



Child Helpline International and the Committee on the Rights of the Child

2014

Reviewing 10 years of CRC recommendations
on the Right to be Heard

Contents

Acronyms

CHI	Child Helpline International
CRC Committee	Committee on the Rights of the Child
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
EC	European Commission
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
OPSC	Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography
OPAC	Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict
Telecom Regulator	Legal regulatory body that governs telecommunications systems in different countries
UN	United Nations
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
WHO	World Health Organisation

Foreword



Child Helpline International would like to congratulate the United Nations on the occasion of the 25th Anniversary of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). The adoption of this Convention on 20 November 1989 was an important milestone and a necessary addition to the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights that recognised children as human beings, not chattels and that they have the basic right to lead a dignified life.

The signing and ratification of the UNCRC by 194 States Parties was the first important step in a chain of activities recognising the rights of children. The UNCRC is a human rights treaty which sets out the civil, political, economic, social, health and cultural rights of children. To ensure the holistic and sustainable development of children, it is imperative that we invest in policies, programs and initiatives to protect and empower them socially.

Once they have ratified the UNCRC, the next, and at times, most complicated step States parties once they have ratified the UNCRC, is the actual implementation of the Convention. Governments that have ratified the UNCRC are bound by it and are required to periodically report to and appear before the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child. This important Committee, composed of experts from around the world, examines the progress of the implementation of the rights of the child recognised in this Convention.

The CRC Committee monitors the implementation of the UNCRC on the basis of country reports submitted by civil society organisations and other specialised UN agencies. Since 2004, Child Helpline International (CHI), has been cooperating with its member child helplines to submit alternative reports during the periodic review of countries. These alternative reports focus specifically on the situation of the child helplines services delivered to children in need of care and protection in each member state.

Over the past 10 years, CHI has submitted 181 alternative reports for 129 different countries, of which several had submitted more than one report to the CRC Committee in the period covered by this

report. In 90 countries a child helpline was mentioned by the CRC Committee in its Concluding Observations as an important mechanism in child protection, and recommendations were made that state parties should take appropriate measures and efforts to either strengthen existing services, or create new ones. The comprehensive evaluation of the impact of alternative reports on country recommendations outlined in this report gives insight and a good overview of the important monitoring role that the CRC Committee has on the implementation of the UNCRC. Over the years, as a result of the Committee's recommendation to create accessible and child-friendly reporting systems, an increased number of states have supported safe, confidential, and accessible mechanisms to children and young people such as telephone child helpline services. Through child helplines, children can report abuse and exploitation, speak to trained counsellors in confidence, and ask for support and advice. This is often the first step that a child can take, to ensure they have an active and participatory role in being treated as human beings with rights, responsibilities and a voice.

Report findings and recommendations from the CRC Committee open a future in which children and young people can live in societies that protect their well-being and enable them to grow up to their full potential so that they can contribute to their nations.

Nenita La Rose
Executive Director
Child Helpline International

Message



The starting point of the monitoring of states' compliance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child is the written reports from the states themselves to the Committee on the Rights of the Child. However, the Committee would not be able to undertake any real monitoring without supplementary information received from other sources. Country specific Reports from UNICEF, NGOs, National Human Rights Institutions and others on the situation of children's rights in that country are invaluable for the Committee in obtaining a more comprehensive picture of the situation on the ground. This enables the Committee to ask the right questions during the dialogue with the State and to make well-founded and pertinent/relevant comments in its Concluding Observations to the State after the dialogue.

Child Helpline International is among the NGOs that provides the Committee with important additional information in the monitoring process. The Committee relies on CHI to give reports on the status of helplines in the country under scrutiny. The highly valued reports from CHI facilitate raising the issue of helplines with the State during the dialogue, whether with regard to establishing a helpline in the first place or improving one that may already exist, thus making it possible to give focussed and relevant recommendations to the State in that respect.

The Committee's Concluding Observations to the State, containing its concerns and recommendations, express what measures the State is expected to undertake to improve the implementation of children's rights over the next reporting period. Not only are the concluding observations an important tool for States themselves; they also play a central role in advocacy work carried out by organizations such as CHI. This work is important in the follow-up to the concluding observations. For the best result the Committee needs to be conscious of the significance of including an issue like helplines in the Concluding Observations, as shown by findings in the present report. Helplines are a vital part of a well-functioning child protection system in a country. The CRC Article 19

requires of states that they protect children from all forms of violence, including emotional violence, abuse and neglect. When a child experiences any of these, or has some other issue to talk about, he or she needs somewhere or someone to turn to. A helpline is the first step and in many cases a premise for protecting and providing help to a child. Even if children may have teachers, family members, neighbours or others that they can address, not all children have a person to confide in, and in any case the child may want to talk to somebody outside his or her daily environment. In that way a helpline also pursues the aim of Article 12 of the Convention, as it gives children an opportunity to express their views to someone who will listen.

A helpline needs to be easily accessible for all children, free of cost, with a number which is easy to remember and with someone answering 24 hours a day 7 days a week. It is also important that the person answering the phone is well-trained and knows how to bring the child into contact with the right instances, in order for the helpline to really bring protection to the child.

Kirsten Sandberg
Chairperson
Committee on the rights of the Child

Message



Every child has the right to be protected from all forms of violence and exploitation. This right has no practical meaning if a child in need of protection is not identified. For many decades this identification depended on the capacity of professionals and other adults to become aware of the problems that the child may have. There are many stories of victims of abuse or exploitation who as a child, have been trying to get the attention of adults for their problems without success.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) produced a radical change in this picture of dependency. This human rights treaty was the first to recognise the voices of children by establishing the right of every child to express her or his views, concerns and problems. States parties to the UNCRC have the obligation to promote these meaningful opportunities for children to have their voices heard.

Child Helpline International was born out of the conviction that tools should be developed to allow children to have their voices heard. The result: the promotion and support for the establishment of easy accessible national child helplines allowing children to express their views and concern and receive advice and assistance and protection from abuse and exploitation. Children can take actions themselves if they are in need of care or protection guided by information from child helplines.

Child Helpline International and its national members have submitted alternative reports to the CRC Committee when it was examining the progress made by States parties in the implementation of the rights of the child. The purpose of these reports is to provide the Committee with information on the development of national child helplines or the lack there of and to submit proposals for the establishment or strengthening of such helplines.

This report shows the impact of Child Helpline International and its national member's activities. The CRC Committee frequently made

specific recommendations in its Concluding Observations encouraging States parties to establish or strengthen national child helplines, recommendations which were implemented in many countries. It also indicates the importance of the ongoing advocating of Child Helpline International and its national members for the realisation of the right of the child to have their voices heard and taken into account.

The 25th anniversary of the UNCRC is an opportunity not only to assess the progress made but to also become aware of the remaining challenges. The CRC Committee should systematically recommend States parties which have not done so to establish national child helplines or strengthen existing ones in order to provide children with a tool to have their voices heard and listened to.

In the future, our goal should be to have child helplines available to children and young people in all states parties that have ratified the UNCRC.

Jaap E. Doek

Chairperson of the CRC Committee 2001 – 2007

Assessing the impact of recommendations made by the Committee on the Rights of the Child in its Concluding Observations on the establishment or strengthening of national child helplines as an important tool for the protection of the rights of the child.

Session Review: 35th Session to 65th Session (2004 - 2014)

Introduction

An important part of Child Helpline International's (CHI) activities is the submission of alternative reports to the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) which monitors the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) by States parties. **In its alternative reports CHI consistently requests that the CRC Committee should make recommendations to governments under sessional review to establish or strengthen the existing child helpline in their country.**

On the occasion of its 10th anniversary in 2013, CHI conducted a review of the impact of its alternative reports on country specific recommendations that the CRC Committee made in its Concluding Observations. **This evaluation is pivotal, as it demonstrates whether the UNCRC and its implementation mechanisms, have an impact in practice and are meaningful to the improvement of the lives of children and young people.**

This report opens with a brief introduction of the UNCRC and the monitoring role of the CRC Committee followed by information on Child Helpline International (CHI). It concludes by detailing the impact of CHI's alternative reports on country specific recommendations.

The UNCRC, the CRC Committee and its Monitoring Role

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) recognises the rights of children. In the UNCRC, children are defined as any person under the age of 18 years. The UNCRC was adopted by Resolution 44/25 of 20 November 1989 at the Forty-Fourth session of the General Assembly of the United Nations and came into force on 2 September 1990. To date, 194 states of the United Nations have ratified the UNCRC. The UNCRC lays out the civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights of children in addition to basic rights such as protection from harm, exploitation and abuse. Each state that has ratified the UNCRC must undertake all appropriate legislative, administrative

and other measures for the implementation and realization of the rights recognised in the UNCRC. States parties should develop a comprehensive national agenda, plan or strategy for a holistic and progressive fulfilment of the rights of the child regarding their economic, social and cultural rights. Furthermore, they are obliged to use their available resources to the maximum extent (Article 4 UNCRC). The implementation process is the responsibility of the governments of the States parties to the UNCRC, often with the assistance of national and international NGO's, CSO's and specialised UN agencies such as UNICEF, WHO and UNESCO; that may undertake implementation.

The Committee on the Rights of the Child is the independent human rights treaty body of the United Nations that monitors the implementation of the UNCRC by the States that have ratified the UNCRC. The Committee consists of respected independent experts on child rights who are elected by States parties to the UNCRC. The Committee held its first meeting in 1990 with 10 members. There are currently 18 members of the Committee, who meet three times a year to examine the progress made by the States parties in achieving the realization of the rights of the child enshrined in the UNCRC.

The key mandate of the CRC Committee is to monitor the implementation of the UNCRC by the 194 States parties; to assess the progress made and to identify the remaining shortcomings and obstacles in the realization of the rights of the child. In order to

make this monitoring possible, governments have the obligation to submit reports to the Committee; the first report within two years after the UNCRC has entered into force within the country concerned and thereafter every five years. These reports inform the Committee on the measures undertaken for the implementation of the UNCRC and the difficulties affecting this implementation. In addition, the Committee receives country specific reports from national and international NGO's such as Child Helpline International, other CSO's (e.g. professional associations) and specialised UN agencies such as UNICEF, the WHO and UNESCO. These reports provide additional information and are known as **alternative** or complementary reports. All these reports and additional information collected by the secretariat of the Committee are the basis for the examination of the state party's performance in implementing the rights of the

child as recognised in the UNCRC. This examination takes place in a full day dialogue between the CRC Committee and the delegation of the state party under review and results in a document known as the Concluding Observations.

These Concluding Observations acknowledge the progress made by a country in areas such as legislation, policy development and implementation. Additionally, the Concluding Observations present the concerns of the Committee on the remaining shortcomings and difficulties that affect the implementation of the CRC. These concerns are addressed and followed by concrete recommendations and it is in this regard that the Committee takes into account the information and suggestions made in the alternative reports, among others, provided by Child Helpline International.

The UN recognising child helplines in Recommendation 8 of the report '*Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Children*' - A/61/299

'Create Accessible and Child-friendly Reporting Systems'

States should establish safe, well-publicised, confidential and accessible mechanisms for children, their representatives and others to report violence against children. All children, including those in care and justice institutions, should be aware of the existence of mechanisms of complaint. Mechanisms such as telephone helplines - through which children can report abuse, speak to a trained counsellor in confidence and ask for support and advice - should be established and the creation of other ways of reporting violence through new technologies should be considered.

Child helplines mentioned in *the Committee on the Rights of the Child General Comment No. 13 (2011)*:

'The Right of the Child to Freedom from all Forms of Violence'

Section 43(b)(1) on Social Programmes
(b) Social programs to support the child individually and to support the child's family and other caregivers to provide optimal positive child-rearing, for example:
(i) For children: childcare, early child development and after-school care programmes; child and youth groups and clubs; counselling support to children experiencing difficulties (including self-harm); 24-hour toll-free child helplines with trained personnel; foster family services which are subject to periodic review.

CHI's Mission: To respond to children in need of care and protection and to voice their concerns to policy and decisionmakers.

Child Helpline International

Child Helpline International (CHI) is the global network of child helplines, with 178 child helpline members in 143 countries (February 2014). CHI assists with the establishment of child helplines in countries where they do not exist; strengthens child helplines through knowledge exchange and capacity development; and aims to strengthen national child protection systems through evidence-based advocacy and policy influencing.

Child helplines play a pivotal role in protecting children's rights as laid down in the UNCRC on the Rights of the Child. CHI's network has assisted millions of children and young people by providing them with care, counselling, intervention and referral. Between 2003-2013 over **126 million contacts were made by children and young people to child helplines around the world**, resulting in many of them being protected, supported and cared for by these services.

To make child helplines available to children and young people at all times, CHI works on widening their reach by advocating for free-of-cost, short telephone numbers. This enables children to call child helplines without paying for the telephone call and takes the financial burden off the child helpline, which in some cases is responsible for paying the telephone bill.

Child helplines are in the unique position of being privy to children's true voices, as they themselves choose to express them. Realising the potential of this wealth of information, CHI collects data from all of its member child helplines worldwide on the numbers and nature of contacts they receive. CHI uses this data to advocate globally for children and their rights, as set down in the UNCRC, and to help pave the way to consolidating and strengthening national child protection systems.

CHI's Objectives 2011-2015

- **Providing child helplines in all stages of development with services;**
- **Working with the communications sector to ensure that children can access child helplines through their preferred means of communication, whether using traditional or new technologies;**
- **Working to strengthen national child protection systems by using child helpline data to advocate to key decision makers.**

CHI employs a multi-stakeholder approach, working with local, regional and national stakeholders and partners to support the creation and consolidation of national free-of-cost child helplines around the world. In addition, CHI strives to offer opportunities for all members and partners to enhance their services through workshops, trainings, peer-exchanges and other vital platforms for knowledge sharing. Finally, CHI taps into the data and information available across the network to advocate to and influence key decision and policy makers as well as to help strengthen national child protection systems and ensure children's rights.

Based in the Netherlands, Child Helpline International works closely with the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the child helpline De Kindertelefoon.

The Importance of Child Helplines

It is the basic right of children and young people to be heard, to voice their opinions and concerns as enshrined in the UNCRC. Child helplines enable and empower children to have these rights, to take their lives into their own hands, and to resolve their problems with professional counsellors, who refer them to the appropriate services (police, hospitals, psychologists, social workers, lawyers) and who protect them from serious issues that maybe be threatening to their lives.

In many instances children and young people do not have the ability to access child helpline services.

It is CHI's mission to ensure that all children and young people regardless of their race, background, religion, status or location have access to the services that are provided by child helplines. Child helplines are at the forefront in child protection;

they are an entry point into any national child protection system and should be available and accessible to all children and young people. In order to increase the quality of and access to optimal services and reach, child helplines should have national coverage and be operational 24 hours daily. Regionally harmonised child helpline phone numbers have recently been allocated in some regions (for example: Europe: **116 111**, Africa: **116**, South Asia: **1098**). However, in cases where this is not possible, any three or four digit number should be allocated to the child helpline by the Telecom Regulator so that the child or young person can easily remember it in times of distress. Most importantly, child helplines should be free of cost, so neither the child nor the child helpline have to cover costs for calls.

A network of child helpline organisations issued a call for action at the 2012 International Consultation of Child Helplines in Durban, South Africa. In addition to the successful adoption of the Durban Resolutions, the network called upon partners, governments, agencies and the private sector to:

1. **Recognise child helplines' unique capacity to amplify the voices of children and therefore strengthen child protection mechanisms;**
2. **Partner with child helplines to ensure that they are sustainable and accessible for all children free of charge; and,**
3. **Ensure that the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) include the protection and empowerment of children and young people.**

Child helplines give a voice to children and young people as stated in *Article 12 of UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*:

1. States parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.
2. For this purpose, the child shall in particular be provided the opportunity to be heard in any judicial and administrative proceedings affecting the child, either directly, or through a representative or an appropriate body, in a manner consistent with the procedural rules of national law.

The role of child helplines is a key tool for the protection of children and prevention of abuse and violence against children as enshrined in *Article 19 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*.

1. States parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child.
2. Such protective measures should, as appropriate, include effective procedures for the establishment of social programmes to provide necessary support for the child and for those who have the care of the child, as well as for other forms of prevention and for identification, reporting, referral, investigation, treatment and follow-up of instances of child maltreatment described heretofore, and, as appropriate, for judicial involvement.

CHI's "dream" is a world where technology allows children to be heard one by one, and it is through their voices that the world is shaped and their rights are realised.'

Case Study

A child helpline team received an anonymous phone call. The caller stated that someone (suspected to be a trafficker) was luring minor girls by promising them a substantial income. Instead, the trafficker was sending the girls to brothels on a contract basis. Based on this information, the team planned a sting operation. Two of the team members went undercover and acted as customers seeking a minor girl, using a 'real estate business' as a cover story. They convinced the suspect that they would pay a certain amount of money to spend 5 days with the girl. Meanwhile, the child helpline team informed the police and the media about the issue, who in turn alerted the special branch police officers. The child helpline undercover staff member exposed the trafficker with a girl at a railway station and the police filed a case against the perpetrator. The girl was relocated to a shelter home and the case was brought before court where the accused was remanded. After a detailed police inquiry, the accused revealed approximately 250 contact details of people involved in human trafficking networks in the area.

CHI, the UNCRC and Alternative Reports

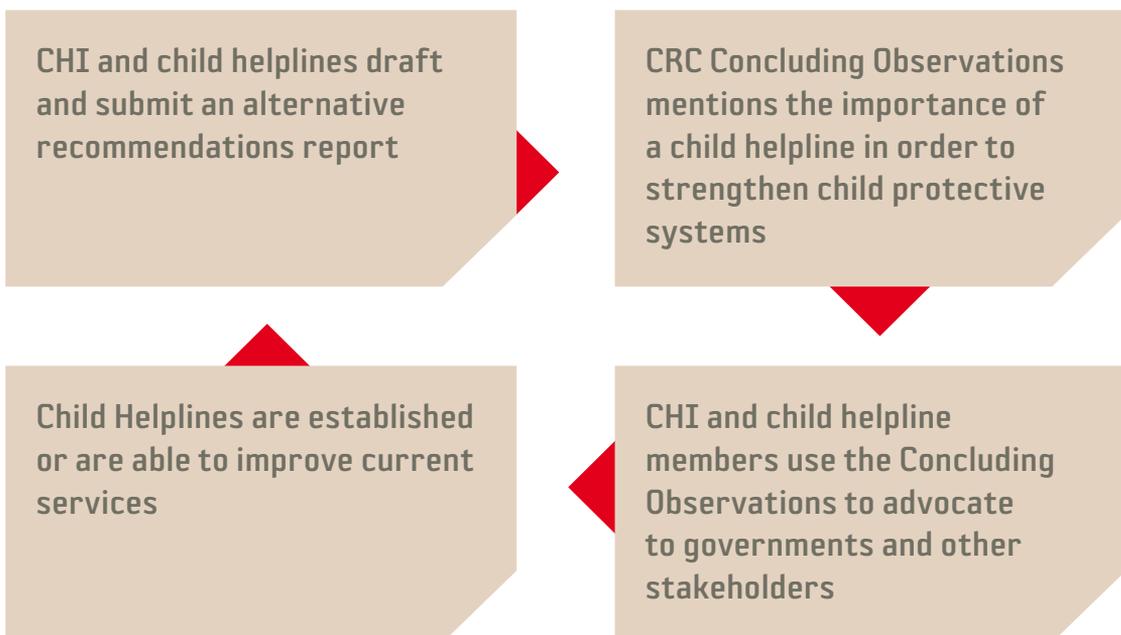
Child helplines give a voice to children and young people as enshrined in the basic rights of the UNCRC. All children should have the liberty to reach out to a child helpline. However, in many cases either a child helpline does not exist, or the child experiences barriers that hinder him/her from receiving the right assistance and protection. Such obstacles could include: having to pay for a phone call; inability to reach a service after operational working hours; or by merely living in a location where the child helpline does not extend its coverage. **This is where governments can step in and either support the establishment of a child helpline or scale-up the capacity and accessibility of an existing child helpline.**

Since 2004, Child Helpline International has been co-operating with its member child helplines to submit alternative reports for the periodic review of countries under the Convention on the Rights of the Child as implemented by the Committee. The alternative reports that were submitted to the

CRC focused specifically on the situation of child helplines in States parties.

As a first step, CHI drafts recommendations that are sent to member child helplines for review and feedback. The child helpline member then adjusts

CHI's Alternative Report Production Cycle



the recommendation to the situation and status of the child helpline on the ground, and this forms the alternative report. Three to Six months prior to each session, CHI submits these alternative reports to the CRC Committee, on behalf of the child helpline members, for each country which is under review in that particular session. Alternative reports are not submitted if the child helpline member is unable to contribute to the recommendation. For countries where there is no child helpline, CHI submits alternative reports to the CRC Committee, recommending and encouraging the establishment of a child helpline in their respective state that has the appropriate resources to provide services to children in that country.

CHI strives to submit consistent reports to the CRC Committee that ensure that all children and young

people can access child helplines in their countries. Over the years, CHI has consistently provided the following four recommendations to the Committee.

Governments should ensure that:

- 1. The child helpline telephone number is free of cost:** Child helplines should be accessible by being free of charge from landlines and mobile phones for both the child and the child helpline provider, so that children and young people have the possibility to access help and assistance, irrespective of their gender or economic status.
- 2. The child helpline is a short, 3 or 4 digit telephone number or a regionally harmonised number:** A national number with few digits makes it easy for the child to remember it in case of an emergency. When applicable, CHI will advocate for the allocation of a regionally harmonised

The child helplines that have the regionally harmonised number of 116 in Africa:

01 Botswana	10 Mauritania
02 Burkina Faso	11 Mozambique
03 Cameroon	12 Namibia
04 Cote d'Ivoire	13 Senegal
05 Guinee Conakry	14 Sierra Leone
06 Kenya	15 Tanzania
07 Lesotho	16 Uganda
08 Madagascar	17 Zambia
09 Malawi	18 Zimbabwe

The child helplines that have the regionally harmonised number of 1098 in Asia Pacific:

01 Bangladesh	04 Nepal
02 Bhutan	05 Pakistan
03 India	

telephone number. When the child helpline’s phone number is regionally harmonised, the service is more accessible to a child, especially in cases of cross-border trafficked or displaced children. So far, Europe has a regionally harmonised number of **116 111**; in the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) countries the **1098** number is currently being used; and in Africa a growing number of child helplines are adopting the three digit number of **116**.

3. The child helpline has national coverage: Child helplines should have national coverage to allow any child or young person seeking assistance from any part of the country, especially children in rural areas. Nationwide is defined as allowing a child to access the child helpline from any part of a country. This does not guarantee that additional or referral services are available in their locale.

4. The child helpline is operational 24 hours daily:

In order for child helplines to be accessible to children at all times, it should have services are provided around the clock, every day of the week.

The availability of these resources for a child or young person will guarantee maximum accessibility to the child helpline services, regardless of gender, origin, economic status or ethnicity. Other items have been included in the CHI child helpline recommendations to the CRC based on country specific needs.

The child helplines that have the regionally harmonised number of 116 111 in Europe:

01 Albania	13 Lithuania
02 Bulgaria	14 Luxembourg
03 Croatia	15 Macedonia
04 Czech Republic	16 The Netherlands
05 Denmark	17 Norway
06 Finland	18 Poland (116111 Helpline for children)
07 Germany	19 Portugal
08 Greece (Helpline connection)	20 Romania
09 Hungary	21 Slovakia
10 Iceland	22 Slovenia
11 Italy	23 Spain
12 Latvia (116111)	24 Sweden

Methodology of Assessment

This report was conducted throughout 2013, by CHI staff members. Primary data was collected from CHI member child helplines who filled in annual data questionnaires of which a section outlined the status of the child helpline. In cases where this information was not filled, or was lacking, secondary data was collected from online sources such as the newsletters, annual reports, database searching or by ad hoc personal contacts.

In order to measure the impact of the alternative reports of CHI, the first indicator was whether the CRC Committee mentioned child helplines as a recommendation in a country's Concluding Observation, after the state party was under sessional review. Secondly, and more importantly, the assessment also reviewed the impact of these recommendations focusing on the following four indicators:

- Child helplines should have a **free of cost telephone number**;
- Child helplines should have a **short three or four digit telephone number** or a regionally harmonised number;
- Child helplines should have **national coverage** so that it is accessible to children all over the country;
- Child helplines should be **operational 24 hours per day, 7 days per week**.

To measure the impact of the Concluding Observations, a distinction was made between:

- Countries for which the **CRC made specific recommendations** regarding child helplines in the Concluding Observation; and
- Countries for which **no specific recommendation** was made regarding child helplines.

Thereafter the status (free of cost, 3 or 4 digit telephone number, national coverage and 24 hour operational services) of the child helpline in a specific country was examined and an analysis was conducted as to whether a child helpline was established or if any action was taken regarding the strengthening of existing child helpline services after the Concluding Observations were issued.

For this report, CHI focused on those countries that were reviewed under the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Those countries reviewed under either of the Optional Protocols (OPAC or OPSC) were not considered in this review.

Process

If Country A was under review and it did not have a child helpline, CHI would submit an alternative report encouraging the government of Country A to establish a child helpline. After a Concluding Observation was issued with a child helpline mention, CHI monitored whether or not any changes took place regarding the status of the child helpline. The following table illustrates the findings against the research criteria if Country A was in the process of establishing a child helpline:

COUNTRY	COUNTRY A
IN THE PROCESS OF ESTABLISHING A CHILD HELPLINE	1
ESTABLISHED A CHILD HELPLINE AFTER THE CRC RECOMMENDATION	0
FREE OF COST	0
3 OR 4 DIGITS/ HARMONISED NUMBER	0
NATIONAL COVERAGE	0
24 HOUR SERVICE	0
ALL FOUR CRITERIA	0
ANY STATUS IMPROVEMENTS	1
TIME TAKEN TO IMPLEMENT (YEARS), SINCE CONCLUDING OBSERVATION	1
NO CHANGES	0

***KEY: 1 = YES 0 = NO**

In another instance, the following table shows the findings if the country being reviewed established a child helpline two years after the Concluding Observation was issued and the service was fully functioning with optimal accessibility.

COUNTRY	COUNTRY A
IN THE PROCESS OF ESTABLISHING A CHILD HELPLINE	0
ESTABLISHED A CHILD HELPLINE AFTER THE CRC RECOMMENDATION	1
FREE OF COST	1
3 OR 4 DIGITS/ HARMONISED NUMBER	1
NATIONAL COVERAGE	1
24 HOUR SERVICE	1
ALL FOUR CRITERIA	1
ANY STATUS IMPROVEMENTS	1
TIME TAKEN TO IMPLEMENT (YEARS), SINCE CONCLUDING OBSERVATION	2
NO CHANGES	0

***KEY: 1 = YES 0 = NO**

The above tables indicate the process taken in this analysis. Each alternative report that was submitted by CHI between the 35th Session and the 65th session was reviewed using this criteria.

The Impact of Recommendations on Child Helplines

Since September 2004 (35th Session to 65th Session), CHI has submitted 181 alternative reports for 129 countries. The number of reports is higher than the number of countries because during the period covered in this review, several countries were examined by the CRC Committee more than once.

- In **90 countries**, a child helpline was mentioned in the Concluding Observations as an important mechanism in child protection, and States parties were recommended to take appropriate measures and efforts to strengthen existing services or create new ones.
- In **39 countries** a child helpline was not mentioned in the Concluding Observations regarding these States parties.

Countries with a recommendation

In **72 out of 90 countries** either a child helpline was established, is in the process of being established, or the four child helpline indicators have been met, increasing child accessibility to the child helpline services.

- In **23 countries** a child helpline was established after a recommendation was made by the CRC.
- In **10 countries** a helpline is currently in the process of being established.
- In **38 countries**, child helplines around the world have improved accessibility to children. In addition, the following results of positive up-scaling have occurred:
 - In **35 out of 72 countries**, child helplines extended their operational hours to 24/7.
 - In **62 out of 72 countries**, helpline services increased access to enable national coverage.
 - In **60 out of 72 countries**, enabled the child helpline telephone number to become free of cost.
 - In **44 out of 72 countries**, a short or regionally harmonised telephone number was allocated to the child helpline.
- In **18 countries** no change was observed.
- The average time for these changes to be implemented was **2.5 years**.¹

Countries with no recommendation

The Concluding Observation **did not** contain a child helpline recommendation in the case of 39 countries.

In **23 out of 39 countries** either a child helpline was established, is in the process of being established, or has positively changed one of the four child helpline indicators that increases a child's accessibility to the helpline.

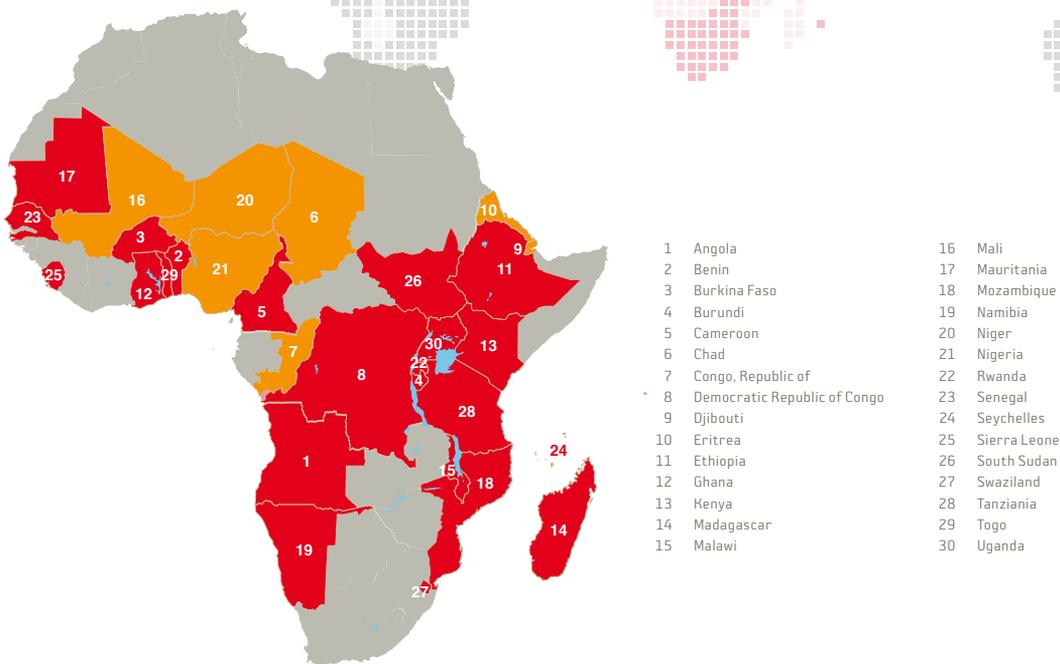
The following positive changes were observed since the review took place:

- In **4 countries** a child helpline was established after no recommendation was made by the CRC.
- In **4 countries** a helpline is currently in the process of being established.
- In **15 countries** child helplines have improved accessibility to children. The following results of positive up-scaling have occurred:
 - In **14 out of 23 countries**, child helplines extended their operational hours of their child helplines to 24/7.
 - In **19 out of 23 countries**, helpline services increased access to enable national coverage.
 - In **20 out of 23 countries** enabled the child helpline telephone number to become free of cost.
 - In **14 out of 23 countries**, a short or regionally harmonised telephone number was allocated to the child helpline service.
- In **16 countries** no change was observed.
- The average time for these changes to be implemented was **3.3 years**.

(1) In many cases the time lapse between changes in status are unknown

Regional Outcomes of Child Helpline Recommendations

The following changes were observed per region, **irrespective** of whether a child helpline was or was not mentioned in the Concluding Observations:

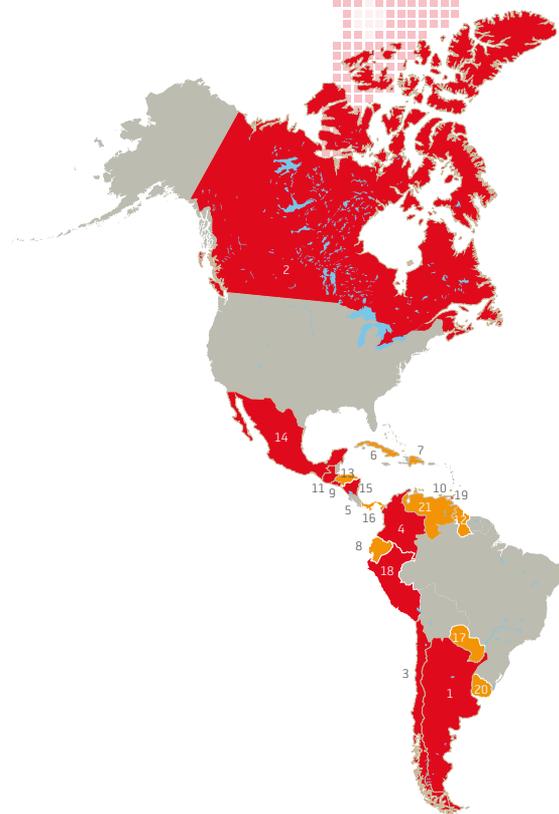


Africa (30 countries)

- Benin, Burkina Faso, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Swaziland and Mauritania **established child helplines** after the countries were reviewed by the Committee.
- Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, Ghana, Rwanda and South Sudan are **in the process of setting up child helplines**.
- Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Mozambique, Madagascar, Mauritania, Namibia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo and Uganda either **have child helplines with the regionally harmonised number of 116** or a short digit number.
- Benin, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Madagascar, Namibia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Swaziland and Uganda were able to **increase opening hours to 24/7**.
- Benin, Burkina Faso, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritania, Mozambique, Namibia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo and Uganda have child helplines that are **free of cost**.
- Benin, Burkina Faso, Mozambique, Togo, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Senegal, Swaziland, Namibia, Sierra Leone, Tanzania and Uganda have **nationwide coverage**.
- Benin, Kenya, Madagascar, Mozambique, Namibia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Swaziland and Uganda are in compliance with the **all four child helpline criteria**² since the CRC recommendation was made.
- In Chad, Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Eritrea, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, and Seychelles **no progress in up-scaling the child helplines** were observed, following the review by the Committee.
- Mali is currently in conflict and therefore cannot be evaluated until peace and stability is established.

(2) All four criteria include one of the following: in the process of a child helpline being established, a child helpline was established, the child helpline became free of cost, the child helpline became a regionally harmonised/short digit telephone number or, the child helpline has nationwide accessibility.

Regional Outcomes of Child Helpline Recommendations



- | | | | |
|----|--------------------|----|-------------------|
| 1 | Argentina | 12 | Guyana |
| 2 | Canada | 13 | Honduras |
| 3 | Chile | 14 | Mexico |
| 4 | Colombia | 15 | Nicaragua |
| 5 | Costa Rica | 16 | Panama |
| 6 | Cuba | 17 | Paraguay |
| 7 | Dominican Republic | 18 | Peru |
| 8 | Ecuador | 19 | Trinidad & Tobago |
| 9 | El Salvador | 20 | Uruguay |
| 10 | Grenada | 21 | Venezuela |
| 11 | Guatemala | | |

The United States has signed the UNCRC but has not ratified it, therefore CHI did not submit a country recommendation for this country.

Americas and Caribbean (21 countries)

Nicaragua and Ecuador **established child helplines** after the countries were reviewed by the Committee.

El Salvador and Guatemala are **in the process of setting up child helplines**.

Argentina, Colombia, Costa Rica, Nicaragua and Trinidad and Tobago **have child helplines with a short digit number**.

Argentina, Canada, Colombia, Nicaragua, Peru and Mexico were able to increase **opening hours to 24/7**.

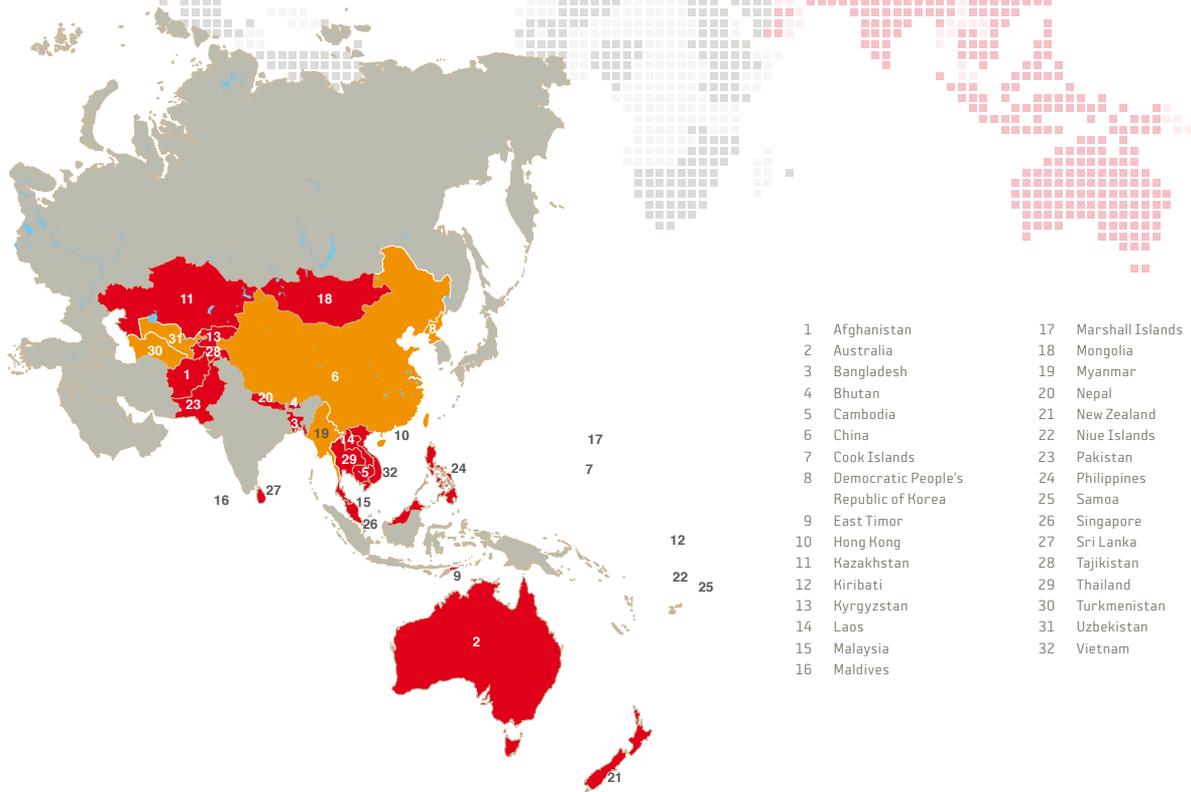
Argentina, Canada, Chile, Mexico, Nicaragua, Peru, Trinidad and Tobago and Uruguay have child helplines that are **free of cost**.

Canada, Chile, Colombia, Nicaragua, Peru, Uruguay, Mexico and Trinidad and Tobago have **nationwide coverage**.

Nicaragua operates in compliance with the **all four child helpline criteria**² since the CRC recommendation was made.

There is insufficient information to assess the situation of the child helplines in the Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Grenada, Guyana, Honduras, Panama, Paraguay and Venezuela.

Regional Outcomes of Child Helpline Recommendations



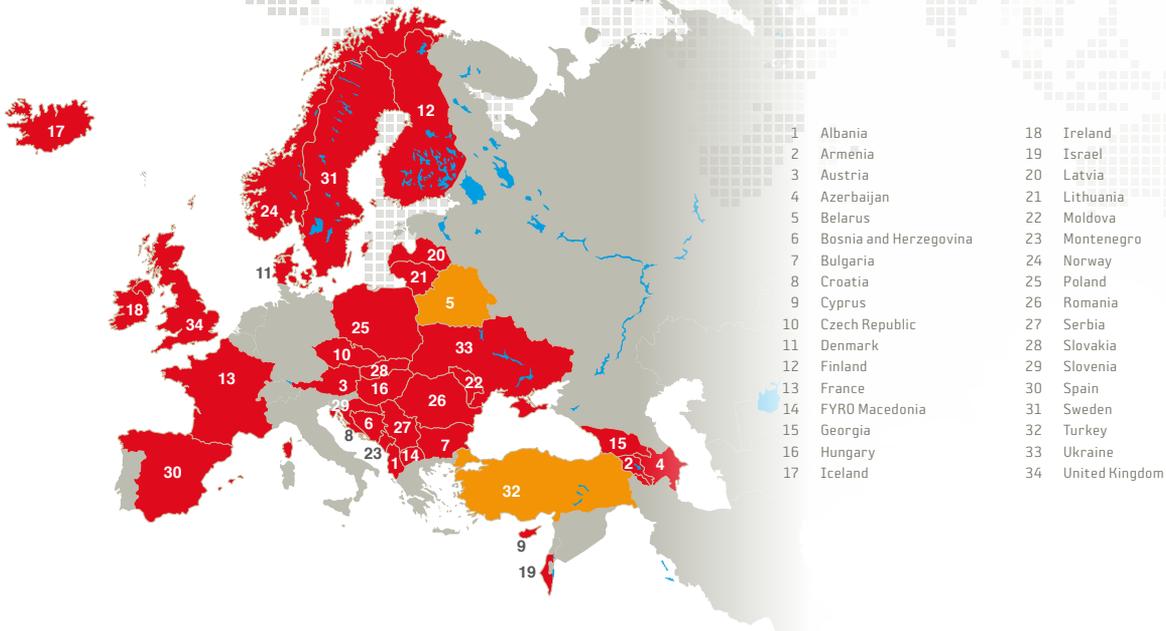
- | | |
|---|---------------------|
| 1 Afghanistan | 17 Marshall Islands |
| 2 Australia | 18 Mongolia |
| 3 Bangladesh | 19 Myanmar |
| 4 Bhutan | 20 Nepal |
| 5 Cambodia | 21 New Zealand |
| 6 China | 22 Niue Islands |
| 7 Cook Islands | 23 Pakistan |
| 8 Democratic People's Republic of Korea | 24 Philippines |
| 9 East Timor | 25 Samoa |
| 10 Hong Kong | 26 Singapore |
| 11 Kazakhstan | 27 Sri Lanka |
| 12 Kiribati | 28 Tajikistan |
| 13 Kyrgyzstan | 29 Thailand |
| 14 Laos | 30 Turkmenistan |
| 15 Malaysia | 31 Uzbekistan |
| 16 Maldives | 32 Vietnam |

Asia Pacific (32 countries)

- Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Malaysia and Maldives **established child helplines** after the countries were reviewed by the Committee.
- East Timor, and Tajikistan are **in the process of setting up child helplines**.
- Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Kazakhstan, Laos, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka and Thailand **have child helplines with a short digit number**.
- Australia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Maldives, Nepal, New Zealand, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Vietnam were able to **increase opening hours to 24/7**.
- Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Hong Kong, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Nepal, New Zealand, Pakistan, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam have child helplines that are **free of cost**.
- Australia, Bhutan, Cambodia, Hong Kong, Kazakhstan, Laos, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, New Zealand, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Vietnam, have **nationwide coverage**.
- Cambodia, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka and Thailand are in compliance with the **all four child helpline criteria**² since the CRC recommendation was made.
- In China, Cook Islands, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Myanmar, Niue Islands, Samoa, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, **no progress in up-scaling the child helplines** were observed, following the review by the Committee.
- There is insufficient information to assess the situation of the child helpline in Uzbekistan.

(2) See footnote 2 on page 19

Regional Outcomes of Child Helpline Recommendations

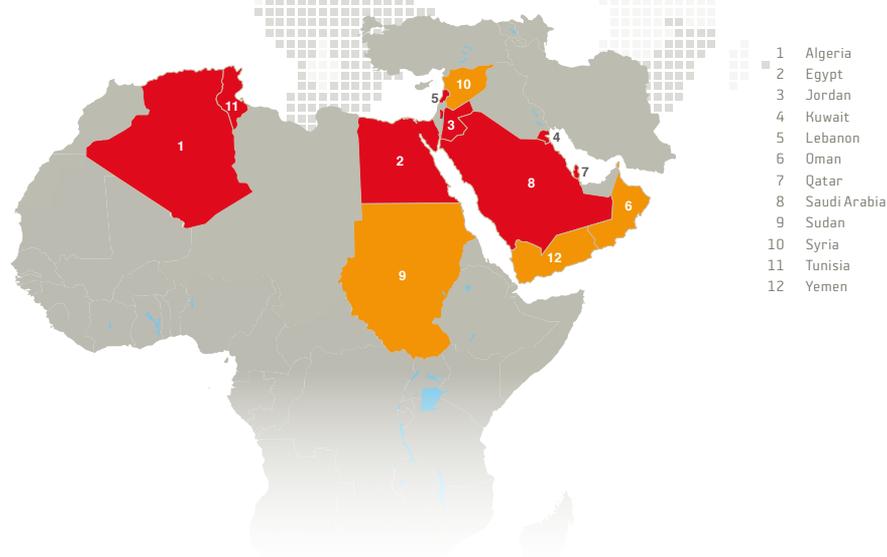


Europe (34 countries)

- Armenia, Azerbaijan, Cyprus, Georgia, Latvia (helpline 116111) Moldova, and Montenegro **established child helplines** after the countries were reviewed by the Committee.
- Moldova is **in the process of setting up a child helpline**.
- Albania, Armenia, Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Cyprus, Denmark, France, Georgia, Hungary, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Montenegro, Norway, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden either **have child helplines with the regionally harmonised number of 116 111** or a short digit number.
- Albania, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, France, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Latvia, Montenegro, Norway, Serbia, Slovakia, Spain, and the United Kingdom were able to **increase opening hours to 24/7**.
- Albania, Austria, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, FYRO Macedonia, Georgia, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Norway, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Ukraine, the United Kingdom have child helplines that are **free of cost**.
- Albania, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Israel, FYRO Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Georgia, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Norway, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Ukraine and the United Kingdom have **nationwide coverage**.
- Albania, Austria, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, France, Iceland, Hungary, Norway, Slovakia and Spain are in compliance with the **all four child helpline criteria**² since the CRC recommendation was made.

- In Belarus and Turkey, **no progress in up-scaling the child helplines** were observed, following the review by the Committee.

Regional Outcomes of Child Helpline Recommendations



Middle East and North African Region (12 countries)

- Jordan, Qatar and Saudi Arabia **established child helplines** after the countries were reviewed by the Committee.
- Kuwait, Lebanon and Tunisia are **in the process of setting up child helplines**.
- Algeria, Jordan and Qatar **have child helplines with a short digit number**.
- Egypt and Qatar were able to **expand opening hours to 24/7**.
- Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Qatar and Saudi Arabia have child helplines that are **free of cost**.
- Egypt, Jordan, Qatar and Saudi Arabia have **nationwide coverage**.
- Qatar is in compliance with the **all four child helpline criteria**² since the CRC recommendation was made.
- In Oman, Syria, Sudan and Yemen **no changes** regarding the status of child helplines occurred following the review by the Committee.
- Syria is currently in conflict and therefore cannot be evaluated until peace and stability are established.

(2) See footnote 2 on page 19

Impact on children

Multiple factors influence the creation and scaling-up of child helplines. The successful implementation of a recommendation made by the CRC Committee depends on a whole range of interconnected mechanisms such as budget, capacity, co-ordination or resources. Implementation also depends to a great extent on the political will of a national government. It is therefore difficult to observe if CHI's alternative reports were decisive in the establishment or improvement of child helpline services. For the purpose of this assessment, CHI focused on the status of the child helplines under review without consideration of external factors beyond its control.

Since 2004 CHI has submitted **181 alternative reports** to the CRC Committee for 129 countries under sessional review. The number of reports is higher than the number of countries because for some States parties more than one alternative report was submitted during the period 2004 – 2013 having been reviewed 2 or more times by the CRC Committee. The outcomes were as follows:

- In **90 countries** a child helpline was mentioned as an important mechanism in child protection.
- In **39 countries** a child helpline was not mentioned.

Findings³ of 90 countries where a 'child helpline' was mentioned in the Concluding Observation:

- In **72 out of the 90 countries (80%)**, a positive change was observed following the Concluding Observation.
- In **38%** of the reviewed countries, a child helpline was either established or in the process of being set-up.
- In **42%** of the reviewed countries, the child helpline improved one or more of the four indicators.
- On average it took **2.5 years** for any of the above changes to be implemented.

Findings of the 39 countries where a 'child helpline' was not mentioned in the Concluding Observation:

- In **23 out of the 39 countries (59%)** a positive change was observed following the Concluding Observation.
- In **20%** of the reviewed countries, a child helpline was either established or in the process of being set-up.
- In **38%** of the countries the child helpline improved one or more of the four indicators.
- On average it took **3.3 years** for any of the above changes to be implemented.

⁽³⁾ Positive changes in child helplines which includes one of the following: in the process of being established, established, free of cost, regionally harmonised / short digit telephone number or nationwide accessibility.

% Child Helplines Mentioned or Not Mentioned in a Concluding Observation

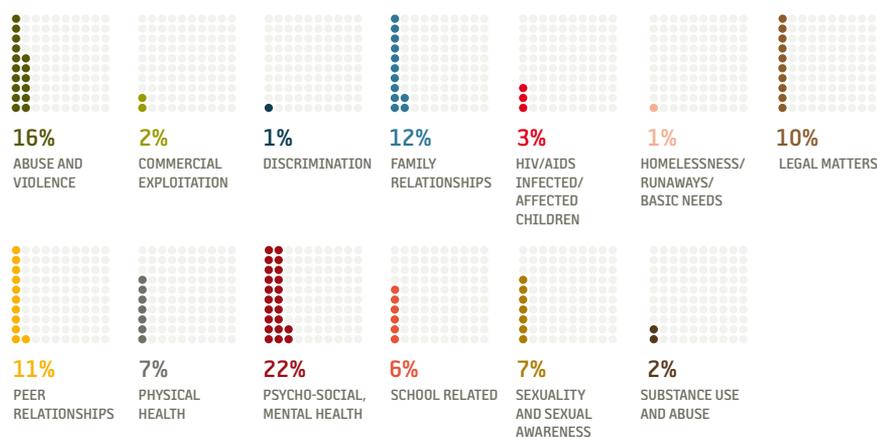
	Child helpline mentioned in Concluding Observation	Child helpline <i>not</i> mentioned in Concluding Observation
Positive change	80%	59%
Child helpline established or in the process of being set-up	38%	20%
One of four criteria	42%	38%
No changes made	20%	41%
Average time of progress	2.5 years	3.3 years

CHI observed a significant impact when a child helpline was mentioned in the Committees Concluding Observation. Analysis shows that an inclusion of a recommendation regarding a child helpline increases the likelihood of a child helpline service being established or improved. Data indicates that if a child helpline was mentioned in a CRC Concluding Observation, that there tended to be a 21% increased probability that the child helpline would either scale-up or be established. Similarly, child helplines were almost 20% more likely to be established if they were mentioned in a country's Concluding Observation.

There is a direct correlation between a mention in a Concluding Observation and the time taken to make a positive change. If a child helpline was mentioned in a Concluding Observation, on average it took **2.5 years** after the publication of the CRC Committees recommendation for services to be up-scaled and improved or similarly, for the establishment of a new child helpline to take place. If a child helpline was not mentioned, it took an extra year (i.e. 3.4

years as opposed to 2.5 years) for the child helpline to be established or for services to be improved. Therefore, if changes took place regarding the status of a child helpline in countries that were reviewed by the CRC Committee, it happened faster in States where there was a child helpline mention in the CRC Committee recommendation as opposed to countries where there was not a mention.

% Reasons for Contact in the 14 Newly Established Child Helplines (2004-2013)



*Data is taken from the following child helplines that have submitted data to CHI: Azerbaijan, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Malaysia, Maldives, Montenegro, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia.

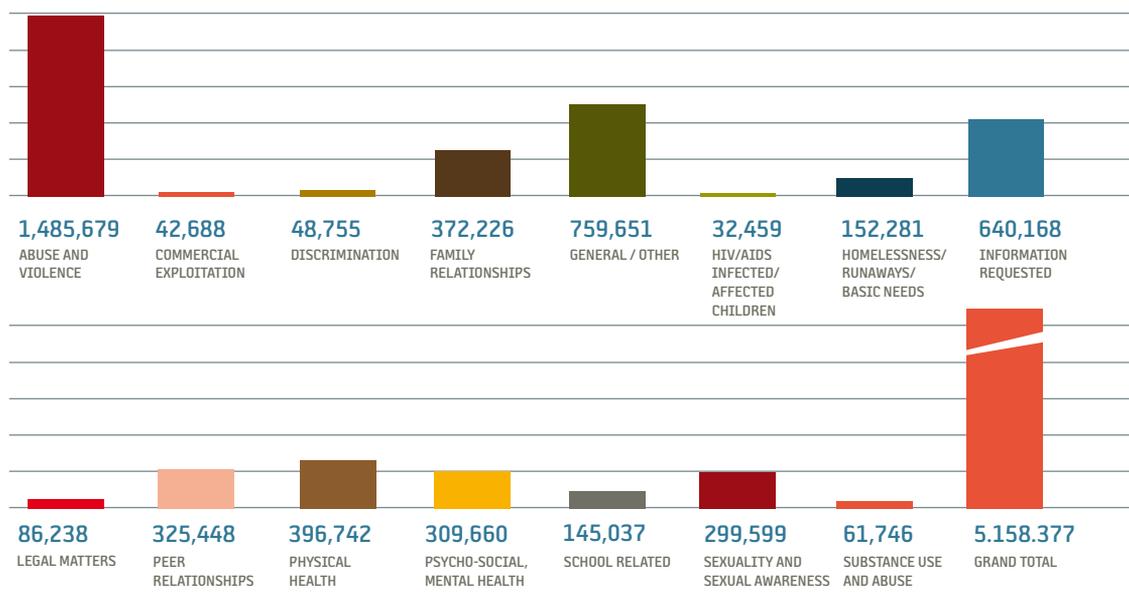
Many child helplines (23) were established after the Concluding Observations mentioned their importance to States parties. CHI data from 14⁴ newly-founded child helpline services (Azerbaijan, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Malaysia, Maldives, Montenegro, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia) demonstrates that the main reasons why children and young people contact the child helpline are psycho-social mental health issues (22%), abuse and violence (16%) and family relationships (12%). The bulk of the 14 child helplines mentioned were established in the past 5 years, averaging at approximately **5 million contacts** (attempted, answered and responded calls⁵) from children and young people during this period. Importantly to note, only 1 million⁶ (of these 5 million) were answered and responded to, due to lack of resources and capacity. This means that 4 million children were unattended to. When the reason for contact⁷ is known for these 14 child helplines, an average of over **50,000 children and young people received assisted**

from each newly establish helpline throughout 2012. The data demonstrates serious gaps in these child helplines that act as child protective systems; and it is imperative that child helpline services are optimally functional so that counsellors are available to children at all times.

Today, there are **approximately 50 countries in the world** of which CHI does not know if a child helpline exists. If we assume that newly established child helplines receive over 50,000 contacts from children and young people per year, it can be estimated that if child helplines were optimally operational in those 50 countries, a minimum of **2.5 million children and young people** in need of counsel, support and referral could have access to protection and care each year, especially those that are exposed to abuse, violence, neglect or commercial exploitation and trafficking.

In 2014 CHI collected data from 93 countries which suggest that, **13.4 million children and young people**

Number of contacts and reasons for contact in 2013



(4) CHI only has data on 14 of the 22 newly established child helplines. Eight child helplines either did not submit data to CHI or are associate members and therefore are not obligated to do so.

(5) CHI collects data in three ways - in order to evaluate gaps in child helpline data and services: i) The attempted amount of calls, ii) Calls that are answered, and iii) Answered calls that are sufficiently documented under a specific reason such as abuse and violence. Notably worldwide, only 1 in three calls are answered due to a lack of capacity, resources or staff members.

(6) Of these 1 million contacts only 575,940 contacts were documented under known reasons.

(7) Reasons known refers to answered calls that are sufficiently documented by counsellors such as abuse and violence, psycho-social mental health and so forth.

Case Study

“My father wanted to discipline me. He came from behind me, pushed me to the ground and tied both my hands and legs together. He then put dry leaves around me and brought a burning piece of wood and set me on fire. All this time my grandmother, auntie and other children were looking at me. Father forbade any one from saying anything about the incident. Then he jumped onto his motorcycle and rode away.” The child in this case, Charles, was severely burnt and needed serious medical attention. The child helpline assisted the family in a variety of ways, following up and working closely with the police and magistrate. Eventually Charles’ father was arrested and imprisoned. The helpline also helped the child with transportation on many occasions to hospitals, court and the police, as well as providing for basic needs such as special clothes and medical prescriptions.

contacted child helplines on a wide range of issues. When specific reasons were known why the child was asking for assistance, 1 million cases concerned some form of abuse and violence. These children were fortunate to have child helpline services that were able to step in and removed them from their harmful environment. In countries where child helplines do not yet exist, these children would have nowhere to turn to.

Recognising Child Helplines as a Child Protection Mechanism

Child helplines around the world are seen as trustworthy services that offer children an approachable means to get the right support in times of need. In the field of policy, the power to utilize evidence such as child helpline data offers new opportunities that bring challenges and solutions to the decision-making table. More

importantly, very little data exists on youth participation in the decision-making process. Child helplines provide an essential platform to amplify the voices of children and young people without fear of repercussions. **These factors support the evidence that child helplines should be an integral part of any child protection systems and should continue to be recognised and strengthened by the UNCRC and governments.**

It is also evident that because of CHI’s alternative report submission and recommendations, actions have been taken by governments to improve the services of child helplines so that they are more available to children in need. CHI’s voice has had an impact, and this action will be continued in the future, in order to strengthen the role of child helplines around the world.

It has been noted by several NGO’s, third parties or affiliated organisations that CRC Concluding Observations are used as influencing tools to advocate for the improvement of the situation of children in a country. This considered, the mention of a child helpline in a CRC Committee recommendation could indeed serve to directly encourage governments to assume responsibility and to implement child helpline services in countries where they do not exist.

In the future, CHI will continue to advocate for the right of the child to be heard, and to be protected from abuse, violence, neglect and exploitation. **Child helplines are essential child protection systems** and particular policy intentions need to be recommended to governments to ensure that their younger generations are free from harm and threat.

CALL FOR ACTION

UNCRC Should Recommend the Following to Governments: Policy Guidance

- 1. Governments should acknowledge child helplines as fundamental child protection mechanisms essential to the prevention, detection and empowerment against abuse, violence, neglect and exploitation of children and young people.**
- 2. Governments should ensure that their States have a child helpline that:**
 - has a free of cost telephone number that is free for the child and the child helpline;
 - has a short three or four digit telephone number or a regionally harmonised number;
 - has national coverage so that it is accessible to children all over the country;
 - is operational 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.
- 3. Governments should recognise child helplines as a viable source of unique data, directly from children on the issues that affect them the most. This data should be used to strengthen child protection systems.**
- 4. Governments should examine and recognise the child-centred models practised by child helplines and adapt this type of framework to all government departments so that the views of children and young people are integrated into government policies.**
- 5. Governments should provide financial support to child helplines to ensure sustainability and allow helplines to continue providing essential assistance to children and young people when they need it most.**



DATA OVERVIEW

For more information please visit
www.childhelplineinternational.org

Colophon

Child Helpline International (CHI) is the global network of 178 child helplines in 143 countries (February 2014). CHI supports the creation and strengthening of national toll free child helplines worldwide and uses child helpline data and knowledge to highlight gaps in child protection systems and advocate for the rights of children.

Child Helpline International (CHI)
Herengracht 418
1017 BZ Amsterdam
The Netherlands

Phone +31 (0)20 528 9625

Fax +31 (0)20 638 7655

E-mail info@childhelplineinternational.org

Web www.childhelplineinternational.org

Authors Child Helpline International, Kate Buljanovic

Reviewers Professor Jaap E. Doek

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Disclaimer:

CHI's work is firmly grounded in the principles and values enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN CRC), including children's right to privacy and protection from harm. To this end, and to preserve the trust and confidence children place in child helplines worldwide every day, all identifying details and information about individual children cited in this report have been removed or altered. Although cases and quotes are real, the names of children and young people are not.

This publication is based on the analysis of information received from child helplines in the CHI network around the world. This data was obtained through CHI's data questionnaire that were given annually to the child helplines. The conclusions and statements are based on this information and they do not capture the full scope of practices and policies of all countries and cases handled by child helplines and other child protection organisations at the national level.