



International Child
Development Initiatives

Growing up and moving on



ICDI's strategy for the period 2015-2021

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1. Thematic goals 2015-2020

Based on the experiences in the past five years (one only has to flip through our annual reports to see the trends), and based on the expertise within our team, and based on where we are likely to have the most impact and where we can potentially attract the most funding for, it is suggested that for the period 2015-2020 we set ourselves goals in only two areas, child protection and early childhood education and care.

1. By December 2020, ICDI has been instrumental in creating improvements in child protection systems, services, communities that contribute to the healthy development of children and young people (8-21) in at least 10 countries.

2. By December 2020, families, communities and practitioners in at least 5 countries, are supported by ICDI to create accessible and equitable ECED initiatives that provide rich, safe and nurturing environments for young children (0-8).

The countries where this should take place will not be defined here, although it should be emphasized that we would like to continue and deepen our work in many of the countries we are now active in (most notably Nicaragua, Sierra Leone, Ethiopia, Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan, Belarus, and Palestine). This because it's clear that structural improvements need long term investments.

It should be noted that by limiting ourselves to only two topics, we are making quite a shift from the ICDI philosophy (also professed in the previous strategic plan) that we are and should remain a multi-issue and not a some- or single-issue organization.

In the coming years we will focus on the two afore mentioned thematic goals, but we will of course keep our eyes and mind open for new developments in the lives of children. Where and when necessary (and possible) we will try to support efforts to address such new developments. Child and youth participation will remain and become an even more important feature of all our work.

3. ICDI Profile 2015-2020

The **main** focus in the coming years will be to position ICDI more clearly to the outside world, especially to professional audiences (nationally and internationally), the general public (especially in The Netherlands), and the (new) media (both nationally and internationally).

As formulated in our recent communications plan: *“It is our belief that by becoming better known as a **specialist, niche knowledge center** on current and newly emerging child and youth development related issues, in this digital age, we can expect to get better access to funds, to develop our media profile and develop our network within and beyond the sector.”*

We will heavily invest in our communication efforts to the outside world. To this end a Communications Manager has been hired, new website will be developed, new branding, and an increase of activities in the new media. Under the lead of our Communications Manager all ICDI staff (and board members) will be involved in these efforts.

(for more details we refer to the Communications Plan)

Internally we will continue to strengthen the capacity of our team by:

- Offering training opportunities
- Organizing regular staff knowledge exchange meetings
- Creating opportunities for team building and relaxation
- Yearly staff performance reviews
- Creating a new organizational structure *(see next chapter)*

We plan to do a big review of our HR policies in 2016, developing together with the team an HR framework for years to come.

In the coming years we will also further strengthen our capacity building portfolio, offering clear training modules on certain topics such as: child and youth development, children as researchers, use of ICDI tools (UPSI-5, Quats), life skills training, training on foster care related issues, and so forth. Promotion and acquisition of these training options will partly take place through the communications strategy.

We will also expand and better “sell” our consultancy services in providing advice, research (including reviews, evaluations and impact assessments), partnership and network development, scoping, mapping and design of projects, organizational development, strategic planning and change management, ofcourse always for child- and youth centered organizations.

We will strive to keep number of staff between 7 to 10. Geographically we are not limited to a certain region or number of countries, but –as said earlier- we hope to be able to continue in many of the countries we are active in now, to have a more sustainable, long-term impact there. At the same time our “choice” for certain countries will remain dependent, as it has always been, on a mix of things such

as: identified needs of children and potential added value of our work, presence of strong partner(s), funding opportunities and other practical considerations. Whatever may be, ICDI is and will remain first and foremost about quality, not quantity.

4. ICDI Fundraising 2015-2020

1. Continue and get better (more time and cost efficient) in drafting project proposals (individually or with partners) for bigger funding opportunities with Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, EU, and other international and national donors. With more cost efficient we think especially in terms of being less often lead applicant ourselves, getting -more than already is the case- on board on the merits of our expertise (training and tools), and making sure that the financial compensation is really worth the effort (so doing much less the small, little projects, with little serious income). In addition, we can make strategic decisions to engage in (smaller) innovative projects that benefit the further development of our expertise or profile and can be used for partnership building or consultancies (see below).

But we should focus in the coming years especially on two aspects:

2. Partnership building. The coms strategy is also geared towards “marketing/framing” ICDI as a niche expert organization on child development, that can support bigger organizations with much needed advice, training and research. We should build strong relationships with (first) 3 to 5 bigger NGOs/Donors, with the aim of making them view us as an essential building block in child centered projects they want to develop and implement. For this to work we also will need to develop our products and services much more, and make sure that they can be clearly and attractively presented to others. Of course a much more detailed action plan is needed to develop this aspect of our fundraising strategy 2015-2020.
3. Expanding our consultancy portfolio. Although originally started as a kind of consultancy firm, ICDI through the years has become a project organization. In the past years our consultancies were haphazard and always on top of our regular projectwork. The amount of funds generated through consultancies has therefore also been limited. There are some judicial issues involved that we would need to take into account if we were to increase the number of consultancies (we are non-profit, so we cannot openly compete; at least, at some point this could become an issue). There are also constraints in terms of HR and time versus regular project management. Focusing more on acquisition of consultancies would imply some shifts in how we organize our work and in who does what. It does however seem a much more promising road than we until now thought, and also fits well with our coms plan’s ambitions and the further development and marketing of our products and services.
4. Fundraising with *exceptional* donors (rich individuals, companies). This fourth strategy came up during a strategic session with the whole team. The idea is to secure some kind of more “core-funding” type of income. It could still be linked to a clear programme or project, but it would entail substantial, longer term, structural support to the organization. Given the complexity, intensiveness, lack of possibilities and thus lack of likelihood of this kind of fundraising to succeed, this does not seem something that should be done by regular staff, and would fall to the Communications & Fundraising Manager, and to a much lesser extent to the Director and/or Senior Associate(s).

Another issue: ICDI’s focus on the first 3 described fundraising strategies needs a broader, organization wide change of set-up and approach (also in light of ICDI wanting to become a real ‘centre of expertise’). We have decided we will create 2 teams: one called ‘Early Years (0-8)’ and one called ‘Children & Young People (8-21)’. Each team will have a Teamleader, managing a team of Specialists. Each team will get a

clear set of goals, including a yearly target in terms of fundraising (applying the 3 strategies described above¹; which strategy is most applied will differ per team and will depend on strengths of Teamleader and Specialists). A new structure is proposed (see page 16), with a Management Team, existing of Director, Teamleaders and HR & Finance Manager.

¹ A format for Annual Action Plans (AAP) has been developed. For each team the AAP 2016 should be ready by November 2015.

5. Conclusions

In the past years the landscape in which ICDI operates has changed significantly. Especially in terms of available funds it has become much harder, even more so for little content and project driven organizations like ours. It's time for us to accept this reality and grow up and move on. At our 20 years anniversary party I said that ICDI never wants to grow up completely, late adolescence is a bit our eternal age. That may be true, or we may want it to be true, but if we are to survive and stay meaningful in a new era, then we have to show the flexibility and learning capacity that is also very typical for adolescence. And if that means changing our identity a bit, there is nothing wrong with that either. As long as the underlying personality stays the same.

To summarize, our strategy for the period 2015-2020:

- We will focus on two result areas (child protection and early childhood care and education);
- We will focus on developing our communication (website, social media), to make ourselves better known for what we want to be: an expert niche, specialist organization on child development, good in providing training, research and consultancies;
- Besides getting more efficient in being part of successful projects (applications), we will strongly focus on 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.
- Our organizational structure will change, to support all the above, by creating two teams, one focused on the Early Years (0-8) and one focused on Children and Young People (8-21). Each team will be headed by a Teamleader. A Management Team (headed by the Director) will from now on be responsible for overall management of ICDI, and will consist, besides the Director, of the two Teamleaders and the HR & Finance Manager.

Drafted by Mathijs Euwema, Director

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ICDI ORGANOGRAM

M.T. = Management Team

EC = Early Childhood

MCA = Middle Childhood &
Adolescence

