

The background of the cover features a photograph of the International Catholic Center of Geneva. In the foreground, numerous national flags from various countries are displayed on tall poles, arranged in two long rows that converge towards a central building in the background. The building is a light-colored, multi-story structure with a central entrance. The sky is a clear, bright blue. The bottom half of the cover is a solid blue gradient, with a green gradient at the very bottom.

CCIG
INTERNATIONAL
CATHOLIC
CENTER
OF GENEVA

REPORT OF ACTIVITIES 2024

www.ccig-iccg.org

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ABBREVIATIONS

CINGO	Catholic-inspired Non-governmental Organization
CRC	Committee on the Rights of the Child
CSO	Civil Society Organization
HRC	Human Rights Council
HRD	Human Rights Defender
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OHCHR	Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights
UN	United Nations
UPR	Universal Periodic Review

« Open to the world,
at the very heart
of International
Institutions »

Confirming Our Shared Commitment



EDITORIAL

DEAR MEMBERS
AND FRIENDS OF CCIG,

We are pleased to share with you our Report of Activities 2024. As part of our steadfast commitment to human rights, the CCIG continues to serve as a vital force in strengthening the presence and advocacy of Catholic and Christian-inspired organizations within the United Nations system. In accordance with its mission and strategic objectives, the CCIG played a pivotal role in empowering NGOs to navigate international frameworks and amplify their voices on critical global issues.

The following are the key highlights of activities implemented in 2024.

Capacity-Building for NGOs

One of CCIG's primary goals is to equip NGOs with the tools necessary to effectively advocate for the most vulnerable communities. Through workshops, consultations, and strategic partnerships, CCIG fostered a collaborative environment where organizations could enhance their impact.

A recent example was the 101st Council Meeting of the International Catholic Education Office (OIEC), held in Geneva on December 4-5, 2024. CCIG Secretary General, Maria D'Onofrio, delivered an intervention on the Universal Periodic Review (UPR). She presented how this UN mechanism could strengthen human rights policy at the national level. The event was attended by no less than 33 participants from 20 countries.



Advocacy for Human Rights and Social Justice

Being in Geneva, the CCIG actively engages in discussions on human rights, including on climate and environmental justice. We serve to ensure that our members can contribute meaningfully to global policymaking.

To achieve this, in April 2024, CCIG's UPR Platform hosted an online meeting to introduce an Advocacy Assessment Tool, designed to measure the impact of lobbying efforts. In collaboration with our members, in particular the Dominicans for Justice and Peace and Marist Foundation for International Solidarity (FMSI), we shared insights on using the tool in projects across Papua New Guinea, Bangladesh, and beyond. The meeting empowered NGOs to collect quantifiable data to refine advocacy strategies, enhancing effectiveness in UN fora.

Strengthening Collaborative Networks

Collaboration remains central to CCIG's work. In September 2024, CCIG and UN Etxea (UNESCO Basque Country Centre) co-organized a training session on UN Human Rights Mechanisms, aligned with the 57th session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva. This initiative educated young leaders from the Basque Country on UN processes, equipping them with tools like the Youth Empowerment Strategy (YES) Advocacy Toolkit.

Participants attended sessions on human rights education, including the Panel on Quality Education for Peace and Tolerance for Every Child. This training fostered global youth participation in international advocacy while reinforcing CCIG's commitment to human rights education.

Looking Ahead

As the world faces ongoing challenges, CCIG remains unwavering in its mission to support NGOs in their advocacy efforts. By bridging the gap between grassroots organizations and international decision-makers, CCIG reinforces its role as a catalyst for meaningful change.



Established in 1950 in Geneva, CCIG celebrates its 75th anniversary in 2025. Multilateralism faces numerous challenges today, primarily stemming from rising nationalism, complex global issues, resource constraints, and the need for reform of international institutions. In addition, we are also facing war and conflicts, genocide in addition to the triple planetary environmental crisis.

However, CCIG will continue to move forward to bring hope. CCIG will continue fostering dialogue, strengthening NGO capacities, and advocating for human rights, ensuring that human rights concerns remain central to global discussions. As global solidarity becomes ever more critical, CCIG stands as a beacon of hope and action.

Thank you for standing firm in supporting this shared commitment.

Sincerely,

Budi Tjahjono
President of CCIG Board

Facilitation and Technical Support to NGOs

UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW (UPR) PLATFORM

In 2024, the UPR Platform has confirmed its role as a leading activity for the CCIG over the past years, constituting the driving force behind much of the human rights advocacy and capacity building activities promoted by the CCIG, both at the United Nations in Geneva and in projects implemented at the local level.

The new CCIG Strategy has confirmed the commitment of the Center to continue the activities of the UPR Platform, which in 2024 not only maintained its work to support and enhance coordination among its members, but also extended its range of capacity building activities.

The UPR Platform's 2024 Endeavors

In 2024, **three plenary meetings** of the Platform took place to facilitate the joint work of the NGOs **between the 45th and the 49th sessions of the UPR**. The plenary meetings were complemented by increased capacity building and sensitization activities and the enhanced technical support provided to local partners.

« National civil society as well as local and regional governments have a key role to bring the decision-making process closer to the citizens and ensure that laws, policies and programs fully integrate rights holders' concerns. »

*CCIG Joint oral statement at the HRC
July 2024*

Eleven joint written reports among CCIG Platform members were submitted to the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).¹ Additionally, members of the CCIG Platform submitted another **twenty-six written reports individually or jointly with other NGOs**.

Nine oral statements were delivered under item 6 of the HRC as a result of joint reports among CCIG Platform members. Additionally, another **seven oral statements were delivered under item 6 of the HRC as result of reports submitted by the Platform's members individually or jointly with other NGOs**.

The human rights situations in a total of 31 countries were addressed through such reports and oral statements, highlighting pressing human rights challenges for the most vulnerable communities and bringing the voice of affected local populations to the attention of the international community.

When compared to similar data from the UPR Platform in 2023 (9 joint written reports and 11 oral statements) and in 2022 (9 joint written reports and 9 oral statements), we see a significant and steady contribution resulting from the work of the Platform.

Speaking up at the Human Rights Council

In addition to the oral statements presented by the Platform members, during the 56th HRC Session (June 2024), the CCIG delivered a **joint oral statement during the Annual thematic panel discussion on Enhancing technical cooperation and capacity-building in the implementation of universal periodic review recommendations**. The statement was co-sponsored by Associazione Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII, Caritas Internationalis, Compagnie des Filles de la Charité de Saint Vincent de Paul, Edmund Rice International, Fédération internationale de l'Action des chrétiens pour l'abolition de la torture, Fondazione Marista per la Solidarietà Internazionale, International Volunteerism Organization for Women, Education, Development, Instituto de Desenvolvimento e Direitos Humanos, Istituto Internazionale Maria Ausiliatrice, Office

1. The UPR joint submissions and oral statements are available at: <https://ccig-iccg.org/service-aux-ong/>



International de l'enseignement catholique, UPR Info, and VIVAT International.²

While recognizing the commitment of Member States to the UPR process, this NGO coalition highlighted how efforts are still needed to ensure the effective implementation of UPR recommendations for the advancement of human rights at the local level. **National civil society as well as local and regional governments have a key role to bring the decision-making process closer to the citizens and ensure that laws, policies and programs fully integrate rights holders' concerns.**

Widespread dissemination of recommendations locally is still lacking. **Further efforts are needed to enhance the role of legal professionals and media in raising awareness of the UPR and relevant human rights issues.**

To enhance the effective implementation of human rights, States need to adopt a holistic approach that ensures respect, protection, and fulfillment of these rights for all, leaving no one behind. This involves not only strengthening the legal and institutional framework, but also promoting human rights education, fostering a human rights-based economy, and ensuring access to justice, redress, and remedies.

National Mechanisms for Implementation, Reporting, and Follow-up (NMIRFs) and local actors are essential for developing inclusive human rights monitoring plans, establishing baselines, and creating

objective-oriented human rights indicators, which foster accountability and transparency.

Finally, **greater efforts are required to provide a safe space and ensure technical and financial support for civil society, enabling them to effectively contribute to advancing human rights.**

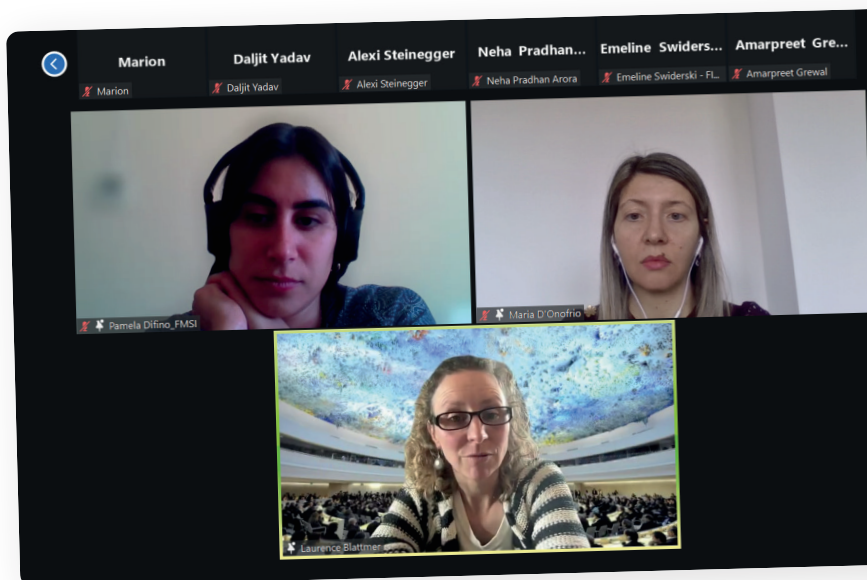
Assessing the Impact of Advocacy Efforts on the UPR Sessions

With the support of the CCIG, NGOs also developed common strategies to assess the impact of their lobbying activities with States representatives in order to prioritize members' concerns during the review and to monitor the impact of UPR recommendations on the ground.

On the occasion of a plenary meeting of its UPR Platform held on April 17, the CCIG offered an update on the Advocacy Assessment Tool developed through the Platform to provide NGOs with a means of measuring the impact of their advocacy work on recommendations made by countries during the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) session. Laurence Blattmer, Program Coordinator at Dominicans for Justice and Peace, and Pamela Difino, Project Administration Officer at the Marist Foundation for International Solidarity (FMSI), gave presentations on their experiences using the Advocacy Assessment Tool. Dominicans for Justice and Peace and FMSI are both members of CCIG and have used the tool in their joint projects carried out in partnership with CCIG in Papua New Guinea and Bangladesh as well as in other contexts.

During the meeting, the presenters provided a detailed description of how to use the Advocacy Assessment

2. The text of the oral statement is available at: <https://ccig-iccg.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/CCIG-joint-statement-56HRC-Panel-on-technical-cooperation-cover.pdf>. To watch the video of the statement: <https://ccig-iccg.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/CCIG-Joint-OS-Panel-on-Technical-Cooperation-56HRC.mp4>.





Tool and explained how the impact of lobbying efforts is measured. They identified the types of data that can be collected and offered suggestions on how participants could adjust the file to fit the specific needs of their organization. They also discussed the importance of having quantifiable information on advocacy efforts for use in reports for donors or yearly organizational reports. With the Advocacy Assessment Tool, NGOs can gauge which forms of lobbying are most impactful, determine which states are most open to their suggestions, and predict what types of recommendations states may make in future UPR cycles.

This meeting not only gave participants the knowledge needed to use the Advocacy Assessment Tool in their own work, but through time for questions and discussion, generated ideas for expanding and improving on the tool going forward.

Technical support to empower local actors voice their concerns about children's rights in Bangladesh

On 25 March 2024, with the support of the CCIG and the FMSI, local civil society actors delivered an oral statement on the occasion of the adoption of UPR outcomes of Bangladesh, under item 6 of the 55th Human Rights Council session.³

The statement welcomed the acceptance by Bangladesh of several UPR recommendations. However, with regard to corporal punishment, grassroots actors expressed concern that the Children Act 2013 does not include any explicit provision prohibiting corporal punishment in schools and the number of cases reported in families is very high as well. It was, therefore, recommended to

enhance existing legislation and its implementation to eradicate corporal punishment in all settings.

Concerning child labour and education, the situation of children working in the tea gardens remains dramatic: 29.8 per cent of children aged 5-17 are involved in child labour in Habiganj, 15.6 per cent in Moulvibazar, and 19.3 per cent in

Sylhet. It was recommended to Bangladesh to ensure that child labour, even when legal, does not prevent children from going to school.

Concerning forced child marriages, it was reiterated the need to reformulate the Child Marriage Restrain Act, since data show that about 59% of women in the country aged 20–24 years were married before the age of 18 years. Local civil society actors recommended to ensure that birth registration is mandatory especially in the tea gardens in order to prevent deceitful manipulations of the age of children as a measure to fight against child marriages.

Keeping track of our work with the UPR

A **database** on the CCIG website providing links to UPR submissions drafted by the members of the Platform, oral statements, and other information relevant to the UPR process has been regularly updated throughout 2024 in order to ensure that the database remains an effective tool for information exchange.⁴ The webpage also includes the video of the oral statements delivered by CCIG and other members of the UPR Platform. This represents a great added value to ensure its dissemination among other NGOs, thus multiplying the impact of CCIG capacity building efforts. In fact, these video materials can be used as a tool for training and awareness-raising of the UPR Platform's local members and partners.

A **specific webpage on the UPR project implemented in Bangladesh in 2023⁵** was created on the CCIG website in 2024, with the objective to support UPR Platform members while developing and strengthening their own advocacy activities. The training materials and other advocacy and monitoring tools developed by CCIG

3. The video of the oral statement is available at: https://ccig-iccg.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Oral-Statement-for-Bangladesh_FMSI.mp4

4. <https://ccig-iccg.org/service-aux-ong/>

5. <https://ccig-iccg.org/bangladesh/>

through the Bangladesh project were made accessible through the establishment of a restricted area in the CCIG website.

The continued updating and enhancement of the UPR-related pages on the CCIG website proves how the CCIG UPR Platform has become a stimulating space for NGOs to conceive and implement new initiatives, enhance know-how, and to spread best practices among its members all over the world.

OTHER SENSITIZATION ACTIVITIES

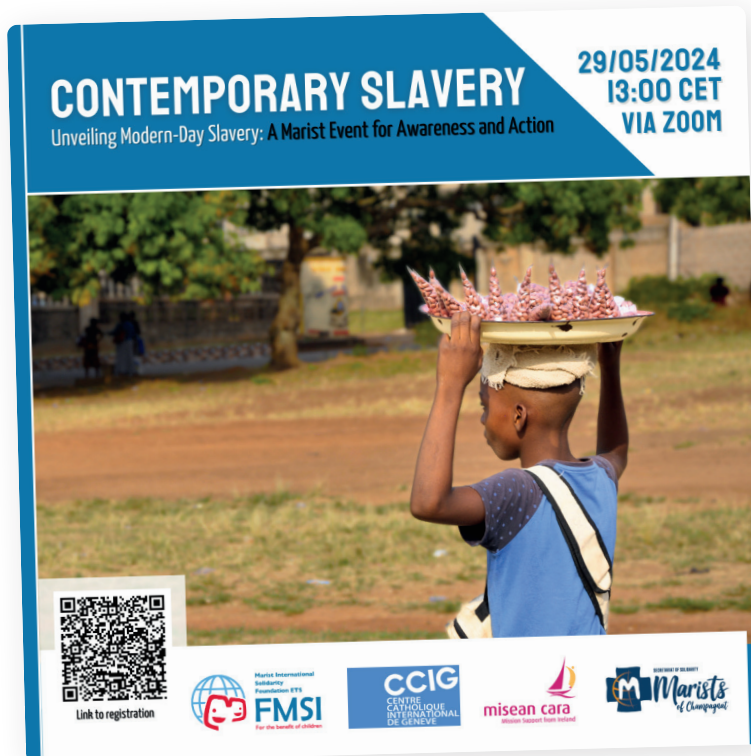
As part of the newly renewed and strengthened capacity-building and sensitization efforts, CCIG endorsed a series of additional activities in 2024 addressed to a larger public in order to raise awareness of human rights issues and the importance of civil society's contribution to the resolution of major challenges in this area.

Fighting Modern-Day Slavery: CCIG Supports FMSI Local Endeavors

On 29 May 2024, the Marist Foundation for International Solidarity (FMSI) and the Secretariat of Solidarity of the Marist Brothers' Institute hosted an online event entitled "Unveiling Modern-Day Slavery: A Marist Event for Awareness and Action." The webinar brought together a range of speakers to discuss the issue of modern slavery and report on projects carried out on the ground. It also highlighted support from CCIG especially to empower local actors in their advocacy undertakings with the UN human rights system.

The webinar began with an introduction by FMSI General Director Andrea Rossi, who emphasized the right of children to be heard and to participate in matters of their human rights. Ángel Diego Garcia Otaola, Director of the Secretariat of Solidarity of the Marist Brothers' Institute, then presented on means of detecting and addressing modern slavery. He focused on the use of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) mechanism to directly involve the most vulnerable in advocating for their rights, providing examples of UPR submissions they made on the human rights situation in Portugal, Costa Rica, and Kiribati and Fiji.

Mauricio Siñaniz of the Marist Brothers in Bolivia next spoke about the definition of child labor as labor deprives



children of childhood and about the rates of child labor in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The next presentation focused on the Children's and Women's Rights in the Bolivia Project, implemented together with CCIG, with the financial support of Misean Cara and Missio. Reflections on the project included the importance of conducting outreach to marginalized children and youth, listening to children long-term, and acting as an accompaniment to working children and adolescents, allowing them to share their needs and be actors for their rights.

Virgilio Bwalya of the Marist Brothers of Bangladesh then discussed the work of the Marist Brothers to address the human rights situation in the tea gardens of Sylhet, including by providing quality, low-cost educational programs. Thanks to training and logistical support from CCIG and FMSI, as well as funding from Misean Cara, the Marist Brothers participated in the 2023 UPR review of Bangladesh, and their advocacy work surrounding human rights violations in the tea gardens has raised awareness of the need to reduce rates of violence against children.

Other speakers from the Union of Child and Adolescent Workers of Bolivia (UNATsBO) and the Marist Brothers of Haiti also presented valuable inputs on how to promote the right to education of children and young people. Finally, to conclude the session, Andrea Rossi emphasized the commitment of Marists to protect children and reiterated the importance of empowering children as active protagonists in advocating for their rights.

CAPACITY BUILDING

The CCIG continued its efforts to carry out several training activities for local human rights defenders and international NGO representatives. In accordance with the importance attached to the capacity-building of civil society actors in the new CCIG 2023 - 2027 Strategy and Action Plan, the CCIG intends to foster quality contributions by NGOs in the UN system for the promotion and protection of human rights. The CCIG offers training courses and theoretical-practical seminars for NGO members, as well as other attendees interested in receiving specialized training on United Nations mechanisms for the protection and promotion of human rights, such as the Treaty Bodies and the UPR.

In 2024, the CCIG continued to make considerable efforts to implement in-person training sessions and online capacity-building initiatives that could effectively respond to the concrete needs of international and local Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). Accordingly, the CCIG secretariat offered continuous assistance to NGO activities to train their members in the field.

CCIG Empowers Local Actors in Kenya to Engage with UPR

CCIG offered a training course on the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) mechanism to a group of about

«[CCIG presentation] offered us profound insights into how the treaty bodies work along with the various ways in which NGOs can engage effectively with the [...] UN conventions. [Its] mastery of the UN operations related to treaty bodies was admirable. Inspired! »

Feedback from a Training Participant

30 local actors in Kenya in partnership with Action de Carême / Fastenaktion. Two training sessions took place online on April 26th and May 3rd, 2024.

During the first session, CCIG Secretary General Maria D'Onofrio provided a thorough explanation of the UPR process and opportunities for civil society participation. Training participants learned how NGOs can be involved in each stage of the cycle, including through submitting a UPR stakeholders' submission, lobbying Member States to put forth priority recommendations, taking the floor during the adoption of the Working Group Report, and monitoring State implementation of accepted recommendations.

The second session focused on the process of drafting a UPR submission. Maria began her intervention by helping participants analyze how recommendations made in the previous Working Group Report of Kenya related to key areas of concern for the group, including access to food and social services, and the rights of indigenous peoples and other minority groups. She then walked the participants through the process of drafting the text step-by-step, from identifying human rights issues and conducting research to writing and publishing.

Participants had the opportunity not only to ask questions, but to share their ideas and concerns regarding writing a UPR submission and to begin to coordinate the process among themselves. The training sessions were offered by CCIG as part of its UPR Platform to promote the human rights work of NGOs by providing them with the tools needed to effectively contribute to UPR cycles. Through the training, local human rights actors gained detailed knowledge of the UPR process, empowering them to use the mechanism in their own human rights work.



Enhancing Human Rights Advocacy Projects for Children's Rights in Latin America: CCIG hosts joint online training with FMSI

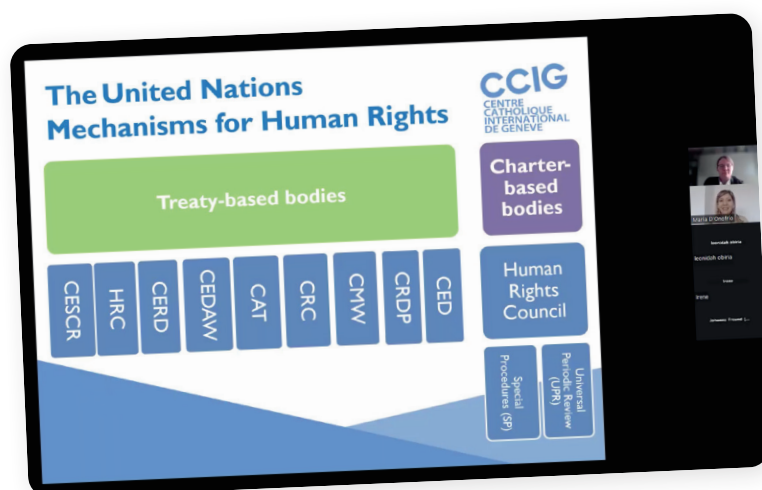
In May, CCIG partnered with the Marist Foundation for International Solidarity (FMSI) and Miseen Cara to offer an online training program on Engaging in Human Rights Advocacy Projects to **24 participants from 14 countries across Latin America**. The program was attended by Marist Brothers and others working in Marist schools, centers, and projects in areas where children's living conditions are of particular concern. The goal of the course was to train participants in the promotion and protection of children's rights at the local and international level through intensive training on drafting and measuring the impact of human rights advocacy projects. Presentations were conducted primarily by CCIG Secretary General Maria D'Onofrio, as well as by Andrea Rossi of FMSI and Patricia Ynoñan Garcia of Miseen Cara.

« I would like to thank you most sincerely for your brilliant presentation on Universal Periodic Reviews, which provided valuable insights for the members of the Board of the Office International de l'Enseignement Catholique.

You expressed yourself with heart and touching sincerity. It was not only beautiful, but also deeply revealing, highlighting some of the limits of the current system.

For our part, we must aspire to be better in our contributions, and your intervention gives us a solid basis for progress! »

OIEC, Secretary General, CCIG Member



The training consisted of four sessions. Module I centered on the importance of human rights advocacy projects and how the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) can be used to advance children's rights. In Module II, participants identified key challenges to drafting a human rights advocacy project and discussed strategies to overcome them, such as methods for writing project proposals including effective indicators, and data collection. Module III focused on how to measure the impact of advocacy actions prior to the UPR session, including short-term effects, through the assessment of lobbying actions, and the long-term effects, through the monitoring of human rights implementation. It introduced the ad hoc advocacy assessment tool employed by the CCIG in previous human rights advocacy projects and proposed that the participants apply it in a practical exercise. Module IV provided participants with the opportunity to present the results of the practical exercises they completed previously during the program, and involved time for feedback, discussion, and questions.

The rationale of this capacity-building activity is based on the acknowledgment that the inclusion of an advocacy component in traditional development projects aimed at a better implementation of human rights has become increasingly essential. At the same time, it presents an intrinsic challenge linked to the difficulty of assessing the impact of such advocacy actions on national human rights policies and thus, ultimately, on the enjoyment of human rights at the local level.

Through this course, which combined both instructional presentations and practical exercises, participants explored the importance of conducting human rights advocacy projects and developed skills for meaningful and effective contribution to the advancement of human rights on the ground. Participants expressed their appreciation for the program, noting the relevance of the content to their work, the usefulness of the practical skills they developed, and the importance of having training spaces available for knowledge-sharing and capacity-building.

Boosting Civil Society Participation in the UPR Process: CCIG Presentation at VIVAT Annual Meeting

On June 3rd, 2024, the CCIG conducted a presentation on the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) mechanism as part of the 2024 VIVAT International Annual Meeting, with the participation of **over 80 local human rights activists from around the world**. The intervention focused on how the UPR can be used to achieve human rights on the ground.

The presentation began with an introduction to the UPR mechanism. It explained the legal basis of the UPR mechanism in the UN Charter of 1945 and provided an overview of the review process. It then addressed the ways in which civil society actors can participate in the UPR process.

To conclude the presentation, CCIG shared success stories experienced with its members in working with the UPR mechanism. It highlighted the Bolivia Project, in which a coalition of 18 local civil society actors made a UPR submission on rights of vulnerable children, youth, and women. Local actors came to Geneva to participate in meetings and side events, even delivering oral statements in two Human Rights Council (HRC) sessions. Their efforts produced 16 focused recommendations that Bolivia committed to implement, and the local actors involved in the submission

proceeded to monitor the implementation with logistical support from CCIG. It was also discussed the Papua New Guinea Project, in which a coalition of 16 local civil society actors made a UPR submission with the support of CCIG related to the rights of children, women, and people with disabilities as well as environmental protection. The project included the use of national radio broadcasts to raise awareness of human rights issues and alert the public to the key human rights challenges raised in the UPR submission.

Following CCIG's presentation, Kachi Adindu of VIVAT International provided a brief on the UPR of Nigeria, which underwent its fourth review in January 2024. The report of the working group contained multiple recommendations related to the VIVAT submission, the adoption of which took place in July 2024 during the 56th session.

Participants concluded the meeting by discussing the greatest challenges they have faced while engaging with the UPR process, noting limited opportunities for networking and knowledge sharing among organizations as well as lack of knowledge of the process and technical skills to draft submissions, both issues that the CCIG works to address through its UPR Platform. Thanks to this training, participants gained a better understanding of the function of the UPR mechanism and the role of NGOs, empowering them to engage with the UPR process in their work as civil society actors.



CCIG Offers UPR Training to Civil Society Actors

On 18 June 2024, CCIG provided training on the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) mechanism as part of the four-day program Summer University on “Human Rights, Education, and Sustainability” offered by OIDEI in partnership with the University of Geneva. The training was offered to a group of **25 participants composed of education professionals, university students, and local civil society leaders**, coming from an array of countries, including Spain, Portugal, England, Ireland, the USA, and Costa Rica.

CCIG Secretary General Maria D’Onofrio began her presentation with an overview of the UN mechanisms for human rights. She then offered an in-depth explanation of the UPR process, underscoring the significance of this mechanism as a review that involves all Member States as equals and allows any human rights issue to be addressed. She then highlighted the opportunities for Civil Society participation in each stage of the process, including through submitting a written report prior to the review, lobbying Member States to put forth recommendations, making an oral statement during the adoption of UPR outcomes at the Human Rights Council, and conducting monitoring and follow-up of implementation on the ground.

This training session furthered the work of CCIG’s UPR Platform to offer logistical and technical support to NGOs in order to increase Civil Society participation in the UPR process, rendering the mechanism a more effective tool for enacting human rights. Through this session, a diverse group of local actors learned about the essential role that Civil Society plays in UN human rights mechanisms and was empowered to participate in the UPR process in their own human rights advocacy work.

Empowering CCIG Members: UPR Training for APG23 Young Volunteers

On August 14th 2024, CCIG offered an in-person training session on the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process to representatives of Associazione Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII (APG23). Held on the premises of CCIG in Geneva, the session was offered to five members of APG23, including two young volunteers from the International Civil Service. The goal of the training was to give participants a stronger understanding of the UPR process, enabling them to

use the mechanism in their own work. At the training, participants learned about the structure of the UPR cycle and opportunities for engagement by civil society, including through submitting a written report, lobbying member states to put forth recommendations, making an oral statement during the UPR adoptions, and conducting monitoring and follow-up measures.

The participants had already been introduced to the UPR prior to the training, so the session offered practical insights on how to engage with this mechanism and an interactive environment with many opportunities for discussion. After the presentation, participants asked questions, shared ideas, and discussed topics such as additional ways to use written submissions and the role of the UPR in relation to other UN human rights bodies. Overall, participants in the training gained a more technical understanding of the UPR and learned best practices for civil society engagement in the process.

CCIG and UN Etxea’s Training Course for Youth active in the education sector

A new edition of the training session on the United Nations Human Rights Mechanisms, co-organized by the CCIG and the UN Etxea (UNESCO Basque Country Centre) took place in Geneva from 16 to 19 September 2024, in conjunction with the 57th session of the Human Rights Council. The training session was addressed to **9 young people from the Basque Country**, who are particularly active in the field of formal and informal education. Interestingly, the OHCHR Study on solutions to promote digital education to young people and ensure their protection from online threats was presented at the HRC during the same days.

Having already a very good expertise in education at the local level, training participants come to Geneva with the expectation to learn more about the UN Human Rights mechanisms and receive insights on how these mechanisms, together with the OHCHR, are contributing to empower young people through human rights-based education interventions in schools and beyond.

Accordingly, trainers’ presentations addressed the functioning of relevant UN bodies and mechanisms such as the Human Rights Council, the Universal Periodic Review, and the Treaty bodies. Furthermore, participants



met with OHCHR officers and received insights on useful sensitization tools, such as the Advocacy toolkit for youth (YES) and the Stories of Changemakers. Finally, the training was complemented by the attendance at some sessions of the Human Rights Council, including the Panel on Quality Education for Peace and Tolerance for Every Child, as well as of the Treaty Bodies.

This training is part of the efforts led by CCIG and its members with the aim of ensuring active, effective and meaningful participation of youth in international fora. The participants expressed their appreciation for the training received and committed to continue their efforts to ensure better human rights education in their local communities.

Empowering Civil Society to Engage with UN Treaty Bodies

In 2024, CCIG was invited to deliver two training sessions on the UN Treaty Bodies to civil society representatives from the Edmund Rice International (ERI) Network, who were invited to Geneva to learn about human rights advocacy within the UN system and attend the sessions of the UN Human Rights Council (HRC). Both training sessions took place at the ERI office in Geneva. The first training, held on June 19th, involved **9 participants hailing from Australia, Ghana, India, Ireland, and the USA, as well as 3 other representatives** of ERI and CCIG in attendance. The second training on November 6th included **12 representatives of civil society from Australia, India, Nigeria, Philippines, Sierra Leone, the USA, and Zambia**. The main goal of this capacity building

initiative was to enable local civil society actors to better navigate the articulated UN Human Rights Treaty system in order to strengthen their advocacy work for the protection of children's rights in their respective countries.

CCIG presentation began with a general introduction to the structure of the UN Human Rights System, before focusing on Treaty Bodies specifically. The training covered all aspects of this topic thoroughly, including the definition of a Treaty, the process of its ratification, the current treaties in place, and the duties of State Parties to fully implement those treaties. Notably, CCIG presentation also highlighted opportunities for Civil Society participation in the Treaty Bodies reporting process, including through the submission of written reports and monitoring of implementation on the ground.

The session offered an interactive environment, allowing participants to demonstrate what they had already learned during their time in Geneva, ask further questions, and engage in conversation related to the function of Treaty Bodies, especially the Committee on the Rights of the Child, and the role of Civil Society members in the process.

Through this training, Civil Society actors from around the world gained a better understanding of the UN Treaty Bodies mechanism, empowering them to engage with the UN system in their own human rights work.

Human Rights Webinar: How to Engage in Existing Process to Increase Impact

On November 28th, 2024, the CCIG was invited to intervene in a Webinar organized by the Alliance SUFOSEC (Alliance for Sustainable Food Systems and Empowered Communities).

The webinar aimed at sharing knowledge on what the UPR is and what steps are necessary to engage in the UPR process as civil society organizations. During the webinar, the presentation of the case study of Kenya, through interventions of local partners, allowed it to share concrete lessons learned and human rights opportunities to replicate in other countries.





The Speakers included: Ms. Maria D'Onofrio, Secretary General, Centre Catholique International de Genève (CCIG); Ms. Miriam Kisilu, Team Member of the Coordination for Fastenaktion Country Programme Kenya; Mr. Nyang'ori Ohenjo, Team Leader at Centre for Minority Rights Development; and Ms. Christa Suter, Coordinator RAISE project and Country Programme Manager for Kenya at Fastenaktion.

Questions addressed specifically to the CCIG speaker, concerned how to follow-up and monitor UPR recommendations at the local level as well as concrete modalities to draft a written report (UPR submission) for the UPR of a specific country. The CCIG was happy to share its insights and expertise on the UPR, built-up over the years thanks to the valuable experience of its UPR Platform.

In fact, earlier this year, the CCIG had undertaken training and capacity building for local actors in Kenya to empower them to engage with UPR. Equipped with simultaneous interpretation in English, French and Spanish, the webinar counted over **70 attendees from all over the world**. The webinar was concluded by the Presentation of a Graphic Recording by Britta Krondorf.

CCIG presents the UPR at the 101st Council Meeting of OIEC

On December 4th, the CCIG was invited to intervene at the 101st Council Meeting of the International Catholic Education Office (OIEC), which was held in Geneva on 4-5 December, 2024.

During her intervention, Maria presented the Universal Periodic Review and the opportunities that this UN mechanisms provides for enhancing human rights implementation on the ground, to 33 participants from several countries, including Australia, Belgium, Benin, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, France, Equatorial Guinea, Haiti, India, Lebanon, Mauritius, Morocco, Philippines, South Africa, Spain, Tunisia, United Kingdom, and Uruguay.

Participants expressed their appreciation ensuring that CCIG contribution provided a solid basis for them to progress in engaging with the UPR.

CCIG – FMSI Online Training for local human rights activists

In November-December 2024, upon request of the Marist Secretariat of Solidarity and the Marist Foundation for International Solidarity (FMSI), the CCIG delivered an online training course to over **20 local human rights activists from the USA, Syria, and several countries of Latin America, Europe, Asia, and Africa**. The training consisted of 4 modules focusing on: (i) The commitment of the United Nations to the respect of Human Rights, in particular through the Human Right Council; (ii) the United Nations Human Rights Treaty System, and in particular the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child; (iii) the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) and the importance for the grassroots and civil society actors to engage with it; and (iv) How to draft a UPR submission.

Through this online training, participants attended remotely some UPR sessions and acquired familiarity with relevant UPR reports and recommendations. They learned how States' compliance with international human rights recommendations can generate positive changes in domestic policies and a real impact on the lives of vulnerable populations who are most affected by human rights violations and discrimination. By sharing best practices and practical examples, they were encouraged to raise awareness on key human rights issues at the local level.

ADMINISTRATION AND COMMUNICATION

STRUCTURE OF CCIG ACTIVITIES

The Board held three meetings in 2024 to ensure coherence and adequate realization of all activities as well as the development of fundraising efforts. The work of the Secretariat was supported by Chris Duckett as a Consultant for Fundraising from January to June, and Emily Pauwels as an intern from May to August 2024.

In order to allow for maximum participation of its members, the General Assembly of the CCIG was held online.

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

COMMUNICATION AND OUTREACH

In 2024, CCIG expanded its communication efforts to better disseminate information about the work of its members.

Firstly, CCIG maintained its UPR Platform database which provides links to relevant UPR submissions and oral statements.

Secondly, a specific webpage on the UPR project implemented in Bangladesh⁶ was created on the CCIG website in 2024, together with a restricted area accessible to CCIG project partners. Through these communication and outreach efforts, the CCIG intends to share know-how and best practices to support



6. In 2023 the International Catholic Center of Geneva (CCIG) and the Marist Foundation for International Solidarity (FMSI) had joined forces to implement the project 'Human Rights in Bangladesh: The situation of Children and their families in the Tea Gardens of Sylhet', together with the Marist Brothers Trust Bangladesh. The project aimed at strengthening the capacity of local civil society to report, monitor and follow-up the most pressing issues in Bangladesh through the Universal Periodic Review. See <https://ccig-iccg.org/bangladesh/>.



advocacy and capacity building activities by other civil society actors.

The creation of both the new webpage and restricted area represents great added value to ensure the dissemination of the training and other relevant documentation among other NGOs, thus multiplying the impact of CCIG capacity building efforts. In fact, CCIG field projects' web pages can be used as a tool for training and awareness-raising among the CCIG local members and partners, as they also gather video testimonies of local human rights defenders and/or local NGO representatives who benefited from different CCIG initiatives in their countries.

In line with its mission to promote justice, human rights and dignity for all, with a concern for the common good and the safeguarding of the environment, in 2024 the CCIG attended several meetings and UN sessions on relevant topics. The sharing of relevant information on CCIG website contributed to supporting the collective efforts of civil society actors in addressing global human rights and environmental issues.⁷



Young people's engagement with climate change and global environmental decision-making processes

In line with the shared commitment of its members to safeguarding the environment, which was solidified in CCIG mission statement with the adoption of its 2023-2027 Strategy, the CCIG supported a joint oral statement delivered on the occasion of



7. See relevant information on CCIG website at: <https://ccig-iccg.org/56-hrc-the-human-rights-council-addresses-climate-change/> ; <https://ccig-iccg.org/ohchr-addresses-rights-of-older-persons/> ; <https://ccig-iccg.org/the-key-role-of-the-special-rapporteur-on-right-to-a-healthy-environment/> ;

the presentation of the Report of the OHCHR on the Biennial panel discussion on youth and human rights, during the 55th HRC session (March 2024). The statement, co-sponsored by several CCIG members, stressed how **despite being at the forefront of the recognition of the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment, youth continue to face barriers to the effective, active and meaningful exercise of their right to participate** in climate change and environmental decision-making processes. Such barriers are multiplied for young people with intersecting forms of discrimination and in situations of vulnerability.

Moreover, even when youth formal participation is ensured, its influence on the decision-making processes, is very limited. This generates mistrust in political institutions and local authorities and diminishes motivation and engagement among youth. Substantial and transformative participation remains critical. To foster this at the national, regional and international levels, the NGO coalition called, inter alia, to ensure systematic mainstreaming of youth rights through existing UN Human Rights mechanisms, especially the UPR and the Treaty Bodies.⁸

These improvements in communications not only increase the visibility of the initiatives conducted by CCIG members, but also provide awareness-raising resources to international NGOs and local human rights defenders.



KEY POINTS RELATED TO FUNDRAISING

- As a result of additional funding efforts undertaken in 2024, the City of Meyrin has extended its financial support to the CCIG UPR Platform.
- DKA's approval of a new Project for the promotion of the rights of children in Kenya and Ghana has been an important outcome for the CCIG.
- Several other training activities were financed by respective partners.



MEMBERS OF CCIG BOARD (UPDATED ON DECEMBER 31, 2023)

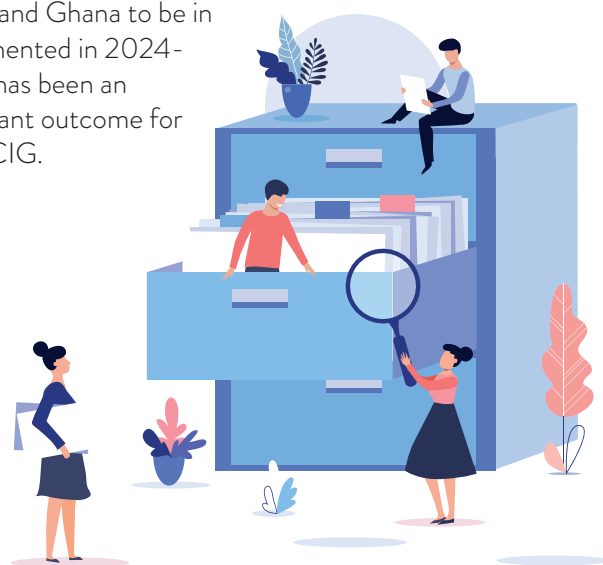
- Budi Tjahjono – President
- Diana Duarte Rizzolio – Vice-President
- Markus Heinze – Treasurer
- Brian Bond – Secretary
- Larry Kohler – Member
- Angel Diego Garcia Otaola – Member
- Anna Biondi Bird – Member

FINANCIAL EFFORTS

In 2024, the CCIG continued its efforts to shape and secure the future of the organization through the generosity of its traditional donors as well as with the more recent donors.

In addition to the continued and appreciated support of Action de Carême (Swiss Catholic Lenten Fund), the CCIG received a contribution from the City of Meyrin.

The approval by DKA of a new Project for the promotion of the rights of children in Kenya and Ghana to be implemented in 2024-2025 has been an important outcome for the CCIG.



8. The text of the oral statement is available at: <https://ccig-iccg.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Joint-OS-Item-3-GD-Youth-and-HR-55HRC.pdf>. To watch the video of the statement: <https://ccig-iccg.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/VIVAT-ITEM3-GA%C2%A9nA%C2%A9ral-Debate-HRC55th.mp4>



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