



CCIG
INTERNATIONAL
CATHOLIC
CENTER
OF GENEVA

REPORT OF ACTIVITIES 2016

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SUMMARY

SUMMARY	2
EDITORIAL New Strategy 2018 - 2022	3
SERVICE TO NGOs Accompanying the Work of the UN System	4
TRAINING Understanding Legal Mechanisms for the Protection of Human Rights	6
EXCHANGES AND AWARENESS-RAISING Promoting Engagement on Issues of Shared Interest	9
ADMINISTRATION Improvement of Center's Internal Process	11

ABBREVIATIONS

CINGO	Catholic-inspired Non-governmental Organization
HRC	Human Rights Council
ILO	International Labour Organisation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
UPR	Universal Periodic Review

« At the Heart
of Challenges
of Our Times »

EDITORIAL

DEAR FRIENDS OF THE CCIG,

One of the core tasks of the CCIG is to enable actors from civil society to get engaged and involved with the Human Rights Council and the UPR. We can see how the capacities among members of the Center in Geneva has increased over the years and how the focus has shifted from training to coordination and exchange, and towards making advocacy efforts as effective as possible. Bearing these shifts in mind, the CCIG began the process of drafting a new Strategic Action Plan for 2018-2022 during its General Assembly in 2016. The process, which was specially designed to include and allow active participation of CCIG members, will conclude at the General Assembly in May 2017, when it will be put to a vote for adoption.

One of the highlights of 2016 was that we were able to extend our training activities on Human Rights and the UN system by organizing together with member organizations a training session in Latin America for children's rights defenders from Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua and Bolivia. We had thorough discussions before starting the project, reflecting on whether such an activity is part of CCIG's core activities and how to ensure that it would not reduce the activities foreseen for Geneva. A first analysis of the project indicates a positive outcome:

- The activities had an enabling effect and inspired participants to collaborate further among themselves and with CCIG. For example, three participants in the training session participated successfully in a side event on the problem of Migration, Youth and Gangs in Central America that was co-sponsored by the Permanent Mission of El Salvador.
- Because we were able to find donors for the project and hire a consultant for the additional work, the project had no limiting effects on the work of the center in Geneva but, in fact, reinforced the core work of the center, and in particular helped to create new synergies within the UPR Platform.

Building upon this experience, I am convinced that this kind of project will also play a part in the successful implementation of the strategy 2018 – 2022 going forward. These projects will not compete with other activities but will enrich them by giving rise to side events or other formal and informal gatherings, which will bring together members and other stakeholders.

Sincerely,

Felix Wertli, President of CCIG Board



SERVICE TO NGOs

UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW (UPR) PLATFORM

Since its establishment in 2011, the CCIG's platform has expanded its initiatives as well as collaboration among its partners. While the 2nd cycle has concluded, the 3rd UPR cycle will soon start, bringing new challenges, in particular in terms of the implementation of the recommendations issued by Member States in the framework of the UPR. The contributions of Civil Society actors have become even more essential not only in ensuring that the true situation experienced by people at the local level is brought to the attention of the international community, but also in ensuring that the commitments made by States are translated into concrete measures in the field. Currently, NGOs are called upon to play a major role in monitoring the status of implementation of UPR recommendations and to lobby States for more effective actions to prevent and address human rights violations.

During 2016, five meetings of the Platform took place to facilitate joint work of NGOs between the 23rd and the 27th sessions of the UPR. Fourteen **joint written reports** were submitted to the High Commissioner for Human Rights by members of the CCIG Platform and four **oral statements** were delivered under item 6 of the Human Rights Council¹. Compared to the number of sessions and countries addressed by the UPR Platform in 2014 (15 countries and 5 sessions) and in 2015 (20 countries and 6 sessions), there continues to be a significant and steady increase in the work of the Platform. Tact that in some cases members opted for multiple reports on the same country shows an increase in coordination among NGOs and therefore represents a successful result for CCIG's UPR Platform. With the support of CCIG, NGOs also developed common strategies to collect information from their own members in the field, to draft joint reports, and to carry out joint lobbying activities towards Member States Representatives in order to have priority NGO concerns be directly addressed during the review.

In addition to the oral statements on specific countries, a **joint oral statement** concerning the functioning of the UPR was submitted by CCIG under item 6



(General Debate) of the 32nd session of the Human Rights Council. This oral statement was co-signed by 16 NGOs. The objective was to stress the need for a more systematic evaluation of the status of implementation of UPR recommendations by the States concerned. In line with the OHCHR's strategy, an NGO coalition led by CCIG called upon Member States to institutionalize a mechanism to follow up, vis-à-vis relevant ministries, on the implementation of UPR recommendations at the national level. The coalition recommended that two basic requirements be satisfied for this national coordinating body, namely: that it be of permanent nature and that it have consultative capacities to engage with Civil Society and National Human Rights Institutions².

On the CCIG website, a database has been regularly updated throughout 2016, which provides links to all Joint UPR Submissions by members, as well as Oral Statements and General debate³.

In their commitment to achieving meaningful results, the NGO members of CCIG's UPR Platform continuously work to find new methods of collaboration. In 2016, in addition to the traditional work carried out in the past years in terms of reporting, lobbying and capacity building, the CCIG UPR Platform initiated several exchanges with the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in order to encourage the work of NGOs in holding States accountable for the implementation UPR recommendations. Accordingly, an advocacy strategy has been initiated by CCIG UPR Platform (together with its members) in order to encourage Member States to establish National Mechanisms for Reporting and



As a result of this and other initiatives, at present, CCIG is coordinating a joint effort among members of the Platform to push forward this specific advocacy action point, including through drafting a joint UPR recommendation on the establishment of NMRF and lobbying Member States to take it into consideration within the framework the 3rd UPR cycle.

1. http://www.ccig-iccg.org/?page_id=457

2. The full text of the oral statement is available at: <http://www.ccig-iccg.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/CCIG-Joint-Oral-statement-32-HRC-item-6-GD-with-logos.pdf>

3. See: http://www.ccig-iccg.org/?page_id=457

4. See: <http://www.ccig-iccg.org/?p=1601>

Follow up (NMRF) with the specific aim to translate UPR recommendations into concrete interventions on the ground.

Notably, on April 4th, 2016, the CCIG organized a **meeting between the UPR Platform and** the Chief as well as other representatives of **the UPR Branch of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)**, which took place at Palais Wilson, Geneva. Eighteen representatives from thirteen NGO Members of CCIG's UPR Platform were present. Upon the request of its Members, CCIG organized this meeting with the aim of providing the members of the CCIG UPR Platform with key information to improve their contributions within the UPR system as well as to share with the OHCHR difficulties encountered by NGOs when working with this specific mechanism. Similarly to a previous meeting held in 2012, introductory comments by OHCHR staff were followed by an interactive dialogue with the participants. NGOs were given the opportunity to pose questions and concerns regarding the UPR process, in particular about the transition from the 2nd to the 3rd UPR cycle, and best practices for advocating for and following up on the implementation of UPR recommendations at the national level. More information on the meeting is also available on CCIG's website⁴.

«The creation of common tools for working within the UPR Platform is very helpful for staying informed, saves a considerable amount of time, and reinforces our influence as a Civil Society actor. It is also very interesting to share how we approach drafting UPR submissions. The approaches of certain members have inspired me in my work with my own members.»

*Fédération Internationale de l'Action des
Chrêtiens pour l'Abolition de la torture
CCIG Member*

TRAINING

Throughout 2016, the Secretariat of the CCIG has provided continuous support to the initiatives of NGOs to train their members on the United Nations' mechanisms for the protection and promotion of human rights, such as the treaty bodies and the Universal Periodic Review. The beneficiaries included human rights defenders from Africa, America, Asia, Europe and Oceania.

In March of 2016, the Secretary General of CCIG served as an expert in a training workshop organized by the Centre de conseils et d'appui pour les jeunes en matière de droits de l'homme (CODAP) on various UN mechanisms and procedures. During the training, she accompanied and counseled young activists on what mechanisms they could utilize depending on the situation of violations at hand. The goal of this workshop was to allow participants to engage directly in the use of UN mechanisms.

In collaboration with the UNESCO Centre of the Basque Country (UNESCO Extea), the CCIG organized a **training session for 13 journalists and media and communication experts** on November 25th in Bilbao, Spain. The training session was designed

to inform participants about existing UN mechanisms, including the Special Procedures and the Universal Periodic Review (UPR). Media and communication experts are called upon to play a fundamental role in the dissemination of UN bodies' recommendations at the national and local level. Their work raises awareness about human rights commitments made by the State and can mobilize local Civil Society actors to take concrete actions to improve the human rights situation in the given country. Accordingly, a specific section of the training was devoted to showing the participants how to access UN information, in particular UN documents and reports on the main human rights challenges in Spain⁵.

« These kinds of trainings bring us the possibility to learn more about human rights, reinforce the capacity of local NGOs' teams, help us to reinforce our activity planning and give us instruments to carry out advocacy efforts with our local governments. »

A participant in CCIG training in Guatemala

« [CCIG] demonstrated a comprehensive knowledge of the content and maintained throughout the training a realistic and constructive approach to evaluating the UN system. »

A participant in CCIG – UNESCO Extea Training in Bilbao, Spain





PROJECT FOR CHILDREN'S RIGHTS DEFENDERS IN LATIN AMERICA

Thanks to the support of the Canton and Republic of Geneva as well as Adveniat, the CCIG carried out a project aimed at **empowering children's rights defenders of five Central and South American countries, namely Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua and Bolivia**. Despite having ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the full and universal implementation of human rights, especially children's rights, remains problematic in these countries where child malnutrition, child economic and sexual exploitation, and violence against children are still widespread issues.

At the intersection of the CCIG's two pillars of actions "Training" and "Awareness-raising", this project was designed and developed in partnership with two of CCIG members, Edmund Rice International (ERI) and Marist International Solidarity Foundation (FMSI). The project included a training session in the field, which took place from the 8th to the 12th of February in Guatemala City, and a subsequent side event organized in June in Geneva during the 32nd session of the UN Human Rights Council.

Addressed to 25 Children's rights defenders, the training was structured in different sessions conceived to develop the necessary skills for human rights advocacy, such as lobbying and monitoring for the follow-up process of the UPR. All along the training, participants were encouraged to share their personal experience as well as present the current advocacy activities carried out within their organizations. Exchanges in plenary sessions and in small working groups allowed each participant to compare children's rights implementation in his/her own country with the reality of other countries of the region and identify common challenges as well as possible solutions to replicate and multiply.

The training consisted of theoretical and practical sessions. Introductory sessions on the UN system and mechanisms for the promotion and protection of Human Rights were followed by three workshops and a roundtable with remarkable speakers from OHCHR, UNICEF and local Civil Society. All sessions were based on targeted learning materials and examples of personal experiences of the facilitators. Within the UN Human Rights Mechanisms,

« What I most appreciate about this experience is the possibility of establishing relationships (...) it lead me to the realization that the fight for the rights of children goes beyond myself and my country: it is something that brings us together and enables us to work jointly to reach the same goal. »

*Ms. Ana Myrella Saadeh Rivera, Guatemala
Speaker at CCIG side event*

particular attention was given to the reporting and follow-up phases vis-à-vis the UPR and the CRC. Participants had the opportunity to: (i) understand how stakeholders can report human rights violations to relevant UN bodies as well as monitor and contribute to the implementation of UPR and CRC recommendations; (ii) learn about current international best practices; and (iii) formulate ideas to draft their local and national action plans⁶.

Upon the completion of the training, a video illustrating the training, its objectives, and its concrete results was produced⁷. The video was then shared among participants in order to raise awareness about advocacy for children's rights and to serve as a learning tool for others who organize training workshops. Finally, the video was uploaded to the CCIG website for broader dissemination at the local and international level.



Three of the 25 children's rights defenders who attended the training were given the opportunity to participate as speakers in a side event in Geneva in order to share their experience and best practices as well as raise awareness about the challenges faced by children in Central America related to gang activity, violence, and migration.

In fact, the current situation requires urgent attention: Despite the efforts made by local Governments and the international community to protect children from all forms of violence, the Latin American and Caribbean regions have the highest homicide rate of people below 25 years of age. El Salvador and Guatemala are two out of the three countries with the highest homicide rate of children and adolescents in the world. In Central America, children who avoid being killed but who are still victims of violence and neglect easily become perpetrators. Children left without parental care or left behind by migrant parents who spend most of their time on the street are especially vulnerable for recruitment by local gangs, known as maras. Once recruited by these criminal organizations, they are employed to carry out a variety of illegal activities, including the smuggling and selling of drugs and arms, extortions, and killings. Despite the difficulty of collecting accurate data about the phenomenon, it appears that the number of children enrolled in gangs is increasing and that the links of organized gangs to migration in the region is becoming more evident. A major consequences of the gang violence in Central America is an increase in migration of unaccompanied minors from the region. These children hope to escape the many dangers in their home countries. They therefore begin unsafe journeys that expose them to other forms of violence and human rights violations.

As a result, the issue of children as victims and perpetrators of violence is also being addressed by several UPR recommendations addressed to the states of Central America. In accordance with HRC Resolution 30/25, States are called to cooperate in the full implementation of such recommendations.

A side event titled, "Children as Victims and Perpetrators of Violence: Gangs and Migration in Central America", was organized by the International Catholic Centre of Geneva (CCIG) together with Edmund Rice International (ERI), the Marist International Solidarity Foundation (FMSI), and the Permanent Mission of the Republic of El Salvador, and took place on the 22nd of June 2016. The side event, which took place

« It is encouraging to see that there are also other people who are speaking up and coordinating advocacy actions to protect the rights of children and youth, especially that they are striving to provide them with an environment of love and protection. »

Ms. Liliam Mejia, Honduras, Speaker at CCIG side event

in conjunction with the 32nd Session of the UN Human Rights Council, was also co-sponsored by Red Niña Niño, Instituto Internazionale Maria Ausiliatrice (IIMA), PAMI, Aldeas Infantiles SOS, Red COIPRODEN, and International Volunteerism Organization for Women, Education, and Development (VIDES International). H.E. Ms. Carmen Elena Castillo, Ambassador, Deputy Permanent Representative of El Salvador to the United Nations Office moderated the event.

Panelists Ms. Ana Myrella Saadeh Rivera, Ms. Liliam Mejia, Ms. Viara Isabel Sequiro Orozco and Ms. Monica Nascimento e Silva delivered presentations that offered inputs on gangs, violence and migration and their impact on the enjoyment of human rights by children. The participation of Representatives of the States concerned enriched the discussion and provided interesting insights into the challenges faced by Governments in addressing such a complex phenomenon⁸. The panelists' presentations were followed by interventions of the Representatives from El Salvador, Nicaragua and Honduras who took the floor to express their views on the topic and present measures currently in place to tackle this issue. The Executive Summary of the event was published and is available in English and Spanish on CCIG's website⁹ together with a video of the event¹⁰.

5. For an article on the event please consult the CCIG website at: <http://www.ccig-iccg.org/?p=1817>

6. More information available at: <http://www.ccig-iccg.org/?p=1557>


7. See: http://www.ccig-iccg.org/?attachment_id=1528

8. For more information, see: <http://www.ccig-iccg.org/?p=1673>

9. English: <http://www.ccig-iccg.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Report-Children-Violence-HD.pdf>

Spanish: http://www.ccig-iccg.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/CCIG-ES_Outcome-Documents-Children-Gangs-Migration-in-Central-America.pdf

10. <http://www.ccig-iccg.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Master-Event-CCIG-Anglais.mp4>



CHILDREN AS VICTIMS AND PERPETRATORS OF VIOLENCE: GANGS AND MIGRATION IN CENTRAL AMERICA

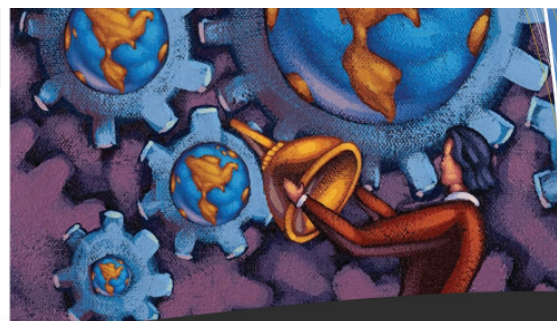
Wednesday, June 2016

EXCHANGES AND AWARENESS-RAISING

« DECENT WORK ALONG GLOBAL VALUE CHAINS: A CALL FOR RESPON- SIBILITY AND OPPORTUNITY FOR SOLIDARITY » - CCIG CONSULTATION

In 2016, CCIG continued its work to promote fair and dignified work in the global labour market. As a part of this ongoing effort, the CCIG organized an event in collaboration with the Kolping International/ German Commission for Justice and Peace, Caritas Internationalis, the World Movement of Christian Workers (WMCW), the International Coordination of Young Christians Workers (ICYCW), the International Young Christian Workers (IYCW), and Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO). Held on the occasion of the 105th Session of the International Labour Conference (ILC) focused on promoting “Decent work in global value chains,” the consultation served as an opportunity for Civil Society actors, private employers and policy makers to share **challenges and best practices regarding the protection of vulnerable workers**. Ms. Manuela Tomei, director of the Department of Conditions of Work and Equality at the ILO and Ms. Anna Biondi, Deputy Director of the

ILO’s Bureau for Workers’ Activities, participated as panelists at the event as well as several other speakers from relevant stakeholders. Within the framework of the event, workshops were held that specialized on the particular risk of exploitation faced by women, migrants and the youth. For further details, please consult the article¹¹ and the executive summary¹² on the event.



DECENT WORK ALONG THE GLOBAL VALUE CHAINS: A CALL FOR RESPONSIBILITY AND AN OPPORTUNITY FOR SOLIDARITY

NGO Consultation

In conjunction with 105th Session of International Labour Conference

Thursday, 2 June 2016

9:30 - 16:00

CONFERENCE ON TRANSNATIONAL CORPORATIONS AND HUMAN RIGHTS



On October 24th, CCIG hosted an event at Club Suisse de la Presse to raise awareness and share best practices regarding holding Transnational Corporations accountable for Human Rights Violations. On the occasion of the 2nd session of the UN Opened-Ended Intergovernmental Working Group on Transnational Corporations and Human Rights, the event, “In Preparation for a Treaty: Calling for Constructive Dialogue and Joint Action”, was the result of a collaborative effort between CCIG members, namely Franciscans International, Dominicans for Justice and Peace, and Caritas Internationalis, as well as other partners such as Action de Carême, the International Platform Against Impunity, Act Alliance, Al-Haq, CIDSE, FIAN International, and the Lutheran World Federation. The event included an **interactive panel with representatives from local NGOs concerned with improving the lives of communities negatively affected by extractive industries in the Philippines, Guatemala, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Colombia**¹⁴.

COMMEMORATING ILO CONVENTION NO. 189 THROUGH A MUSICAL PERFORMANCE.

To celebrate the entry into force of ILO Convention 189 in Switzerland in November of 2015, which provides protections for domestic workers, the CCIG co-hosted **a concert at Victoria Hall** along with the Parish of Sainte Clotilde. Over 1,200 guests, including the Mayor of Geneva, Esther Alder, attended a performance of classic works by composers including Mozart, Puccini, and Verdi that was conducted by Stanislava Nankova. CCIG president, Felix Wertli gave opening remarks and expressed the power of music to bring together people regardless of race, religion or gender and the need to celebrate this victory. For the further details please refer to the article on the event¹³.



11. Article on event: <http://www.ccig-iccg.org/?p=1684>

12. The Executive Summary is available on the CCIG website at: http://www.ccig-iccg.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Outcome-Documents-Work-along-the-Global-Value-Chains_2016.pdf

13. <http://www.ccig-iccg.org/?p=1531>

14. Please consult relevant article and press release of the conference at: <http://www.ccig-iccg.org/?p=1760>

ADMINISTRATION

STRUCTURE OF CCIG ACTIVITIES

During the past year the Board has held seven meetings at the CCIG headquarters in order to ensure coherence of all activities with the Strategy and Action Plan 2013-2017 and the development of fundraising efforts.

Moreover, CCIG is currently in the process of drafting its new Strategy and Action Plan for 2018 – 2022. Initiated at the last General Assembly held in May 2016, this one-year process will be concluded with the adoption of the new Strategy and Action Plan at the upcoming General Assembly to be held on May 11, 2017. CCIG Members' participation is of pivotal importance to the Board of the organization. Accordingly, Members were already offered a first opportunity to provide their feedback and assessment on the current Strategy 2012 - 2017 on the occasion of the last GA. Inputs collected on that occasion provided the Board with the information used to prepare the Draft of new Strategy and Action Plan 2018 - 2022.

Finally, as with every year, several meetings were held between the Secretariat and members wishing to receive assistance in the development of their activities.



FINANCIAL STRATEGY

In addition to the continued and appreciated support of Action de Carême (Swiss Catholic Lenten Fund), CCIG has, in 2016, consolidated existing partnerships and took steps to identify new sources of funding. The approval by the City of Geneva for a new project for human rights defenders in Togo has been an important aspect of our fundraising efforts.



KEY POINTS RELATED TO FUNDRAISING:

- The above mentioned project for children's rights defenders was founded by the Canton and Republic of Geneva as well as Adveniat.
- The training course for representatives of the Basque Country was mandated by the CCIG "UNESCO Extea" that ensured the financial aspects of the project.
- Similarly, in 2016, CCIG has obtained a contribution to the UPR Platform from Trócaire.
- Fundraising in German-speaking Switzerland has resulted in donations from the Interior Mission of Zug.
- Other activities such as the consultation on the transition of the informal economy to the formal economy were financed by the respective partners.

REPORT OF ACTIVITIES 2016

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