



CCIG

INTERNATIONAL
CATHOLIC
CENTER
OF GENEVA

REPORT OF ACTIVITIES 2025

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ABBREVIATIONS

CINGO	Catholic-inspired Non-governmental Organization
CRC	Committee on the Rights of the Child
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DKA AUSTRIA	Dreikönigsaktion – Hilfswerk der Katholischen Jungschar
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 »

Renewing Our Commitment to Human Dignity Through Action



EDITORIAL

DEAR MEMBERS
AND FRIENDS OF CCIG,

As we look back on our activities in 2025, the International Catholic Centre of Geneva (CCIG) stands at a pivotal moment in its 75-year history. Founded in 1950 with a mission rooted in justice, dignity, and the promotion of human rights, CCIG has continued to evolve in response to a rapidly changing global landscape. The past year has been marked by profound geopolitical tensions, widening inequalities, and the ongoing environmental crisis—yet it has also been a year in which CCIG’s commitment to empowering civil society has grown stronger than ever.

This 2025 Annual Report demonstrates that our work is not abstract advocacy but a concrete, sustained effort to ensure that the voices of the most vulnerable reach the international community. As one Kenyan partner expressed, “The drafting of the oral statement initially looked very hard, but the CCIG sessions helped a lot to accomplish the work with a reasonable effort.” This testimony captures the essence of the CCIG’s mission: to accompany, strengthen, and amplify.

At the heart of this work is the Universal Periodic



Review (UPR) Platform, which once again proved to be a cornerstone of CCIG work. In 2025, the UPR Platform facilitated joint submissions, coordinated oral statements, and provided technical support to NGOs in different countries. The submissions and statements represent the concerns of communities whose struggles and aspirations were brought before the Human Rights Council through collective effort.

The CCIG UPR Platform is also a space of solidarity. The introduction of the Advocacy Assessment Tool exemplifies our commitment to innovation. By helping NGOs measure the impact of their lobbying efforts, the tool strengthens accountability and strategic planning. This is capacity-building at its most practical and transformative.

Thanks to the CCIG key partnership with Fastenaktion and DKA Austria, local actors played a more significant role on the global stage. Kenyan and Nepali civil society representatives travelled to Geneva to advocate ahead of their countries' UPR sessions. Their interventions—on land rights, food security, minority protections, and gender equality—demonstrated how training and accompaniment can translate into effective advocacy.

Similarly, CCIG's support for children's rights defenders in Ghana and Kenya highlighted our commitment to addressing urgent human rights violations. During the 60th session of the Human Rights Council, a Ghanaian representative denounced the exploitation of children in mining, emphasizing that artisanal and small-scale mining "recruits thousands of child workers" and exposes them to grave risks. These interventions remind us that behind every statistic lies a child, a family, a community whose dignity must be defended.

Training remained a central pillar of our work. From online modules on the UN human rights system to in-person workshops with students and young leaders, the CCIG continued to invest in the next generation of advocates. Participants repeatedly emphasized how inspiring these sessions were: "Learning about the UPR is empowering and I am wondering how we can make more people know about it." This desire to share knowledge is precisely what sustains a vibrant civil



society.

In the face of conflict, polarization, and environmental degradation, this report conveys a message of hope—grounded not in idealism, but in action. The CCIG strengthened partnerships, expanded communication efforts, and renewed fundraising initiatives demonstrate a clear vision for the future. As the editorial section of the report affirms, the CCIG will continue "fostering dialogue, strengthening NGO capacities, and advocating for human rights," ensuring that human dignity remains central to global discussions.

In its 75th year, the CCIG stands not only as a witness, but as an active shaper of history. Our work this past year shows that when civil society is empowered, when local voices are heard, and when solidarity guides action, meaningful change becomes possible. The challenges ahead are immense, but so too is the collective strength of those committed to justice.

The CCIG's mission continues—and with it, the promise of a more humane and equitable world.

Sincerely,

Budi Tjahjono
President of CCIG Board

Facilitation and Technical Support to NGOs

UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW (UPR) PLATFORM

In 2025, 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 UPR Platform's 2025 Endeavors

In 2025, **two plenary meetings** of the Platform took place to facilitate the joint work of the NGOs **between the 50th and the 54th sessions of the UPR**. The plenary meetings were complemented by increased capacity building and communication activities and the enhanced technical support provided to local partners.

Ten joint written reports among CCIG Platform members were submitted to the United Nations

“I appreciate the fact that we are working together as partners.”

“The drafting of the oral statement initially looked very hard, but then the CCIG sessions helped a lot to accomplish the work with a reasonable effort.”

“The children we work with were sensitized, so they can become accountable leaders. We were empowering them with information.”»

Civil society representatives from Kenya

Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).¹

Additionally, members of the CCIG Platform submitted another **twenty-nine 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 **twenty-one 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 **33 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 2024 (11 joint written reports and 9 oral statements) and in 2023 (9 joint written reports and 11 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 59th HRC Session (July 2025), the CCIG delivered a **joint oral statement during the Annual thematic panel discussion on technical cooperation and capacity-building**. The statement was co-sponsored by Associazione Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII, Caritas Internationalis, Catholic Organization for Relief and Development Aid (Cordaid), 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 (VIDES International), Istituto Internazionale Maria Ausiliatrice, Office International de l'enseignement catholique, and UPR Info.²

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

2. The text of the oral statement is available at: <https://ccig-iccg.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/CCIG-joint-statement-59HRC-technical-cooperation.pdf>. To watch the video of the statement: <https://ccig-iccg.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/CCIG-Joint-OS-Panel-discussion-on-technical-cooperation-HRC59.mp4>

While recognizing the progress States have made so far, the statement stressed the need for a more systematic evaluation of the implementation status of recommendations at the local level. **National structures, and in particular the National Mechanisms for Implementation, Reporting and Follow Up (NMIRFs) play a key role in ensuring protection of human rights, by contributing to the implementation of UPR and other human rights bodies' recommendations.**

The NGO coalition led by the CCIG called upon all Member States to set up or strengthen NMIRF and to develop a human rights monitoring plan in order to enhance the implementation of UPR recommendations and, ultimately, to better human rights for all worldwide.

Accordingly, the following minimum requirements should be guaranteed for these mechanisms to be truly effective: 1. Strong governmental anchoring: the mechanism should be linked to a high-level office with the authority to coordinate across sectors. It should include representatives from key ministries, local governments, parliament, and the judiciary; 2. Permanent and resourced structure: it should be a permanent body, built on existing structures, with dedicated staff and funding; 3. Mandate to consult with Civil Society and NHRI, as the main partners for the monitoring and implementation of UPR recommendations. 4. Training for Government officers at the grassroots level to ensure better understanding on the importance to effectively implement UPR recommendations at the local level.

From CCIG's training to Action: Kenyan Civil Society Actor in Geneva to Advocate Prior to the 49th UPR Session

From February 17 to 21, 2025, Mr. Nyangori Ohenjo, representing the Centre for Minority Rights Development (CEMIRIDE)³ in Kenya, came to Geneva to engage in advocacy prior to the UPR session of Kenya, scheduled for May 2025. During his visit, he took part in bilateral meetings with several State representatives and UN staff, and delivered speeches at the UPR Info pre-session of Kenya and at the EU Delegation's informal meeting with NGOs, advocating for minorities and indigenous people's rights.

3. <https://www.cemiride.org>

4. See <https://actiondecareme.ch/>

5. For more information, please consult relevant UPR Submission at: <https://ccig-iccg.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/CEMIRIDE-Joint-UPR-submission-KENYA.pdf>; and Executive Summary at: <https://ccig-iccg.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/CEMIRIDE-Fact-sheet-revised.pdf>

6. See <https://upr-info.org/en/news/pre-sessions-49-programme-and-accreditation>.



Earlier in 2024, at the request of Fastenaktion⁴, the CCIG delivered two online training sessions on the UPR mechanism for 30 Kenyan local actors, including CEMIRIDE, focusing on civil society participation and drafting UPR submissions. This space allowed the participants to engage with each other and begin coordinating their potential participation at the 49th UPR pre-session.

With the technical support of CCIG and Fastenaktion, the CEMIRIDE representative effectively presented Kenya's current human rights situation vis-à-vis other Member States. Beginning with UPR submission prepared jointly with other local partners, and continuing through his interventions in Geneva. Mr. Nyangori Ohenjo highlighted challenges and areas for reform related to the right to food, access to land, and minority groups⁵. He also received personalized feedback to deliver impactful speeches while prioritizing human rights issues and the respective recommendations.

He began his advocacy in Geneva by participating as a speaker in the UPR Info pre-session⁶ and then in the European Union delegation's informal meeting with NGOs ahead of UPR49 to encourage Member States to address specific recommendations to Kenya. Following this, he took part in several bilateral meetings with the Permanent Missions of Colombia, Switzerland, Georgia, France, Spain, Chile and Bolivia.

Notably, the CEMIRIDE representative recommended ensuring the right to food in Kenya by securing land access through the enforcement of existing

land laws, and to effectively protect land rights for peasants, with particular attention to women, youth, and people with disabilities. Additionally, he urged to implement safeguards against arbitrary evictions in accordance with the National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights.

This visit to Geneva gave Mr. Ohenjo an opportunity to raise awareness on Kenya's issues and share his recommendations, and allowed the civil society delegation accompanying him to attend parallel sessions, listen to panels on international issues, and connect with advocates from other countries.

This experience illustrates how capacity-building efforts, such as CCIG's training on the UPR mechanism, could directly strengthen civil society engagement in international human rights spaces, and amplify local voices and recommendations at the Universal Periodic Review of their respective countries.

Local Civil Society Speaks about the UPR Outcomes of Kenya at the 60th HRC

On behalf of Dreikönigsaktion – Hilfswerk der Katholischen Jungschar (DKA Austria)⁷, and representing five partner organizations in Kenya, on 26 September 2025, Ms. Denise Mghoi Kighombe delivered an oral statement (via video message) during the adoption of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) outcomes of Kenya under Item 6 at the 60th session of the Human Rights Council (HRC)⁸. The CCIG provided the speaker and the other partners with technical support to prepare and submit the statement, which was part of the wider Human Rights Capacity-Building Project, implemented by CCIG

«We truly value this opportunity and the space created for us to contribute to strengthening human rights in our country.»

DKA partners in Kenya

and DKA Austria starting from November 2024, to empower children's rights defenders from Ghana and Kenya. The project aimed to enable local and international civil society actors to use UN human rights mechanisms, such as the UPR and the HRC, to advocate for their communities' rights.

In her statement, Ms. Denise Mghoi Kighombe welcomed the acceptance by Kenya of several UPR recommendations received during the country's last UPR, in particular those recommendations aimed at addressing the **digital divide in education, the promotion of women's political participation ahead of the 2027 general elections, and the strengthening of accountability for abuses by security forces**. It also called on the Government of Kenya to urgently develop and implement inclusive strategies to realize these commitments⁹.

Previously, the CCIG supported local partners in parallel with the UPR session of Kenya held on May 1, by providing access and insights on relevant documentation, facilitating their remote attendance of the UPR session, as well as by encouraging them to join forces to boost sensitization on key UPR recommendations in Kenya and to identify UPR recommendations to be prioritized for implementation.

We are pleased to see the first outcomes of the year-long project implemented by the CCIG in partnership with DKA Austria, and to remain committed to supporting local civil society actors through various human rights capacity-building initiatives on the effective use of UN mechanisms to better protect human rights at the local level.

Advancing UPR Implementation: Technical Support for Kenyan Civil Society Actors

On November 17th, Dreikönigsaktion – Hilfswerk der Katholischen Jungschar (DKA Austria) and CCIG organized an online meeting for local civil society actors from Kenya. This meeting was provided as an opportunity to reflect on their experiences with the UPR of Kenya in 2025, evaluate progress, and explore new strategies to ensure that UPR recommendations are effectively implemented in their communities. It also

7. <https://www.dka.at>

8. To watch the whole discussion on the UPR outcomes of Kenya at the 60th HRC through UN WebTV - Part 1: <https://webtv.un.org/en/asset/k11/k1191rlb0o>; and Part 2: <https://webtv.un.org/en/asset/k1t/k1tb1kksg1>

9. The text of the oral statement is available at: <https://ccig-iccg.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/DKA-Oral-Statement-UPR-Kenya-1.pdf>. To watch the video of the statement: <https://ccig-iccg.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/DKA-Austria-Denise-Mghoi-Kighombe.mp4>

served as a space to assess the relevance of the training and technical support provided to them.

In fact, from November 2024 to October 2025, as part of the Human Rights Capacity-Building Project executed by CCIG and DKA Austria, local partners from Kenya participated in an online training course on United Nations (UN) system for the protection of human rights and then actively engaged in the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process, including delivering an oral statement in the UN Human Rights Council.

The Kenyan civil society actors who attended the meeting represented three organizations: Community Education and Empowerment Centre (CEEC)¹⁰, Rescue Dada Centre¹¹, and New Life Mwangaza Rehabilitation Center (NLMRC)¹². Each of these organizations works within diverse thematic areas relevant to their communities, such as gender-based violence, alcoholic addiction, and children and adolescents' rights.

We were glad to hear their feedback on project activities and how the training and technical support sessions have been helpful to them. They also shared how they become aware that their ongoing activities contribute to implementing UPR recommendations, and discussed possible follow-up actions. Together, we explored

“It is great to see that the UPR recommendations addressed to Kenya align with our priorities as local organizations.”

DKA partners in Kenya

opportunities for UPR monitoring follow-up, responding to their questions and considering how we might collaborate in the future.

Following this conversation, a brief overview of the UPR follow-up and monitoring process was presented to the participants. It was emphasized that the UPR calls attention to human rights issues, and that an appropriate follow-up plan helps raise awareness of these issues and their respective recommendations, while contributing to implementation. The process of monitoring was also explained as a tool for systematic assessment of both progress and challenges during implementation, and for preparing the ground for the next UPR submission. For this reason, it is important to identify recommendations that are relevant and where expertise exists, and to see this as an opportunity to go deeper into the process. We are pleased that this meeting was a space to provide

updates on how local civil society actors are demonstrating the impact and outcomes of these capacity-building actions, and to help strategize follow-up activities at the local level. Even more encouraging was their willingness to work for better implementation by requesting additional training and continuing their engagement with the UPR process, through increased dissemination and sensitization, as well as concrete support to UPR recommendations' implementation and monitoring.



10. <https://ceec.or.ke>

11. <https://www.facebook.com/rescuedadacentre>

12. <https://newlifemwangaza.org>



Nepali Civil Society Actors in Geneva to advocate prior to the 51st UPR Session

From November 25 to 28, three Nepali civil society actors representing the local organizations of Community Self-Reliance Centre (CSRC)¹³ and Social Work Institute (SWI)¹⁴ came to Geneva to engage in advocacy prior to the UPR session of Nepal, which is scheduled for January 2026. During their visit, they took part in bilateral meetings with several State representatives, delivered a speech at the EU Delegation's informal meeting with NGOs, and attended the UPR Info pre-session of Nepal.

These advocacy actions supported by CCIG, Fastenaktion and DKA Austria, followed the series of online training delivered by CCIG to local partners from June to October, in order to ensure

their meaningful participation in the UPR process and allow them to effectively present Nepal's current human rights situation vis-à-vis other Member States. Beginning with UPR submissions prepared jointly with other local partners, and continuing through their interventions in Geneva, CSRC and SWI representatives highlighted challenges and areas for reform related to the right to food, access to land, and minority groups. The specific situation of women and youth in rural areas was also brought to the attention of relevant stakeholders¹⁵.

Prior to and upon their arrival in Geneva, CSRC and SWI representatives received personalized and careful feedback by CCIG, Fastenaktion and DKA Austria to deliver impactful speeches highlighting their priority human rights issues and the respective recommendations.

13. <https://csrcnepal.org>

14. <https://www.swi-nepal.org>

15. For more information, please consult relevant UPR Submissions: CSRC - https://ccig-iccg.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/CSRC_UPR-Submission-on-Land-rights-in-Nepal.pdf; and SWI - https://ccig-iccg.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/SWI_UPR-Submission-on-the-Rights-of-Peasants.pdf; and Executive Summaries: CSRC - https://ccig-iccg.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/CSRC_Executive-summary-UPR-NEPAL.pdf; and SWI - https://ccig-iccg.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/SWI_UPR-Executive-Summary-UPR-NEPAL.pdf

They began their advocacy in Geneva by participating in the European Union delegation's informal meeting with NGOs ahead of UPR51 to encourage EU Member States to address specific recommendations to Nepal. During the discussion, Aparajita Gautam, from CSRC, urged EU Member States to uphold zero discrimination in land allocation, require women's representation in land-governance bodies, and protect tenure rights and food security in accordance with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas (UNDROP). Meanwhile, Namaraj Silwal, from SWI, emphasized the need to fully implement the Right to Food Act, ensure peasants' involvement in shaping food and agriculture policies, strengthen social protection for farmers, support local markets, and enhance climate resilience.

Following this, they also took part in several bilateral meetings with the Permanent Missions of Colombia, Austria, Romania, South Africa, Belgium, and Italy. These exchanges allowed civil society actors to share the main human rights issues faced in their communities, present key recommendations to address them, and clarify questions raised by the missions' representatives. Their interventions focused on advancing recommendations related to the human rights to food, land, and the protection of minority groups, with these meetings providing a valuable space for dialogue and the exchange of perspectives.

Additionally, the Nepali representatives had the opportunity to attend the UPR Info 51st pre-session. There, they were able to hear other key human rights concerns and recommendations related to their country presented by Nepali civil society organizations and national human rights institutions. The pre-session also offered a space to interact with other actors, exchange ideas about their work, and explore potential avenues for strategic collaboration.

Finally, they met with OHCHR officers working for the implementation of UNDROP. During this meeting, they highlighted the challenges Nepali peasants continue to face, including a fragmented policy framework, limited access to resources, inequitable social services, and persistent economic insecurity. These realities underscore the urgent need for Nepal to fully implement the principles of UNDROP, and the meeting provided an opportunity to raise these concerns and explore concrete measures for stronger national follow-up.

We are proud to have accompanied Nepali civil society representatives throughout their time in Geneva and look forward to seeing how they bring these insights back to their communities to continue carrying out their human rights advocacy work with local communities in Nepal.

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 2025 in order to ensure that the database remains an effective tool for information exchange¹⁶. 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.

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

OTHER SENSITIZATION ACTIVITIES AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT

As part of the newly renewed and strengthened capacity-building and sensitization efforts, CCIG endorsed a series of additional activities in 2025 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.

Technical Support to Empower Local Actors denounce violations of Children's Rights in the context of mining activities in Ghana

On 12 September 2025, with the support of CCIG and Dreikönigsaktion – Hilfswerk der Katholischen Jungschar (DKA Austria), a representative of Care for Deprived Communities, a local NGO based in Ghana, took the floor through video message during the 60th session of the Human Rights Council (HRC)¹⁷ to denounce violations of children's rights in the country¹⁸.

This oral statement was part of the wider Human Rights Capacity-Building Project, implemented by CCIG and DKA Austria starting from November 2024, to empower children's rights defenders from Ghana and Kenya. The project aimed to enable local and international civil society actors to gain a better understanding of and make use of the UN human rights mechanisms, such as the HRC to advocate for their communities' rights.

Delivered under item 3 – Interactive Dialogue (ID) with the Special Rapporteur (SR) on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and consequences¹⁹, focusing on his Report "Worst forms of child labour: assessing progress and persisting challenges"²⁰, the oral statement specifically addressed the **involvement of children in hazardous forms of work related to mining**, highlighting how Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining Activities (ASSMA) currently recruits thousands of child workers in Ghana. It was emphasized that this situation **results in multiple human rights violations**, as it exposes children to

serious health risks, involves long hours of hard labor, and denies them access to basic education.

To confront this concerning situation, it was recommended that Member States allocate resources to legislate and enforce policies aimed at eradicating child exploitation in mining. In addition, they called for securing access to **universal, quality and free education for children**, and for **supporting Ghanaian youth** through capacity-building programs focused on vocational and employable skills.

In line with the above recommendations, the Special Rapporteur reaffirmed the firm commitment to eradicate child exploitation, and encouraged States to strengthen laws, policies, and enforcement mechanisms to support this commitment by ensuring access to education, protecting victims through rehabilitation and justice access, and addressing root causes such as poverty and lack of decent work.

This opportunity showcases the importance of collaboration with local civil society actors to ensure that grassroots perspectives are represented within the United Nations system and contribute to advancing global efforts to address human rights violations.



17. To watch the ID with the Special Rapporteur on slavery at the 60th HRC session: <https://webtv.un.org/en/asset/k19/k19j9r7q0a>

18. The text of the oral statement is available at: https://ccig-iccg.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/HRC60-OS_DKA-Item-3-ID-SR-slavery-FINAL.pdf.

To watch the video of the statement: https://ccig-iccg.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/HRC60-OS_DKA-Item-3-ID-SR-slavery-VIDEO.mp4

19. For more information: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/sr-slavery>

20. Please consult the report at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/thematic-reports/ahrc6028-worst-forms-child-labour-assessing-progress-and-persisting>

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 workshops for NGO members, as well as 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 2025, the CCIG ran numerous in-person training sessions and online capacity-building initiatives tailored to the concrete needs of international and local Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) committed to defending human rights worldwide. Accordingly, the CCIG secretariat offered continuous assistance to NGO activities to train their members in the field.

Human Rights Capacity-Building Project for Kenya and Ghana: CCIG hosts joint online training with DKA Austria

As part of the Human Rights Capacity-Building Project, executed by International Catholic Centre of Geneva (CCIG) and Dreikönigsaktion – Hilfswerk der Katholischen Jungschar (DKA Austria), from November 2024 to October 2025, an online training course on United Nations (UN) system for the protection of human rights was delivered in March 7-17, 2025, for civil society actors from Kenya and Ghana.

“The training has really transformed my knowledge on children and right protection, it has provided a solid ground for me to start learning more on the UN HR Mechanism”

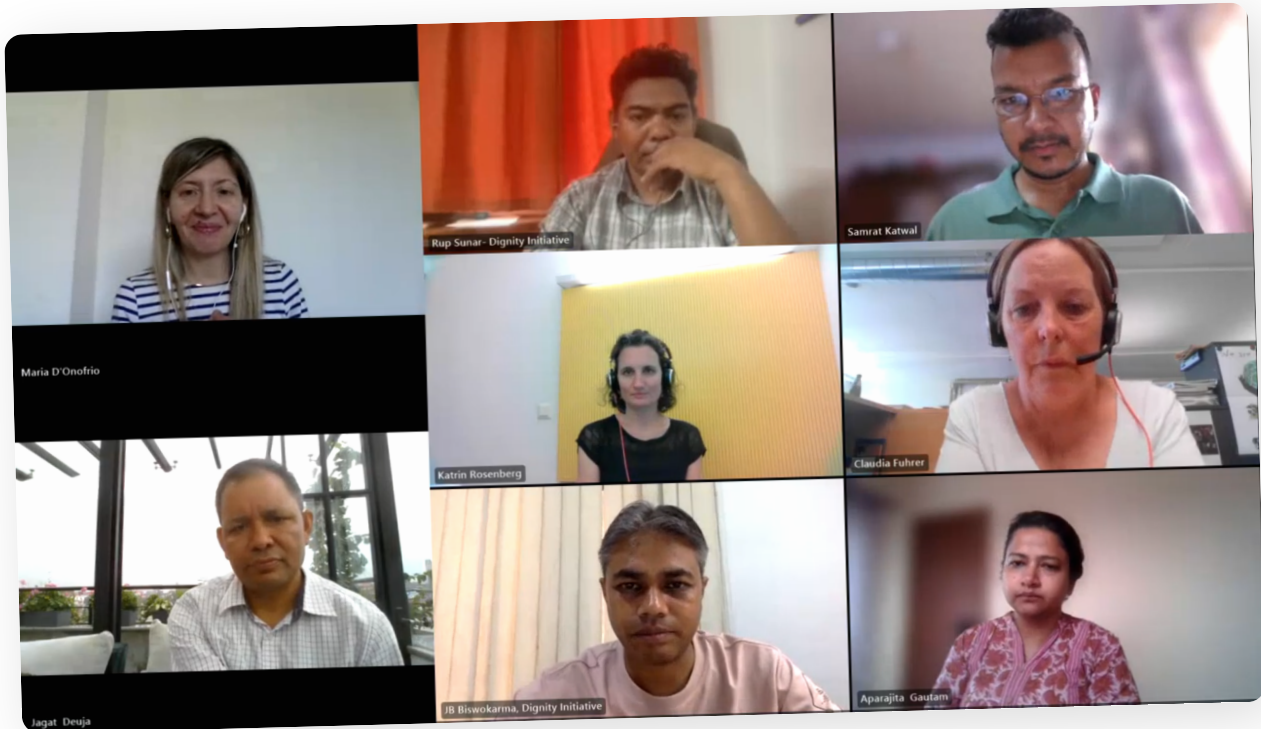
Feedback from a Training Participant

Civil society’s engagement is key to making the voices of the most vulnerable heard in the international fora. That is why it is important for CCIG to continue strengthening the capacity of local NGOs to fully benefit from the tools provided by the UN system to voice their concerns. For this reason, the primary goal of this one-year long project is to enable local and international civil society actors, specifically children’s rights defenders in Kenya and Ghana, to gain a more effective understanding and make use of the international UN mechanisms.

This online training consisted of three modules of two hours each, to present the opportunities for NGO participation in relevant UN mechanisms, and to provide examples of possible advocacy activities by local civil society actors to be undertaken at the international level with the participation of children. Around **20 participants from 12 different local organizations in Kenya and Ghana**, who work in their respective countries across a wide range of themes including food, education, health, good governance, climate justice, and more, took part in the training and other project activities.

In Module I, participants were introduced to the UN mechanisms for the protection of human rights, with a special focus on the Human Rights Council (HRC). Module II introduced the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) and the opportunities civil society actors, including children, have to engage with the review. Module III focused on children’s rights protection through the UN Treaty Bodies, with particular attention to the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC). Throughout these online sessions, participants had the opportunity to apply their knowledge and engage in interactive activities such as reading UPR reports and watching extracts of UPR sessions, with the aim to identify the most relevant recommendations for their contexts.

According to the evaluation survey upon training completion, participants were satisfied with the training and consider it relevant and useful for their advocacy work. For some of them, it was also valuable to have a clear purpose and objectives, contextual understanding, and opportunities for interaction during the sessions. Others also reported that the contents were very educational and insightful, and overall, appropriate for



their knowledge level. Ultimately, participants were grateful for receiving access to the materials after the training and stated that it motivated them to be more active in their local advocacy work.

Following this training, other project activities illustrate the dissemination of UPR outcomes at the local level as well as the opportunity to deliver oral statements (OS) at the HRC. Selected participants among the training attendees are to be accompanied through the preparation process and offered technical support by CCIG for undertaking such activities, which represent a great opportunity for local actors to voice their concerns and sensitize about the most urgent human rights issues affecting their communities.

We look forward to seeing the results and impact of this project and encouraging more civil society actors to engage in international spaces to continue advocating for their communities' human rights.

Food Security, Right to Land and Minority Rights: Strengthening Local Organizations in Nepal to Engage in the UPR Process

On June 11, 2025, CCIG in partnership with Fastenaktion, offered an interactive online training on the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) mechanism to a group of local civil society actors from Nepal, as part of their advocacy work to engage in the UPR for their country.

Among the Nepali organizations that participated in this training, were the **Community Self-Reliance Centre (CSRC)**, a grassroots and international organization that works on land rights advocacy, and **Dignity Initiative (DI)**, which advocates for the rights of Dalit communities in Nepal. Dalits are communities historically regarded as the lowest case in South Asia, who continue to face discrimination and social exclusion.

The online training, delivered by CCIG Secretary General Maria D'Onofrio, was divided into two main parts. The first focused on identifying and assessing previous UPR recommendations for Nepal, while the second guided participants on how to draft an effective UPR submission. These topics aimed to strengthen local actors' ability to link the human rights issues they deal with on the ground with the **international human rights framework provided by the UPR** and formulate **action-oriented recommendations for Nepal to address these challenges**. Additionally, participants received practical insights, as well as key procedural information to comply with the UPR submission process.

Upon request of partners involved, the training was adjusted to the Nepali context on **food, land and minority rights**. Participants recognized these issues as being of central importance to Nepal's social and economic development. They also had the opportunity during the training to discuss the analysis of previous UPR recommendations, identify gaps in implementation, and **develop strategic proposals for the upcoming review cycle**.

A subsequent training was planned for October to continue supporting these local partners in preparation for the UPR session of Nepal scheduled for January 2026. CCIG welcomes the opportunity to equip local organizations with the tools and knowledge to engage effectively in the UPR process for their countries and advocate for enhanced human rights implementation in their communities.

Connecting Students with the UPR: CCIG Delivers a Training for the 2025 Summer University Program

On June 23, 2025, for another consecutive year, CCIG was invited to deliver a session on “The UPR and Civil Society Contributions” as part of the Summer University program in Geneva. The 2025 edition, entitled “Human Rights and Education,” was organized by OIDEL²¹ in partnership with the University of Geneva.²²

This session aimed to encourage the development of civil society’s effective advocacy strategies within the

UPR framework. CCIG was pleased to deliver the session to **23 students from Spain, Andorra, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, the United States, Ireland, and Germany**, as well as **14 faculty members** from the same countries and from Switzerland, Pakistan, and Brazil.

The session opened with presentations on the context of CCIG’s work and the UPR Platform²³ it has developed. This was followed by an introduction to the UPR mechanism and an overview of the various forms of civil society participation. The session concluded with a discussion on potential on-the-ground engagement activities in Geneva and beyond.

Once again, CCIG appreciated the opportunity to contribute to the Summer University program and to raise awareness of the UPR mechanism for the benefit of civil society actors. CCIG values this exchange as a meaningful learning experience and remains committed to supporting students and partners in strengthening human rights advocacy through effective engagement with UN mechanisms.



21. <https://www.oidel.org>

22. <https://www.unige.ch>

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



The 2025 Edition of CCIG and UN EXTEA's UN Human Rights Mechanisms Training

Our annual training on the United Nations Human Rights Mechanisms, organized in partnership with UN ETXEA-Basque Country Association for UNESCO²⁴, took place in Geneva from September 15th to 18th 2025. We were honored to welcome an inspiring **cohort of young leaders from the Basque Country**, Spain, who engaged in a variety of sessions about Human Rights, and had the opportunity to attend the HRC Biennial Panel Discussion on Youth and Human Rights during the 60th session of the Human Rights Council (HRC)²⁵.

This four-day training covered topics on human rights basics and the UN mechanisms for the protection of human rights, as well as an introduction to the UN Human Rights Council and the promotion of youth rights through the UN treaty bodies. These sessions, moderated by Maria D'Onofrio (CCIG Secretary

General), invited the participants to analyze the ways in which they, as members of civil society, can engage from their own context in the international human rights fora.

Additionally, we were privileged to have such inspiring guest speakers. First, Helen Griffiths (Child and Youth Unit, OHCHR) explained about youth rights and youth participation in the HRC and beyond. We also welcomed Paula Martínez, an OHCHR Intern, to share her experiences as a young person at the OHCHR and her journey as an advocate for children and youth rights. Finally, we were pleased to have Vaibhavi Sharma Pathak (Human Rights Education and Training, OHCHR), who through interactive activities and discussion groups, helped participants explore the true meaning of think critically about human rights education and envisaging concrete actions to promote human rights in their communities. Another highlight from the training was the attendance of the HRC Biennial Panel Discussion on Youth and Human Rights²⁶ during the 60th session of the HRC,

24. <http://www.unescoetxea.org>

25. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/hrc/regular-sessions/session60/regular-session>

26. <https://webtv.un.org/en/asset/k1t/k1t31069r1>

whose theme was about the role of youth in fostering peaceful societies. The participants were also able to attend other side events at the Palais de Nations as well as a session of the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights²⁷ at Palais Wilson, and experience firsthand how the UN human rights bodies work.

We are deeply grateful for the youth active participation throughout the 2025 program, and we look forward to seeing them share their experiences and insights with fellow young people in the Basque Country, carrying forward this important work in youth human rights advocacy.

Advocacy Training Prepares Nepali Civil Society Actors to Engage prior the 51st UPR Session

On October 15, 2025, CCIG had the opportunity to host in partnership with Fastenaktion and Dreikönigsaktion – Hilfswerk der Katholischen Jungschar (DKA Austria), an online advocacy training for local civil society actors from Nepal, ahead of the UPR session. This followed a previous training on the UPR mechanism held in June²⁸.

This training series aimed to strengthen local civil society actors' knowledge of the UPR process, specifically regarding Nepal's recommendations, offer examples of advocacy and partnership tools, and provide guidance and support for their advocacy work prior to the UPR session of Nepal scheduled for January 2026. In particular, the UPR pre-session of Nepal, taking place this November in Geneva, provides a key opportunity for local human rights defenders to approach Member States representatives and advocate for the most pressing human rights challenges in Nepal.

Moderated by CCIG Secretary General Maria D'Onofrio, this session aimed to provide theoretical and practical **guidance on how to give visibility to local human**



rights concerns and recommendations vis-à-vis other Member States, in order to ensure that the key human rights concerns raised by local actors are addressed during the UPR session. The **training focused on the right to food, right to land, and minority rights**, as these are the main priorities highlighted by training participants for Nepal's upcoming UPR recommendations. Accordingly, participants received guidance on identifying and reaching out to targeted states, as well as on advocacy before, during and after the UPR session, with examples drawn from CCIG's past work.

We were pleased to host Nepali civil society organizations, which participated in the initial training in June: **Community Self-Reliance Centre (CSRC)** and **Dignity Initiative (DI)**, and to welcome participants from the **Social Work Institute (SWI)** and **Consortium Nepal**. Some of these participants are preparing to travel to Geneva and attend the UPR pre-session for Nepal at the Palais des Nations²⁹.

We are proud to continue partnering with Fastenaktion and DKA Austria to empower local civil society actors to effectively take part in the UPR process, advocate for concrete and action-oriented recommendations leading to enhanced human rights implementation issues in their countries. We look forward to continuing our support for Nepali civil society representatives and to welcoming them in person in November in Geneva.

27. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/treaty-bodies/cescr>

28. <https://ccig-iccg.org/food-security-right-to-land-and-minority-rights-strengthening-local-organizations-in-nepal-to-engage-in-the-upr-process>

29. <https://upr-info.org/en/news/call-applications-pre-sessions-51-now-open>

Training Civil Society on UN Treaty Bodies

On 5 November 2025, CCIG was pleased to once again collaborate with Edmund Rice International (ERI)³⁰ Network to deliver a training session on the UN Treaty Bodies for a group of civil society actors. The session was part of their ERI Training in Human Rights and International Advocacy, held at its Geneva office, and welcomed **12 participants from Saint Lucia, Spain, South Africa, India, Tanzania, Nigeria, Zambia, USA, and Colombia**. This training aimed to strengthen the capacity of civil society actors in human rights advocacy within the UN system linked to the advocacy work they carry out in their respective countries.

The session provided an overview of the structure of the UN Human Rights System and its Treaty Bodies. It also focused on clarifying key terminology and concepts essential for understanding the system and its

mechanisms. In addition, the session offered information on the legal status of various UN conventions, as well as various opportunities and examples of how NGOs can engage with the treaty body system.

The session aimed to create an interactive learning environment, offering participants accessible and practical information on how to use UN mechanisms in their advocacy work. Throughout the training, participants were also encouraged to share their experiences, reflections and inquiries, which brought up interesting perspectives and insights.

CCIG welcomed once again the opportunity to deliver this session to empower civil society actors and is grateful to Edmund Rice International—a CCIG member—for the invitation. We look forward to continuing collaborating with our members and partners to empower local civil society actors to effectively engage with the UN human rights system.



30. <https://www.edmundriceinternational.org>



From Recommendations to Action: UPR Monitoring Training for Civil Society in South Africa and Kenya

On November 10, 2025, CCIG and Fastenaktion partnered once again to host an online Universal Periodic Review (UPR) monitoring training for local civil society actors from South Africa and Kenya. About **50 participants, including local NGO representatives and women from rural communities**, joined the training to deepen their understanding of how to engage in the follow-up of the UPR of their respective countries.

This training was led by Maria D’Onofrio, who opened by highlighting the vital role civil society actors play in the follow-up process, including local sensitization and dissemination of the UPR recommendations, contributions to their implementation, and monitoring of government action towards human rights implementation. Accordingly, the training offered technical insights on **how to build up a monitoring**

plan and set up adequate human rights indicators to track the implementation of UPR recommendations more effectively. With the 4th cycle of the UPR of Kenya completed in May 2025 and the UPR of South Africa scheduled for 2027, the timing of this training was particularly relevant, giving civil society actors the opportunity to strengthen their knowledge on follow-up, but also to better prepare for the next review.

As a result, this interactive training allowed participants to deepen their understanding of the UPR follow-up and monitoring and also provided a space to exchange experiences, ideas, and inquiries, and to engage in dynamic discussions on the ongoing activities related to the UPR carried out by local partners.

We are proud of partnering with Fastenaktion to provide this capacity-building training for local civil society actors in South Africa and Kenya. We look forward to seeing the leadership civil society actors will demonstrate in ensuring a stronger implementation of human rights recommendations in their countries.





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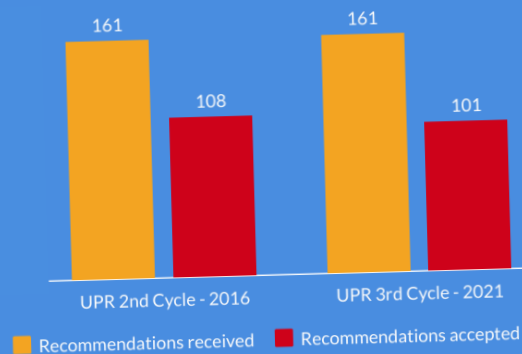
Papua New Guinea

The Universal Periodic Review

Papua New Guinea was reviewed by UPR Working Group 39, in November of 2021. It received 161 recommendations and it supported 101 recommendations at the adoption of its UPR outcome at Human Rights Council 49, in March 2022.

Supported recommendations related to: legal and general framework of implementation, international humanitarian law, universal and cross-cutting issues, civil and political rights, economic, social, and cultural rights, women's rights, children's rights, and other specific groups and persons.

Trends in supported recommendations



CCIG and DKA Austria: Preparing for the 2026 UPR of Papua New Guinea

In December 2025, in partnership with DKA Austria, CCIG offered training on the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) mechanism to a civil society coordinator working in the areas of environmental issues, Indigenous peoples' rights, and business and human rights in Papua New Guinea. The training, divided in two modules, aimed to promote advocacy and engagement of civil society in the upcoming UPR of Papua New Guinea, scheduled to take place on 4 November 2026.

Training Module I provided a thorough explanation of the UPR mechanism, with emphasis on the timeline for Papua New Guinea's review. It also highlighted the opportunities for civil society participation, including advocating Member States to put forward priority recommendations, delivering oral statements at the HRC, and monitoring the implementation of UPR recommendations.

Module II focused on identifying and assessing previous UPR recommendations for Papua New Guinea, such as **improving environmental standards**, ensuring **meaningful participation of vulnerable communities** in climate change and disaster risk reduction frameworks, and **developing national human rights action plans** with a focus on the **business sector**. Step-by-step guidance was provided on how to make recommendations and draft an effective UPR submission, from identifying human rights issues and conducting research to writing a submission to the UN.

Through this initiative, CCIG aims to support and encourage local organizations to take an active role in their country's UPR process and to advocate more effectively for stronger human rights practices within their communities. We are eager to see their engagement in the country's upcoming UPR in November 2026.

"This presentation was eye opening to me."

"Learning about the UPR is empowering and I am wondering how we can make more people know about it and how we can put pressure on the government to implement it."

"These training sessions were relevant because I did not know about the UPR and the possibility to raise our voices in such a high-level international context."

DKA partners from Kenya

ADMINISTRATION AND COMMUNICATION

STRUCTURE OF CCIG ACTIVITIES

The Board held three meetings in 2025 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 María Fernanda Negrete Espinoza as an intern from September to December 2025. This year, Angel Diego Garcia Otaola resigned from the Board, which he joined in 2020. Diego Leonardo Zawadzky Zapata replaced him as representative of the Marist International Solidarity Foundation - FMSI (organization member) within the CCIG Board. We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks Angel Diego for his valuable and much appreciated contributions to the work of the CCIG.

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

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

COMMUNICATION AND OUTREACH

In 2025, CCIG continued to update its website by sharing news of activities implemented with CCIG members and partners and by maintaining its UPR Platform database, which provides links to relevant UPR submissions and oral statements.

Moreover, in the last quarter of 2025, CCIG expanded its communication efforts by revitalizing its LinkedIn profile and using it to give visibility to human rights activities carried out. From September to December, 22 posts were created and/or disseminated in order to share key insights on the work of CCIG and its international and local partners as well as to inform on UN sessions relevant for our network.

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, 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 issues³¹.

Through these communication and outreach efforts, the CCIG intends to share know-how and best practices to support advocacy and capacity building activities, as well as provide awareness-raising resources to international NGOs and local human rights defenders.

FINANCIAL EFFORTS

In 2025, 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 the framework of the continued and appreciated support of Action de Carême (Swiss Catholic Lenten Fund), a new term of reference was agreed upon for an enhanced partnership between the two organizations.

The successful implementation of the Project for the promotion of the rights of children in Kenya and Ghana from November 2024 to October 2025 has led to a project extension until the end of 2025 and new funding opportunities with DKA Austria for 2026.

A new funding proposal for a project in Nepal was submitted for donor's consideration. The outcome of this application will be communicated next year.



MEMBERS OF CCIG BOARD (UPDATED ON DECEMBER 31, 2025)

- Budi Tjahjono – President
- Diana Duarte Rizzolio – Vice-President
- Markus Heinze – Treasurer
- Brian Bond – Secretary
- Larry Kohler – Member
- Diego Leonardo Zawadzky Zapata – Member
- Anna Biondi Bird – Member



KEY POINTS RELATED TO FUNDRAISING

- DKA's approval and extension of the Project for the promotion of the rights of children in Kenya and Ghana has been an important outcome for the CCIG.
- A new application for a project in Nepal was prepared and submitted for donor's consideration.
- Several other training activities were financed by respective partners.



31. See relevant information on CCIG website at: <https://ccig-iccg.org/hrc60-just-transition-to-sustainable-energy-systems-and-indigenous-peoples-rights>

CCIG

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