

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS ALLIANCE

WORKING TO MAKE IRELAND
ONE OF THE BEST PLACES IN
THE WORLD TO BE A CHILD.

BY TANYA WARD, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF THE CHILDREN'S RIGHTS ALLIANCE

THE IRELAND FUNDS INVESTED IN THE REPORT CARD IN 2014. IT PROVIDED US WITH THE SUPPORT THAT WE NEEDED TO RESEARCH, PUBLISH AND EDUCATE ON CHILDREN'S WELFARE ISSUES. THE IRELAND FUNDS' NOD OF APPROVAL ALSO HELPED US TO RAISE FUNDS FROM OTHER PHILANTHROPIC BODIES. WE CANNOT DELIVER WITHOUT MAINTAINING OUR INDEPENDENT VOICE AND THIS IS WHY THE IRELAND FUNDS' SUPPORT IS SO CRITICAL TO US.





OUR VISION IS BIG

but we start small. We change the lives of all children in Ireland by making sure that their rights are respected and protected in our laws, policies and services. We don't believe in 'band aid' solutions. We don't just treat the symptoms. We focus on delivering real systematic changes that will help all children. Over 100 member organizations working with children come under our umbrella as a united voice advocating for Ireland's young people.

Our biggest achievement to date has been securing a referendum and helping to lead a successful national campaign in 2012 to change the Irish Constitution for children. We were instrumental in supporting the Government to establish an Ombudsman for Children and attaining an end to the detention of 16 and 17 year old boys in unsafe adult prisons.

We have secured these changes by identifying problems for children and developing solutions. We educate and provide information on children's rights. We essentially encourage Government and our parliamentarians to put children first.

Our Annual Report Card is our tool for identifying serious issues for children and establishing how the Government is delivering on its own promises to children flowing from the Program for Government. Each year, the Children's Rights Alliance—supported by a panel of independent experts—evaluates the Government's commitments in the area of education, health, social supports, protection from abuse and neglect and freedom from discrimination.

Each section is graded from A-F in the style of a school report card. In its sixth year, the Report Card launch is now a much anticipated national event with the media and political stakeholders interested in seeing how well the Government is doing for children. Government Departments, in particular, take the Report Card very seriously. In fact they even review the Report Card before we make it public.

The Children's Rights Alliance will be 20 years old in 2015. Despite our record of success, we still have a long way to go. Today one in nine children experience poverty; mortality rates for infant Travellers (our indigenous nomadic population) is nearly four times higher than the settled population and children with disabilities experience huge difficulties in accessing education.

However, we are fortunate that there are so many opportunities ahead to make children's lives better. Ireland will be examined by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child on its record for children. We will be consulting nationally in preparation and will submit a major report for the UN. In the year that Ireland celebrates 100 years since the 1916 Rising affirming our independence, we will be asking if we cherished all children of the nation equally. We promised to on the steps of our General Post Office (GPO) when the proclamation was read out by Irish revolutionaries. We will be asking and answering that question in 2016.