

# International Child Development Initiatives:

# Girl Power!

ICDI Annual Report 2015 •



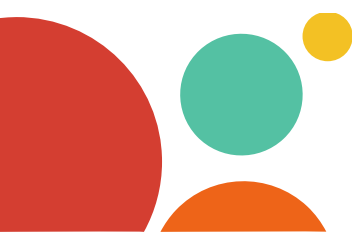
# About ICDI

**International Child Development Initiatives** (ICDI) is a knowledge organization in psychosocial development of children and young people growing up in difficult circumstances.

ICDI believes in the power of children and young people, supporting their rights and addressing the underlying causes for the problems they face.

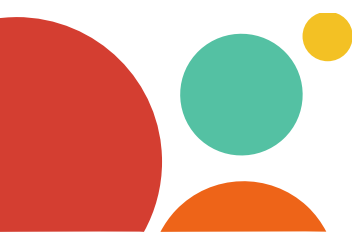
We aim to improve policies and practices by building the skills of: children, mothers, fathers, families, communities, local organizations, and authorities. ICDI also works with and for bigger international child rights organizations, supporting knowledge transfer through training, research and advice.

From Nepal to Nicaragua, and from Kiev to Katwijk, our dream is 'a happy life for all children'. Serious and sincere, academic and practical, small and with major impact, ICDI has been promoting psychosocial well-being of children and young people for more than twenty years. [www.icdi.nl](http://www.icdi.nl)



# Contents

Introduction from the board	1
Introduction from the director	2
Early Years (0-8) Projects 2015	3
Children & Youth (8-21) Projects 2015	8
Other ICDI activities in 2015	26
Financial Statement	28
Board and staff	29



# Introduction from the board

2015 has been a rather dynamic year for the Board of ICDI. The Board bid farewell to two experienced and much appreciated members: Thijs Malmberg, the Chairman of the Board, and Evelijne Bruning, Board Member. The three remaining Board Members elected a new chairman from among them, and decided to recruit new Board Members, based on profile descriptions. The recruitment process led to the appointment of three qualified new Board Members: Carla van Os, Nina Schmitz and Patrick Roozeman. Together with the Director, the new Board organised two brainstorming sessions on the governance model that it would like to use in the future. These sessions were facilitated by an external expert and led to the development of a policy governance document in which the Board specifies the policy objectives and the governance model of ICDI.

The Board had three regular meetings during the year. The most important topic of our deliberations has been the new strategic plan for 2016 – 2020. In summary our strategy for the period 2015-2020 will be to focus on:

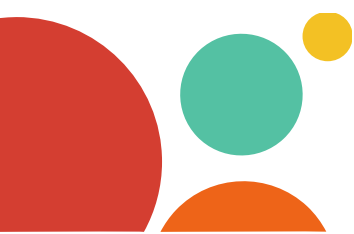
- Two result areas: 1) Child protection and 2) Early childhood care and education;
- Developing our communication (website, social media), to make ourselves better known for what we want to be: an expert niche, specialist organisation on child development, good in providing training, research and consultancies;
- Expanding our partnerships with (initially at least) a small number of bigger child focused NGOs/donors, and we will focus on acquisition and expanding our consultancy & training portfolio.

Internally our organisational structure will change, to support the effective implementation of the above strategy. Two teams are created; one is focused on the Early Years (0-8) and one focused on Children and Young People (8-21). A Management Team (headed by the Director) will be responsible for overall management of ICDI, and consists of the Director, the two Team Leaders and the HR & Finance Manager. Although we still feel that there are many challenges ahead of us, we are confident that ICDI is well prepared for the future with this new strategy and structure.



Financially it was a good year for the organisation. The overall result is positive with a surplus of € 2.803 (about 0,2 % of the annual income), which will be added to the continuity reserve. This means that the total continuity reserve is almost at 73% of annual organisational costs (the Board's aim is to have 75% continuity reserve).

**Jeroen Wismans**  
**Chairman of the Board**



# Introduction from the director

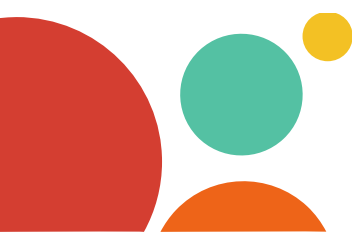
In the past five years ICDI, together with partner organisations in Nicaragua, Sierra Leone, Ethiopia, Bangladesh, Nepal and Pakistan, implemented the Girl Power Programme. The focus was to improve adolescent girls' participation in society, economic and educational opportunities and protection against gender based violence. In December 2015 Girl Power came to a conclusion, and we are proud to say that it has been highly successful: independent evaluations in 2013 and again in 2015 clearly show that Girl Power was effective in improving the living conditions of hundreds of thousands of girls in the countries we worked in.

The question is of course: what now? Will there be a follow-up? Are the results sustainable? To a large extent we can announce they will be. Together with Dutch organisations The Hunger Project and Kinderpostzegels, we have secured funding for the next five years for a programme called Her Choice, which will focus on reducing child marriage. Although there will be differences, Her Choice will very much build upon what has been achieved during Girl Power. ICDI and partners will implement this programme in Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan, Sierra Leone and Ethiopia. For us it is very important that we can continue in these countries. We know that true impact can only be achieved through working in a country for a long time. ICDI and Girl Power: the story continues!



2015 and 2016 will be very much 'transitional' years for ICDI. Given the rapid advancements in the global landscape (of developmental aid), we have realised that we need to change and develop, if we want to remain relevant. In the coming years we aim to position ourselves (even) more as a knowledge organisation in child and youth development, that can offer training, research, advice and partnership. To be able to be more effective in this, we have made some internal changes: from 2015 there are two operational teams within ICDI, one focusing on children aged 0-8 (Early Years Team) and one focusing on children and youth 8-21 years of age (Children and Youth Team). Within these teams we have specialist knowledge on innovative and important topics for children and those who care for them. Our Strategic Plan 2016-2021 'Growing Up and Moving On', which is available on our new website, explains the how and why of these organisational developments. Part of this process has also been the creation of a new ICDI logo, corporate style and, as said, a new website. All these will be launched in 2016.

**Mathijs Euwema**  
**Director ICDI**



# Early Years (0-8) Projects 2015

Healthy development in the early years of a child's life forms the essential foundation for future, positive outcomes, this has been proven time and time again through multitudes of international scientific research studies. This has led to an increase in support for programmes and interventions in, what is known as, Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC). However, most of these have quite a narrow focus on improving cognitive skills and preparation for school (whilst international scientific research actually indicates that such a focus is far less effective).

ICDI's **Early Years Team (0-8)** therefore aims to stimulate training, research and policies that look at more non-formal, psychosocial domains to support young children, such as the importance of play, contact with nature, cultural enrichment and building community based support (from parents, teachers, community leaders, etc.).

Innovative, promising approaches are an important element in our work. Intergenerational Learning (IGL) between young children and senior citizens is an example of that. We also have a strong emphasis on children that grow up in difficult circumstances, like children in and from conflict areas, children with a minority background, children with disabilities and, in general, children growing up in poverty.





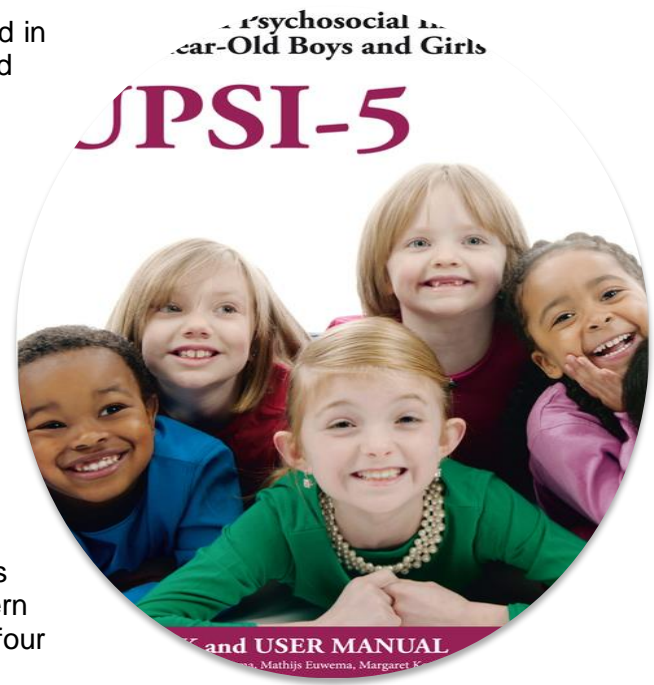
## South Africa: UPSI-5 and its Relevance for South Africa

When it comes to measuring young children's healthy development, psychosocial well-being tends to be a forgotten factor. Over the past two years ICDI has worked with the Khululeka Community Education Development Centre to implement a 2014-2016 research project which has put the spotlight on the psychosocial well-being of young children in South Africa. The UPSI-5 (Universal Psychosocial Indicator for Five-Year-Old Boys) was used to measure psychosocial well-being of almost **2100 children**. The results showed that there is a clear reason for concern for almost 25% of the children!

The findings from the research were presented in June 2015, to an audience of national and provincial policy makers, researchers, representatives from child focused organisations, and teacher education colleges. This event took place in premises of the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund in Johannesburg, one of the co-funders of the project. The other funder was the Liberty Foundation.

ICDI, Khululeka and NMCF jointly developed an advocacy brief with key messages from the research. This was shared with over 100 decision-makers in policy, practice and development work in South Africa. Further dissemination events were organised in Eastern Cape, Western Cape, Kwazulu Natal and Free State, the four provinces where data was collected.

In September Fioni Murray from Khululeka and Margaret Kernan from ICDI also presented the findings at the largest European Early Childhood Education and Care conference in Barcelona, the EECERA (European Early Childhood Research Association) Annual Conference.



## Palestine: Foundations for the Future

Children in Palestine are growing up in what can only be characterised as violent circumstances. ICDI, together with our Palestinian partner Early Childhood and Family Development (ECFD) Trust for the past years have been working towards improving the quality of Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) services in 10 villages and the Shufat refugee camp north of Jerusalem, in the West Bank, this with financial support from the EU.

Activities in the project include:

- Learn by Play aims at limiting illiteracy and decreasing the dropout rate from schools of children who are at risk. Parents, teachers, and young volunteers work together to stimulate learning and participation of young children.
- Mother to Mother Program: which provides training to mothers from local communities in early child care and development who will in turn offer home counseling to other mothers in their communities.
- Awareness raising (activities with parents and poster campaigns). The programme will change a relationship of –often- hostile dependency to a more constructive partnership between parents and teachers.
- Training of teachers in child friendly and child-centred pedagogical tools; The course focuses on the fundamentals and principles of early childhood development.
- Two Community Schools have been opened for five days. During these times teachers and social workers will be conducting extra curriculum activities for the children and their parents.
- Strengthening three Mother & Child Centres one in Shu'fat refugee camp and two in villages North West of Ramallah. The aim of the Centres is to provide mothers with a low-threshold service, where they can get information and share experiences with other mothers on early childhood issues.
- One of the key activities of the project is to bring young children in closer contact with nature in their daily lives at home and at preschool, to support their healthy psychosocial development. We want to do this in a sustainable way: conserving water, recycling materials and using found items from nature as play materials.

In May 2015, ICDIs Margaret Kernan and Asia Koerten conducted a successful training on nature and outdoor learning in Early Childhood services and schools – named Gardens of Eve. Present at the workshop were 20 pre- and primary school teachers and two representatives from the Ministry of Agriculture. By now green spaces have been set-up in four preschools and five primary schools.





We also have:

-Raised the awareness of parents and communities about the importance of a green environment in schools. The parents and the community provided the schools and the preschools with seedlings, potted plants, fertilizers and other useful stuff to set up the Gardens of Eve.

-Ensured children's active participation (boys, but especially also girls) in preparing the gardens, where now fruits, vegetables and flowers are grown.

-Expanded the collaboration and the networking with new governmental sectors. The Ministry of Agriculture provided guidance and counseling through professional agriculture specialists.

***Facts and figures 2015:***

- *30 mothers trained as paraprofessionals*
- *300 families from 10 communities received pedagogical support through the Mother to Mother programme*
- *2 Community schools established and open 5 days a week*
- *50 teachers trained in child friendly pedagogical tools*
- *20 teachers were trained setting up and managing Gardens of Eve*
- *Gardens of Eve were set up in 4 preschools, 5 primary schools, benefiting 2000 children*
- *10 parent/teachers councils functioning and active, benefiting 50 teachers and 900 parents*
- *3 mother and child centers strengthened, benefiting 3000 children and 250 mothers*

## Global: Together Old and Young (TOY)

Intergenerational Learning (IGL) involving the youngest and oldest members of our society is not yet part of Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC), elderly care services and community work, which results in many missed opportunities to improve social cohesion, solidarity, active and healthy ageing, positive development of children, and intergenerational dialogue.

The TOY Programme aims to bring to a global scale the TOY approach, which was initially developed as a European project ([www.toyproject.net](http://www.toyproject.net)).

Our strategy in the TOY Programme (2015-2017) is to work on three different levels: policy, local governance and practice.

1. Advocacy at national and international level for the inclusion of a multigenerational approach in educational and social policies.
2. Decision makers at local level are stimulated to enhance intergenerational contact in local communities, such as different age groups acting as volunteers, participants, facilitators or social grandparents.
3. Development of innovative and online training for ECEC and social care practitioners to support them to implement intergenerational activities.



The project began November 2015. ICDI has started to upgrade the TOY website to make it more interactive, submitted two project proposals on: IGL as a topic for the professional development of ECEC and social care practitioners; IGL as a tool for social cohesion and de-segregation of Roma children and communities. This project is funded by Dioraphte.

We are working together with partners in at least six countries around the world. Expected outcomes in 2017 will be:

1. *A stronger international network, including training organisations, practitioner organisations and organisations representing the needs of older people and young children, all of which recognise and gives visibility to IGL*
2. *Increased availability of resources and exchange among practitioners, policy makers and researchers involved in IGL with young children and older people*
3. *Increased number of IGL initiatives*

# Children & Youth (8-21) Projects 2015

The main focus of **ICDI's Children and Youth Team (8-21)** is on the linkages between informal provisions and formal services concerning boys and girls. We promote efforts to improve their informal lives, social environment and place within their community, as these are just as important as formal schooling and training. We are fully aware that in a few years' time these young people will determine the future of their societies, regions and even the world; it is, therefore, at this critical juncture that ICDI's interventions in the form of changing and improving policies and practices are vital.

In particular we focus on:

## Child protection

This refers to formal, non-formal and informal systems and services. It covers topics such as foster care, de-institutionalization, children and young people in (post-) conflict situations, refugee children and homeless children and youth.

## Child & Youth Participation

Participation recognizes that children and young people are agents and experts on their lives and that their views have to be heard and taken seriously. Youth participation contributes to the personal well-being and healthy development of children, and simultaneously, aids in the work of organizations and government agencies by providing original and useful insights and inputs to strategies and approaches. Children and young people that come from multi-problem families and young migrants/refugees are expected to form our main focus in the coming years.

## Gender Equality

It is generally recognized that gender equality leads to a range of personal and family benefits as well as to economic growth and sustainable development and healthier, "better" societies. Besides investing in girls themselves, much can be achieved by engaging their families, communities, cultural and traditional leaders, and the boys and men within these communities. We will focus in the coming years on preventing and reducing child marriage.



## Global: Girl Power Programme

Girl Power was an initiative involving six Dutch child rights organisations working together with their local partners in 10 countries. Funded by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Girl Power was launched January 2011 and will run until January 2016. The goal of the programme was to improve the rights and opportunities of adolescent girls.

ICDI worked on Girl Power with partners in the following countries:

- Bangladesh (Shariatpur Development Society- SDS)
- Ethiopia (Education for Sustainable Development - ESD)
- Nepal (Child Workers in Nepal - CWIN)
- Nicaragua (Asociacion La Amistad)
- Pakistan (Bedari)
- Sierra Leone (One Family People - OFP)

The final independent evaluation has shown that in the past five years **1 million girls and young women** benefited locally from Girl Power programme's activities, such as:

- Girls clubs: where they can learn about issues such as sexual and reproductive health and rights.
- Vocational skills training: to give girls more opportunities for work and economic independence.
- Victim support services: providing better social and legal protection to girls who have become victims of violence.
- School programmes: designed to prevent girls dropping-out from school, to prevent early marriages and enhance their chances for higher education.

Girl Power has significantly contributed to the advancement of girls by **reducing early marriage rates, increasing school retention, better protection of girls against violence and overall increased social participation** of girls and young women.

The Girl Power Alliance has published five Learning Briefs that describe the lessons learned from these 5 years of cooperation and work to promote girls' and women's rights. To read them, visit: <http://icdi.nl/projects/spotlight-girl-power>

On the next pages we briefly highlight what was achieved by ICDI and its partners in 2015 in the six countries we Girl Powered in.

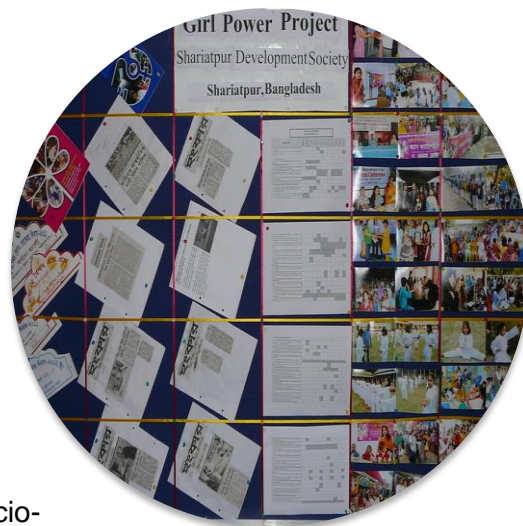




## Girl Power in Bangladesh

Shariatpur Development Society, ICDI's partner in the Girl Power Programme, focused on adolescent girls, young women, their families and communities living in 60 rural municipalities of the region of Shariatpur, as well as on local authorities, regional and national governments.

During the final year of the programme, bullying of girls, equal access to education, domestic violence and socio-economic participation have remained the fields of intervention, but the main focus was on fighting the insidious problem of child marriage. Through intensive lobby and awareness raising activities at community level, involving adolescent girls themselves and giving them a prominent role, they managed to make twelve local municipalities 'Child Marriage Free'. Sport activities for girls, especially the karate training, also remained a success. Over 300 girls took part.



### *Facts and figures 2015:*

- *8800 girls and young women have been reached through raising awareness activities on women's and children's rights, socio-legal support, sport and campaigns*
- *Over 1500 boys and young men were engaged to reduce violence against girls and women in the region*
- *16.000 household and 800 communities have been involved in activities for the reduction of gender-based violence and the eradication of child marriages*
- *500 traditional community and religious leaders have been engaged in activities aimed at the prevention of child marriages and violence against girls and women*
- *250 teachers, law enforcers, and policy makers have attended training and awareness sessions*
- *200 civil society organisations have received training in the area of women's and children's rights*



## Girl Power in Ethiopia

Our partner Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and ICDI focused on girls in primary and post-primary school-age, as well as on young women who dropped out of school, or who never even attended school. We also worked with their families and engaged in the effort to make sure that girls complete their education, don't marry too early and receive the Sexual Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) services they need.

Activities that took place included training of social workers to prevent school dropout and stimulate girls and young women to return to school, and training of parents, community members and leaders on specific challenges to girls' education (including reproductive health and harmful traditional practices).

Girls, organised in clubs, have been trained in life and vocational skills, amongst others in making their own sanitation pads. Girls clubs are places where girls now freely discuss matters relating to SRHR, school drop-out and girls' rights. Boys have been invited to join the discussions, increasing support and understanding for girls' rights. Joint theatre and sports activities for boys and girls have been organised, reducing the bias many boys have towards girls' participation.



### *Facts and figures 2015:*

- *30 disadvantaged girls received material support, including uniforms and sportswear*
- *5 girls' clubs were outfitted with materials; the club's needs were identified by the girls*
- *8 mini media clubs established and functioning in 4 primary and 4 middle schools*
- *2214 girls and boys involved in sports activities and school events*
- *14 social workers were trained to provide psychosocial support to girls in schools*
- *197 students received support from social workers and avoided school drop-out*
- *15 teachers and 45 representatives of girls clubs were trained in life skills and sexual and reproductive health rights*
- *125 'influential' people in society, including elders and local administrators participated in workshops to increase understanding and support for girls' education, gender equality, and harmful traditional practices*
- *Radio messages on girls' rights and education were transmitted to 19 rural districts and 2 cities, with the capacity to reach 50,000*

## Girl Power in Nepal

In the final year of the Girl Power Programme, the earthquake and subsequent aftershocks which occurred in Nepal in the month of March and April 2015 devastated the country and affected many thousands of children. ICDI's partner CWIN was forced to abandon all regular activities and join the relief effort for three months. All staff of the project also needed to engage in emergency rescue and relief work including psychosocial work, providing food and medicine and building temporary shelters. In addition, there was a political and social crisis at the border between India and Nepal, resulting in shortage of fuel, food and medicine. This seriously inhibited movement and communication between regions and movement from one place to another.

We are proud of our partner CWIN for completing the project as planned and reaching most of the targets set.

These achievements included:

- Improvement and increase of protection and support services for individual girls/young women, such as telephone helplines, informative media messages, training and workshops on gender equality, sport activities, support to victims of gender based violence through shelters, scholarships and material support for (post-) primary education, and savings and loans schemes.
- CSO's partners, including girls' clubs, women cooperatives, youth organisations, community based organisations and other grassroots organisations were strengthened in relation to gender equality and girls' rights.
- Shelters for victims of gender based violence (GBV) received training on a range of topics to improve the support they offer to girls and young women.
- Villages and communities were supported to develop active community-based child protection committees and services.



### **Facts and figures 2015:**

- *50.000 girls and young women reached by psychosocial support services*
- *306 communities reached with activities aimed at promotion of gender equality and girls' rights*
- *8200 households reached with activities aimed at promotion of gender equality and girls' rights*
- *1500 frontline professional staff of (local, district, province, regional or national) government institutions trained on girls' rights – including from the police, justice, health, and education departments*
- *1450 staff of government institutions reached by partners for lobby and advocacy to influence laws and policies related to girls empowerment, child rights and women's rights*

## Girl Power in Nicaragua

La Amistad, ICDI's partner in Nicaragua have focused their work on girls and women's clubs, life skills training, capacity building of government officials and teachers, socio-legal support for victims of violence and abuse. Their work has been always inspired and guided by principles of child and youth participation, giving special emphasis to the active involvement of girls and women themselves in the production of media messages, products and services.

Through ICDI training and advice, La Amistad has been inspired to engage young people to research the issues that they feel are most important in their communities. In 2015 girls and boys of five rural communities in the region of Matagalpa have presented their own research findings during public events with the participation of local authorities, police, teachers, parents and other young people. The most researched topics were violence against children and alcoholism, not so surprising, as these are huge problems facing girls and boys.

In 2015 a lot of attention was also given to engaging men and boys, since they are not only part of the problem, but also part of the solution. Changing the attitudes and behaviors of boys and men with regard to violence against girls and women, is a new and exciting area of work for La Amistad.



### ***Facts and figures 2015:***

- *2400 girls and young women participated in legal and social support services and 2200 boys were reached*
- *460 families have been reached through activities aimed at promoting children's and women's rights*
- *140 traditional community leaders have been engaged in community-based child protection services*
- *500 teachers, law enforcement agents, and policy makers have attended training and awareness raising sessions*
- *25 civil society organisations received training on gender based violence and children's rights*

## Girl Power in Pakistan

Girl Power has been a transformative project for our partner organisation Bedari, the services it delivers and the clients they reach. Bedari has grown to become a well-known organisation in Pakistan and abroad. It delivers quality services for women and girls at risk, has excellent relationships with the communities they work in, often making use of street theatre. It has also run very effective lobby and advocacy campaigns.

Helped by reports by Village Child Protection Committees and effective child helplines, more than 100 girls a year, who are victims of violence, abuse and discrimination, are receiving legal aid and psychosocial support. Bedari is also improving the living conditions and standards of Dar-ul-Amams (women's shelters).

In communities where Girl Power was implemented in Pakistan, the tolerance for Gender Based Violence (GBV) has decreased considerably. There is a positive change of attitude amongst lawyers, law-makers and police departments towards the rights of women and girls. Not only in word, but also in action, with lawyers taking on more and more (often very controversial and dangerous) cases, police responding to reports of violence towards girls and civil servants working to improve the implementation of policies aimed at the protection of girls. Cooperation between various relevant services and authorities has also improved. For example, the Executive District Office (EDO) of Health, Education, and Social Welfare now works closely with Bedari when it needs to refer cases of GBV.



### *Facts and figures 2015:*

- *940 girls and young women were reached through life skills training*
- *373 cases of Gender Based Violence(GBV) were referred to Bedari by Village Child Protection Committees*
- *2403 GBV cases were received through the Bedari Child Helpline and got advice*
- *283 victims of violence received free legal aid*
- *232 traditional leaders were visited and sensitized on GBV, women's rights and education for girls*
- *In 3 shelters training to staff took place on giving high quality psychosocial support to girls who have become victims of violence*
- *26 communities/Villages in Vehari and 26 Communities/Villages in Chakwal have active Community Based Child Protection Committees*
- *15 radio programmes on girls' rights and GBV have been broadcast, potentially reaching thousands*
- *In 2015, a Child Marriages Restraint Order was passed by the Punjab Assembly, setting the minimum age for girls to marry at 16, aided by Bedari's lobby and advocacy efforts*



## Girl Power in Sierra Leone

ICDI's partner in Sierra Leone is One Family People, a human rights organisation dedicated to fighting for the rights of people with disability. For One Family People 2015 was a year when they succeeded in rebuilding and strengthening community structures, following the restrictions imposed by the horrific Ebola epidemic. These community structures include the V-Girls (Girls Clubs) for which football is a key activity, and the Mother Led Protection Units, who have organised themselves into micro finance groups which they use to provide financial assistance to other young women in their communities. They use some of the proceeds to monitor any Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) incidents against girls in their communities and aim to provide 24 hourly protection for girls and young women against all forms of violence. One Family People has also worked to build the leadership skills of 40 'Goal Champions', who can lead the next generation in maintaining safe spaces for girls, where –for example- they can play football.

One of the celebratory achievements in 2015 was the Girls Football Tournament in November and December which coincided with the global 16 Days of Activism Against Violence Against Women. It was the first time that such a football event for girls was organised in Sierra Leone. One Family People also used this global campaign to inform the Sierra Leone public about the Sexual Offences Act (2012), which was established through strong lobby efforts from OFP and ICDI.



### ***Facts and figures 2015:***

- *52,000 girls, boys, women and men reached in awareness raising events about violence against women through radio and town hall meetings*
- *262 girls participating in life skills training activities*
- *48 community support organisations such as girls clubs, Mothers Led Protection Units, men's support groups, supported in 17 communities in Freetown, Western Area and Moyamba*
- *Men's support groups appointed Men Care leaders in each group who are role models for their peers in standing up against violence against girls and women*
- *14 shelters for victims of gender based violence supported through training and useful materials*



## Nepal, Pakistan and Bangladesh: Suddenly Not a Child Anymore, Preventing Child Marriage

2015 was the year when ICDI really put the spotlight on the negative impact child marriage has on physical and psychosocial development and well-being of, and educational opportunities for girls. This was achieved through Suddenly Not a Child Anymore, a one-year project which ICDI developed along with Kinderpostzegels and The Hunger Project, with financial support from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The overall objective of the programme was to reduce the practice of child marriage by ensuring that girls are enabled to choose when and whom they will marry and creating and strengthening an enabling socio-political environment to combat child marriage.

In addition to monitoring the implementation of project activities and their impact, ICDI's role was to provide advice and training. The dedication of our partners in Bangladesh, SDS; in Nepal, CWIN; and in Pakistan, Bedari led to some impressive results.



### *Facts and figures 2015 Bangladesh:*

- *1110 girls and young women trained through educational initiatives on sexual and reproductive health and rights and early marriage. 80 of these girls received martial arts training*
- *90 teachers trained on girls rights*
- *6077 parents reached in meetings about girls' rights and benefits of education for girls*
- *25 child marriages were directly stopped*
- *2400 community members attended meetings in 12 villages, which are now officially declared as child marriage free*

### *Facts and figures 2015 Nepal:*

- *1620 young people (867 girls and 753 boys) have received life skills training including discussions and information about the harmful effects of child marriage. As a result, they are empowered to say no to child marriage*
- *29 adolescent forums with 754 members have been established to work as change makers in their communities as a unified voice against child marriage*
- *80 young people have received counselling on safe migration*
- *150 radio programmes about child marriage have been aired*
- *64 cases of child marriage have been handled by the Child Helpline and Counselling services.*
- *CWIN participated in the drafting of a national policy on child marriage prepared by Ministry of Women Children and Social Welfare to reduce child marriage by 50 percent by 2021*

**Facts and figures 2015 Pakistan:**

- 9460 girls and young women trained through educational initiatives on sexual and reproductive health rights and early marriage
- 240 teachers were trained on child marriage and its social, medical, psychological affects, sexual reproductive health and rights, family planning and breaking stereotypes and myths
- 3032 community members, mainly women, were reached in community awareness raising events on child marriage which also provided information on and introduced family planning services to women
- An estimated 200,000 members of the general public heard radio panel discussions about child marriage during which the audience were invited to submit questions to the panelists on the topic
- 270 religious leaders participated in sessions on girl's rights and child marriage

The final public event of the project 'Lifting the Veil: Expert Meeting on Child Marriage' took place in The Hague in October, where a big crowd of international actors gathered to discuss effective ways of fighting child marriage. Key speakers and panelists included Princess Mabel van Oranje, representing Girls Not Brides Global Network, Satvika Chalasani (UNFPA) and Giovanna Lauro (Promundo) and Lilianne Ploumen, Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation.

Saleem Malik, Executive Director Bedari, was also in attendance and a prominent contributor to the debate (on the picture below from left to right: Princess Mabel of Oranje, Saleem Malik and Mathijs Euwema, ICDI).



## Europe: ComeOn!

The ComeON! project in The Netherlands, Italy, Spain, Hungary, UK and Romania, aimed at promoting active citizenship of both elderly and young people through meaningful intergenerational volunteering experiences. It was funded by the Life Long Learning Program of the European Union and took place in 2014-2016.

An innovative training manual was developed aimed at bringing old and young together and have them develop social initiatives and joint learning. The training which took place in Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Romania and Spain, and brought together highschool children and senior volunteers to learn about each other's lives, speak about current issues facing their societies and how they can close the gap between the generations.



In the final year of the project, theory was translated into practice. ICDI worked together with 'De Rijdende Popschool', which translates to 'The Popschool on Wheels'. This is an initiative that brings the possibility of making music to children in deprived rural villages in the North of The Netherlands. Usually they only work with children, but for the pilot of ComeON! they decided to work together with old and young people towards a music performance. The joint interest in music made this pilot a success.

After several meetings and practice sessions between students of the Popschool and senior citizens (involved in a choir), the Garmerwolde community of around 100 villagers gathered to watch this unique performance.

In other project countries projects were developed that focused on innovation, solidarity and active citizenship. In Italy and Spain children taught the elderly how to work with computers, and in Romania, old and young developed theatre productions together.

The projects results and stories were shared at an international workshop, which took place in Rome on October 30th. ICDI's Remi Goossens and our partners from the Rijdende Popschool, Sabine Hoes and Niels Steenstra presented the Dutch experience.

### ***Facts and figures 2015:***

- ***105 high school students participated***
- ***80 senior citizens volunteered***
- ***18 teachers led the workshops and oversaw the mini projects***
- ***9 mini projects developed***
- ***1 intergenerational training manual developed and translated into 6 languages***

## Nepal: Breaking the Barriers

Discrimination against women and girls is widespread in Nepal. The preference for giving birth to a son rather than a daughter is deeply embedded in Nepalese cultural and religious traditions. Although Nepalese abortion law criminalizes sex-selective abortion, it has not prevented sex-selective abortions from occurring and women resort to unsafe and clandestine abortions. For this reason the Breaking the Barriers: Safeguarding the Rights of Girl Infants project was developed, a three year (2015 – 2017) project funded by the European Commission. The overall goal is to eradicate sex selection and girl infanticide in Nepal.



ICDI, together with our long-time Nepali partner CWIN, and local partners CHREPHA and WVAF, implemented several activities in 2015, beginning with a baseline study forming the basis of the development of advocacy packages, formation of networks of local, community based organisations, raising awareness through a radio program and organising workshops on girls' rights and approaches to engage men. ICDI's role is to monitor and give advice on these activities, as well as provide substantive input on the workshops and conduct several Girls-QUAT trainings, which focus on assessing quality of services for girls and young women.

### **Facts and figures 2015:**

- **Civil Society Networks for Combating Worst Forms of Discrimination against Girl Infants were formed: 5 meetings organised in 5 districts, 150 participants**
- **Form/activate village child protection committees: 36 meetings were conducted in 6 project districts. 590 community members participated**
- **Trainings on girl's rights and protection at community level: 596 local stakeholders and municipalities of 6 districts were informed about the worst forms of discrimination against girls, ranging from sex-selective abortion to discrimination on the access to various opportunities**
- **Psychosocial Counseling and Referral Services: 6 counselors were hired and trained, and now provide such services to girls and young women in need**
- **Trainings for Female Community Health Volunteers to perform urine pregnancy test and provide psychosocial counselling: A total of 1050 of such volunteers have been trained, and are now operational and get on the job support**
- **Training to project stakeholders on Girl-QUAT: 35 people attended the opening seminar. A more intensive training took place for 18 Child Helpline staff and CSO members on facilitating the Girls-QUAT and assess Child Helpline using Girls-QUAT. Also 7 adolescent girls were trained in and used the Girls QUAT to assess the quality of their shelter.**



## Belarus: Home is Where the Heart is

Children of 'alcoholic' parents are faced with many challenges in Belarus, where alcoholism is the number one social problem. They need a great deal of support lest they get overwhelmed and the vicious circle of intergenerational addiction and violence continues. Whatever the situation, family remains a key factor in determining the well-being of children, but government and community based services have a supportive role to play.

The objective of this project was to safeguard and improve the wellbeing and healthy development of children of parents with alcohol addiction.

In 2015, the final year of this three year project, ICDI conducted the last of six workshops for the Master Trainers. ICDI introduced some practical exercises to help improve evaluation of family support systems and participation of clients. We also prepared the 20 Master Trainers for the final phase of the project, in which six mini projects were implemented by local authorities, local organizations working on alcohol prevention and parent associations.

Some initiatives and activities that took place were:

- Awareness raising campaigns on the effects of parental alcohol abuse and upgrade of materials;
- Development and implementation of family intervention models/prevention services in the community;
- Skills development and coping strategies for children and their families in social shelters;
- Parenting skills training at home and at institutions and online and telephone consultations;
- Supporting parents in finding support to overcome alcoholism.



The results of the project have been impressive. 'Home is Where the Heart is' has made substantial improvements in the child and family protection system in Belarus. In short, child protection services have changed from a somewhat directive, hierarchal stance to an approach in which listening, openness and cooperation with families and local support networks are key. This project has laid the groundwork for fundamental improvements in the nation's infrastructures which aim to support vulnerable families and their children

Instructive videos and lessons learnt were presented at a final conference in Minsk in December. Members of social services and government of the 6 project regions, the Vice Minister of Education of Belarus, representatives of various media were present along with ICDIs Asia Koerten, Rutger van Oudenhoven and Catelijne Sillevs.



**Facts and figures 2015:**

- 63 meetings were held at families' homes in which issues as safety, importance of daily structure, communication, relationships and leisure activities were discussed
- 209 children took part in regular project activities
- 130 parents were trained in parenting skills and communication with their children and family safety measures
- Over 200 children and 100 parents participated in 6 successful mini projects organised to increase community integration and support for families in which parents have alcohol problems



## The Netherlands: Nest, an After School Programme in the Refugee centre in Katwijk

In 2014, Dutch organisation De Vrolijkheid, with financial support from Kinderpostzegels, set up the first Nest Centre for children in the refugee centre in Katwijk. Nest is an innovative model for an after-school programme for children growing up in difficult circumstances.

The model was developed by Kinderpostzegels and ICDI in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where it has been successfully established in deprived rural villages. Children growing up in the refugee centre in Katwijk face many difficulties: they live with their families in cramped conditions, live in isolation from the surrounding community and most face deportation from the Netherlands. In the Nest Centre they do creative activities, get homework support and individual care and attention from dedicated and professional staff after school and on Saturdays.

ICDI is responsible for training and support of the staff and we are doing research on the impact of Nest Centre approach on the psychosocial well-being of the children.

### *Facts and figures 2015:*

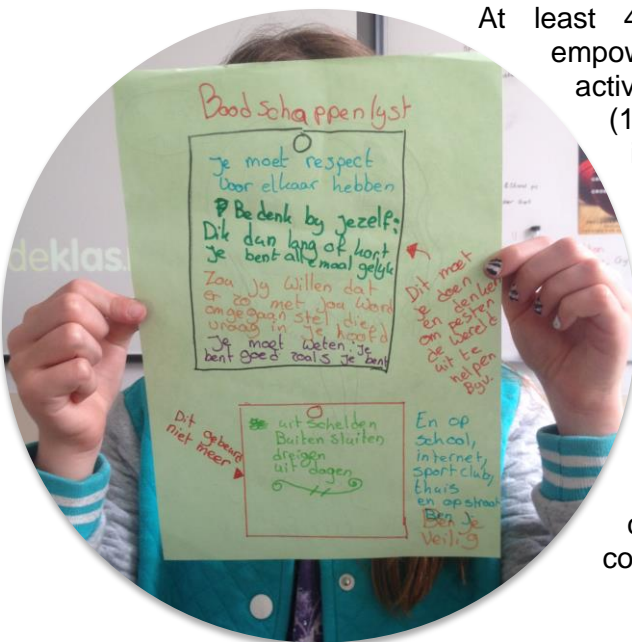
- *In 2015 around 100 children aged 6 to 12 benefited from the Nest Centre*
- *In 2016, 4 more Nest centres will be set up in other refugee centres around the Netherlands, with ICDI again being involved in training and research*



## Europe: Introducing an Approach for Early Identification and Prevention of Bullying in School

Bullying remains a persistent problem for children all round the world, with often devastating and long lasting effects on their psychosocial well-being. Although many anti-bullying programmes have been developed, to various levels of effectiveness, the voices of children in these have seldom been given a lot of attention.

ICDI is the Dutch partner in a 2014-2017 EU-funded project focused on early intervention and prevention of bullying in seven EU-countries. Project activities focus on several thematic areas: provision of space for school children to share their views on bullying, violence and safety at school; raising teachers' capacity for recognizing early signs of bullying and intervening effectively in school settings; raising stakeholders' capacity for early identification and prevention of bullying in the communities; evaluation of anti-bullying policies in the seven participating EU countries and recommendations for their improvement.



At least 480 school children aged 7-16 participated in empowerment initiatives and 480 participated in prevention activities; 120 child victims/perpetrators and their parents (160) were supported through community based interventions; 400 teachers were involved in capacity building trainings; 10,500 parents were targeted with information materials on early signs of bullying. Lobbying activities targeted national and international stakeholders, local authorities, the media and policy and decision-makers dealing with child policies.

In 2015 ICDI organised 4 workshops involving a total of 50 children in The Netherlands, to hear their views on bullying and possible solutions. We also compiled the overall research report from the seven countries.

### **Facts and figures 2015:**

- *At least 480 school children aged 7-16 participated in empowerment and prevention initiatives*
- *120 child victims/perpetrators and their parents (160) were supported through community based interventions*
- *400 teachers were involved in capacity building training*

## Ethiopia: Education Matters

More girls are enrolled in schools in Ethiopia but still much too many of them drop out before completing their education. This project supports girls to stay in school.

The project is jointly implemented by ICDI, and our Ethiopian partners Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and HIWOT. Its overall objective is to ensure that girls in the Amhara Regional State of Ethiopia attend and complete primary and secondary education by specifically addressing causes for early school leaving. Within this project we operate in 10 Kebeles (municipalities) of the North Shoa Zone, Amhara State. Besides improving facilities for girls in school, there has been strong engagement of the wider community, including local authorities, traditional leaders and parents.

We firstly conducted a field research which -in short- found that the key factor for keeping girls in school were that they should not get married, not be too poor, not be sexual harassed on the way to school or be abducted. In fact, the support of their mother is maybe the most important way of preventing school dropout (and often overlooked).

The findings of the study informed the other activities included a training of teachers to become counselors, a training for mothers on sexual and health issues of girls, individual psychosocial support for girls, awareness raising within the community on the importance of Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) for girls and ending child marriage. Our partners also engaged boys by raising their awareness on girls' rights and encouraged them to help their sisters out with the work in their homes. Educational materials and clothing were provided to disadvantaged girls, and Girls Clubs were provided with some material support. At schools spaces were created for girls where they can receive sanitary menstruation pads and take a rest when necessary.



### **Facts and figures 2015:**

- *Participatory research/situation analyses was conducted and a report was published*
- *A project committee, with 15 members representing sectors and communities, was established at district level and tracking the project implementation*
- *32 selected school teachers were trained on psychosocial services for girls*
- *10 Girls Clubs were strengthened/re-established in 10 schools, benefiting over 1500 children (all girl students are members of girls clubs)*
- *169 girls with severe economic problems were supported with educational materials (books, pens, pencils, bags) and sport wear*



## Kenya & Uganda: Righting the Future - Universalizing Secondary Education for Girls in Africa

Africa has the highest number of out-of-school children as well as the highest gender disparity rate of all continents. Gender and poverty intersect to create constraints for many girls, who face early marriage, child labour, teenage pregnancy (and lack of effective re-entry policies), as well as HIV/AIDS and the rise in the number of orphans and vulnerable children.

Righting the Future is an innovative pilot project built on the principles of south-south collaboration and capacity building. Good practice from a successful experience in India, provided by the MV Foundation, is being disseminated to two distinct settings – a rural area in Kenya and an urban slum in Uganda. Project staff from ICDI and MV Foundation has been providing ongoing technical support and advice to the African partners. The project was designed to encourage and trigger the development of a regional approach to universalization of girls' education and lay the ground work for future scaling up and dissemination.

In year 3 of this project a change in the mind sets of the communities is already palpable: where the parents earlier wanted to know what the project would pay them for bringing their daughters to school, they are now willing to pay fees for them and are demanding that the project extend its scope to reach boys as well. The communities, including local leaders, teachers, youth and elders, now act as guardians of school going girls and alert project staff to drop outs, never-enrolled and pregnant girls in their neighborhoods. Most importantly, teenage pregnancy, which is rife in these communities, is no longer seen as the end of a girl's educational prospects. The project has successfully demonstrated that given the right kind of support and information, it is possible for young mothers to get a second chance at education in the formal system. The target of enrolling and retaining 250 girls in school per country per year has already been exceeded in both countries.



### **Facts and figures 2015:**

- *300 girls enrolled in bridging schools*
- *7457 households have been tracked in Uganda and 1250 in Kenya to collect comprehensive information on girls in the target communities*
- *25 training sessions have been held in Uganda and 6 in Kenya with teachers, bridge centre coordinators, community mobilizers, village elders, local leaders, youth, teen mothers and project staff on a variety of child rights related subjects*

ICDI's partner in this project is the MasterCard Foundation.



# Other ICDI activities in 2015

## Consultancies

### Expert support to Aflatoun (Child Social and Educational Finance)

Aflatoun is an international organization focusing on financial and social education of children. In a previous consultancy ICDI supported Aflatoun in developing a special curriculum for young children, called Aflatot.

In 2015 ICDI's Early Years team provided a 2 day training workshop for Aflatoun staff to share information on current issues and developments in Early Childhood Development from a global perspective. We also supported Aflatoun staff to deepen their knowledge and understanding of principles and concepts underpinning Aflatot. Another task in 2015 was to support the development of a Family Toolkit, accompanying Aflatot.



### Expert support to the Roma Education Fund (REF, Budapest)

The Roma Education Fund (REF) supports policies and programs which ensure quality education for Roma, including the desegregation of education systems, with the ultimate goal of closing the gap in educational outcomes between Roma and non-Roma. It is currently supporting early childhood education and care (ECEC) projects in 11 countries: Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Croatia, Hungary, Kosovo, Macedonia, Romania, Serbia and Slovakia.

ICDI continued to provide expert support to REF to increase their institutional capacity in the field of Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC). Activities included the drafting of a 0-3 years communicaty based component for REFs ECEC strategy; presentations on the Changing Face of ECEC policy and Assessing young children's learning and development as part of REFs annual staff retreat. In October, Margaret Kernan visited Kosovo to support in the training of data collectors from Serbia and Kosovo to pilot the Home Learning Environment Parent Interview questionnaire. For more information about the Roma Education Fund see [www.romaeducationfund.hu](http://www.romaeducationfund.hu).



## Training

### **Belarus: Training for Social Workers in Foster Care**

In August 2015 Bep van Sloten and ICDI's Mathijs Euwema gave a second 3-day training for around 20 staff from SOS Children's Villages in Mogilev, Belarus. This training focused on how social workers can work positively with foster children and foster parents. Topics included: recruitment and selection of foster parents; basic training for foster parents; child friendly re-unification approaches; setting up self-support groups for foster parents; autism, causes and consequences; and preventing professional burn-out. The training was well received and the social workers indicated they would be able to use it in their daily work.



### **Turkey: Training in 'My Backpack'**

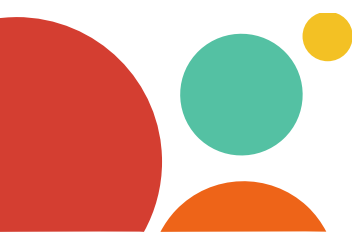
In April and May 2015 Bep van Sloten and ICDI's Mathijs Euwema gave two trainings for 25 social workers from foster care organizations from different regions in Turkey in the 'My Backpack' methodology. 'My Backpack' is an interactive method that supports communication between social workers, children and foster parents, and helps children deal with the traumatic experience of being separated from their biological families. This method has proven highly effective and covers a clear gap in the care for foster children. It is now being used in Sweden, Netherlands, Czech Republic, Bulgaria and Turkey. For more info please go to [www.mybackpack.com](http://www.mybackpack.com).



# Financial Statement

In 2015 ICDI's total income from project subsidies and other donations was € 1.467.280. Of this 86 % was directly spent on ICDI's objectives 'Child Protection', 'Early Childhood Education and Care', 'Newly Emerging Issues of Children and Youth' and 'Child and Youth Participation' (in 2015 this was 81%). Total expenditures in 2015 were € 1.464.477, leaving a positive result of € 2.803.

Just 14 % was spent on overhead and fundraising costs. This latter figure falls well below the maximum of 25% for such costs as set by regular Dutch standards for Non Governmental Organisations. ICDI also adheres to the so called 'Code Wijffels'. For the full financial statement and independent auditor's report, please go to our website <http://icdi.nl/who-we-are/reports> .





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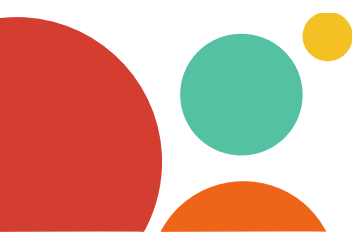
Remi Goossens ›  
Programme Manager (Youth)



Nico van Oudenhoven ›  
Senior Associate



Rekha Wazir ›  
Senior Associate





International Child Development Initiatives (ICDI) is a knowledge organization in psychosocial development of children and young people growing up in difficult circumstances.

ICDI believes in the power of children and young people, supporting their rights and addressing the underlying causes for the problems they face.

We aim to improve policies and practices by building the skills of: children, mothers, fathers, families, communities, local organizations, and authorities. ICDI also works with and for bigger international child rights organizations, supporting knowledge transfer through training, research and advice.

From Nepal to Nicaragua, and from Kiev to Katwijk, our dream is 'a happy life for all children'. Serious and sincere, academic and practical, small and with major impact, ICDI has been promoting psychosocial well-being of children and young people for more than twenty years.

