



**6th Regional Meeting of NGOs
Children's Rights Coalitions in Europe
"Children's Rights Networking"**

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Overview of Presentation

- Brief introduction to the Children's Rights Alliance (Ireland)
- Networking at:
 - Co-operation with Ombudsman for Children
 - National level
 - European level
- Tools for effective networking



Who is the Children's Rights Alliance?

- Independent NGO
- Established in 1995 (Ireland ratified CRC in 1992)
- 7 full time staff
- Coalition of over 90 NGOs
- Cover Republic of Ireland (population 4.5 million)



Strategic Plan 2007 - 2011

Vision: *Ireland will be one of the best places in the world to be a child*

Strategic Aims

1. Bringing about a **shared vision** that **will realise and protect children's rights** in Ireland
2. Securing legislative and policy changes to give **meaningful effect to the UN Convention** on the Rights of the Child
3. Securing the effective **implementation** of Government policies relating to children



Co-operation with Ombudsman for Children

- Alliance called for establishment of Office; lobbied on legislative powers; organised children's participation in recruitment process
- Ireland's first Ombudsman for Children, Emily Logan, appointed in 2004; and reappointed in 2009
- Positive engagement on national & European issues
- Shared UNCRC hearing in 2006 – Ombudsman for Children and Irish Human Rights Commission



Lobbying at national level

- Focus = elected officials and key decision makers
- Shadow Report and Children's Report 2006
- Report Card 2009, 2010...
- Constitutional reform
- Budgetary work



Networking at National Level

- NGOs:
 - 90 member organisations
 - Thematic NGO groups: Poverty, Separated Children, FGM
 - Broader NGO Coalition: UPR process
- Government, Civil Servants (OMYCA), Social Partnership
- Academics, experts, lawyers – ‘Friends’ for emails
- Media / Social networking – newsletter, facebook, twitter, blog, podcasts



Networking at European & International Level

- Eurochild – Chair of the Policy Working Group
- Jillian van Turnhout, Chief Executive of Alliance
 - European Economic and Social Committee
 - Steering Group of European Forum on the Rights of the Child (EESC)
- Council of Europe / NGO Group / CRIN
- Children's Rights Alliance (England) EU project
- Vietnam Association for the Protection of Children's Rights



Challenges to Effective Networking

- Accessing materials & meetings – language / costs / staff time
- Strategic – pulled in all directions
- The right person at the right time
- Apply the issue to your country
- Balance - getting something out of it but also giving something back



Report Card

- ✓ Tool to monitor implementation
- ✓ Relationship building
- ✓ Local focus
- ✓ Link to UN Concluding Observations



Findings:

- Departments not working together
- Reform of processes and practice
- Transparency decisions and monitoring
- Accountability in the face of inaction
- Delivery of workloads by public sector staff
- Creativity and innovation in response to recession

children's
RIGHTS ALLIANCE

