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with the help of the staff
of the Child Rights Centre
and its associates and friends

*The CRC is grateful to Dušan Radulović for his comments
and suggestions on the text of the Report.*

Child Rights Centre - Belgrade



*The Child Rights Centre - Belgrade*¹ (CRC) is a non-partisan, non-profit, non-governmental organisation established in 1997, whose aim is the **implementation of child rights, in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child**. Activities of the CRC are focused on the introduction of such laws, policies and practice that enable the improvement of children's well-being, the protection of their rights and their full participation in society.

The general aims and activities of the CRC go beyond national boundaries, enabling us to participate in regional, European and world-wide processes focused on the implementation of child rights.

¹ The organisation was registered as the *Yugoslav Child Rights Centre*, but by the decision of the Governing Board of the *Yugoslav Child Rights Centre* from 15 April 2002, the name was changed into *Child Rights Centre - Belgrade*.

Partners and Donors

The work of the CRC would not be possible without the professional, technical and financial support of our partners. The most important partners of the CRC are international organisations and funds who, due to the nature of our co-operation, have a status that definitely surpasses the framework of donorship.

- **Save the Children Norway and UK** have a very important place, because without their continual support, the CRC would hardly be able to achieve this degree of overall organisational and programme development;
- **Unicef** - a partner of strategic importance in the area of education, health, social care and child participation;
- **Save the Children Sweden** - the most important partner in the area of child rights and the media;
- **Danish Centre for Human Rights** - the key partner in the area of juvenile justice.

The other, but no less important partners are:

- Embassy of Canada in Belgrade
- Embassy of Finland in Belgrade
- Embassy of Switzerland in Belgrade and the Swiss Government
- Embassy of the United Kingdom in Belgrade
- Embassy of the United States of America in Belgrade and *Democracy Commission Small Grants*
- Open Society Fund in Belgrade
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- *Triangle* - Lyon

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Associates

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 Rada Sekulić
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- *Beogradski centar za ljudska prava (Belgrade Centre for Human Rights)*, Belgrade
- *Centar za antiratnu akciju (Centre for Antiwar Action)*, Belgrade
- *Centar za kulturu Stari grad (Stari Grad Centre for Culture)*, Belgrade
- *Centar za razvoj neprofitnog sektora (Centre for the Development of the Non-Profit Sector)*, Belgrade
- *Dečji centar (Children's Centre)*, Zaječar
- *Dečji kulturni centar (Children's Cultural Centre)*, Belgrade
- *Dištrikt 0230, Kikinda*
- *Familia*, Belgrade
- *Građanski parlament Srbije (Civil Parliament of Serbia)*, Čačak
- *Grupa 484 (Group 484)*, Belgrade
- *Humanitarna grupa Osmeh (Humanitarian Group Smile)*, Vrbas
- *Humanitarna organizacija Naša Srbija (Humanitarian Organisation Our Serbia)*, Belgrade
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- *Multietnički centar (Multiethnic Centre)*, Medveđa
- *Milenijum (Millennium)*, Kragujevac
- *Mladi istraživači Srbije (Young Researchers of Serbia)*, Belgrade
- *Novosadski humanitarni centar (Novi Sad Humanitarian Centre)*, Novi Sad
- *Prijatelji dece Indije (Friends of the Children of Indija)*, Indija
- *Prijatelji dece Srbije (Friends of the Children of Serbia)*, Belgrade
- *Psiho-pedagoški klub (Psychopedagogical Club)*, Niš
- *Save the Children*, Podgorica
- *Socijalno-humanitarno udruženje Sačuvajmo decu (Social-Humanitarian Association Let's Cherish the Children)*, Belgrade
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- *Vojvođanski centar za prava deteta (Vojvodina Child Rights Centre)*, Novi Sad
- *Zdravo da ste (Hi, Neighbour)*, Belgrade
- *Ženske građanske inicijative (Women's Civic Initiatives)*, Kraljevo
- *Centar za djecu i mlade Žirafa (Centre for Children and Youth Giraffe)*, Podgorica

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- University of Belgrade, Faculty of Political Sciences
- University of Belgrade, Faculty of Philosophy
- Institute of Mental Health, Belgrade
- Institute of Social Medicine, Faculty of Medicine, Belgrade
- Institute of Forensic Medicine, Faculty of Medicine, Belgrade
- Yugoslav Commission for Co-operation with Unicef and the Improvement of the Situation of Women
- University of Belgrade, Faculty of Medicine
- Ministry of Education and Sports of the Republic of Serbia and numerous schools in the country
- Ministry of Social Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, centres for social work and institutions of social care
- Ministry of Health of the Republic of Serbia
- University of Belgrade, Law School
- Federal Ministry of Justice
- Belgrade City Assembly
- Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Montenegro
- Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Montenegro
- Ministry of Social Affairs of the Republic of Montenegro
- Ministry of Education of the Republic of Montenegro

COOPERATION IN THE REGION AND THE WORLD - with organisations and networks active in the domain of human rights and child rights:

- Balkan Human Rights Network - BHRN
- Child Rights Information Network - CRIN
- Defence for Children International - DCI
- Global March Against Child Labour
- Hi, Neighbour, Republika Srpska
- NGO Group for the Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Unicef NGO Committee in Geneva
- South East European Child Rights Network -SEECRAN and a large number of member organisations
- Regional Network of NGOs from Central and Eastern Europe and Baltic Countries on Monitoring Children's Rights

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Executive Summary



Executive Summary

This Report is an overview of half a decade long efforts and results achieved by the CRC in the domain of child rights, since its establishment till today. We hope that, based on the facts presented in it, you will be able to assess the effects achieved through our work, just as the preparation of this Report helped us not only in that, but also in conceptualizing further strategies of the CRC's work.

The Report is divided into several segments, beginning with an overview of the child rights situation in Yugoslavia, in the light of the current political, economic and social contexts. The circumstances in our country in the '90s had an immense impact on the situation of children. Wars in the former Yugoslavia created severe economic and social crises. The impoverishment of the population and political dictatorship created an environment dominated by violence, intolerance, xenophobia and the marginalisation of the most vulnerable groups of the population, particularly children. Positive political changes in the autumn of 2000 delivered Yugoslavia from international isolation and enabled the beginning of changes in the economic sphere. If this development were to continue, along with the solution of the existing political problems at the south of Serbia, Kosovo and in relations between Serbia and Montenegro, we could expect a gradual "healing" of society and more favourable conditions for the realisation of human rights in general and, by that, the realisation of child rights.

After the introductory part, we present our views on the place and the role of the CRC as a non-governmental organisation in this domain, the problems we faced after its establishment and throughout its five-year work, the priorities we set and the results we have achieved so far.

- The CRC is a non-governmental organisation whose aim is the implementation of child rights in Yugoslavia and the region. However, our aim is also participation in the development and promotion of civil society. Since the beginning of our work, we have strived for civil society organisations to find their place in the protection and improvement of human

rights as well as for the non-governmental sector to become an important and visible element of civil society.

- The system of management and decision-making in the CRC respects the rules of democratic organising and work. The Statute and membership, and the jurisdiction of its bodies demonstrate this dedication. All activities are carried out with respect for the principles we have set as a kind of ethical code in our work.

The activities carried out by the CRC are diverse. They are implemented through programme sectors of *information, research and education* and *the child rights policy development sector*. The administrative sector provides support to these programmes. If we were to present our work according to the type of activities, in the past five years we have:

- monitored the situation in the domain of child rights in the FRY;
- published a preliminary report on the overall situation of child rights in the FRY, as well as a large number of reports on some specific child rights;
- carried out numerous surveys and research and published the results of five of them;
- participated in the reform of the systems of education and social care;
- influenced legal reforms and the compliance of the national with international law;
- lobbied for amendments in four national laws and the ratification of five;
- participated in the organisation of several campaigns;
- participated in the establishment of two international networks and closely co-operated with five international networks;
- assisted in the establishment of four child rights NGOs and participated as facilitators in 13 seminars organised by other NGOs;
- taken active participation in 98 gatherings in the country and abroad;
- enabled the establishment and activities of the "Child to Child" group, which held 40 panel discussions and seminars in 13 elementary and 10 secondary schools;
- organised seven training-for-trainers seminars in different areas of child rights;
- organised 40 seminars for professionals;
- trained seven interns;
- organised and held 55 seminars and panel discussions for children;
- provided humanitarian assistance to a large number of children in hospitals, institutions and collective centres;
- published: 14 issues of the Bulletin, 4 authors' books, 1 almanac, 1 biennial report on the activities of the CRC, 5 books with the relevant international documents, 7 brochures and 6 handbooks;
- given numerous interviews for the national and international media.

The specific themes we have been dealing with in the past five years are:

- juvenile justice,
- violence against children,
- child rights and health,
- children in institutions of social care,
- child rights and media,
- anti-personnel landmines,
- child labour.

Finally, we present the **FUTURE PROSPECTS** - our view on the role of the CRC and on defining strategies in the domain of child rights.

General Context and Child Rights in FR Yugoslavia



General Context and Child Rights in FR Yugoslavia

The Collapse of Society and Its Consequences on Children

The beginning of the crisis in Yugoslavia coincided with the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (the Convention) under the auspices of the United Nations (1989). In the years to come, the deterioration of political, economic and social situations in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Yugoslavia) had an immense effect on the exercise of child rights. We believe that after more than a decade of wars, destruction and isolation, a period of economic consolidation, a stabilization of political circumstances and social recovery is to follow.

In spite of the changes that were introduced, many problems still exist in Yugoslavia. A *combination of economic and political crises* and large instability and insecurity in the larger part of South-East Europe have seriously impeded the efficient implementation of the Convention. In some countries in that region, especially in Yugoslavia, the crisis had an influence on the overall situation of children, causing it to become much worse than in the beginning of the '90s. The armed conflicts, resulting in trauma and tension, as well as mass migrations of the population, brought serious problems to our country. On the one hand, we were faced with structural disparities, changes in the family and in general, as well as the incapacity of the system of social care to respond to the new needs.

Political Changes in Yugoslavia in 2000 and Child Rights

The dramatic events on 5th October 2000 ended a decade of dictatorship in Yugoslavia. Moreover, they signified a possible end to the destabilisation of the whole region, wars and economic decay. However, the swift changes in all spheres of the society, awaited for so long by the majority of the population, did not take place overnight.

As in every abrupt political change, improvement cannot be achieved rapidly. After several months of political dialogue, the governments were established in

Yugoslavia and Serbia. This country's heritage is more than obvious. In terms of the economy, Yugoslavia is in a difficult situation. Politically, there are still several sore points - the south of Serbia, Kosovo and relations between Serbia and Montenegro. Solutions are being sought for these problems and the economic recovery of the country depends on the pace of this process. The lack of political and economic certainty makes it almost impossible for the authorities in Yugoslavia to deal with the long-term policies in the specific fields of child rights. As a start, the activities of the Ministry of Social Affairs of the Republic of Serbia and the Ministry of Education and Sports of the Republic of Serbia are encouraging.

Today, more than 18 months after the political changes in Yugoslavia, no significant improvements in the situation of children have been made. Still, many doors were opened. What was done is *the beginning of the process of demystification*. For the first time, the public in Yugoslavia is able to find out the truth about the situation of children placed in institutions of social care. Also, they can see the state of health institutions, schools and other places where children stay during the day. The dramatic situation in education (in terms of professional standards, staff, attitudes, programmes and salaries) is the subject of open debates, while the relevant administration is working on the reforms. Children's security is an issue that is discussed openly, whether it concerns the school, home or the street.

As to the realisation of child rights, i.e. information on the situation of children, we are in the *fact-finding phase*. Information is available, but it is either scattered or collecting it requires a serious research project. The government is faced with urgent humanitarian needs on the one hand, and the need to develop a long-term strategy, on the other.

At all events, any significant change in the situation of children will depend, among other things, on the capacity of decision-makers in Yugoslavia to think strategically and create short-term and long-term plans for the future. It will also depend on their capability to "notice" children and to place them in the focus of their attention.

The Situation in the Non-Governmental Sector

The CRC is a non-governmental organisation - it was founded as an "association of citizens" in accordance with the law in effect at that time. In the '90s, the non-governmental sector developed intensely in Yugoslavia. Numerous NGOs were founded, as an expression of the citizens' needs to take direct participation in the process of the development and improvement of society. A number of these organisations, especially those dealing with the promotion of the values of

democratic society and human rights, contributed significantly to the creation of conditions for democratic changes in Yugoslavia. However, due to political circumstances, their work had a limited range and they encountered serious difficulties.

At the beginning of the '90s, non-governmental organisations focusing on the improvement and development of child rights were small in number, having no significant influence on policy making in the area of child rights or their implementation. In the following years, numerous organisations were founded dealing either with child rights in general or some specific children's issues. However, until 2000, their influence on the relevant policies and practice was minor. The largest contribution to the development of child rights was given through educational, research, humanitarian and information activities of these organisations.

Since the changes in 2000, the situation of NGOs has improved. In the first place, the adoption of an up-to-date law on NGOs, in compliance with international standards, is expected. The influence on formulating law and practice in the field of child rights is incomparably larger than before. For the first time we can see the results of our activities in the field of policy making, amendments in the existing legislation, compliance with international standards. As far as practice is concerned, i.e. the implementation of child rights, the role of the non-governmental sector is small but important, to the extent in which practice can be changed rapidly.

Currently, the CRC has good professional relations with the relevant governmental bodies and co-operates with them in concrete projects. We find this very important, just as we find important the fact that our independent status is of the greatest significance, because it enables us to take part in, but also monitor the activities of the government, as well as to intervene, when necessary.

Our work is impeded by numerous problems - firstly, those of a financial nature, keeping us in a constant state of insecurity and uncertainty. Then, there are problems caused by the political situation in the country, making it impossible for us to define our activities geographically. What helps us in dealing with the latter is our independent status, as well as our determination to work on the development and the protection of child rights without discrimination, i.e. regardless of political borders (although we work primarily in Yugoslavia).

Finally, as is the case in other sectors, the lack of professionals presents a problem in the non-governmental sector. Although there are many competent co-workers on specific projects, we lack people who know the kind of work in the specific environment of the non-governmental sector.

Economic, social and political contexts and child rights in Yugoslavia

The political and economic crises of the '90s caused a large social crisis, which still exists in a way. The consequences are manifested not only as a general collapse of the system of values, but also as xenophobia and intolerance. Many children were born and have been brought up in a culture of hatred and nationalism, which was the case throughout South-East Europe, including Yugoslavia. Children have grown up with prejudices incited by their surroundings and the media controlled by the previous government, which could permanently determine their views in life. Access to free media and other independent sources of information was limited. The assessment is plausible that for a long time after the crisis ended, generations would have the feeling of "missed" years in terms of information and knowledge. The majority of children in Yugoslavia have never travelled abroad or met their peers from other countries. Nowadays, thanks to more open media, the film industry and access to the Internet, some children can find out about life outside Yugoslavia. Unfortunately, new information available to children is geographically limited to Western Europe and the United States, while information from our Region and other parts of the world is still less accessible.

Although the situation of children in Yugoslavia is directly conditioned by political, economic and social circumstances, it is also largely conditioned *by attitudes towards children and their rights*. One of the basic characteristics of relations towards children is the excessively protective attitude, at least in verbal presentation, because the *patriarchal family structure* still prevails in Yugoslavia, with the important role of the extended family, both in terms of providing help and influence. As one goes from the north to the south of the country, patriarchal characteristics are stronger and more dominant. This family structure, dominated by the *pater familias*, directly influences attitudes towards children and their right to participation, as well as the right to privacy and the right to express one's own views. Also, attitudes towards women and, consequently, female children, are mainly discriminatory and - again - stronger, going from the north to the south of the country.

Attitudes outside the family are similar. This is visible in the educational system, health and social care institutions, as well as in state and legal proceedings. Traditional attitudes are also displayed by the majority of political decision-makers. Of course, one can hardly expect a different attitude towards children in an environment that does not recognize and accept human rights. It is likely that the changed political situation in Yugoslavia, including the prospects for the improvement in the economic sphere and legislative reforms, will not suffice

without the development of processes to change attitudes regarding human rights and, consequently, child rights. Political, economic and social improvements are not possible without the recognition of human rights. And maybe, even more is required for the respect of child rights, particularly concerning the political and civil rights of the child, which belong in the sphere of privacy and personal freedoms.

The situation in the family - so essential for the healthy development of the child - has changed drastically. Most of the families in Yugoslavia have faced increasing poverty and the inability to maintain their households. At the same time, the state could not provide help in the way it had done in the decades preceding the crisis, not only because a large number of families suddenly needed help, but also because the state itself had become impoverished, using its diminished budgets mostly on paying debts, the military and the growing numbers of the law enforcement bodies.

In short, after all that has happened, *the overall situation of children* in Yugoslavia is as follows:

- Children's *health* has deteriorated;
- Although most children received an elementary *education*, the educational system has collapsed in the last decade, which is primarily manifested in the quality of education;
- *Juvenile delinquency* has increased in the last decade and juveniles commit more serious crimes;
- *Drug and substance abuse* is on the increase;
- *Sexual abuse of children* also;
- *Child labour*, practically non-existent before the '90s, has become a reality in Yugoslavia;
- The situation of children that belong to ethnic *minority* groups, especially Roma children, has deteriorated;
- On top of all that, hundreds of thousands of children living in Yugoslavia have experienced *war* and all its consequences and almost the same number had to leave their homes and *migrate* to another place.

De jure, child rights are fully accepted in Yugoslavia: this state has ratified the Convention and is therefore obliged to respect and ensure the *implementation of all the rights* from this international document. Unfortunately, practice here does not comply with the law again. At this moment, we cannot pride ourselves in a high and well-balanced level of the implementation of child rights.



Child Rights Centre - Belgrade

 Report 1997 - 2002





1. Background

The establishment of the Yugoslav Child Rights Centre (CRC) was the result of an idea of individuals, representatives of three non-governmental organisations: *Save the Children UK*, the *Belgrade Centre for Human Rights* and the Council for the Protection of Children of the *Friends of Children of Serbia*. These organisations' representatives - Kevin Byrne, Nevena Vučković Šahović and Mirjana Pešić - with the help of an independent assistant, Jasmina Grdanički - worked for six months on the preparations for the establishment of the CRC. They created a plan for the development and organisation of work of the CRC, its programme activities, fund raising and proposals for the founding documents, including the Statute of the organisation.

The Founding Assembly was held in Belgrade, on 23 February 1997. Its members were:

- Biljana Branković
- Prof. Dr. Marija Draškić
- Jasmina Grdanički, M.A.
- Prof. Dr. Marina Janjić-Komar
- Prof. Dr. Nada Korać
- Svetlana Krivokapić
- Tamara Lukšić-Orlandić
- Prof. Dr. Mirjana Obretković
- Ljubomir Pejaković
- Prof. Dr. Mirjana Pešić
- Prof. Dr. Ružica Rosandić
- Dragan Todorović
- Dr. Nevena Vučković Šahović

The Statute, as the principal legal act of the organisation, was adopted unanimously. So far, it was amended twice.

By courtesy of Save the Children UK, the CRC used the SC UK offices in Belgrade (Generala Hanriša 1) in the preparatory phase and during the first months of its work. From June 1997 until September 1998, we worked in Belgrade, Mačvanska 8, and since September 1998, our office has been in Zmaj Jovina 25 in Belgrade.



In the team that undertook the huge responsibility of the initial steps in work were Branka Ristić, Vesna Dejanović, Gordana Radulović, Tamara Lukšić-Orlandić and Nevena Vučković Šahović. In 1998, we were joined by Ivana Stevanović, while other members joined us successively, with the development of the programmes. In the beginning of 2001, Tamara Lukšić-Orlandić left the team, but she is still our associate, a member of the Governing Board and the Assembly.



2. Organisation of Work

The CRC employs 12 persons, working full time or on contracts. In the implementation of programmes they are aided by a number of associates as consultants, researchers, lecturers and workshop facilitators, engaged for specific projects.

The Statute

The Statute of the CRC is a public act, containing the main goals of our organisation, regulations on the organisation of work and management, as well as other important elements. The Statute is a public document and a copy can be obtained in our office.

The Assembly

The Assembly of the CRC is the largest body of the organisation. Its members elect the organisation's executive body, called the Governing Board, and make the principal decisions.

The initial idea of the CRC founders was to avoid mass membership, at least in the beginning, as well as the establishment of branches and, in general, expansion and growing into a massive organisation. Therefore, the Assembly now has 45 members. This attitude was based on the belief that the development of a large and complex network would influence similar civic initiatives in this domain. That is why from the very beginning, we set before us as a goal to encourage and assist similar notions, whether they include the establishment of organisations focused specifically on child rights or those whose activities partly deal with child rights.

The Assembly meets once a year or, if necessary, more often. It adopts the report on the previous year and work plans for the following, discusses the issues of strategic importance in the area of child rights, as well as our basic activities.

Besides the founding members, members of the Governing Board and the staff of the CRC, the Assembly members are: Jelena Arnautović, Dr. Miroslav Brkić, Milica Čičovački, Prof. Dr. Vida Čok, Prof. Dr. Viktorija Cucić, Ivan Ivanišević, Dr. Milena Jauković, Milan Jovanović, Tena Korać, Đorđe Krivokapić, Maja Londhardt, Suzana Miličić, Jasmina Milošević-Stolić, Nikola Milošević, Karlo Puškarica, Aleksandar Resanović, Milan Samardžija, Dr. Nebojša Šarkić, Marko Šijan, Sašenka Tatalović, Prof. Dr. Žarko Trebješanin, Mihailo Vasiljević, Prof. Dr. Jelena Vlajković and Doc. Dr. Nevenka Žegarac.

The Governing Board

The Governing Board is the executive body of the CRC. It meets regularly, at least six times a year. Its members make decisions on the most important issues for the regular functioning of the organisation, including decisions on programme activities, as well as the adoption of short-term plans and reports. This body also prepares proposals of annual reports and plans, and submits them to the Assembly. The Governing Board has 7 members. The Governing Board elects the president of the organisation, the director and sector co-ordinators.

The members of the Governing Board are: Vesna Dejanović, Svetlana Krivokapić, Tamara Lukšić-Orlandić, Prof. Dr. Mirjana Pešić, Jelena Radojković, Gordana Radulović and Dr. Nevena Vučković Šahović.



Who are we and how are we organised

President of the CRC: Nevena Vučković Šahović, lawyer
 Director: Ljubomir Pejaković, psychologist



The CRC carries out its work through three programme sectors and the administration sector:

- *Research and Education*
 Co-ordinator: *Ivana Stevanović, lawyer*
 Assistant: *Slađana Vorkapić, lawyer*
- *Development of Child Rights Policies*
 Co-ordinator: *Ljubomir Pejaković, psychologist*
 Assistant: *Stanislava Vidović, psychologist*
- *Information Sector*
 Co-ordinator: *Vesna Dejanović, psychologist*
 Assistant: *Tanja Zogović, librarian and documentalists*
- *Administration Sector*
 Administration Co-ordinator:
Branka Ristić, philologist
 Financial Co-ordinator:
Gordana Radulović, economist
 Office Assistant:
Miloš Ilić, student
 Office Assistant:
Miloš Đokić, student



Just as child rights are indivisible and intertwined, so are the CRC programme activities. Projects often surpass the framework of one sector. This is why the co-operation of the whole team is so important. The CRC work is carried out in a good atmosphere and, aside from professionalism, co-workers are expected to meet only one requirement - a large enthusiasm. Thanks to such members of the staff and their associates, as well as team work and positive energy in our office, we can say that we are proud of our 5-year work and its results.



3. Child Rights - Principles as a basis for aims and activities

Convention on the Rights of the Child

Today, child rights are more than a moral category because they are recognized in international law and, to the largest extent, in national legislations. On the international level, they are recognized by documents, certainly the most important of which is the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). In states, child rights are protected by laws and other legal acts and are exercised in the family, in school, state institutions, at work, in the street and in other places and circumstances. Just as human rights, child rights are not "given" to us by anybody - we have them by the mere fact that we exist. However, it is important that child rights are specifically and explicitly recognised by laws and other relevant acts and that there is adequate protection in cases of the violation of these rights.

The catalogue of child rights is, just like in human rights, very comprehensive. When we decide on which rights to deal with most, we begin with the assumption that some rights are "above" others and that they are considered principles without which no other right could be realised. Therefore, in all our projects we always keep in mind:

- **The right to life, survival and development**
- **Non-discrimination**
- **The child's right to participation**
- **The child's best interest**

Besides adhering to these principles in our work, we always keep in mind:

The inseparability of rights

Namely, we never found it sufficient, for example, to deal with the child's right to health, disregarding the fact that this right is intertwined with the right to health of a refugee child or the right to health of a child placed in an educational institution. A good example and a question often asked is: do you work with Roma children? Our answer is: YES, because Roma children are in schools, institutions for children without parental care, in hospitals and in their families and we implement programmes in all these environments, always bearing in mind ALL children.



4. Our Work

In the core of all activities of the CRC are:

Non-discrimination

In our work, non-discrimination is manifested through our dedication to co-operate, on all possible bases, with all those who are willing to work on the improvement, protection and formulation of child rights.

Exchange of opinions

Our work with associates, children, media, administrative bodies and, in general, all those we are in contact with, is always carried out with the respect for the views of others and non-violent conflict resolution.

Transparency

The work of the CRC is public and so is all documentation on our status and work.

Nonpartisanship

Bearing in mind our status and determination, from the very beginning we have strived to be nonpartisan in our work, always maintaining the highest criteria in our relation towards the child and his/her rights. That is why we have always tried not to put our personal beliefs before the interest of the child. If ever we were biased, that could only have been in the general adults - children relations.

Efficiency

An organisation dealing with human rights and, therefore, child rights, should always be prepared to react efficiently, whether it concerns a humanitarian crisis, a rising or detection of a new problem or somebody's act violating child rights. The CRC is a small organisation, which means that our capacities have not always allowed us to tackle all problems concerning child rights, but in those five years we have still managed to respond promptly and efficiently in many situations of child rights violations or their incomplete realisation.

Readiness for co-operation

In order to carry out our work successfully, from the very beginning we set before us the task to always be ready for cooperation with children, individuals, other organisations, institutions and media. Again, our small capacity sometimes prevented us from obliging everyone.

The Features of Our Way of Work

Being informed

Since the establishment of the CRC, we have been forming a resource base on the situation of children in Yugoslavia and the world, the status of their rights and the activities of the governmental and non-governmental organisations related to child rights. Without constantly monitoring and gathering information, we would not be able to assess the situation and needs and formulate programmes. Such a system also enables all potential users to be thoroughly informed on the matter. This is how the CRC has developed its library and web site and printed numerous publications.

Professionalism

Our team is composed of professionals of various profiles. Numerous CRC associates are also experts dealing with different aspects related to the realisation of child rights. In this way, we fulfil the requirement of a multidisciplinary approach in the issue of child rights, but also a high standard of work.

Method

Depending on project activities, we use methods that enable a familiar and interesting way of presenting the child rights theme. This is particularly evident in educational activities, where we avoid passive participation by using workshop methods. Also, we realise some contents through media campaigns, publications and research or lobbying.

Planning

In order to make our work more expedient, we always make long-term and short-term plans, as well as precise plans for specific programme activities. This enables the successful realisation of programmes, especially when unexpected circumstances occur. We present the planning techniques in our handbooks for specific areas, such as child rights and health, participation and protection of children from abuse.

Target groups

A careful selection of the target group is an essential element in the successful implementation of each project.

Evaluation of outcomes

We assess and describe the results of our work after the completion of every project. In addition, we have introduced an annual and three-year evaluation. This helps us to assess what we did well, what our mistakes were, how our work fits into the general aims and, finally, to see how to plan future activities.



Publications



Seminars, panel discussions, training



Other activities



5. Activities

Being a small organisation, we have not been able to deal with all the themes that we wanted to and that we considered important. Our choice of certain fields of child rights is conditioned by the capacities, financial resources and estimations of a particular threat to the exercise of certain rights. Also, when deciding on the themes, we are motivated by the need for a more significant role of civil society in the implementation of child rights, as well as the lack of a specific policy in this domain, both on the state and local community levels.

So far, we have commenced work in several specific areas of child rights. The activities in these areas have not yet been completed. On the contrary, some began with the establishment of the CRC, some later and some only recently. In some areas we dealt with smaller segments, only to develop and expand the activities later. Some, such as lobbying for the ban of landmines, for instance, were on our agendas as active projects for a year, while later on we continued dealing with these themes in the form of monitoring and participating in further implementation with other organisations.

It is important to say that it is difficult to systematise and classify activities, especially in some specific areas, primarily due to their nature. Thus, some activities, such as lobbying for amendments in legislation, are present in every thematic area we deal with, whether it is juvenile justice or general policy making in the domain of child rights in Yugoslavia. The same applies to campaigns, information and educational activities.

Systemic activities:

- **Monitoring the State of Child Rights in the FRY**

In order to know what is the state of child rights in Yugoslavia, we have to be thoroughly acquainted with the current situation in each specific sphere, that is, to have at our disposal all relevant statistical and other data. To that end, for several years we have been working on the development of indicators, on the basis of which we can monitor the situation in view of the essential characteristics of each specific sphere. Up to now, we have developed indicators for specific spheres or fragments of spheres, based on which we carried out research, published results and began to work on proposals for the relevant policy.

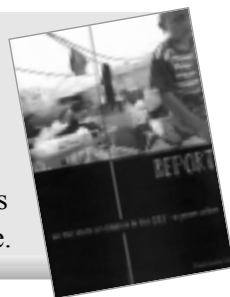
Our plan is to complete work on the development of indicators next year, and to compile **the first independent and comprehensive report on the state of children in Yugoslavia**. In addition, our aim is to design a computer application for monitoring the situation in the domain of child rights.

Reports on the state of children in the FRY should be updated annually, for use as a basis for activities in the area of child rights. However, the first comprehensive report will serve as the alternative report to the Governmental report and will be submitted to the Committee on the Rights of the Child in Geneva.



Report on the Situation of Children in the FRY - 10 Years After, Belgrade, 1999 (Serbian and English)

In addition to an analysis of the general social and economic context, the Report deals with the problem of refugee children in particular as well as the situation in the realms of education, health and social care.



- **Research**

The CRC attaches great importance to research and we strive not to commence a single project without this essential phase. Any research in the domain of child rights will be of a much higher quality once we have developed and processed unique indicators.

So far, we have carried out (or commenced) research in all thematic areas we deal with. Concrete steps in the implementation of projects in a certain area are planned on the basis of reliable and exhaustive research results. A particular difficulty in research is the unwillingness of our partners to finance such activities. Still, without thorough research, our "field" projects cannot be of the same quality. There were occasions when, merely for the lack of research and results, we had to interrupt the implementation of a project and continue after the research was completed.

Juvenile Delinquents in Serbia - Ivana Stevanović, Milan Škulić; Belgrade, 1999 (Serbian)



A study on the analysis of laws regulating the situation of juvenile offenders in the Yugoslav legislation and their compliance with the relevant international norms and standards. In addition to the analysis of the relevant court practice, official statistical data and the results of their research, the authors offer suggestions for new solutions in the implementation of specific legal norms.



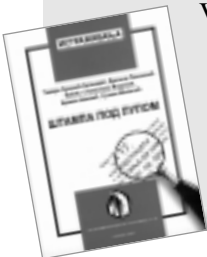
Child Participation in Focus - Mirjana Pešić, Biljana Branković, Smiljka Tomanović-Mihajlović, Vesna Dejanović; Belgrade, 1999 (Serbian, summary in English)

Besides the analysis of adolescents', parents' and teachers' views on the child's right to participation, this explorative study deals with the assessment of the real life participation of children in decision-making and taking the initiative in family and school. The analysis of the research results is preceded by a theoretical introduction with a brief overview of the development of the concept of childhood, the perception of the child in our culture, as well as the legal status of the child.



The Press in Focus - Tamara Lukšić-Orlandić, Dragica Pavlović-Babić, Stanislava Vidović, Branka Nikšić, Suzana Miličić; Beograd, 1999 (Serbian)

The publication offers an overview of the analysis of press articles on children throughout 1998 and 1999, as well as an analysis of the promotion of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in the media.





Agenda for the Future and a documentary film, Belgrade, 2001 (Serbian and English)

The publication is the result of the project "Children of Today for Children of Tomorrow". In addition to the assessment of the situation of children, it presents children's messages to adults as those responsible for policy making in the area of child rights, with unique advice to them to create a world WITH children instead of only FOR children.



The Invisible Child - The Image of the Child in the Media - Nada Korać, Jelena Vranješević; Belgrade, 2001 (Serbian, summary in English)



The publication is the result of the research on the image of the child presented in media contents intended for an adult audience. The study's aim was to determine the extent to which children are present in our media and what they are like in that context. The publication offers an extensive overview of the research methodology and results.

- **Policy Making**

Almost two years ago, we started activities on the overall policy in the area of child rights. We regard this task as the highlight and essential area of our work. The limited resources of the CRC and its status as a non-governmental organisation prevent us from engaging in more active work in this area. Despite the limitations we are facing, we are not abandoning our intention to create the model of a quality policy plan in the domain of child rights and offer it to the relevant governmental bodies and political parties.

We believe that every country, including Yugoslavia, should have a serious long-term plan for a specific policy in the area of child rights. That is why we regard this project as one of the systemic projects of the CRC.

- **Reform areas: education and the system of social care**

The five years of our "behind the scenes" work gained their true meaning with the opportunity to contribute our knowledge and quite specific experience to the ongoing reforms.

As active members of the expert team for the democratization of the system of education, we now have the opportunity to participate both in the formulation of general principles and the course of the reform and in legislation reforms. Another contribution of ours is in the introduction of a new subject in schools - Civil Education - which was offered as an optional course to first grade students in elementary and secondary schools in Serbia in 2001. Besides participating in the creation of the content of the course, we worked on the training of trainers for teachers.

The CRC participated in the creation of the contents and the Teacher's Handbook for the course in "Civil Education" for the 1st year of secondary schools, as well as in the training of trainers.

Although we carried out several programmes for professionals in the area of social care in the previous period, the influence of the CRC on any notable changes in this area was insignificant. Particularly inaccessible was the segment of the system referring to the institutional care of children. After the changes in the country, for the first time the public had the opportunity to learn of and gain an insight into the distressing situation of children. By enabling us to enter these institutions, the relevant authorities gave us the opportunity to engage more actively in the streams of the reform of social care. Thus, we became equal partners in many projects on the reform of the system of social care, through which we can contribute to the adjustment of the system to children's real needs.

The Situation of Children in Institutions of Social Care;

Belgrade, 2001 (Serbian and English)

The publication was created by an interdisciplinary team consisting of professional associates of the CRC, the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Serbia. The report offers a comprehensive analysis of the situation, as well as an overview of priority needs for each institution. A documentary film with the most striking illustrations of the current state accompanies the report.

- *Three versions of a documentary on the situation of children in institutions of social care in Serbia (Serbian and English);*
- *A computer application was created for data on the situation of children in institutions of social care in Serbia.*

- **Influence on amendments to legislation**

Essential change in the exercise of child rights is possible only with the existence of a firm legislation framework. The existing laws and other legal acts do not provide sufficient grounds for the implementation of child rights. Consequently, the CRC monitors and analyses the situation in the area of legislation and proposes the introduction and amendments of relevant regulations. In this activity we are guided by the existing standards of international law and the best solutions in the national legislations of some countries.



- **Round table on the preparation of NGO and other organisations' alternative reports for the Committee on the Rights of the Child (Belgrade, 1997)**
- **Round table on the ban of anti-personnel landmines (Belgrade, 1998)**
- **Round table "Child Rights - Problems and Prospects in Yugoslavia" (Belgrade, 2000)**



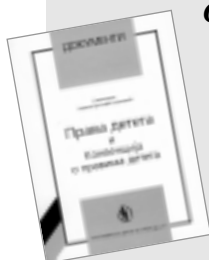
Convention on the Rights of the Child - Nevena Vučković Šahović, ed.; three editions: Belgrade, 1998, 1999, 1999 (Serbian)

Child Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child - Nevena Vučković Šahović, ed.; fourth supplemented edition, Belgrade 2001 (Serbian)

The publication contains the complete text of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, preceded by a brief overview of international-legal protection of the child.

A World Polluted by Landmines - Aleksandar Resanović; Belgrade, 1998 (Serbian)

Besides the general information on antipersonnel and other mines, their use in international and non-international conflicts, their consequences, victims and the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, the book contains three selected documents of international humanitarian law regulating the problem of mines.





Selected International Instruments in the Area of Child Rights;
Belgrade, 1999 (Serbian)



After a short introduction, the book offers the integral texts of the following documents: Convention on the Rights of the Child, UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice (Beijing Rules), UN Guidelines for the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency (Riyadh Guidelines) and UN Rules for the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of Their Liberty.

Convention on the Rights of the Child and Legislation in FR Yugoslavia -
Živka Vasilevska, Vid Vukasović, Marija Draškić, Biljana Njagulj, Tamara Lukšić-Orlandić, Ljiljana Radaković, Radojka Sretenović, Nevena Vučković Šahović;
Belgrade, 1999 (Serbian)

Following the guidelines for the preparation of periodical reports for state parties to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the publication offers a comparative overview of the current legislation in the FRY. The relevant provisions of national legislation are identified and systematised, but not analysed in terms of compliance with the Convention.



- **Lobbying**

Even when good legal solutions exist, the question of their implementation is still open. Adequate implementation depends on the way laws are enforced in our country in general, but also on the attitudes of those who implement the law. Therefore, an important activity of the CRC is to oversee the implementation of child rights. In addition, we constantly monitor and try to influence a change of attitudes towards children.

Here, lobbying is given as a specific activity. However, it is not an aim in itself and is, therefore, an integral part of other activities of the CRC. The specific target groups in this activity are decision makers, administration officers, judges, health professionals, carers in institutions of social care and teachers. Media and other NGOs are our important co-operators in lobbying.



From 2001, the CRC continually participated in all processes focused on amendments in national laws and the adoption of new ones:

- *Law on Associations,*
- *Criminal Proceedings Law,*
- *Law on Ombudsman,*
- *Creation of draft legal texts in the domain of juvenile justice,*

as well as the signing and ratification of international documents relevant for the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, i.e. the exercise of child rights in our country:

- *Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography,*
- *Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict,*
- *Convention concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour - ILO C 182,*
- *Convention concerning the Revision of the Maternity Protection Convention, 1952 - ILO C 183,*
- *amendment of Article 43 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.*



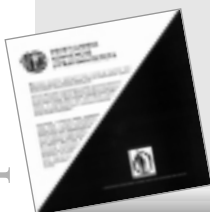
A Guide Through Child Rights; Belgrade, 1998 (Serbian)

A short, illustrative guide through the Convention on the Rights of the Child, including Q & A on some general misconceptions in this domain.



10 Years of the Convention on the Rights of the Child; Belgrade (Serbian)

A brochure published on the 10th anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. It contains basic information on the Convention and the responsibilities of the state, addressing parents, children and professionals.



Child Rights - Adults' Headache; Belgrade, 1998 (Serbian)



An illustrated brochure, listing all articles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in a language adapted for children. The authors of the brochure are members of the "Child to Child" group.

What To Do When Troubles and Violence Enter Our Lives; Belgrade, 1999 (Serbian)

Advice to adults on how to help children in stressful situations. The brochure is intended for parents, with instructions on how to help children to cope with troubles.



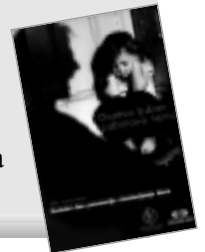
The First Letter to My Mama; Belgrade, 2000 (Serbian)

A brochure intended for parents, primarily mothers who have just given birth, encouraging them in a warm and open way to accept the concept of child rights.



This Love Cannot be Forgotten; Belgrade 2000 (Serbian)

A brochure published on the occasion of the 19th November, Child Abuse Prevention Day. Besides the definition of child abuse, the brochure offers recommendations about what to do when a child is a victim of abuse.




- **Campaigns**

Apart from the direct work targeting political decision-makers, professionals in various spheres and children themselves, we find it necessary to address the wider public through different forms of media advertising. All our public appearances have a common denominator: to act in the interest of the child is not just a question of good will and morals, but also an obligation and a responsibility.

Depending on the concrete theme or problem, sometimes they are only press releases, interviews for the press, TV and radio coverage, as an integral part of the social response to a certain situation. Likewise, we take active participation in joint NGO campaigns, for instance, marking the anniversary of the adoption of an international human rights document or sensitizing voters in election campaigns - again from the child rights perspective. In addition, we purposely marked Child Abuse Prevention Day and organised a coordinated and widespread campaign that had a range of concrete outcomes.

We intend to keep on sensitizing the public, although we are aware that sometimes it is difficult to measure the outcomes of such activities. We are also convinced that the comprehensiveness of the method we use is directed towards the same goal.



The campaign marking the 19th November, Child Abuse Prevention Day, was carried out as a synchronised activity in seven towns throughout Serbia, in 2001. In addition to 40 TV and 15 radio features, as well as 25 articles in the press, the campaign had 6 press conferences, 14 round tables, 6 workshops for children, 6 literary and art competitions and 5 public events. Two promotional TV clips were filmed for the campaign.

- **Networking**

The CRC is a member of several international organisations: the Balkan Human Rights Network - BHRN (www.balkan-rights.net), Child Rights Information Network - CRIN (www.crin.org) and Defence for Children International - DCI (www.defence-for-children.org). By understanding the essential purpose of networking, the exchange of knowledge and experience, and the strength of joint action taking, we find particularly important the contribution to the establishment of a regional network of child rights organisations. Thus, an initiative of the CRC for the establishment of such a network led to founding a new and independent regional organisation - South-East European Child Rights Action Network - SEECRAN (www.seecran.org), which today has 9 member-countries and is seated in Slovenia. We also find very important our contribution in the establishment of the network of European lawyers working for child rights (childjustice@bahnhof.se), participation in the activities of the Regional Network of NGOs from Central and Eastern Europe and Baltic Countries on Monitoring Children's Rights (rosc@mb.roknet.ro), as well as our membership in the European Children's

Network - EURONET (<http://europeanchildrensnetwork.gla.ac.uk>). Our engagement in further linking will not stop here, because we plan to contribute to networking on the national level.

- *Representatives of the CRC took active participation in 6 gatherings focused on NGO networking in the country;*
- *The CRC participated in 7 meetings whose aim was regional networking;*
- *The CRC organised the **Second Meeting of European Lawyers Working for Children's Rights** (Budapest, 1999).*



• **Development of the civil sector and co-operation**

The CRC has carried out activities focused on the development of similar non-governmental organisations since its establishment. So far, we have assisted in the establishment and activities of several child rights NGOs. We also co-operate closely with other organisations whose specific programmes include children.

We consider this activity important because of the need to develop possibilities for assistance in the implementation of child rights within civil society, particularly at local community level, but also because of the need to involve civil society more intensely in the process of the creation, protection and improvement of child rights, as well as monitoring the activities of the relevant governmental institutions in this sphere.

Seminars and lectures held for other organisations

- *"Child Rights and Refugee" (Kragujevac, 2000) DRC*
- *"Convention on the Rights of the Child (Bečej, 2001) IRC*
- *"Child Rights" (Belgrade, 2001) Familia*
- *As an associate, the CRC held 10 courses on child rights within the "Belgrade School of Human Rights" for the Belgrade Centre for Human Rights.*





Participation in gatherings in the country, organised by other NGOs, international organisations or governmental institutions

- *The staff and associates of the CRC participated in 34 professional/thematic gatherings, in 21 of which they had the role of lecturers or facilitators;*
- *The staff of the CRC attended 15 seminars and training sessions in the domain of child rights, human rights, education, networking and PR.*



Participation in international gatherings

- *The staff of the CRC attended a total of 12 international seminars and training sessions in the domain of child rights, human rights, child participation and PR;*
- *Representatives of the CRC participated in 24 international conferences and professional gatherings in the broader domain of child rights, in 8 of which they had the roles of lecturers/facilitators.*

• Development of child participation - "Child to Child" group

The child's right to participation, as a controversy and a challenge, is one of the basic features of our work. In search of the best model, we first did research in this sphere, discovering adolescents' comprehension of this notion in our culture, how much importance they attach to this right and to what extent it is realised in their everyday life. At the same time, we have provided support to independent and self-organised children's and youth organisations. As a result, the "Child to Child" group (www.geocities.com/decadeci) was established. It survived and is still developing. It has been active for five years, representing a good model of how the partnership of children, youth and adults should be in the function of the implementation of child rights. Today, they are peer educators in the sphere of child rights, designers of a child rights web site, initiators and organisers of various activities, carriers of an information service for children and youth (*DX, Takovska 8, Belgrade, Telephone: +381 11 324 20 13; E-mail: decadeci@eunet.yu*) and active co-workers in other CRC projects.

The right to participation has been a topic of our interest in the sphere of education and institutional care, as well. Thus, two projects focused on encouraging children's initiatives and co-operation with adults were carried out in the school and in homes for children without parental care.

As a result of the continual monitoring of the success and outcomes of the completed activities, child participation is definitely gaining the status of a principle in our programme orientation - the same place that this right has in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Child participation still remains in our focus. We intend to pay more attention to the role of the child in the family and media.

- *The members of the "Child to Child" group organised a total of 40 seminars and panel discussions in 13 elementary and 10 secondary schools.*



Educational activities:

- **Training of trainers**

From the beginning of our work, our intention has been to enable the dissemination of knowledge in the area of child rights by educating trainers who will carry on the work. Therefore, we have prepared several programmes, depending on the area that needed trainers, and we keep organising seminars for the education of this target group.

"Training for Trainers in the Domain of Child Rights"

- Belgrade, 1998
- Banja Luka, 1999
- Budapest, 1999
- Podgorica, 2000
- Belgrade, 2000
- Budva, 2001
- Zlatibor, 2001



- **Seminars for children**

Last, but not least, is the training of children themselves. This project is based on the child's right to receive information and to be informed of his/her rights. We are also inspired by the belief that children should have the knowledge and skills enabling them to detect any violation of rights, to participate in the dissemination of information on child rights and grow up into self-confident citizens.



"Summer School on Child Rights" (Kotor, 1997, 1998, 2000)

"How to Achieve Child Participation" (Belgrade, 1997)

"School on Child Rights" (Borsko jezero, 1997)

"Winter School on Child Rights" (Belgrade, 2001)

"The Convention, Participation and Us" seminars for children and staff in child homes

- "Moša Pijade" (Belgrade, 1998)
- "Miroslav-Mika Antić" (Sombor, 1998)
- "Drinka Pavlović" (Belgrade, 1999)
- joint evaluation seminar (Belgrade, 1999)

"Education for Child Participation in School" (2000)

- Sremski Karlovci Lyceum
- Technical School in Čačak
- 5th Belgrade Lyceum
- Medicah High School in Belgrade

"Child Rights in School", 4 modules of seminars for the 4th Belgrade Lyceum (2001)

"Agenda for the Future", 39 workshops/seminars for adolescents (Kikinda, Novi Sad, Sremski Karlovci, Sremska Kamenica, Veternik, Novi Banovci, Bela Crkva, Belgrade, Loznica, Miloševac, Kraljevo, Kruševac, Niš, Podgorica, Budva, Kotor).

In support of these activities, we prepared several specific handbooks, the key didactic means for workshop facilitators:



How to Reach the Carrot - Nevena Vučković Šahović, Jelena Vranješević, Vesna Dejanović, Nada Korać, Ružica Rosandić; Belgrade, 1999 (Serbian)



A handbook for workshop facilitators (trainers) in the area of child rights for work with adolescents. After the introductory theoretical part dealing with the preparation and organisation of seminars, and the workshop approach (principles and techniques) the handbook offers 14 linked workshops, creating a complete training programme in the area of child rights with children of high school age.

So Close and Yet So Far Away - Milica Krstanović, ed.; Belgrade, 1999 (Serbian and English)

This report presents results of the evaluation of the project "Open Club - Invisible Refugees", carried out by the CRC in spring 1999 with children who took refuge in Hungary during the NATO intervention. With an overview of activities and implemented methodology, this publication offers a systematised list of recommendations for work with children in emergency situations.



How We Can Work Together - Stanislava Vidović, Nevena Vučković Šahović, Vesna Dejanović, Mirjana Pešić, Lidija Radulović, Emina Hebib; Belgrade, 2000 (Serbian)



The handbook represents a complete programme of education for children and youth - elementary and high school students. It is intended primarily for teachers and co-workers in schools, although it could be used, with minimum modifications, by other workshop facilitators in child/youth camps, or organisations and institutions dealing with or organizing similar programs for children and youth. The central part of the handbook consists of 4 thematic blocks of educational workshops for working with children aged 9 to 17.

- **Seminars for professionals**

This type of educational activity is focused on professionals directly working with children (in health care, teachers, carers) or those who deal with issues that are relevant for children (judges, prosecutors, policemen, journalists).



"Juvenile Justice in Serbia" seminars for:

- the police (Belgrade, 1997)
- judges (Velika Plana, 1997)
- misdemeanour judges (Velika Plana, 1998)
- prosecutors (Velika Plana, 1998)
- centres for social work (Velika Plana, 1998)
- joint seminar (Velika Plana, 1998)

"Juvenile Justice in Montenegro" seminars for:

- the police (Kotor, 1999)
- judges (Kotor, 1999)
- misdemeanour judges (Kotor, 1999)
- prosecutors (Kotor, 1999)
- centres for social work (Kotor, 1999)
- joint seminar (Cetinje, 1999)

"Protection of Abused and Neglected Children" seminars for the representatives of:

- legal system (Belgrade, 2000)
- media (Belgrade, 2000)
- NGO (Belgrade, 2000)
- legal system, the police and guardianship authorities (Herceg Novi, 2001)

"Child Rights and Health" for pediatricians, medical technicians and other professionals in the area of health care

- round table and seminar in Belgrade, 1999
- seminars in Novi Sad and Niš, 2000
- 20 seminars in 2001 (Zlatibor, Subotica, Pirot, Kragujevac, Zaječar, Vranje, Belgrade (2), Zrenjanin and Kruševac)

"The Role of Media in the Protection and the Promotion of Child Rights", seminar for journalists (Belgrade, 1997)

"Interviewing Children", seminar for journalists (Belgrade, 1998)



Child Rights and Health - Handbook for Health Professionals and Co-workers - Viktorija Cucić, ed.; Belgrade, 2000 (Serbian).



The aim of the handbook is to make the contents of the "Child Rights and Health" seminars accessible to a broader circle of readers. It was created as a reminder to health professionals working with children. In its introduction it offers a theoretical concept of child rights, the perception of childhood as well as the child's developmental abilities and right to health. In addition, it provides an exhaustive analysis of conditions needed for the exercise of the child's right to health. With examples from the practice, it also contains research results on children's/youth and health professionals' views on the exercise of the child's right to health.

Child Rights and Health - A Guide through Child Rights in Health Care - Viktorija Cucić, ed.; Belgrade, 2000 (Serbian)

The handbook is intended not only for health professionals, but also for other professionals working with children, as well as parents, children and youth. By analysing children's rights to health and health care, the right to be informed, the right to form one's own views and to participate in decision-making, the right to protection of privacy and reputation, as well as the right to the protection from abuse and neglect, the handbook offers suggestions and ideas for the improvement of child rights in the domain of health care.



Protection of Children from Abuse - Handbook for Centres for Social Work and other Services in Local Community - Nevenka Žegarac, Ljiljana Mijanović, Mirjana Obretković, Ljubomir Pejaković, Ivana Simović; Belgrade, 2001 (Serbian)



The handbook represents one of the initial phases in the creation of a systemic-methodological basis for work concerning the problem of child abuse. As the result of a survey, its aim is to contribute to a closer definition of professional standards and procedures, as well as to create a methodological basis for building a social network, i.e. the linking and co-ordination of activities of all the actors in the process of protection.

- **Training of interns**

The education of interns is closely related to the project of NGO development in the area of child rights. It includes several week or a month of training in the CRC office. In addition to NGO representatives, the interns are sometimes high school, university or post-graduate students or administration officers. So far, most of our interns were from Yugoslavia, but several also came from abroad.



1997 - Tanja Baine, student of the *International High School* in Belgrade

1998 - Maja Knežević, psychologist, *Rhode Island College*, USA

1998 - Stanislava Vidović, psychologist; on the CRC staff since 1999

1998 - Jelena Žunić and Radovan Cicvarić, students at the *Teachers' College* in Užice at that time; founders of the Užice Child Rights Centre

1999 - Maja Milić, student of psychology at the University of Novi Sad at that time; associate of the *Vojvodina Child Rights Centre*

2001 - Maja Križanić, postgraduate student at the *OSI University* in Sarajevo, Department of Human Rights

2001 - Nini Zhang, high-school student from the USA.

Information activities:

Information activities of the CRC represent one of the ways of documenting and sharing all that we do. This is how we address not only the direct participants in our programmes, whether they are professionals, trainers or children, but also political decision-makers, the media and general public.

- **The Library** contains a large number of national and foreign titles (professional publications, books, periodicals, reports, documents and analyses) covering the extended area of child rights. It is open for all those who are interested in this field.
- **The web site** (<http://yu.cpd.org.yu>), which is regularly updated, offers an overview of all programme activities of the CRC, links with other similar organisations, as well as all relevant international documents in the area of child rights.

- **Publishing activities** continually accompany our projects. Their content determines the series within which they are published: a thematic bulletin on child rights, books, research, documents, the almanac, handbooks and reports, as well as a large number of brochures and posters.

"Bulletin of the Yugoslav Child Rights Centre"



Issue 1 - September 1997. Theme: Child Participation

Issue 2 - December 1997. Theme: The Situation of Roma Children in the FRY

Issue 3 - April 1998. Theme: The Right to Education

Issue 4 - June 1998. Theme: Children with Special Needs

Issue 5 - October 1998. Theme: Protection of Children from Abuse and Neglect

Issue 6 - May 1999. Special Issue: Children Affected by War in the FRY

Issue 7/8 - October 1999. Theme: Refugee Children

Issue 9/10 - December 1999. Theme: Report on the Situation of Children in the FRY - 10 Years After

Issue 11 - April 2000. Theme: The Aims of Education

Issue 12 - June 2000. Theme: The Right to Leisure and Recreation

Issue 13 - October 2000. Theme: Child Participation

Issue 14 - December 2000. Theme: The Life of Children in Belgrade





Authors' books

Incest Between Myth and Reality - Zorica Mršević; Belgrade, 1997 (Serbian; summary in English)

A criminological study on the sexual abuse of children, the result of the author's work in several projects in this area. The study treats the problem of incest comprehensively, starting from reviewing family incest pathology, the social context and the psychology of incest victims, legal regulations and NGO activities in this area.



A Blow Upon Soul - Nada Banjanin-Đuričić; Belgrade, 1998 (Serbian; summary in English)

A sociological study on child abuse in the family, presenting pioneer work in the area of social pathology. The author analyses the phenomenon of child abuse in a systematic way, dealing not only with its forms and frequency, but also prevention and treatment.

The Image of the Child In Serbian Culture - Žarko Trebješanin; Belgrade, 2000 (Serbian; summary in English)

The book is a mixture of anthropological and psychological knowledge. It is the result of the author's research and theoretical work in this area, describing folk customs and magic rites as the child grows up, analyzing the perception of the child in language and folklore. The author also deals with the child's socialization in the Serbian patriarchal family. The first edition was extended with a text dedicated to the empirical research of the contemporary perception of the child in Serbian culture.



Child Rights and International Law - Nevena Vučković Šahović; Belgrade, 2000 (Serbian; extended summary in English)

A monograph on child rights and international law, contributing to the creation of a conceptual basis for legal policy in this area. The book is the result of the author's long and active engagement in the area of human and child rights, in particular. Due to its comprehensive approach and the popular way in which it presents the whole matter of international law and practice, the book is recommended not only to law students, but also to a broader professional audience.



Almanac, Reports



Almanac 2000 - Dr. Vida Čok; Belgrade, 2000 (Serbian)

A collection of professional papers and research results by several renowned professionals in the broader domain of child rights.



Report 1997/98 - *Suzana Miličić*; Belgrade, 1999 (Serbian and English)

Report on the activities of the CRC since its establishment until 1998.



Specific Themes:

The activities and their outcomes presented so far in the Report are interconnected with the specific themes we deal with. In order to avoid repetition, we shall list and briefly describe only the specific activities. Further reference to seminars and publications can be found in the preceding chapters of the Report.

- **Juvenile justice**

The aim of this long-term project is to establish the system of juvenile justice that will treat the child with full respect of his/her rights and that will not be a system of a repressive, but rather of a preventive character. A specific activity of this project is the work on amendments in legislation and the introduction of new regulations in this sphere. In fulfilling this aim we have taken a series of steps.

The CRC regards the system in which children are both offenders and victims as a unified entirety. Thus, an idea was born to acquaint the professional public, through a range of educational and awareness raising activities, with international standards in the area of juvenile justice and, based on the assessed situation, to stimulate the interlinking of all actors in the process of the treatment of a juvenile. In our work so far, we have assessed the situation in the area of juvenile justice and organised

numerous seminars with representatives of the legal system, the police, as well as administration bodies and schools.

- **Child abuse**

The aim of this project is to acquaint parents and the child's environment with the harmful consequences of abuse and to eliminate child abuse. Our projects are focused on the changing of attitudes and practices of both parents and all those who provide care to children, but also on the relevant compliance of laws with international standards.

Violence against children is absolutely unacceptable, both from the perspective of child rights and the morals of a healthy society. Although as a theme it is an integral part of juvenile justice, we found it important to distinguish it as a specific theme in our work. This is because we ascertained that violence, especially in the family, is widespread and is one of the most frequent causes of asocial behaviour. Violence is a source of numerous traumas and frustrations for the child. It was and is experienced by the majority of children in conflict with the law. Therefore, we find our contribution to the development of a social network and the model of protection from abuse very important, particularly the handbook on this issue, which we created for centres of social work and other services in local community.

Up to now, we have mainly dealt with family violence. However, we plan to expand the project to violence in school, institutions of social care and the street.

- **Child rights and health**

The aim of this project is to influence the dissemination of the notion of child rights in the sphere of health, to influence the change of attitudes and conduct of professionals working with children in institutions of primary health care and social care, as well as to incite a reform of the legislation in this sphere

So far, the CRC has organised a series of seminars for professionals in health and social care institutions and created a handbook for health workers.

- **Children in institutions of social care**

The aim of this project is to decrease the number of children in institutions of social care and the humanisation of living conditions in these institutions.

The project involves systematic monitoring of the state of children in institutions of social care, as well as the situation of children in them. In addition, we work on the education of carers and on changing their attitudes. Finally, a particularly important target group in this project are children themselves, i.e. the users in institutions of social care. We carry out various forms of workshops for them and stimulate their inclusion in life outside the institutions.

- **Child rights and the media**

The aim of the project is to sensitise media representatives and, thus, the general public, for the problems of the state and implementation of child rights.

Bearing in mind the particularly important role of the media in informing the public, but also in shaping opinions on themes relevant for society, we have co-operated with media representatives from the very beginning. The turning point in our approach in this sphere was a survey in which we were confronted with a tragic but true picture of the 'invisibility' of the child in the media. Based on the published results, we will initiate a series of activities aiming at a more serious and systematic involvement of media representatives in this sphere.

This includes the ongoing implementation of a special media literacy programme for children and youth. The aim is not only to empower children and youth for the critical reading and creation of media messages - it is also a way of putting pressure on the existing model, which, as our data shows, does not regard the child as an active subject, but rather as a 'minority, a victim and a passive being', to whom 'humane adults' provide care by 'sacrificing' themselves. In the following phase we plan to establish a comprehensive programme of education and support to media professionals.

- **Anti-personnel mines**

This project was initiated with the aim to raise the awareness of the public and, in particular, children and university students regarding the issue of AP mines, to sensitise the public about the dangers of war and the war industry and to animate other civil society organisations in Yugoslavia to join the International Campaign to Ban Landmines.

The CRC translated the Ottawa Convention, organised a round table and started the initiative for the ratification of this international treaty. In view of the fact that landmine victims are mostly civilians and children in particular and being aware of

the fact that several millions of landmines are planted on the territories of the former Yugoslavia, we found it necessary, as a child rights centre, to assume the responsibility of initiating the project. Later, the project was handed over to the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia and the CRC is still a member of the national campaign.

- **Child labour**

The aim of this project is the elimination of child labour, particularly its worst forms, preventing children's regular schooling and their physical, spiritual and emotional development.

The project is carried out through a research on the issues of child labour in our country, a pilot project in a Belgrade school with a large number of working children whose education and development is impeded by their work, and lobbying for amendments in the existing legislation, that is, its compliance with international standards.

Specific Activities:

- **Humanitarian activities**

Humanitarian activities of the CRC are focused on providing the necessary material assistance to the most vulnerable groups of children in institutions and hospitals. The aid distributed so far consisted mostly of books, didactic material, hygiene items, clothes, as well as medical equipment and devices. It was provided by citizens, private and state-owned corporations from the country and international organisations, in the form of financial and material donations.



6. Future Prospects

It is too early to anticipate how and when the situation in the domain of child rights in Yugoslavia will change significantly, but it should certainly be looked upon in view of multiple integration processes. For us, crucial importance lies in the process of inclusion in European trends (European Council, South-East Europe Stability Pact, European Union), although it cannot be viewed independently of universal processes (Global Movement for Children), as well as the activities of international organisations (UN, Unicef) and bodies (Committee on the Rights of the Child and other committees on human rights).

Despite the fact that the Government of Yugoslavia is primarily responsible for the implementation of child rights, civil society remains a very important actor in the process, particularly in regard to improvements. The recent political changes in the country have opened a new phase in the activities of non-governmental organisations. Co-operation with the relevant governmental bodies and decision-makers is more open and effective, but time will show to what extent the new authorities are willing to co-operate with the civil sector and to acknowledge their contribution. Further activities of non-governmental organisations will also largely depend on international donor policy, but also on the development of the national strategy for encouraging national sources of financial support. Last but not least, the strength and ability of the civil sector to influence further processes of democratisation are determined by their internal capacities and their readiness to identify priorities and define the strategies of their further action-taking.

As an organisation that has, through its five-year work, clearly defined its place, the CRC will strive to remain an important actor in the forthcoming processes, in co-operation with all other relevant structures. Co-operation and partnership with the state in all systemic and reform processes certainly is one of the aims concerning the improvement of the situation of child rights. However, under no circumstances shall we risk our independence and digress from the primary role we share with the entire civil sector. Therefore, we believe it is important to continue to participate in the processes not only of national, but also regional and international networking of

non-governmental organisations. By being well organised and professionally qualified, we should strengthen our role as constant observers and those who are always ready to react quickly and consistently in the interest of children. In such a manner our actions, whether they concern exerting pressure, concrete independent projects or partner strategies, will always be consistent with our mission, which is - the full implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

This country is now on the right track, advancing and maturing, but it still needs assistance in its endeavours to reach the level of a developed democracy. The measure of the overall quality of life in a country is, among other factors, the state of particularly vulnerable groups of the population, such as the old or children, and the degree of their marginalisation is directly linked with democratic tendencies in society. Hence, we believe that along with the need for immediate humanitarian assistance, it is necessary to undertake the process of the creation and implementation of a unified national policy in this domain, which would clearly define not only its aims, but also, in the broad sense of the word, the mechanisms for its implementation. This, certainly, means a clear division of responsibilities among all the relevant actors.



Report Future Prospects

