



Dialogue
Works

Annual Report 2023

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Terre des Hommes
International Federation

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Kindernothilfe is a German children's rights organisation that supports vulnerable and marginalized children and youth to develop their full potential. We partner with local non-governmental organisations in 33 countries and empower children to lead independent, self-fulfilled lives.

Terre des hommes International Federation is a network of ten national organisations committed to realizing children's rights and to promote equitable development without racial, religious, political, cultural or gender-based discrimination.

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Content

- 1. Introduction and Background Information 6
- 2. Key internal activities implemented at global level 9
- 3. Key advocacy activities implemented at global and regional level 13
- 4. Key activities implemented at local level 15
- 5. Key challenges, lessons learned and suggestions to improve 25



1. Introduction and Background Information



CAC member from Peru sharing her experiences during the Global Gathering in Rwanda
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This annual report provides an overview of the main activities implemented under the Dialogue Works project from local to global level during 2023. Dialogue Works (2020 – 2024) is a joint campaign led by Kindernothilfe and Terre des Hommes and co-financed by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, dedicated to creating spaces for meaningful participation of working children and youth in relevant policy debates.

The annual report highlights key activities from the partner organisations at local to national level and the key advocacy activities at global level. Furthermore, it portrays general activities organised by the Steering Committee as well identifies key lessons learned, challenges and suggestions to inform planning for 2024 and beyond.

Dialogue Works currently supports around 44 Children's Advisory Committees (CACs) of working children in 15 countries, supported by 19 NGO partners:

Africa

FC - Facilitator for Change (Ethiopia)



AfCiC - Action for Children in Conflict (Kenya)



WCY - Welfare for Children and Youth (Kenya)



CVT - Children's Voice Today (Rwanda)



TAWLAE - Tanzania Women Leaders in Agriculture and Environment (Tanzania)



JCM - Jesus Cares Ministries (Zambia)



CACLAZ - Coalition Against Child Labour in Zimbabwe (Zimbabwe)



Asia

CSID - Centre for Services and Information on Disability (Bangladesh)



NIWCYD - National Institute of Women, Child and Youth Development (India)



VIGYAN - Vigyan Foundation (India)



PKPA - Pusat Kajian dan Perlingdungan Anak (Indonesia)



CWISH - Children Women in Social Service and Human Rights (Nepal)



Kaugmaon (the Philippines)



CAJDEN - Christian Advocates for Justice and Development - Negros (the Philippines)



Latin America

PASOCAP - Pastoral Social Caritas Potosí (Bolivia)



CEIPA - Centro Ecueménico de Integración Pastoral (Guatemala)



Cesip - Centro de Estudios Sociales e Publicaciones (Peru)



Ifejant - Instituto de Formación para Educadores de Jóvenes, Adolescentes y Niños, Niñas Trabajadores de América Latina y el Caribe (Peru)



Middle East

NABAA - Development action without border (Lebanon)



We are very grateful to work with very strong partner organisations and CAC Coordinators as well as the children who form part of the CACs, without whom this campaign and the network for child participation would not be possible. We greatly appreciate their commitment to the fulfilment of children's rights!

In 2021, each NGO partner organisation supported the formation of 1 to 4 CACs. In the second and third project year (2022 and 2023), the CACs continued meeting on a regular basis (between weekly till every 2 months) and conducted at least one advocacy dialogue per year with a key stakeholder identified by the CAC members.

The third project year (2023) has started with the Global Gathering – a conference for working children and youth representatives from Dialogues Works partner organisations and the adaptation of the “Kigali Declaration” to the local contexts of the partner organisations.

Members of the CACs are working children and young people aged 8 to 18 years.¹ Across the various countries, the CAC members include girls and boys from urban and rural settings; mostly school going children, but also children in non-formal education or children who dropped out of school; refugees, displaced and migrant children and children from host communities; working children with disabilities; children from indigenous communities and diverse ethnic backgrounds.

The CAC members are engaged in different types of work, with the majority working in the informal sector. Most of the CAC members help their families with the household, do agricultural work, work as small-scale vendors or look after animals or siblings. Other work that CAC members undertake include selling or producing handicrafts, working as small-scale producer, collecting wood or water, work in the fishing industry or as a tailor, in a hotel or restaurant, in brick or stone making, in construction work or in carpentry. Most of the children do part-time or occasional work (e.g. before or after school, at the weekends or during the school holidays or agricultural seasons). ●

¹ Some CAC members were under 18 when they joined the CAC, but have now become 18 or 19 years old and support the CAC Coordinators in facilitating the CAC meetings.

2. Key internal activities implemented at global level

In this section main activities implemented as part of the Dialogue Works project in 2023 at global level are described.

A. Global Gathering

The year 2023 started with a key milestone of the Dialogue Works Project.

In January 2023, Dialogue Works hosted its first Global Gathering of Working Children and Youth in Kigali, Rwanda, a conference for working children and youth representatives. 63 CAC members from 16 countries including representatives of the African Movement of Working Children and Youth (AMWCY) and the Latin American and Caribbean Working Children and Adolescents Movement (MOLACNATS) spent 5 days together to exchange, to learn from one another, to build capacities and share key messages on crosscutting issues affecting the lives of working children and youths.

In so-called Policy and Practice discussions, the CAC delegates discussed their problems and solutions affecting working children. In addition, the CAC members participated in skill training workshops, to build children's capacities on different thematic areas, such as on equity, diversity and inclusion, climate justice or



63 CAC members from 16 different countries met in Rwanda for the Global Gathering © Jakob Studnar

creative expression, and to provide them with tools to support the sustainability of their CACs. New perspectives opened up for the participants and many new friendships were made.

The heart of the conference was a declaration that was drafted and adopted by all children who participated in the Global Gathering – the “Kigali Declaration”. A huge success for all people involved.

On the last day of the conference, an intergenerational panel discussion took place, and the children presented their declaration to representatives from the Rwandan Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the Rwandan Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion, representing members of other governments, as well as representatives of other civil society organizations and alliances. For more information see the official [Documentation](#) of the Global Gathering and a [video](#) of the event.

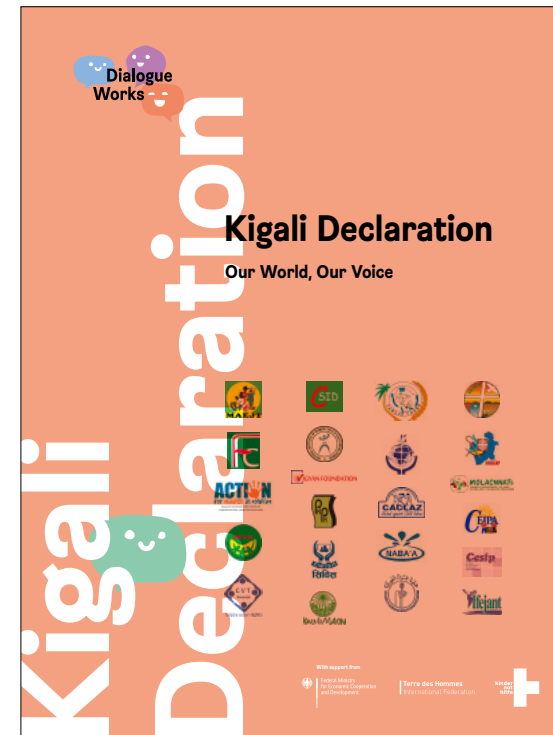


During the intergenerational panel discussion, three CAC members exchanged ideas with external guests © Martin Bondzio / Kindernothilfe

B. Kigali Declaration

At the end of the Global Gathering, the CAC delegates took back home to their local CACs the powerful “Kigali Declaration”, that has been translated into 12 languages: English, Spanish, Arabic, Swahili, Amharic, Indonesian, French, German, Filipino, Hiligaynon, Hindi, Nepali.

The demands include that policy measures should be closer to the children’s reality. Poverty reduction as well as the creation of decent jobs for their parents and assured access to quality education for all children can be found in the declaration, as well as positions on climate protection and inclusion. At the same time, children’s declaration outlines how children want to be allowed to continue pursuing appropriate light forms of work in parallel to attending school, in order to support their families and prevent them from slipping further into poverty.



The concrete 5 key demands are:

1. Address poverty, provide decent jobs for our parents and ensure our basic needs are met
2. Take our education seriously and provide quality education and skill training
3. Protect us from labour exploitation, harsh conditions and risks, and allow children to do suitable dignified work
4. Listen to us, understand us and implement laws that respect our rights
5. Prevent and protect working children from violence and discrimination



Political stakeholders sign the Kigali Declaration and commit to fulfil the demands of the CAC members (CAJDEN/ Philippines)

In the follow-up of the Global Gathering, each CAC met and discussed to prioritise one key demand from the Kigali Declaration, in order to unpack what the demand means in their particular socio-political cultural context. With these results, the CACs developed and took forward very concrete demands for their prioritised topic with specific target audiences and the support of key allies.

C. Development of series of facilitator notes of skill training workshops

Part of this conference was a series of skill training workshops, facilitated by the CAC facilitators of the partner organizations and in some cases co-facilitated by CAC members. The facilitator notes for these workshops were published afterwards for other CAC Coordinators to implement with their local CACs.

The skill training workshops are about climate justice, climate change, creative expression through theatre, disability and inclusion and creative expression through comic.

D. The development of guidance and training module for NGO partners and CACs

The Steering Committee and two lead consultants on child participation Claire O’Kane and Ornella Barros gave guidance on the proposed flow of CAC meetings, providing an outline of the purpose of each CAC meeting and proposed activities drawing upon existing guidance and tools from the Time to Talk! Toolkit I and Toolkit II and different training modules.

A new module on “Communication and self-expression”, developed by Ornella Barros and Claire O’Kane has been published in May 2023. It provides creative activities for CAC members to strengthen their self-expression and communication skills that benefit the power and authenticity of child and youth-led advocacy.

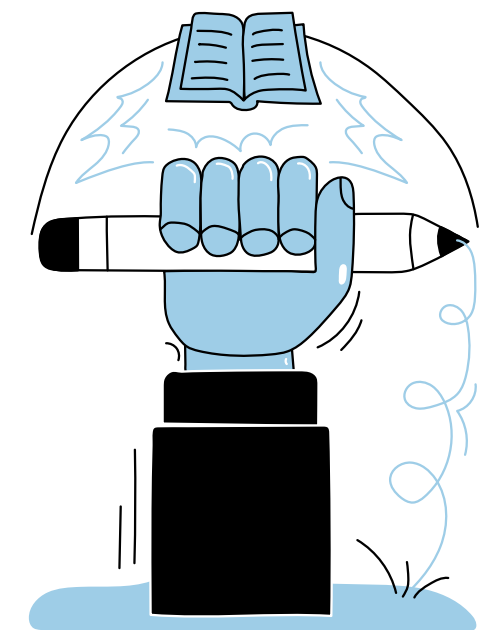
E. Publication external midterm Evaluation

In March 2023, the external Midterm Evaluation (MTE) of Dialogue Works has been published. The MTE focuses on analysing what has been achieved during the project’s lifetime so far (from 15/10/2020 to 20/01/2023) – and what are the most important lessons learned.

Important findings are that Dialogue Works gives visibility, improves outreach of the partner organizations and supports the CAC members to develop their capacities in order to advocate in dialogue formats at local and global levels. Furthermore, the uniqueness of the project that focuses on children in working situations, the right to participation and on advocacy both at the local and the global level has been revealed.

While the project contributes to the achievement of several positive outcomes, for a higher change to occur, structural change and long-term engagement are necessary for sustainable involvement of important actors in the advocacy process, such as the local governments, schools, NGOs already involved in the campaign, need for engaging more children. Recommendations include CAC-based handbooks, setting up of a regional CAC, scaling up the number of CACs, strengthening of social media campaigns.

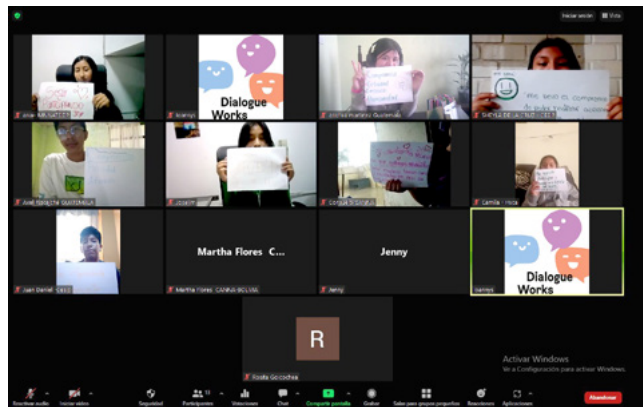
For more information please see [here](#).



F. Regional CACs

During the Global Gathering in Rwanda, as an initiative from several Dialogue Works partner organisations, the idea was born to build Regional CACs that consist of representatives of the local CACs from NGO partners to strengthen the regional network structures of Dialogue Works partner organisations. The aim is for CAC members in the regions to get to know each other and exchange about their local CACs and advocacy dialogues, as well as to collaborate on regional advocacy initiatives. The CACs from the Latin-American countries, as well as CAC delegates from the Asian partner organisations, held their first meetings on Zoom in 2023. For the Latin-American Regional CAC, every meeting is organised by a different CAC, supported by its partner organisation. Within the partner organisations from African countries and the MENA-region, the idea of a regional CAC was very well received, and they are about to start the formation in early 2024.

In 2024, each Regional CAC will hold their own face-to-face Regional CAC meetings.



CAC members from Latin-America meet online for the regional CAC meeting

G. Media Youth group

The first Dialogue Works Media Youth Group kicked off in November 2023. The purpose of the global media youth group is to empower CAC members to use online and offline media to amplify their voices to influence policy and decision-making and to ensure that their perspectives are well-represented. 14 CAC members from seven different countries (Peru, Guatemala, Kenya, Rwanda, Nepal, Zimbabwe and Zambia), aged 13 to 19, are part of the Media Youth Group and meet once a month virtually. The first session was all about getting to know each other, creating a positive and collaborative atmosphere. The following two sessions were dynamic media training led by a specialized organization in Nairobi. During these sessions, our members delved into various aspects of media, covering communication, types of media, photography, videography, child-led advocacy, internet safety, social media misinformation, disinformation, and content creation. In 2024, they will be able to translate this knowledge into action on the social media channels of Dialogue Works. In the follow-up of the Global Gathering, each CAC met and discussed to prioritise one key demand from the Kigali Declaration, in order to unpack what the demand means in their particular socio-political cultural context. With these results, the CACs developed and took forward very concrete demands for their prioritised topic with specific target audiences and the support of key allies.

H. Peer-learning among Dialogue Works partner organisations Virtual CAC Coordinator exchanges

Coordinator meetings and advocacy calls were also organised to allow for more informal exchange and peer learning among the different NGOs and to seek advice on global advocacy activities, e.g. on learnings and suggestion of the implementation of the module “embedding children’s participation” (2023). These discussions have shown an interest and need for a stronger exchange on the topic, which will be further developed in a task force group in 2024 to which all interested partner organizations are invited. ●

3. Key advocacy activities implemented at global and regional level

A. Working children’s participation at the African Children Summit

A total of 10 CAC delegates from Zambia, Zimbabwe, Rwanda and Kenya participated in the African Children Summit, held from 10th to 12th April 2023 in Nairobi, Kenya. The African Children Summit was a child-led conference to strengthen the visibility of children and their rights. The Summit brought together children from across Africa and beyond to share their experiences on matters of children rights and protection, the challenges they face, the interventions by their governments and recommendations or solutions.

During the Conference, the CAC members presented the 5 key messages of their Kigali Declaration to a large audience. At the end, they used this opportunity to handover the Declaration to the key stakeholders Dr. Najat Maalla M’jid (UN Special Representative on Violence against Children), Philip Jaffé (Vice Chair of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child) and Martha Koome (Chief Justice in Kenya).

B. Working children’s participation at the African Climate Summit

Another Summit took place in September 2023 in Nairobi, Kenya. During the African Climate Summit, four CAC members from the Kenyan partner organisation WCY, who are also actively engaged in addressing climate change within their communities, shared their experiences and insights about climate issues, their expectations from countries responsible for climate change, and recommendations for a better approach to include working children and youth in international policy debates. The CAC members offered recommendations for organizations and initiatives seeking to address climate change. They stressed the importance of creating awareness and involving children and youth actively in environmental initiatives. Leading by example, such as cleaning up rivers, roads, and streets, can inspire the wider community to act.



CAC members from WCY and AFCIC (Kenya) hand over the Kigali Declaration to Dr. Najat Maalla M’jid, the UN Special Representative on Violence against Children.

C. Launch of a child friendly version of the Durban Call to Action

After the V. Global Conference on the Elimination of Child Labour in South Africa in May 2022, Dialogue Works started to work jointly with the Department of Social Development of the Republic of South Africa, UNICEF and civil society organisations including the Child Rights Network for Southern Africa (CRNSA) and Save the Children to develop a child-friendly translation of the outcome document of the Conference - the Durban Call to Action. Children were consulted in the process of developing the [child-friendly booklet](#). One year later, in June 2023, the child-friendly booklet of “We are putting an end to child labour” has been launched officially.

D. Women Deliver Conference in Rwanda

The Women Deliver Conference, a global platform dedicated to gender equality and the promotion of health, rights and well-being of girls and women, took place for the first time in an African country, Rwanda. During this special milestone, Elisabeth (16 years old) and Prisca (15 years old), two members of our Children’s Advisory Committee (CAC) from Dialogue Works partner organization Children’s Voice Today (CVT), made their mark on the conference by making their voices heard. Their participation in the Women Deliver Conference underlined the essential role grassroots organizations can play in achieving real change within communities. These young members of CVT shared their experiences, challenges and testimonies gained through their involvement in the CAC meetings. These meetings discuss multifaceted problems faced by peers and others in the community. They raise the issues with local authorities and advocate for solutions that have a lasting impact.

E. Participation of two CAC delegates for the General Comment No. 26

On September 18th, 2023, after 18 months of preparation, the General Comment No. 26 was presented- an official legal assessment emphasizing that climate and environmental damage and its impact on children can no longer be ignored. The GC No. 26 says that children do have a right to a healthy environment, and the

United Nations and governments must take measures to guarantee this right worldwide. This marked one of the largest child participation processes in the history of the United Nations, involving 12 “Child Advisors” for the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, along with contributions, comments and feedback from 16,331 children from 121 countries. Two of the “Child Advisors” were part of the Dialogue Works Committees and came from Rwanda (CVT) and Peru (MOLACNNATs). For more information, click [here](#).



Elisabeth from CVT (Rwanda) speaks at the event for the launch of the General Comment No. 26

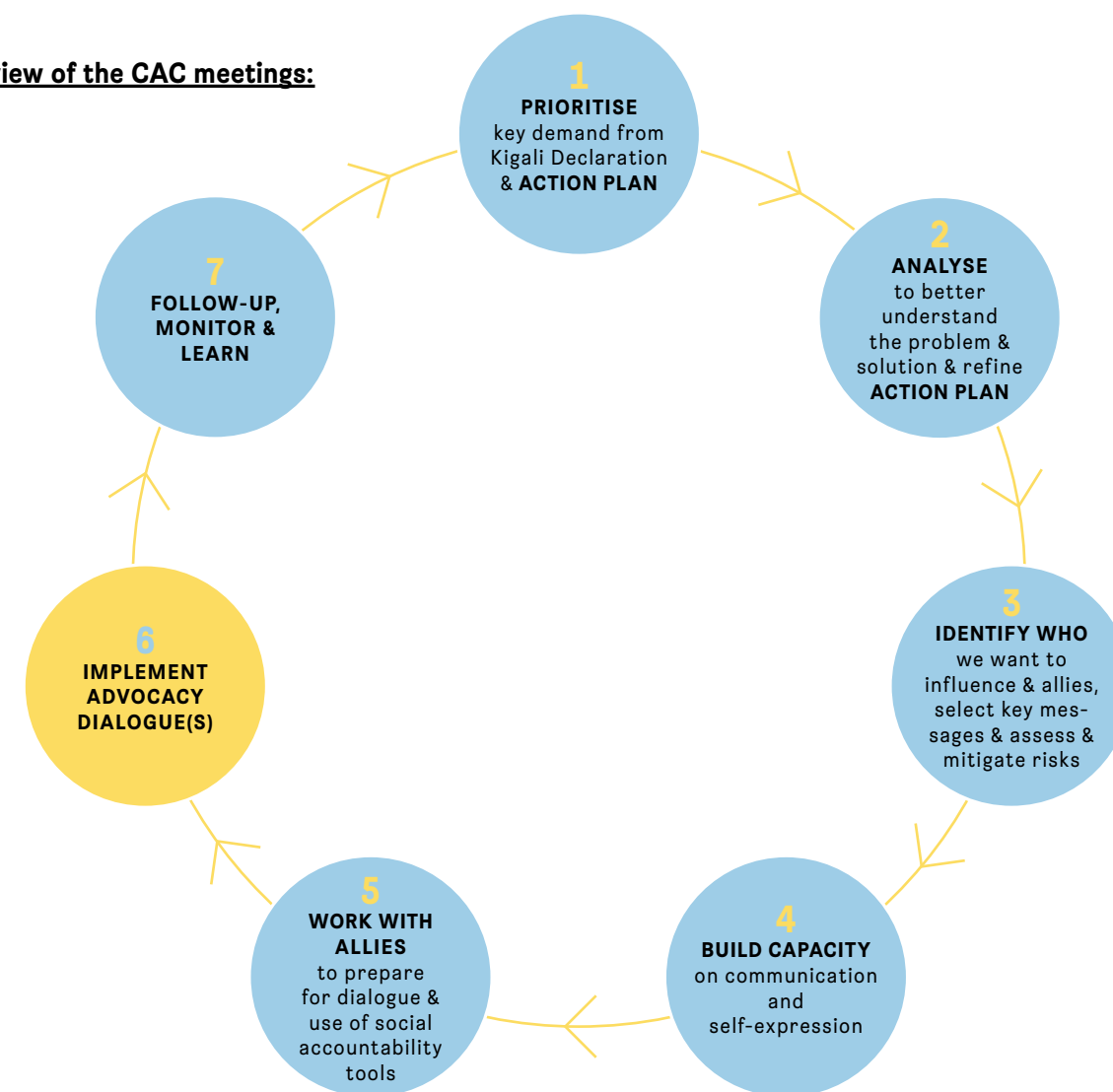
F. Participation of 6 CAC delegates at an online session of the Children & Work network

The [Children & Work Network](#) is an international and diverse group of academic researchers and practitioners concerned with childhood and children’s rights, with a particular interest in children’s work. More than 100 researchers are member of this network and exchange actively on issues related to children’s work. The network regularly conducts a research session to provide a space where individuals and organisations from within and from outside the network can come together to engage in fruitful conversations about relevant and diverse topics in our field. On October 25th, 2023, six child delegates from four partner organisations of Dialogue Works in Kenya and Peru participated in this research session to present the key demands of the Kigali Declaration and their personal experience in engaging in local to global policy events. A rich and intense exchange with the members of the network followed. ●

4. Key activities implemented at local level

During the year 2023, the partners implemented several CAC meetings as per the figure below. As the context is different for each CAC, the guidance has been used in a flexible way, adapted by each partner to best suit their particular context.

Overview of the CAC meetings:



In the following paragraphs, Dialogue Works partner organisations share their highlights from local to national level within their CACs, advocacy dialogues and topics their CACs focussed on in 2023.

Partner organisations in Asian countries

In Nepal, the CAC supported by CWISH successfully conducted five child-led advocacy activities, six national and local advocacy campaigns and 11 regular CAC meetings. In the framework of the World Day Against Child Labour on 12th of June, a CAC member from CWISH organised an art gallery program in their school. All students and teachers were invited to listen to the stories of the CAC members who have drawn pictures about their experiences as working children and youth. Another child led activity was a signature campaign on community sensitization to stop child labour. Through the signatures, the CAC members were able to collect the commitments from local community people and stakeholders for the elimination of child labour as an advocacy program.

In addition, the CAC members in Nepal handed over the Kigali Declaration to different stakeholders of government agencies from the National Child Rights Council, the National Planning Commission, the secretariat of the federal parliament of Nepal and the National Human Rights Commission. Due to the questions raised by the CAC members, there is a realization in the government regarding the need to enhance the capacity of the local government. The National Child Rights Council promised to deal with children's complaints about child labour and committed itself to take complaints without any evidence in the case of children and implement them.



CAC member organizes an art exhibition at her school to talk about her experiences as a working child (CWISH/ Nepal)

The CAC from PKPA in Indonesia consists of 8-15 CAC members. Most of them work as garbage collectors on the street with their parents. The CAC members chose to work on the topic “address poverty, provide decent jobs for our parents” because it is the main reason for children to work.

As a follow-up to the Global Gathering, the CAC members and PKPA organised an Advocacy dialogue with representatives from the government in North Sumatra to share their experiences and recommendations. Representatives from the ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection and representatives of the Ministry of Manpower gave their response to the children's recommendations.

In addition to that, the CAC members together with other children developed an E-Book with the title “Let's Become An Ending Violence Against Children Warrior” that has been launched in two schools. In this E-Book, CAC members tell about how they have changed since being part of the Dialogue Works, Time to Talk Campaign and also EVAC Campaign.

On the “Labour Day” or “May Day” in March, two CAC members joined a podcast to share their views about child labour and how they want more children to be aware of the danger of child labour and how child labour can break children's lives.



Two CAC representatives sharing their experiences from the Global Gathering during a Advocacy Event (PKPA/ Indonesia)

The CAC from CSID in Bangladesh consists of 30 working children with disabilities, most of them live with their families. The prioritized message of the Kigali Declaration was to prevent and protect working children from violence and discrimination as a crosscutting issue of discrimination. In 2023, CSID focused on working with their parents and caregivers on the topics of child protection and domestic violence. In specific sessions and awareness raising trainings, the parents and caregivers talked about how the CAC members can spend part of their money they earned for themselves instead of taking it away from them for use by the family.

Furthermore, during the advocacy dialogue, the CAC members from CSID highlighted the issue of wage discrimination against working children with disabilities and invited stakeholders to discuss it. Inclusive education also played a role in the CAC discussions, as the combination of education and work in Bangladesh is a challenge (no evening shift or night shift education is provided) which makes it difficult for working children to follow their educational schedule while working.



Group picture of CAC members during a CAC meeting (CSID/ Bangladesh)

The two CACs (one rural and one urban CAC) supported in the Philippines by Kaugmaon distributed the messages of the Kigali Declaration through theatre presentations in the community, schools and in children's events with other stakeholders. The CACs focused on the call for effective responses to combat poverty and ensure decent jobs for parents and guardians to meet their basic needs. The prioritization on education and skill training and prevention and protection of children from all forms of violence, exploitation, discrimination and abuse are included in the theatre presentation. The CAC members continuously reached out to other child labourers and other children's organisations to mainstream the Kigali Declaration to create stronger voices in the campaign on popularizing the Declaration and the Dialogue Works Campaign in general during the Children Summit. Additional issues highlighted during the Children Summit are the alarming mental health concerns faced by the children. Some of the children narrated that the CAC activities and the group itself became as a support group and its activities are therapeutic as well. Furthermore, video documentation highlighting the lives of the members of the CAC were also developed to support the advocacy campaign of the CAC.



Theatre performance of CAC members (Kaugmaon/ Philippines)

The CACs from CAJDEN in the Philippines work closely with the Department of Labour and Employment (DOLE) to end child labour continuously gives support in providing livelihood projects for parents of child laborers. During the celebration of World Day against Child Labour on 12th of June and a Children Summit against child labour, some CAC members had initiated a dialogue and convinced their teachers and student councils to conduct children's rights sessions and child labour orientation in their schools. With this initiative of CAC members, CAJDEN is planning to work with school heads together with them to participate in school governance. One demand from CAC members is for school managements to consider working children's worktime and integrate maybe a blended learning model so that working children can study after work.

The CAC members from CAJDEN have been empowered and capacitated through different methods and activities, such as the "self-care and disappointment management". The psychologist from the public university was invited and helped them to confront themselves, their emotions and feelings and their attitude towards themselves. Capacity building and self-care or self-awareness and mindfulness need to be continued with other working children.



Cajden and the CAC members held their "2nd summit of children against child labor" with the theme "let the children's voices be heard" (Cajden/ Philippines)

The CACs supported by NIWCYD in India involved new CAC members in 2023 and focused on addressing the needs and challenges of children living on the street. CAC members who were engaged earlier are now adults or youth. Orientation sessions were conducted for involving new CAC members along with adults/ youth of the CACs and child leaders from other children's groups. Regular meetings have been conducted at the community level with these children and their groups have been formed for coordination and facilitation. Weekly meetings and activities are planned and executed with the support of organisations and local Field Level Community Mobilizers, who work closely with street-connected children and their families. They regularly interact with these children and their families for addressing various issues of education, support for coordinating with the relevant stakeholders of the government and service providers.

In addition, meetings with parents or caregivers have been undertaken as part of regular actions at community level, as this is seen as crucial to address the root causes of child labour and children in street situations. Furthermore, educating parents about the importance of education and the detrimental effects of child labour can help their attitudes and behaviours.

On June, 12th, the International Day against Child Labour, a state and zone level consultative dialogue was held to raise awareness on the issue of child labour and the vulnerabilities of children in street situations, their challenges of protection, access to education, shelter and basic amenities. The findings of the situational analysis report, as well as the Kigali Declaration were shared with the government counterparts and the elected representatives of the Urban Local Body.



Meeting with CAC members, parents and community members (NIWCYD/ India)

The rural and urban CACs supported by VIGYAN in India started with discussions and the sharing of the Kigali Declaration, which was translated in an easy comprehensible way with CAC members, parents, as well as with the school management, local peoples' representatives and the labour department. Out of the five key demands included in the Kigali Declaration, the CAC members prioritized the demand "listen to us, understand us and implement laws that respect our rights".

Another key event was the Child Dialogue event, a gathering of children, both working and non-working, studying as well as dropouts from 18 districts of Uttar Pradesh, with the highest authority of child protection at state level - The State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (SCPCR). The children, their guardians and school committees raised the issues of child labour, low quality of education, housing conditions, poor working condition of parents etc. that lead to the violation of children's rights. A complete report with applications was submitted to the chairperson SCPCR and its members and action is awaited.

In addition, two 3 - 5-days workshops for CAC members were conducted: a theatre workshop, focused on increasing the power of expression of the CAC members and a workshop on emotional and mental well-being. In this workshop conducted by a trained counsellor, the children were given tips on meditation, journalism etc. for controlling their anxiety, frustration and anger and doing activities to help them to express showing signs of unbalanced emotional status.



A CAC member shares her ideas on a advocacy event with political stakeholders (VIGYAN/ India)

Partner organisations in Latin-American countries

IFEJANT in Peru works with one CAC close to Lima (PROMINNATs) and another CAC is supported by MNNATSOP, the movement of working children in Peru. In 2023, at the local level, PROMINNATs has taken up the issue and action to engage for the realisation of the right to dignified work for children. They assume it as a cultural practice that helps the formation of the personality. At the same time, they maintain an absolute rejection of mistreatment and exploitation as a form of violence and violation of children's rights.

At the national level, a dialogue was achieved with the Congresswoman Flor Pablo to create awareness for any sign of violation of the rights of children and adolescents, in the context of the murder of 12 adolescents in the national protests in Peru in 2023, most of them children and adolescents.



CAC members in discussion with a Peruvian congresswoman (Ifejant/ Peru)

The CAC members supported by CESIP also in Peru, participated in seminars and meetings with local authorities where they presented the situation of the rights of children and adolescents in Peru, and also carried out advocacy activities in their communities through awareness campaigns. Likewise, socialization activities were carried out with other local, national and international youth organizations where they presented the issues of the Kigali Declaration and their prioritization. The key messages were "rights are for everyone", "child labour violates rights", "little people, doing little things, in little places, can change the world".

The CACs have been an important space for exchange that has allowed children and young people to listen to each other and, above all, to hear the different opinions regarding the different problems that concern them.



CAC members organize an awareness rising campaign in their community and discuss with other children about child labour (CESIP/ Peru)

The CAC members supported by PASOCAP in Bolivia discussed the Kigali Declaration and decided to work on the demand "prevent and protect working children and adolescents from violence and discrimination".

As part of their advocacy action and in coordination with educational units and other organizations, in the framework of the commemoration of the national 34th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the CAC members carried out the March for the rights of Mother Earth. The goal was to raise awareness among the population about the care of water, the importance of planting trees and not burning forests. More than 1000 people participated in this march.

In December 2023, after more than 10 years of hard work, another milestone in the recognition of dignified work was reached. The municipality of Potosi approved and handed over the municipal law N° 419, which commemorates the day for the dignity of working children in the city. Moreover, the law regulates the provision of funds for the work on protection and prevention issues related to working children. The CAC members and working children from the Bolivian movement of working children (CONNAT'SOP) participated in this event.



Representatives of the municipality of Potosi hands over the new municipal law which aims to protect working children to a CAC member (PASOCAP/ Bolivia)

In Guatemala, the year 2023 was characterized by electoral campaigns and elections at the municipal and national levels. The CACs supported by CEIPA focused mainly on activities aimed at demanding support for the realization of children's rights from the candidates who aspired to be elected to the popular public office. The CAC members received training on how to develop a child rights situation analysis. Afterwards, they applied these tools and did a child rights situation analysis in three departments the CAC members live in (Quetzaltenango, San Marcos and Retalhuleu), including gathering the opinion of more than 900 children. The identified problems of the analysis focused on poor access to health services and education, violence, bullying, street harassment, water shortage and environmental pollution. For each of these problems, the CAC members discussed solutions with political candidates and identified key stakeholders who can help reduce these problems.

Based on the discussion with elected deputies, the CAC members elaborated an advocacy plan, which focused on quality education, where they emphasized that it is necessary that children from public schools have the necessary supplies to go to school. In an advocacy meeting, the political stakeholders from the municipality of Quetzaltenango committed themselves to deliver bags of school supplies to students in their municipality.



CAC members during a CAC meeting (CEIPA/ Guatemala)

Partner organisations in African and MENA region countries

The CAC members from AfCiC in Kenya usually meet during their school holidays. In 2023, their advocacy activities focused on a presentation of issues prioritized by children in the schools and communities to the Thika Sub County Children Advisory Committee.

In the meantime, other CAC members addressed the Thika Court Users Committee on the issue of justice for children arrested while begging in the streets. Their concern was that begging is not a crime but rather a source of income or food for children and their families suffering extreme poverty.

The prioritized demands from the younger CACs were "addressing poverty, provide decent jobs for our parents and ensure our basic needs are met" as they see poverty as the underlying cause of many problems. The older CAC members decided to focus on the topic "listen to us, understand us and implement laws that respect our rights" as most adults tend to make decisions for them without consulting them.



Dr. Macharia Principal Magistrate making remarks during the Court Users Committee Presentation in Thika (AFCIC/ Kenya)

To amplify children's voices, the **Kenyan** partner organization **WCY** formed Dialogue Works Clubs, which became a great platform for children and youth to engage and dialogue with leaders and policy makers. In 2023, the CAC members had the opportunity to visit the County assembly of Kiambu, Kakamega and the National assembly. The CAC members contributed towards increasing spaces for child participation and the need to be involved and heard in the county assemblies process with legislators and policy makers who are tasked with legislation so that they can formulate laws and policies that are child friendly.

In addition, each five CAC members from AFCIC and WCY participated in a Media training led by the Kenyan institute Mtoto News in which they learned skills in engaging in meaningful participation with policy makers and decision making, carrying out effective child led advocacy and how to produce child-led content on child protection.



CAC members visit the County assembly of Kiambu, Kakamega and the National assembly (WCY/ Kenya)

The CACs supported by **CACLAZ** in **Zimbabwe** successfully held an advocacy campaign in form of a roadshow where children pronounced child labour as a big problem and called for joint action. The CAC members opted for a different way as usually, when they do roadshows in towns or bigger places, and visited grassroots levels in rural communities where most of them are working as child labourers. The families have to be aware that child labour was and will never be a solution to poverty. The Ministry of Youths supported the demands and committed themselves to help some vulnerable children returning them back to school. The CAC members also visited a radio station where children aired their concerns so that the children's voices could be heard. Building on such successes, the children feel that the use of media, using radios broadcast and national television stations should be used more frequently.



CAC members discussing the Kigali Declaration (CACLAZ/ Zimbabwe)

The CACs supported by **CVT** in **Rwanda** identified labour exploitation, harsh working conditions and risks for working children as the main problem for child labourers and limited knowledge of parents and employers on children's rights as one main underlying root causes of the problem. That's why they focussed on awareness raising activities in 2023. CAC members conducted a mapping of areas where children and youth are employed to identify the ones who experience violence at their workplaces. They talked to the children, parents and their employers about the rights and welfare of working children, the problems they face and possible solutions. In addition, the CAC members conducted monitoring visits to different workplaces and identified relevant duty-bearers to address their issues. In total they managed to advocate for 13 working children who were helped to go back to school due to the sensitization done by CAC members.

Another big success in 2023 was the participation of two CAC members from CVT in the presentation of the alternative child-led complementary report on the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC). The presentation was part of the 42nd Ordinary Session of the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC) that was held in November 2023 at the Headquarters of the African Union Commission, Addis Ababa.



CAC members sharing their experiences in a creative way (CVT/ Rwanda)

The number of CACs of **FC** in **Ethiopia** increased from two to four and its members from 30 to 72 with an age range from 7 up to 16 years old. In 2023, there have been several CAC meetings conducted to build the capacity of newly established CAC members to know the basic nine requirements for effective and ethical child participation and share experience among formerly and newly established CACs. They focused on the topics of labour exploitation, early child marriage and school absenteeism and dropout from school and advocated to stop child labour exploitation in their localities through presenting poems and drama to convince community members and duty bearers regularly. In total, more than 200 people have been addressed.

The CAC members also transferred the messages of the Kigali Declaration using demonstrations or media like FM radio on children program to address more audience with messages like "stop child marriage - protecting children from early marriage which leads them from school dropout and labour exploitation".



CAC members organise a manifestation in their community (FC/ Ethiopia)

The CACs from JCM in Zambia implemented a youth-led approach in which former CAC members got training and formation on how to conduct CAC meetings and engage with working children and youth. This allowed them to organize and conduct their own CAC meetings, always in consultation with the support of JCM. The key messages and demands from the CAC members in 2023 were to support and scale up business ideas by young people especially those that are environmentally friendly, to monitor social protection programs better and to create job opportunities for other professions like social workers and labour inspectors.

On a national level, the CAC members from JCM participated in an event in October on the International Day of a Girl Child. In 2023 it was commemorated under the theme “Invest in girls rights; our leadership our well-being”.



CAC members during the International Day of a Girl Child (JCM/ Zambia)

The CACs supported by TAWLAE in Tanzania organized a big advocacy dialogue in their communities in 2023. In this event, representatives from the church and the mosque participated, as well as leaders from the Tobacco Primary Society (AMCOs) as most of the CAC members work in the tobacco industry, society leaders, agriculture officer and other people from the village.

All the messages presented by the CACs were acknowledged by the audience, and stakeholders committed to acting within their capacity. They've also included these messages on their agenda for future discussions. ●



CAC members share their experiences from the Global Gathering in their community (TAWLAE/ Tanzania)

5. Key challenges, lessons learned and suggestions to improve

Key Challenges

- **The unstable political situation and economic crisis** in some countries created challenges to organise regular CAC meetings and Advocacy Dialogues (e.g. Lebanon, Ethiopia). The fear is since schools in these countries are often closed, that the conflict may lead for the increase in child right violations including child labour.
- **The national-level advocacy programs take a long time for follow-up actions on commitments made by decision-makers** (Nepal)
- It is difficult to **work with employers** of working children as they show no interest to participate in meetings or activities (Nepal)
- **The lack of communication material available in local languages** that can be used for awareness raising and advocacy dialogues (Rwanda)
- Some CACs have difficulties to join the CAC meetings and advocacy actions because their **schools** don't give **permission** (Nepal)
- In some cases, partner organisations invited external guests, such as government officials or other authorities to attend their advocacy dialogues but they wouldn't attend the meeting on short notice. The success of the advocacy dialogues depends very much on the **willingness of the addressed (political) stakeholders** (Bangladesh). In some countries, due to upcoming national elections, many programs could not be completed on schedule because politicians were busy with other tasks.
- Due to **financial constraints**, it was difficult to gain a foothold at national level (Zimbabwe)
- **More working children and young people interested** in being part of the CAC than can be accepted for the local CACs (Kenya)
- **Time management**: Working children tend to be very busy juggling work, education and other responsibilities, as well as needing time to rest and engage in leisure activities. This makes it difficult to organize powerful child-led advocacy actions (e.g. India, Philippines)
- **Low interest of our CAC members in online meetings**, e.g. regional CAC meetings. The translation does not help to sustain their interest in the meetings and they tend to opt out (India)
- CAC members are often affected by **mental health problems** due to their and their family's situation. Thus, it is very important to work on the emotional well-being of the CAC members and devise ways to address this issue (e.g. India, Philippines)
- **The response of the government to child labour issues is not enough** to address the extent of the problem (Philippines)
- **(In-)continuity of (political) contacts**: After election or when there is a change in the position of a (political) stakeholder, the CACs need to rebuild new contacts with relevant stakeholders and to update and involve them in the campaign. But it can also serve in a strategic way to approach future decision makers (Guatemala)
- CACs advocacy campaign includes addressing **climate change and climate justice**, however, this would entail **risk for the children** (Philippines)

Lessons learned

- Younger children should start participating in the campaign to ensure sustainability (Philippines)



Meeting with parents and caregivers and CAC members (CAJDEN/ Philippines)

- Since the beginning, many of the NGO partners are making increased efforts to inform and **actively engage parents and caregivers** which tends to increase parental support for children's active participation in the CACs and for their advocacy initiatives. Through their support they help other parents or caregivers to become interested in learning more about the CAC and children's rights.
- There is still the need to raise people's awareness to distinguish between **child labour and child work** (Rwanda, Philippines)
- When the **working environment is conducive, working children can attend school and perform well** (Rwanda)
- Doing awareness raising and sharing messages in a **creative way**, e.g. through poems, singing, dancing, theatre, art, is a very successful way for children to express themselves freely and with more self-confidence and helps to gain attention. The opportunities and ways of participating should be based on the capacity of children to participate, like theatre performances. It is not only an advocacy method but also a therapeutic method (Philippines)



CAC members from PKPA (Indonesia) during a creative activity

- It is difficult for the CAC members to organize big national advocacy dialogue on their own - **support** of their organizations is needed (Nepal)
- The **ministry and local government** have **little coordination** between government agencies. Therefore, it seems that the ministries and local agencies working in the field of children should be brought together and advocated to end of child labour (Nepal)
- **Collaborate** with **local schools** to facilitate the enrolment of children in appropriate grade levels. Offer support through educational classes to help them in their curriculum and prepare them for mainstream schooling (India)
- Need to increase efforts to **integrate the CACs sustainably into existing organizations** and movements, so that it is not an extra project, but an integrated one (Peru)
- Until now, the **statistics of working children** have not been compiled by any municipality, thus statistics of working children should be collected in coordination with the municipality (Nepal)
- Considering that a significant number of working children attend government schools, organizing interaction programs at the school level involving principals, teachers, **School Management Committees (SMCs)**, and Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) is crucial. We need to have interactive sessions to explore what steps the school can take to combat child labour (Nepal)

- Lot of **effort** is needed when working with **government officials**. The partner organisation in Zambia learned that government officials and other stakeholders are willing to work with them but it is up to them to put in more effort in the advocacy dialogues because they are the ones feeling the negative impact of poverty
- If there is **no will and openness on the part of the authorities**, children and adolescents are not listened to and much less seen as subjects of rights with their own opinions and voices (Peru)
- The partner organisations in Zambia, Bolivia, India and the Philippines learned that it is important to **develop strong networks** with other NGOs working on child-led advocacy.
- **Involve the authorities** in some of the CAC meetings, for greater knowledge and understanding of the issue and to make them aware of the objectives (Bolivia)
- **Interest to expand the CACs** to other communities (Guatemala)
- Identifying **child rights champions** from school or governmental children and youth council, and community leaders, and other stakeholders to help support and advocate for CAC advocacy (Philippines)

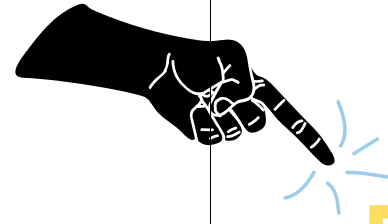


Advocacy Event with different stakeholders, including school management (VIGYAN/ India)

Suggestions to improve



CAC members from PASOCAP in Bolivia organise a demonstration for a healthy environment



Suggestions to improve

- Engaging other child rights organizations to act against the violation of children's rights (e.g. Zimbabwe, India, Philippines)
- Continued awareness and education on child rights among **duty-bearers** emerged as a frequent theme (Rwanda)
- Increasing **community awareness** and do awareness raising in schools (Zimbabwe, Rwanda, Guatemala)
- Increasing communication with the **ILO** (Bangladesh, Philippines)
- Organise **follow-up advocacy** meetings and dialogues (Bangladesh)
- The capacity of the children of the CAC committee should also be enhanced on the issue of **climate change** and its impact on children (e.g. Nepal, India, Philippines)
- To ensure the sustainability of the CAC, the **regional network** needs to be led by **CAC members** themselves (Nepal)
- Include **artistic and creative activities** such as dance, music and theatre in CAC activities as a strategy to work on life projects and contribute to a better development of children (e.g. Bolivia, India, Philippines)
- Include **former CAC members** to strengthen the group (Bolivia, Philippines)
- Offer **vocational/ life skills training** support for older CAC members, focusing on trades that are in demand and as per their interest. Life skills sessions to develop their problem-solving skills, communication and interpersonal skills (India)
- Regular meetings and follow-ups with **parents** and **caregivers** to address obstacles or concerns with their children. Conduct parenting workshop to enhance parents' knowledge and skills in supporting their children. Facilitate regular parents' teacher meetings to provide feedback on children's progress and encourage parental involvement in their education. Conduct awareness raising sessions for parents on the importance of education and child rights, and the consequences of child labour. And provide holistic support to both children and their families for poverty elevation and economic well-being (India)
- **Parents and caregivers as well as teachers should be well-informed** about the importance of child participation to further support the CAC advocacy (Philippines)
- Engage and meeting with **local employers** to promote responsibilities and ethical practices, ensuring the elimination of child labour supply chain. Encourage them to provide decent working conditions and fair wages, and supporting initiatives that promote the education and wellbeing of children (India) ●



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