Nicolette MOODIE (UNICEF); Claudia SQUILLACIOTI (CRC Intern)

- **Apologies**: CRC members Agnes Akosua AIDOO, Aseil AL-SHEHAIL & Maria Rita PARSI; Gerison LANSDOWN (IICRD) & Paul STEPHENSON (WVI)

Contents

1. Introductions and plan for the day

(Kirsten Sandberg, Stuart Hart)
- Opening remarks and introductions around the table.

2. The need to advance accountability to child rights obligations

(Lothar Krappman, Maria Herczog, Kirsten Sandberg)

Comments from Lothar:
- The Committee's heavy schedule doesn't provide time to reflect broadly and deeply on accountability issues. The GRGA can help the Committee in this regard.
- We need to unpack 'accountability' (for example, what does this mean in relation to the right to education?)
- We need the competent assessment of the Committee to provide an overview of the whole picture of indicators.
- Using indicators to 'rank' States is a misuse of indicators: receiving a high ranking can lead to complacency and de-motivation whereas receiving a low ranking can be discouraging. A set of indicators should be used as a diagnostic instrument to identify progress, bottlenecks and needs and to get an overview of the whole CRC implementation process in a country.

Comments from Kirsten:
- Accountability is about getting States to show that they are implementing what they committed to do. The CRC's tool to hold states accountable is the reporting process. Accountability needs to be integrated into everyday implementation. It is not about States Parties (SPs) taking action just before they come to Geneva.
- We need to give concrete and specific guidance to SPs in Concluding Observations to make it easier for them to understand what we expect them to do. We also need to support civil society to hold SPs accountable.
- We need to explore the use of indicators for SPs to measure what they're doing. Rather than telling SPs to do a whole list of things in the Concluding Observations, we should maybe rely more on standard indicators to give them guidance.
- A challenge exists - how can we balance the strengths-based approach with giving them concrete guidance on what they still need to do?
- The Committee also has to hold itself accountable for what it sets out to do. Institutional memory is very important for the Committee.

Comments from Maria:
- It is hard for many people to accept and understand how to measure things which appear to be unmeasurable. Many Committee members do not come from this type of background.
- There is a fast growing 'industry' in this area. There is an increasing need to look at 'social return on investment' (cost benefit analysis).

3. Understanding, imperatives and vision from the 10-11 February 2012 CRC Accountability Technical Meeting

(Maria Herczog, Benyam Mezmur, Stuart Hart, Philip Cook and Ziba Vaghri)

Comments from Benyam:
- Indicators need to be linked to CRC rights as well as to each other.

- We need to respect ongoing and planned initiatives.
- Countries should have the option to skip certain indicators which are less relevant for them (whilst justifying why they want to skip these).
- We can examine General Comment 7 (GC7) indicators as a framework.
- There is a realism to the 2012 Sion report. It will take time and commitment to achieve its vision.

Comments from Stuart:
- Outcomes for the day:
    - What should be prioritised for framing indicators and standards, given the vast scope of the CRC?
    - Establishing an institutional memory on accountability for Committee.
    - Developing a work plan to carry these things forward.
- A lot has been done in related areas, but there is a pollution of indicators. There is an opportunity to pull things together to strengthen the work of the Committee and implementation of child rights in practice.

Comments from Philip:
- Four overarching themes emerged from the 2012 Sion meeting:
    1. Mapping of promising indicator practice globally (including well-being research, MICS, WHO, and the work of INGOs);
    2. Importance of looking at synergy between these high points; the need to better coordinate efforts;
    3. The possibility to draw on GRGA expertise (see the full GRGA list at the end of this report);
    4. Importance of anchoring the work with the Committee.

Comments from Ziba:
- Essence of all of us being here is that we all share a commitment to children.
- The Committee has an important role to play. We want to facilitate and serve the Committee so that this process is easier and more effective.
- This is the foundation of good governance and the conditions in which children thrive.

Question from Nicolette: Why call it 'accountability' rather than (e.g.) an 'indicator initiative'?
- It is broader than just 'indicators'. Indicators are a tool to serve the greater goal of ensuring SPs accountability to children.

4. Designs for the way forward: preparing for an afternoon of exploration and decision making

Three presentations set the scene for the three discussion groups to follow. For more details see the Powerpoint presentations, available separately. Key points from each presentation were written up on flipcharts which were then used as the basis for discussions in the subsequent group work

A. Frameworks and models for indicators and tools (Stuart Hart)

- Indicators can be grouped into three broadly accepted OHCHR categories:
    - **Structure**
    - **Process**

- o **Outcomes**
- In Sion in 2012 we discussed the need for a core set of 'proxy' or summative' indicators. However, given the scope of the CRC, how can these be prioritised? A promising way forward may be to choose frameworks on which to base and prioritise these proxy or summative indicators from among the following:
  - o **Reporting Guidelines**
  - o **General Comments**
  - o **General Principles**
  - o **Child well-being** (physical, mental, social, spiritual, and moral domains; see particularly Articles 17, 27 & 32)
- Multiple programmes and projects already exist for monitoring and measurement which may provide guidance and deserve incorporation. Three of these were presented by Powerpoint:
  - o **Early child development** (age 0-8) (Ziba Vaghri)
  - o **Child protection** (Philip Cook)
  - o **Child participation** (Powerpoint by Gerison Lansdown, presented by Stuart Hart)

B. Establishing CRC institutional values, intentions and memory regarding accountability to child rights obligations – a perspective paper (Lothar Krappman & Maria Herczog)

The following are identified as ways to document and safeguard the Committee's institutional memory in relation to accountability.
- Accountability Focus Group (AFG)
- The Committee's relationship with the Global Reference Group on Accountability to Child Rights and Well-Being (GRGA) through:
  - o Establishment of a work plan for cooperation toward priority objectives and goals
  - o Regular communication
  - o Participation in each other's' meetings
- Introduce 'accountability' as a standing agenda item for the Committee
- Pay attention to how accountability is addressed in General Comments:
  - o Existing
  - o New
  - o Revised
- Pay attention to how accountability is presently addressed in Concluding Observations and upgrade as desired:
  - o Work with postgraduate students to analyse past Concluding Observations
  - o Examine changes over time
- Pay attention to how accountability is addressed in the Reporting Guidelines
- Create a series of core reference documents on accountability, including a CRC Accountability Reference Document, made available to all existing and new Committee members
- Be cognisant of the changing approaches of the Committee: interpretations and methods of working are not static

C. Establishing a work plan for the Accountability Focal Group and GRGA to advance accountability in service to the Committee (Philip Cook & Benyam Mezmur)

The following key processes were outlined as a basis for the work plan:
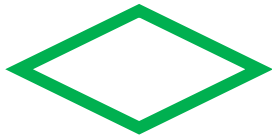- Mapping existing work
- Exploring synergies
    - CRC reporting
    - Universal Periodic Review (UPR)
    - Post-2015 / MDG discussions
- Build on the indicator work already underway in relation to General Comments (GC7, GC12, GC13) and link this to CRC reporting
- Series of meetings to move forward on accountability

Other issues to consider:
- Communication with and within the Committee
- Think about other actors who need to be involved

5. Group discussions - including plenary feedback

Participants were divided into three groups. One group comprised Spanish speakers and the other two groups included a deliberate mix of geographic representation. Each group spent approximately 45 minutes discussing each of the three themes: frameworks and models; CRC institutional perspective; work plan.

		Blue triangle group	Red star group	Green diamond group
Committee members		**Sara** (Ecuador)	**Amal** (Bahrain)	**Hatem** (Tunisia)
		Wanderlino (Brazil)	**Bernard** (Monaco)	**Yasmeen** (Malaysia)
		Jorge (Spain)	**Gehad** (Egypt)	**Kirsten** (Norway)
		Peter (Slovakia)	**Hiranthi** (Sri Lanka)	**Olga** (Russia)
		[**Renate**] (Austria)		
Others		**Rafael**	**Nicolette**	**Roisin**
		Claudia	[**James**]	**Sue**
		Allegra	**Marie**	**Carmen**

A. Frameworks and models (facilitated by Ziba and Stuart)

- Keep the **whole of the CRC** in mind. Start with overall CRC and summative indicators then drill down to sectors and levels. Make decisions regarding indicators based on evidence.
- Use the **Reporting Guidelines *clusters*** as a point of departure rather than individual articles. Even so, there are already 8 – 9 clusters: how to prioritise? Take a fraction and develop selection criteria for the Committee to discuss, for example, prioritise indicators that are most needed or easy to measure. If the Reporting Guidelines are to be the starting point then be

careful when revising them to encourage application of the evolving state of appropriate indicators. Don't revise the Reporting Guidelines too often.

- **Map initiatives, Committee experience, expertise and opinion** (including Concluding Observations).
- **Structure, process and outcomes** should be reported more intentionally by SPs, with an increased emphasis on outcomes. SPs need to move away from fragmented reporting on (e.g.) legislation *or* training *or* services etc. Remember that the 'general measures of implementation' are cross-cutting, especially structural.
- **Well-being:** increase awareness and the importance for indicators and reporting, particularly in relation to outcomes. Well-being is assumed to be integral to the Reporting Guidelines but it may not be explicitly mentioned.
- Invite **SP partnerships with the Committee** toward advances, documenting and sharing good practices (concern was expressed that, if done, it must be in a politically sensitive way).
- **Results must be simple, clear and appreciated by SPs**. In an ideal world, the Committee and others would spend a period of time promoting a set of indicators and directing SPs to technical support /online examples of good practice. SPs would then find them so useful that they would start using them for their own benefit. This would result in SPs automatically reporting to the Committee against the indicators. On the one hand, most SPs are relying on primitive ('clunky') data collection systems to respond to multiple and increasingly sophisticated demands. However, SPs are already being asked to report on the statistical annex indicators so it would not be so radical to ask them to report on other indicators.

B. CRC institutional perspective (facilitated by Maria and Lothar)

- The Committee has an **extremely heavy workload**. It is very difficult to maintain momentum between sessions. Remember that members are not full time.
- There needs to be **a permanent / standing AFG in the Committee**, with terms of reference, staggered membership terms to avoid members leaving at the same time, and a pack of supporting core documents. **There is no alternative to this** if we wish to safeguard Committee institutional memory regarding accountability.
- **Need for outside support**. Even with the best intention, the AFG cannot do everything. We need to call not only on the GRGA but also others such as SPs and other experts. (Please note that membership of GRGA is fluid and needs to be updated regularly).
- Whatever outside support there is, the **ownership has to stay with the Committee**.
- Can we **make the accountability relevant to the Committee itself**, not just for SPs?
- Can we create a **universal / standardised approach** given that countries are so different? (e.g. Nui compared to Canada)
- If we are creating these kinds of indicators, **does this create more work for SPs**? In the longer run it makes their work more meaningful, effective and efficient, but will they actually implement this in practice? Should SPs

have a Standing Group in each country to produce all reports? (This is wishful thinking and we are not in a position to push for this). There was much discussion on how to link with other global and regional mandates and mechanisms, given the increasing emphasis on harmonised reporting.

- **Any indicators developed must be 'made official'** in some way (this is a question for the AFG). The Committee hasn't been using the GC7 indicators as there is no clear understanding of which documents or resources can be referred to as an 'official' source of information. GC7 can be referred to, but not necessarily the indicators.
- **The Committee could produce 'handouts' or a 'handbook' on common issues** that the Committee regularly asks SPs to comment on (e.g. juvenile justice) which are relevant for all countries. This would make the life of the Committee easier by simplifying the process of preparing questions for SPs. The expertise of the Committee changes. It would be good to standardise and document this expertise in different fields.
- There is a need for a **Committee 'follow-up' procedure** regarding Concluding Observations etc.

C. Work plan (Benyam and Philip)

- There was **general agreement with the 4 points** outlined in the morning session (although the 'series of meetings' will be integrated into ongoing work; there will be an update on issues at each session and possibly a retreat once a year):
    o Map existing work;
    o Explore synergies (e.g. with CRC reporting, UPR, Post-2015 / MDG discussions);
    o Build on the indicator work already underway in relation to General Comments (GC7, GC12, GC13) and linking this to CRC reporting;
    o Hold a series of meetings to move forward on accountability.
- '**Mapping existing work' and 'exploring synergies'** can be addressed together.
- **'Mapping existing work'** can start relatively soon, building on past papers. It will not be comprehensive, but will capture 'high points' with some level of analysis. It will be descriptive and analytical, not just a list of initiatives, but it will not take 'editorial decisions' about which initiatives deserve further attention by the Committee. Selected dates need to be applied to the mapping exercise so that it does not become an unending process. For example, it could consider indicators developed up to a certain point, predominantly at global level and then at regional level. A draft of the findings to date could be shared in the September 2014 Committee session. A TOR, budget and funding is needed for the mapping work (Wellspring Foundation has offered $100,000). A Working Group will be established for this mapping. Hatem, Benyam, Kirsten, Carmen and Nicolette have expressed interest in joining this Working Group. The work of DevInfo[1] will be considered as part of the mapping.

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[1] DevInfo is a database system developed under the auspices of the United Nations and endorsed by the United Nations Development Group for monitoring human development with the specific purpose of monitoring the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). DevInfo is a tool for organizing,

- **The overall work plan** will be for everyone, with a column outlining responsibilities for different stakeholders such as AFG, GRGA, OHCHR etc. It will cover a 2-year timeframe, to be reviewed at the end of 2015. It will include activities, timeframe and budget.
- The work plan will include **updating the paper done by Lothar** (a Committee member can be tasked to do this, possibly in cooperation with Lothar).
- There is a need for similar kinds of indicators for **GC16 on business interests** and any future GC work on public spending.
- **Core documents** will be identified and shared via the extranet and/or Dropbox.

6. General discussion

Blue triangle group:

- Agree with everything said. However, there was a feeling in the group that attention is focused only on indicators, whereas the **important accountability mechanism for the Committee is the Concluding Observations** which are concrete and precise. Follow-up of Concluding Observations within a short timeframe is very important for SPs.
- We also talked about the **need to make things concrete**. These are long term issues and things happen slowly, but membership of the Committee is short term.
- If there are going to be **indicators for some GCs**, they can be included at the time of developing the GC to save time.

Red star group:

- Need to **improve the clarity of some of the indicators** and link them more closely to the **Reporting Guidelines clusters**.
- Need to give emphasis to **'structure', 'process' and 'outcomes'** when communicating with SPs.
- **Selection** is important within the clusters.
- There are already databases for some of the indicators, such as education, but there will also be areas where this data is not available. Capacity building may be needed. **It is not an equal playing field when it comes to data.**

Green diamond group:

- Quite a lot can actually be done through the **'list of issues'** (e.g. raising awareness of 'structure', 'process' and 'outcomes'). The Committee can control this.
- **The issue of well-being should be established as cross-cutting**: we can also introduce this into the list of issues.

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storing and presenting data in a uniform way to facilitate data sharing at the country level across government departments, UN agencies and development partners. It is distributed royalty-free to all UN member states. It is a further development of the earlier UNICEF database system ChildInfo.

- **Some clusters will have indicators more readily available than others**. For example, in relation to health it will be more a question of selecting existing indicators, whereas in relation to child protection these indicators might need to be developed.
- We recommend making a **handbook of questions the Committee already regularly asks SPs**. Each member could prepare a list of questions for their favourite subject or area of expertise. We discussed whether this would be only for internal reference purposes, but we agreed it could also be possible to merge this with the indicator work. If we are allowed to do this, the handbook could be submitted to SPs as informal guidance on what to include in the reporting process and it could including references to useful resources and tools.
- We recommend a possible **Day of Discussion on accountability in 2016** (replacing 'access to justice' which will be dealt with by the Human Rights Council).

General plenary discussion:

- Benyam: To what extent can SPs themselves be actively involved? How can we involve them to see how seriously SPs will take these indicators?
- Kirsten: We need to consider the impact and implications of this indicator work on others, including SPs and civil society.
- Allegra: We need to bear in mind what has already been developed. OHCHR is happy to support the process.
- Child Rights Connect: We are already working on follow-up to the reporting process.
- Nicolette: UNICEF can be expected to be a cooperating partner. I will report back to the official UNICEF GRGA representatives but there are others in UNICEF who could be involved. Nicolette will stay involved as the Committee liaison at UNICEF.
- Hiranthi: UNICEF already conducts situation analyses at country level. If they could include indicators in these documents it would help implementation and reporting. We have already advocated for a closer link between UNICEF and the Concluding Observations. UNICEF has requested clearer prioritisation in the Concluding Observations to facilitate implementation.
- Marie: For interest, the 'UKID' Index of Urban Child Development (developed by UNICEF and the Global City Indicators Facility) really struggled to develop child-specific indicators for issues such as child protection due to lack of available standardised data. On a different topic, the Committee is encouraged to return to its GC13 definition of the 'child rights approach' and reinforce this as part of its implementation and accountability efforts. The process of implementing this work (using the child rights approach) is just as important as the end result.
- Kirsten: Each Committee member could be tasked to present a 20 minute summary of past GCs, a few per session, in order to refresh Committee members' knowledge on what has already been documented in relation to key issues, thus helping to keep the Committee's institutional memory alive.
- Ziba: The GC7 indicator experience shows that there is an enormous positive by-product created through the *process* of discussing the indicators, raising

the issues and answering the questions. The process itself leads to increased transparency, inter-sectoral cooperation and dialogue.

7. Wrap up

(Kirsten Sandberg)

- **Next steps include -**
    - o TOR for mapping (and the broader work plan)
    - o The mapping itself
    - o Preparation of a draft accountability perspective paper for CRC consideration and eventual archiving
    - o September 2014 Committee meeting to discuss the draft mapping (although there is already a lot going on in September; it would be held in the session room, not as an extra day; IICRD may be invited to present it in person)
    - o Possible retreat in January 2015
    - o Meanwhile, the Committee will follow up on their 'internal mapping'
- There is a generally positive feeling amongst participants with regard to this work.
- Kirsten thanked the GRGA and the AFG for its efforts in organising this consultation and capacity building day.