



**The Story
Continues...!**

**ANNUAL
REPORT
2016**



International Child
Development Initiatives

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The Story
Continues...!



‘Not seeing the forest
through the trees.’

Introduction

Nowadays much is made of data. Children everywhere are exposed to tests from birth up to adulthood. Officials demand, from teachers and care professionals, to keep track of children's progress in excel sheets. Statisticians study enormous amounts of data to say something on children's health and cognitive development. Governments like to show off their policies by hiding behind flow charts and indexes. Non-governmental organizations, eager to please donors, likewise are presenting endless numbers that they claim measure the impact their work is having.

There is a saying: 'Not seeing the forest through the trees.' That's how all this often feels: through the piles of reports that are produced we sometimes can't see the kids anymore.

We need to realize something: children's lives are not fragmented sets of data. Children's lives are more like stories, each one unique and valuable and interesting of its own accord.

At ICDI we like to read, tell and sometimes, in some small way, help write those stories. It's not that we think numbers are meaningless. We don't, we also collect such information. But it is definitely not what we are most interested in.

Our work contributes to children's real life stories in a positive way. That's why we started our own story 23 years ago, and that's what we hopefully will continue to do for many more years to come. In this annual report we therefore share stories. Those of ourselves, of people we work with and – most importantly- of children.

A Story from the Board

In 2016 the (supervisory) Board of ICDI bid farewell to one of its much appreciated members, Anke Vervoord, who had been a Board member since 2013. We decided not to fill the vacancy, since we had just recruited three new and competent Board members in 2015, and the Board still consisted of five members after Anke's departure. We did manage to reinforce ourselves by recruiting a volunteer minutes secretary (Ester Holswilder), and we also initiated the recruitment and appointment of a Confidential Counsellor for the staff of ICDI, whose appointment took effect as of December 2016.

In 2016 the Board continued to introduce policy governance as its approach to supervision of the organization. We agreed on a policy framework with the director and we now use this framework to guide our Board meetings. The main consequence of the new approach is that the Board now focuses on, more than before, if and how ICDI is achieving its goals. Based on the developments in the external environment, and the adopted policy guidelines, we guide and supervise the director in achieving ICDI's mission and goal; "promoting the psychosocial well-being of children growing up in difficult circumstances with providing training, research advice and partnership.

Policy governance really helped us to realize what our main responsibility is as the supervisory board of ICDI: we represent the interests of the main target group of ICDI- the vulnerable children- because they themselves cannot. This makes being on the board of ICDI very relevant and very fulfilling, our role being simple and clear. We look at ICDI through the eyes of the children that have to benefit from ICDI's activities. Therefore we want ICDI to flourish and grow, and continue to deliver high quality interventions, whether via high-level policy intervention, or small scale grass roots initiatives. The goal remains the same; to improve situations for vulnerable children. Providing safe and healthy environments for children to grow up in benefits not only the future and development of those children, but also the future of our world.

The Board applauds the achievements of ICDI in 2016. Worldwide, as many as 60,000 children and young people have directly or indirectly benefited from ICDI projects and programmes. Furthermore, ICDI and its partner organizations trained around 8,000 child care professionals, and

approximately 18,000 parents and community members were reached with training or awareness-raising activities. Although numbers are not the most important aspect of our work (see the Introduction), these are nevertheless impressive figures.

For less than € 25 per child per year, ICDI is making a difference. We also consider it an achievement worth mentioning, that such a small organization was able to acquire new funding sources to fill the gap that the Girl Power programme left behind. There is still a (hopefully long) story to be told, and the Board remains sharply focused on creating a more sustainable long term (financial) perspective. We remain optimistic that ICDI will find new allies and new allies that will enable us to help many more vulnerable children to grow up in a safe and healthy environment.

Jeroen Wismans
Chairperson of the Board

[READ MORE ABOUT JEROEN >](#)



Early Years (0-8)

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 research studies, leading to an increase in support for Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) programmes. However, the majority 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.).

Introducing 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.

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Margaret Kernan
Team Leader
Early Years

"What I most enjoy in my work is making sense of the complexity of children's lives and 'translating' new knowledge together with all the wonderfully committed teachers, social workers, parents, and organizations we in ICDI work with."

[READ MORE ABOUT MARGARET >](#)



Giulia Cortellesi
Senior Programme Manager
Early Years

"The opportunity to do research and develop training on issues that I experience myself every day as a mother of two young children, makes my work for ICDI very fulfilling. My aim is to contribute to a world where there is social justice and inclusion for children of all backgrounds."

[READ MORE ABOUT GIULIA >](#)



**SEE ALSO
CHILDREN &
YOUTH (8-21)
PAG. 14 >**

Palestine - Foundations for the Future



A Story from Nico van Oudenhoven
Senior Associate
[READ MORE ABOUT NICO >](#)

"Nobody seems to know or even to care how many people live in Shu'fat refugee camp, an area of 0.203 km2 in Jerusalem, set aside in 1965 for some 4,000 Palestinian refugees. Any number is tossed about: 60, 000, 80,000 or 120,000? It doesn't seem to matter. Ever growing piles of rotting debris, penetrating smells of filth and excrement, drugs and weapons abound, car wrecks at every corner, murders a daily thing, and rats think they are in heaven. Lots and lots of boys and young men; all looking very cool. Wrapped-up women and girls scurrying hastily in narrow alleys, carrying heavy plastic bags. Yes, there's one (!!) playground, a bit larger than a basketball pitch, and there is an occasional tree. If you wanted to make a comparison with the Israeli yuppie township of Pisgat Ze'ev barely 400 meters away, you would not know where to start. And what would such a comparison add or matter anyway? Shu'fat refugee camp in Jerusalem is a hellhole, no doubt about it.

If there ever was a toxic environment to grow up in, then it is the Shu'fat camp. One wonders: **What do parents here tell their children? What meaning do they attach to such common words as 'fairness', 'integrity', 'future', or even 'beauty' and 'hope'?**

In October we visited a girls' school in the camp and talked with some young women. They are there in their role as 'tutors', and are being supported by the Trust for Early Childhood and Family Development, ICDI's longstanding Palestinian partner organization. These girls help children to stay in school by playing with them, talking to their parents, and trying to assist with daily problems. And they are successful. Amazing about them is that they look good, vibrant, healthy, confident and happy. They actually say 'We are strong!' When asked what helped them to remain 'standing' while being exposed to such a violent environment, these young women mentioned such activities as music, sport, dancing, arts and just sharing stories with each other. And they added: 'Stress, loss of land and pressure has made us strong. We need development and knowledge to make us strong, use stress positively. We are stronger now and that is why we won't stop. We need to pave the way'.

We, at ICDI often struggle against despair and cynicism when we see what's happening to so many children and young people in so many places, and the deadening bureaucracy and Orwellian 'newspeak' that has taken over the debate and practice of international development. Those young women in Shu'fat Refugee Camp, of all places, made it clear, why we shouldn't stop."



Context

Children in the Palestinian West Bank are growing up in what can only be characterized as violent circumstances. In the past years ICDI, together with our partner organization Early Childhood and Family Development Trust, has improved the quality of Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) services in 10 communities through the project 'Foundations for the Future'.

One of the key activities of the project was to bring young children in closer contact with nature, to support their healthy development and offer some balance against all the 'ugliness'. We wanted to do this in a sustainable way: conserving water, recycling materials and using found items as play materials. We called these places 'Gardens of Eve', because girls played a leading role in the project.

Other project activities included:

- Two community schools fully functioning and open five days a week;
- Learn by Play: aimed at limiting illiteracy and decreasing the dropout rate from schools of children who are at risk. Parents, teachers, and young volunteers worked together to stimu-

- late the learning and participation of young children;
- Mother to Mother Program: provided training to mothers from local communities in early child care and development, who in turn became volunteers that offer home counseling to other mothers in their communities;
- Training of teachers in the use of child friendly and child-centred pedagogical tools. Training focused on communication with children and how to support early childhood development;
- Support to three 'Mother & Child Centers': one in Shu'fat refugee camp and two in villages Northwest of Jerusalem. 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.

Partner
Early Childhood and Family Development Trust (ECFD Trust)

Donor
European Union



Facts and Figures 2016

30 mothers were trained as para-professionals, working in the communities to support parents and children.

300 families from 10 communities received pedagogical support through the

50 teachers were trained in working with child friendly pedagogical tools.

20 teachers were trained in setting up and managing Gardens of Eve..

Two fully functioning community schools were set up, and open five days a week.

10 parent/teachers councils are functioning and active, benefiting 50 teachers and 900 parents.

Three mother and child centres are fully functioning, benefiting 3000 children and 250 mothers.

Gardens of Eve were set up in four preschools and five primary schools, benefiting 2000 children.



Europe: Together Old and Young – TOY

Quotes from young children, older people and those in between

This experience has been very rewarding for me. I felt very involved, loved by the children and also I have noticed a significant improvement in my well-being and personal mood.'

Carmen (77)

Every session had an educational value, a peaceful atmosphere and was very touching. Children are so special and they enjoy these activities'

Anna (79)

The real facilitators were not us, but children themselves who taught us how to relate to seniors in the most spontaneous, unfiltered and emotional way.'

Silvia (62)

Some time ago the grandparents were the reference points in families. Now this has changed, and bringing them inside a school and allowing them to be grandparents to the classes has an incredible value. The level of respect was surprising – probably the highest in my experience as educator – it brought beautiful and very special dynamics.'

Alessio (35) teacher

I discovered how to restore my bike, I will teach my father!'

Davide (8)



Context

Together Old and Young (TOY) is an initiative conceived and developed by ICDI. In a nutshell TOY aims to bring (very) young children and older people together. Through sharing experiences they have fun, learn from each other and develop meaningful relationships. Through research we know that intergenerational activities have benefits for all age groups at different levels: it counteracts aging stereotypes and it increases the general well-being of senior citizens as well as the self-esteem and self-confidence of young children. The TOY approach also promotes social interaction and inclusion, to overcome segregated communities. TOY can happen in different spaces in the community, such as a local library, a community cultural and arts centre, a day care centre, a garden or an outdoor playground.

During 2016, with the support of the Dioraphte Foundation, ICDI worked to bring the TOY approach to a global scale, by building a stronger international network and increasing the availability of resources and exchange among practitioners, policy makers and researchers.

As part of this effort, ICDI has successfully launched a new project called 'Together Old and Young:

Practitioners Learning and Upscaling Skills', or 'TOY-PLUS'. This project aims to develop an innovative online curriculum and methodology in intergenerational work for practitioners in early childhood education and care (ECEC), social care and community work. At the end of the project (2018) the TOY-PLUS MOOC (massive open online course) will be publicly available on open online learning platforms. The other main task of TOY-PLUS is the development of a TOY Quality Stamp, with agreed standards for local authorities and educational institutions in intergenerational work involving young children and older adults.

Partner

Beth Johnson Foundation (UK)

Dublin Institute of Technology (Ireland)

Hellenic Open University (Greece)

Municipality Lleida (Spain)

PEI Educational Research Institute (Slovenia)

Retesalute (Italy)

Donor

Together Old and Young -TOY: **Dioraphte Foundation**
TOY-PLUS: European Commission (Erasmus+ Strategic Partnerships for Adult Education)

Facts and Figures 2016

Website: **4000 single users.**

TOY was awarded for its creativity, inclusivity and innovation in lifelong learning during the **Lifelong Learning Award** held in Brussels in October 2016.

Three academic peer-reviewed articles presenting and elaborating on the TOY approach were published by ICDI and other TOY partner organisations in Europe.

ICDI presented the TOY approach at three international conferences: the **BECERA Conference**, held in Birmingham (UK) on 16 February 2016; the 7th **Conference on Childhood Studies**, held in Turku (Finland) from 6 to 8 June 2016; and the **Child in the City Conference 2016** held from 7 to 9 November 2016 at the University College in Ghent (Belgium).

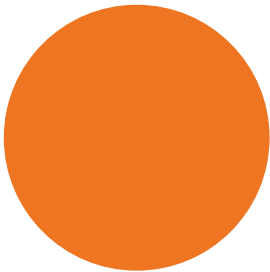


Ethiopia: Universal Psychosocial Indicator for Five Year Old Boys and Girls (UPSI-5)

The Story behind this Psychosocial Indicator

"If you have a minute to spare, you should type in 'Ethiopian Children's Song' at YouTube. You will not be among the first viewers, some 1.5 million have gone before you. When you watch the video and many others (like the more edifying 'New Ethiopian Kids Song - Embut Abeba 2015'), you may perhaps understand why the UPSI-5 was developed by ICDI and why it is currently being introduced in Ethiopia. Rather than showing the all too familiar hungry and sad faces of little girls and boys, these videos show happy children who are embracing life. They also show that life itself -having friends, moving about, giving and finding meaning, caring for each other, being able to enjoy nature, learning and loving and so much more-, cannot be defined by physical health alone.

Without denying the importance of good health and nutrition, certainly not in the Ethiopian context, the USPI-5, or Universal 'Psychosocial Indicator for Five-Year-Old Boys and Girls', has been constructed to help practitioners and policy makers to get an impression of the psychosocial well-being of young children. It is an additional pillar to such indicators as under-five mortality rate (UMR5). With new information available from the UPSI-5 research, it is expected that more attention will be given to children's psychosocial well-being. Introducing the UPSI-5 in Ethiopia is an audacious effort, as the country faces so many issues that may make young children's psychosocial well-being seem unimportant. Clips like the ones mentioned above make clear just how important it is. This two year project aims to improve the psychosocial well-being of young children, with an emphasis on those growing up in difficult circumstances."



Context

ICDI has developed the **UPSI-5** a simple, quick-to-administer, and thoroughly-tested tool, to measure the psychosocial functioning of large groups of five-year-old children. It can be used to track changes about children's psychosocial well-being over time, to make comparisons among groups (e.g. rural versus urban populations), and to inform early childhood policies and services on a national, regional and local level.

UPSI-5 is a highly-needed and missing complement to prevailing efforts that look exclusively at the physical aspects of children's health, such as the

'Under-Five Mortality Rate (U5MR)', 'height-for-age' and 'height-for-weight', or school enrollment. Already tested and further developed in South Africa in 2013 to 2015, Ethiopia is now the second country where UPSI-5 is being implemented. The idea is to start in Ethiopia and then expand to other countries.

Partner

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)

Donor

Dioraphte Foundation



Facts and Figures 2016

Four data collectors

were trained.

40 preschool teachers

are being interviewed about the psychosocial well-being of 1000 five-year-old children (in progress).

Two information seminars

on the psychosocial well-being of young children were organized in the cities of Debre Birhan and Hawassa. Total reach: 100 people.



Children & Youth (8-18)

ICDI's Children & Youth Team develops and delivers tailor made training, provides advice, conducts research, and designs and implements projects, concerning boys and girls roughly 8-18 years of age, that are growing up in difficult circumstances. The overall aim of our work is to create safe, enriching social and professional environments, to help facilitate the smooth transition from middle childhood (8-12) to adolescence (12-18), and from adolescence to adulthood, so that children can fulfill their potential and become happy, well-balanced grown-ups. We focus on children and young people most at risk, with specific attention to those living in or coming from situations of violence.

ICDI's Children & Youth Team has three focal areas:

Protecting children and youth from violence

Too many children and young people still grow up in situations of abuse, neglect and violence. By strengthening protection systems and services, we help to create safe, nurturing social and professional environments. We especially focus on children and youth who have lost parental care (or are at risk of doing so), and on war-affected children and youth.

Child and youth participation

Participation is not only a right as laid down in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, it is also of vital importance for the well-being and psychosocial development of children and youth. Our team has developed innovative projects and tools to this end, an example of which is our training on 'children as researchers'.

Girls

Sadly, girls are often most at risk. Therefore we pay special attention to their rights and needs in our work. Besides investing in girls themselves, much can be achieved by engaging their families and communities. The 'Girls-QUAT' is a participatory tool developed by ICDI which can be used to measure and monitor the quality of services for girls. A prime example of our efforts with and for girls is the 2016-2021 'HER CHOICE' project, in which we tackle the widespread problem of child marriage.

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SEE ALSO
EARLY YEARS
< PAG. 6



Rutger van Oudenhoven
Senior Programme Manager
Children & Youth

"In my professional work I aim to convince people that any development should take into account the well-being of children and youth, as they form the core of our investment in the future. They should be at the centre of development"

[READ MORE ABOUT RUTGER >](#)



Remi Goossens
Programme Manager
Children & Youth

"I think listening to young people, taking them seriously and using their experience to educate others, is one of the most important things in this field of work."

[READ MORE ABOUT REMI >](#)

Worldwide: HER CHOICE – Building Child Marriage Free Communities

A Story from a Child Bride in Pakistan

"Daughters are considered a burden, and the sooner you get rid of the burden, the better. This mindset is the most important reason for child marriages in our communities – mine was no exception.

I was merely 14 years old when my parents decided to arrange my marriage. Luckily my husband is not too old – just 5 years difference between our ages. He did not have any job, and had nominal education. We had to make a real struggle to deal with the problems our marriage brought. In the beginning, he quite loved me, and then he thought I was reason for each and every problem he faced in his life. Slowly, he realized that we had to live together and support each other to stay happy.

My mother in law was really impatient about child birth. She wanted to have a grandson as soon as possible. Pregnancy and child birth were really horrible experiences for me, and then raising a child was another challenge.

I was not alone. Most of the girls of my age were married, and had one or two children. Some of them were married to men much older than themselves. The age difference was another challenge for them. We were all going through similar problems, and would share our issues with one another but nobody could help others much.

One day, we heard that representatives of an NGO came to our village, and talked to the village elders about child marriages and its negative consequences. The elders started talking about it. I, too, heard about it from my aunty. Most of the elders were unhappy about it and thought the NGO was promoting some kind of western agenda.

The NGO people came again and again. I learnt that the NGO's name is Bedari. It works for women rights and provides support to women and girls facing violence. Later, they decided to form a group of girls who were victims of child marriages. They said a person married before the age of 18 was victim of child marriage. I talked to my husband and joined the group. They provided us lots of valuable information, and encouraged us to speak about the problems we faced due to early marriage. They told us about negative effects of child marriages and early teenage pregnancies. They advised us not to have any more pregnancies before reaching the age of 20.

I was convinced. In fact, every girl in the group was convinced, but we could not take a decision on our own. Anyhow, I had better luck as my husband is quite supportive. I talked to him, and he agreed that we should not have any more children. Then, I got back to Bedari representatives, and asked them to tell me about family planning methods. They referred me to population welfare center, where I learnt about the methods. Though my mother in law wants me to produce more children, but we have taken a strong stance.

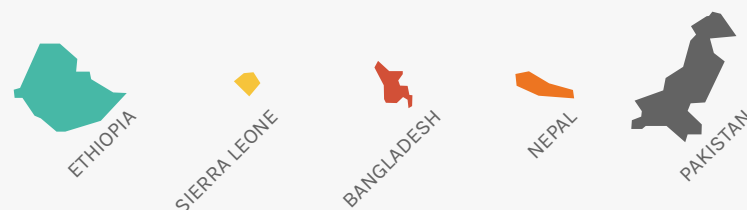
Now I am volunteering for [Bedari](#) in their [HER CHOICE](#) programme together with ICDI. I talk to other teenage mothers about these issues, and where possible I try to talk to elders as well. Slowly, we are changing our community. I am sure child marriages would become a thing of past in a few years in our community."



BUILDING CHILD MARRIAGE FREE COMMUNITIES



ICDI is active in five countries:



GOALS AND STRATEGIES



The long-term goal (2016-2020) is to support the creation of child marriage-free communities in which girls and young women are free to decide if, when and whom to marry. The six intervention strategies are based on evidence, which shows that the most consistent results of targeting child marriages are achieved by fostering information, skills and networks for girls in combination with community mobilisation. Therefore, strategies focus on both areas:

Increasing girls' control in decision-making

- 1** Investing in girls, their knowledge, skills related to Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) and participation in society: enhancing their comprehension of the negative effects of child marriage and of alternative options.
- 2** Keeping girls in school: improving access to formal education for girls by supporting girl-friendly schools and building knowledge through schooling in general, and on SRHR in particular.
- 3** Improving access to youth-friendly SRHR services for girls: improving health services and by actively referring girls to health workers.

Mobilising relevant community actors

- 4** Strengthening the economic security of girls and their families: creating and supporting women's self-help groups with training and access to (financial) resources.
- 5** Transforming social norms and traditional practices: mobilising and supporting communities, including boys, men, women, leaders to promote girls' rights and gender equity, to achieve gender equity in education, decision making, and access to services.
- 6** Creating an enabling legal and policy environment on preventing child marriage: supporting traditional leaders and (local) authorities to enforce national policies on preventing child marriage.



Partners

Kinderpostzegels (NL), the Hunger Project (NL), University of Amsterdam (NL), Education for Sustainable Development (Ethiopia), CWIN (Nepal), Dalit (Bangladesh), Bedari (Pakistan), One Family People (Sierra Leone)

Donor

Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Facts and Figures 2016

Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, Nepal

7384 girls reached through training on Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR), life skills, leadership, economic empowerment etc.

1589 child care professionals (teachers, health workers) trained in girl friendly approaches.

1962 community members (traditional and religious community leaders, parents, local and national authorities) trained in alternatives to child marriage, SRHR, and other approaches that stimulate girl participation.



Belarus: School for Parents



A Story from Mathijs Euwema

ICDI's director (also trainer, researcher, project manager, child psychologist and many other things)

[READ MORE ABOUT MATHIJS >](#)

"In October a colleague and I gave presentations at the end-conference of the project 'School for Parents' in the city of Mogilev, in the east of Belarus. It was a highly successful conference, with over a hundred child care professionals from all over the country present. It was a fitting conclusion to a three year project in which our partner, SOS Children's Villages, managed to make great improvements in the support of families that care for foster children, and families that are at risk of having their children being taken away from them due to problems like alcoholism and mental disorders.

I gave a presentation on the impact of trauma on children's brain development and also talked about how secondary trauma can affect professionals working with these children. The lecture seemed to go down rather well judging from people's enthusiastic reactions.

But what proved to be my highlight of the year came actually later, at the end of the conference. A lady who had been in one of our trainings a year earlier came up to me. She did not speak any English so she used a translating app on her mobile phone to tell me something she obviously found important to share. In a bit of broken English I read the following: "Your training last year on how to deal with professional burn-out helped me to recognize and overcome my own professional burn-out. Thank you!" I can honestly say that I was almost moved to tears. We hugged and then parted ways.

Why is this my highlight of 2016? Because it is in a way exemplary of the work we try to do as ICDI. We want to strengthen people who work with children growing up in difficult circumstances, so that they can enjoy healthy, positive, nurturing relationships with children that so much need that. It may seem small, but to me this is a sign of the impact we are having."



Context

The project 'School for Parents' was an EU funded project implemented by SOS Children's Villages, Belarus. ICDI played a supporting role by providing training for child-care professionals working with families and children. The improvement of parental competences, and lobbying for child rights realization through the implementation of good experience and innovative approaches, were important objectives of the project. The aim was to help children who have lost parental care (or are at risk of losing it), and

are placed under alternative care. Family-type children homes, foster families, and adoptive parents were supported through the project, which focused on the Mogilev region in Eastern Belarus.

Partner

SOS Children's Villages

Donor

European Union



Facts and Figures 2016

992 children and **432 care-givers** (298 families) received intensive psychosocial support from trained care workers (more than 6 months).

470 children and **642 care-givers** received short-term and one-off support.

842 parents improved their pedagogical competencies via training sessions.

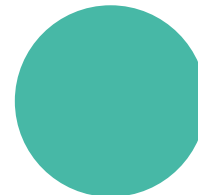
During this three year project **1914 child care specialists** participated in different training sessions, workshops and seminars focused on improving their skills in giving psychosocial support to parents and children in vulnerable situations (foster families and families at risk of being separated).

Netherlands: A Safe Nest for Children in Refugee Centres

Observations from staff members about children in the NEST centres:

"Emina (11), a girl who has spent most of her life in different refugee centers, comes to NEST every day. It has increased her fragile self-confidence and self-esteem. She is now better able to express her wishes and needs, if a staff-member stays close to her and gives positive reassurance constantly. In those circumstances she looks for support when she finds something hard, or even better: then she is confident to do things on her own."

"Jano (10) had his parents really worried about him. He was very difficult to reach and expressed a death wish and said he wanted to run away from home. In NEST we see that he is blossoming again. His qualities come out and he starts to recognise these himself too. He is engaged in fun activities and interacts more and more positively with other kids. His concentration has improved and he has become less aggressive than before."



Context

The 'Nest model: a Home Away from Home' is an after-school programme developed in Bosnia and Herzegovina by Kinderpostzegels and ICDI. In essence it is a safe, stable place for children coming from difficult backgrounds, where they can receive psychosocial and educational support.

There are currently two such Nests in The Netherlands: one in the refugee centre in Katwijk (running already for 2 years), and one in the refugee centre in Burgum (operational since September 2016). The model from Bosnia has been adapted to the specific circumstances in Dutch refugee centres. Hundreds of kids

growing up in very difficult circumstances can make use of Nest, to enjoy creative group activities and individual psychosocial support. ICDI's role is to train the staff and volunteers of Stichting De Vrolijkheid, the main implementing organization, in the Nest approach, to support staff in their daily work and to conduct research on the impact of Nest on the children involved.

Partner

Stichting De Vrolijkheid

Donor

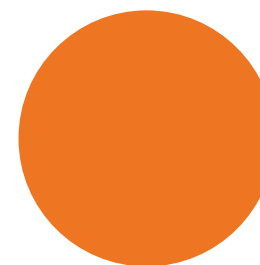
Kinderpostzegels



Facts and Figures 2016

100 children in two refugee centres are attending the Nest centres on a regular basis.

Six child care professionals have been trained in the Nest approach.



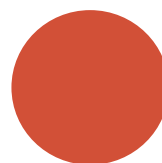
Nepal: Breaking the Barriers

Story of a visitor of the conference 'Praying for a Boy'

"The first presentation is of Tarik, the executive director of Central Child Welfare Board (CCWB). He kicks off this conference about Sex Selective Abortion (SSA) with a PowerPoint presentation about boy preference in Nepal, with additional examples from India and China. Birth rates show that nowadays for every 100 girls, 105 boys are born. Obviously this causes an imbalance in society. He gives an example of how difficult it is for young Chinese men to find a bride. In order for Nepal to avoid such situations in the (near) future it is crucial to act now, emphasizes Tarik.

When talking about SSA we know about the consequences it has for society and for women's health (physical and psychological). Everybody knows, also the women performing such measures. Awareness raising programmes are important, but clearly not sufficient. The law is there, but monitoring, investigating and punishment is lacking. As long as the (mostly private) health clinics can make money from performing illegal abortions we are a long way from solving the problem.

We need evidence-based advocacy to get the government to take action. Besides monitoring, the most important thing is the willingness to change. It is a deeply rooted tradition in Nepali culture. When even a parliamentarian is going to a temple to pray for a boy, what can you expect?"



Context

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 such abortions from occurring. Many women resort to unsafe and clandestine abortions. For this reason the project 'Breaking the Barriers: Safeguarding the Rights of Girl Infants' was developed. It is a three year (2015 - 2017) project funded by the European Commission. The overall goal is to eradicate sex selective abortions and girl infanticide in Nepal.

ICDI, together with our long-time Nepali partner CWIN, and local partners CHREPHA and WVA, implemented several activities in 2016: advocacy

packages were developed to influence community members, doctors and authorities; networks of local, community based organisations were set up to discuss the problem and jointly develop plans to counteract sex selective abortions; awareness was furthermore raised through radio programmes and workshops on girls' rights and approaches to engage men. ICDI's role was to monitor the project and give advice on activities, as well as to conduct several Girls-QUAT training sessions, which focused on assessing the quality of services for girls and young women.

Partner

CWIN Nepal

Donor

European Union

Facts and Figures 2016

Six Civil Society Networks for Combating Worst Forms of Discrimination against Girl Infants were formed where 150 stakeholder participated.

Form/activate village child protection committees: **36 meetings were conducted** in six project districts. 590 community members participated.

Training on girl's rights and protection at community level: **896 local stakeholders** and municipalities of six 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: **six counselors** were hired and trained

together with 12 other from different Civil Society Networks, provide such services to girls and young women in need.

Training for Female Community Health Volunteers to perform urine pregnancy test and provide basis psycho-social support: A total of **1050 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 seven adolescent girls were trained in and used the Girls QUAT to assess the quality of their shelter.



Ethiopia: Education Matters



A Story from Rutger van Oudenhoven

Senior Programme Manager

[READ MORE ABOUT RUTGER >](#)

"What really touched me during the final conference of the Education Matters project were the contributions by the girls, boys and parents who were touched by this project. Rarely have I seen such contributions by so called 'professional' or 'official' people.

After the introduction a 16 year-old girl stood up: 'I was married at 10, had to leave school and was abused by my husband. After two years I escaped and went back to my family. I went back to school but my family couldn't support me and after a while they wanted me to get married again. Thanks to the Education Matters project however, the teachers and project staff were able to convince my parents that I should not get married and continue my education. Besides convincing my family, the project also supported me with school materials and with the possibility of staying in the safe house at school, where I live during the week. I also receive counseling on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights and educational matters. I am now the best student of the class!'

After this a middle-aged woman stood up: 'This is also my story! I was also married at 10, I have divorced three husbands since and support my three children alone. People like me were always forced to look out for themselves, live in poverty, beg or enter into prostitution. I never was able to finish my education, but thanks to the project girls with the same history can now do those things. I myself have also become more aware and empowered.'

After this a boy, 15 years old, stood up, and eloquently and clearly spoke of the role boys have in raising understanding on gender roles and how they can either obstruct or contribute to girls' education. He spoke with genuine passion.

All the issues that the project addressed were incorporated in a show of 'edutainment', a play in which youth re-enacted a scene in which an ambitious school girl was, with permission of her mother, abducted by two boys and forcefully wed. The crowd watched with eagerness and delight. People laughed, cried and showed great appreciation for the play, which in a short time explained so well the complexities that girls face."

Context

In the past years, more and more girls are enrolled in schools in Ethiopia. Sadly, too many of them still drop out before completing their education.

The project 'Education Matters' was jointly implemented by ICDI and our Ethiopian partners; Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), and HIWOT. The overall objective was to ensure that Ethiopian

girls attend and complete primary and secondary education by addressing the main causes for school drop-out (such as early marriage). Project activities took place in 10 Kebeles (municipalities) of the North Shoa Zone, Amhara State. Besides improving facilities for girls in schools, the project has encouraged strong engagement of the wider community, including local authorities, traditional leaders and parents.



We first conducted a field research project which, in short, found that the key factors that keep girls in school were: not getting married; not being too poor; not being sexually harassed on the way to school. It also turned out that the attitude of the mother (whether she is supportive of her daughter's education or not) may be the most important way to prevent school drop-out (and sadly something that is often overlooked).

The findings of the study informed the other project activities which included: a training of teachers to become counselors; a training for

Partner

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)

Donor

Dioraphte Foundation



Facts and Figures 2016

Girl friendly spaces were established and improved in 10 schools: toilets were made up to standard, girls clubs and girls counseling rooms were refurbished.

Training in life skills, SRHR, and sanitary pad fabrication was conducted for **1000 girls**.

School materials support was provided for 100 girls.

Economic support and lodging at safe houses was provided for 15 girls.

Tutorial class support was provided for 200 girls.

Training on SRHR was conducted for **97 parents**.

Training on SRHR was conducted for staff and volunteers of 40 community based organisations.

mothers on sexual and reproductive health rights of girls; individual psychosocial support for girls; awareness raising within the community on the importance of sexual and reproductive health rights, 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 material support. At schools safe spaces were created for girls where they can receive sanitary menstruation pads and take a rest when needed.

Counselling and guidance by trained teachers was made available for all girls in project schools.

Awareness-raising theatre performances in public spaces were attended by over 2330 people.

AND: 30 CHILD MARRIAGE ARRANGEMENTS WERE CANCELLED!

The girls clubs reported cancellation of 19 child marriages due to their efforts, along with the guidance and support of school teachers. The girls who were prevented from marriage are now able to finish their education.

As a result of mother to mother discussions, parents, in collaboration with their respective local project committees, cancelled 11 child marriage arrangements.

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

Some quotes from children about bullying



Bullying is when children do not want to go to school anymore. When they have the feeling that no one helps them they are sad feel excluded they feel pain in their stomach if they have to go to school.'

Mike (9)

Yes, I have been bullied. It's not nice and feels like a maze that you can't get out. Bullies can make people gang up on you.

Sofia (11)



They think they are better than the rest; they think they are better than their victims. Bullying is like the 'survival of the fittest' and thus, it makes the bully stronger.'

Mohammed (10)



Sometimes you don't dare to talk to the teachers so it is good if the teachers take the first step.'

Jennifer (12)

Context

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

ICDI was the Dutch partner in a 2014-2017 EU-funded project focused on the early intervention and prevention of bullying in seven EU-countries (Bulgaria, Germany, The Netherlands, Romania, Slovakia, United Kingdom and Sweden). Project activities focused on several thematic areas: provision of spaces 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 participating countries and recommendations for their improvement.

Partner

Animus Association

Donor

Daphne programme of the European Union

Facts and Figures 2016

ICDI drafted the **research report**: 'Children's and Adults' Perspective on Bullying'.

ICDI drafted **a paper with recommendations**, and presented research findings at the closing conference in Sofia.

The book **'Listen, what children have to tell us about bullying and safety in school'**, written and illustrated by children, was published in seven countries.

At least **514 school children** aged 7-16 participated in empowerment and prevention initiatives.

140 child victims/perpetrators and their parents (190) were supported through community based interventions.

450 teachers were involved in capacity-building training.

10,500 parents were targeted with informative materials on the early signs of bullying.

Ukraine: A New Home



A Blog from Remi Goossens

Programme Manager

[READ MORE ABOUT REMI >](#)

"My colleague Mathijs and I were in Ukraine in August 2016 for the project 'A New Home'. We are working there with so-called Internally Displaced People (IDP), especially children and youth. IDPs have fled from the war in the east of Ukraine to safe areas in other parts of the country. ICDI is responsible for training professionals and volunteers to support their work with these young IDPs, who have often experienced sad things. We implement this project together with our Ukrainian partner organization, Labour and Health Social Initiatives (LHSI).

First we visited a remote nature area in central Ukraine, where the National Organization of Scouts of Ukraine (NOSU) have been organising summer camps for years. This year they also welcomed a number of IDP children. When we arrived the kids gathered around by age group, the young ones were only 6 years old whilst the oldest were up to 18 years of age. We had come to organize 'Children News Teams'. These teams were to report to all the participants on what is happening in the camp (this also to stimulate real child and youth participation). Each team consisted of reporters, photographers and cameramen, who went around the camp to talk to all the children. It turned out to be a successful activity that everybody really enjoyed. A small movie was made of all the interviews the kids did with each other.

After the visit to the summer camp we went to Odessa, where the training was organized. Present were staff from government agencies, teachers, NGO workers and volunteers (the latter are usually IDP's themselves). We were responsible for facilitating two days of the 3-day training. The first day focused on legislation, local context, and opportunities for organisations to find ways of working together (this day was facilitated by very capable Ukrainian colleagues). Our part of the training we tried to make as interactive, practical and fun as possible with exercises and group games, which the participants could also use in their daily work. We included a quiz on child development, group work on child participation, a personal timeline (to increase empathy of people on the impact certain events can have in a child's life), a case study about resilience, and finally a chair debate on some interesting issues.

As well as providing information and doing exercises together, we tried to get the message across that when it comes to psychosocial programming and child participation it's not necessary or even possible to follow very specific methods and techniques. The age of the child, the level of their development, their circumstances, the objectives, practical or personal limitations, all need to be taken into account when working with children and organising activities and programmes for them. We also stressed the importance of not just focusing on (assumed) psychological problems, like trauma, but also on strengthening the resilience of children, their families and communities. This training was highly evaluated by the participants, and many indicated that they would be able to put it to good use in their daily practice."



Context

Due to the conflict in the Eastern part of the Ukraine, there are now almost 2 million internally displaced people, many of them children. This project addresses the psychosocial needs of these young people, who are at risk of developing mental health problems and have trouble integrating into their host communities.

In conducting supportive activities for children and youth, priority is given to the mobilisation of existing support systems including family, friends, teachers, social workers, and community and religious leaders. Care is taken to strengthen children's existing capacities and support systems.

Activities include:

-Sports activities for girls and boys. These activities provide an opportunity for releasing energy and reducing stress.

-Child and youth friendly spaces are being created for children to play and interact with their peers,

free from violence and conflict. Examples include the aforementioned summer camps where they learn about nature and life skills, and are joined with non-IDP children. This creates an enabling environment for positive interaction.

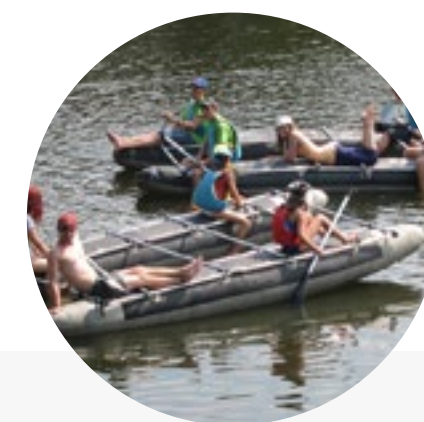
- Promoting youth participation. The IDP children and youth are directly involved in the development of Local Action Plans, thus ensuring they have a voice in their own future. Community leaders and local organizations involve young people in specific community tasks ranging from local clean-up campaigns, support by IDP children for elderly people, and other volunteer work.

Partner

[Labour and Health Social Initiatives \(LHSI\)](#)

Donor

European Union



Facts and Figures 2016

271 Internally Displaced People (IDP; refugee), children and youth (8-15 years old), took part in summer camps in 2016.

1326 internally displaced children and their families received social support from professionals trained in the project.

60 professionals from local organizations took part in different training sessions, some of which were delivered by ICDI. In our training we focused on how to give psychosocial support to children and youth affected by conflict. Topics included the psychosocial

development of children, creating true child participation, and building resilience in children. ICDI also gave a specific training on the [Nest model](#); as part of the project several Nest centres will now be set up in Ukraine.

Additionally, **200 Ukrainian professionals** were trained through 3 webinars, one of which was organized by ICDI. We introduced a handbook that we developed called 'Psychosocial Child & Youth Development: Implications for theory & practice when working with internally displaced children & youth in Ukraine'. This handbook was translated to Ukrainian.



Kenya and Uganda: Righting the future



A Story from Rekha Wazir
Senior Associate
[READ MORE ABOUT REKHA >](#)

"Prudence is an 18 year old girl from a slum in Nakulabye, Uganda. Two years ago she was forced to leave school after her mother had died from Aids and she had to start taking care of her for younger brothers and sisters (Prudence's dad had passed away years earlier). Besides dealing with the grief over losing her mother, Prudence had to start making money to keep the family alive, and going to school therefore was no longer an option. This saddened her very much as she had always been an eager student, doing well in subjects like math and language. Now her days became filled with household chores, feeding her brothers and sisters and getting them to school, and then going to the local market to try and sell handicrafts she made at home at night. Prudence loves her brothers and sisters very much, so she did not mind taking on the responsibility, but she missed her education very much and was worried she would have no other option than marrying some man soon. At that point she heard about the Righting the Future project, through a street theatre event. She contacted the organization and they helped her so that she did not need to go to the market anymore during the day and instead is now attending a bridging class, to catch up on the lessons she missed. This year Prudence finished her high school after all, with honours. Although it is still a struggle for her to keep the family afloat, she has now more hope and sees more options for a brighter future for herself."

Context

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, and teenage pregnancy (and a lack of effective re-entry policies). HIV/AIDS, and the rise in the number of orphans and vulnerable children, are also prominent issues.

Righting the Future (2014-2017) was 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, was disseminated into two distinct settings – a rural area in Kenya and an urban slum in Uganda. Project staff from ICDI and the MV Foundation provided ongoing technical support and advice to the African partners. The project was designed to encourage and trigger the development of a regional approach to the universalization of girls' education, and lay the ground work for future scaling-up and dissemination.

Partner

[Nascent Uganda](#)
[Impact Kenya](#)

Donor

[Master Card Foundation](#)



Facts and Figures 2016

2000 girls have been reached
 via four bridging schools in Uganda and Kenya

More than a 1000 girls
 have now been mainstreamed into formal schools

Picture book

'Changing Social Norms to Universalize Girls' Education in East Africa



Other ICDI Stories in 2016

Advice, research and training (short-term assignments)

Romania, Early Years

Expert support was given to the Ready Set Go Programme, the goal of which is to improve the early developmental outcomes of young Roma children in Romania. ICDI advised on the integration of all the educational components of the programme: kindergartens, toy libraries, and the literacy programme for mothers. We also provided training in the ECD-QUAT for Toy Libraries.

Commissioned by the Roma Education Fund

Eastern Europe, Early Years

ICDI provided expert support to the Roma Education Fund to increase their institutional capacity in the field of Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC). ICDI reviewed and improved REF's evaluation procedures, and adapted and developed evaluation tools and strengthened the organization's expertise on ECEC. Part of this consultancy involved the adaptation of one of ICDI's quality assessment tools, the ECD-QUAT, to make it fit for toy libraries.

Commissioned by the Roma Education Fund

The Netherlands, Early Years

Following on from ICDI's technical advice for the development of the 'Aflatoun Curriculum for the Early Childhood Years (Aflatot)', ICDI provided additional support and expert advice on the development of the 'Monitoring and Evaluation Manual for Aflatot'; the 'Aflatot Training Programme for Practitioners' and the second edition of 'Aflatot', including the 'Family Toolkit', published in 2015. Additionally we provided a 2-day training in September 2015 to all Aflatoun staff members on current issues in ECEC.

Commissioned by Aflatoun Child Social & Financial Education

The Netherlands, Early Years

ICDI participated in a series of expert meetings with renowned Dutch researchers on the topic of the development of young children (9 months to 2 years of age), with the view to developing an 'Information Map on Early Childhood Development' for parents. Additionally, ICDI translated the map into English for international consultation.

Commissioned by the Bernard van Leer Foundation

Belarus, Children & Youth

In the past years ICDI was responsible for organizing training sessions for foster care workers on a range of child development topics (such as attachment, brain development, mental disorders, resilience, etc.). Furthermore we organized a study visit for experts from Belarus to the Netherlands. At the final conference in October 2016 (which over a 100 people attended) we gave two lectures and two workshops.

Commissioned by SOS children's villages Belarus

Europe, Children & Youth

ICDI developed and implemented the evaluation of a training in child rights for foster care workers in 8 European countries. Our tasks included: drafting of an evaluation report; developing focus group guidelines; drafting of European recommendations; development of data-aggregation guidelines; and a framework for a sustainability roadmap.

Commissioned by SOS Children's Villages International

The Netherlands, Children & Youth

ICDI gave a one-day training to an international group of 20 young debaters on how to use, organize and implement focus group discussions.

Commissioned by IDEA NL

The Netherlands, Children & Youth

ICDI organized a two-day training for Dutch teenagers who are staying in women's protection shelters with their mothers (due to domestic abuse). The training focused on how to conduct peer research. These youngsters subsequently interviewed their age mates living in similar circumstances. The results of the research were presented at an event later in the year.

Commissioned by Kinderpostzegels

The Netherlands, Children & Youth

ICDI delivered a much appreciated lecture on adolescent brain development to around 30 enthusiastic volunteers of Stichting Heppie, a Dutch organization that provides psychosocial support and fun to children growing up in difficult circumstances.

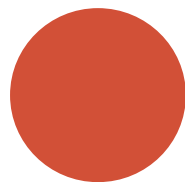
Commissioned by Stichting Heppie

The Netherlands, Children & Youth

ICDI during the year twice presented a lecture on psychosocial development of children from war affected areas to around 100 primary and secondary school teachers from the Leiden area, as part of a larger series to increase the awareness and skills of teachers on the growing population of young refugees in their classes.

Commissioned by the Municipality of Leiden





The Communication Story 2016

In 2016 we told ICDI's story to bigger audiences. Our profile became more visible to the general public, partner organizations, and donors. For decades we have been well known, but in this digital time you need also to be well shown. So we introduced our new visual identity.

A new logo, a new website and a new house style were introduced. We captured 20 years of ICDI in a short, appealing message. The identity shows who we are, and the words represent what we believe in and what we do, capturing the essence of our story. ICDI has and continues to work on many impactful programmes around the world, reaching thousands of vulnerable children by providing training, research, advice and partnership. A new focus is that we are now actively spreading this story through shorter and longer messages, on our website and social media, with pictures, news items, blogs and updates from all over the world, because people need to hear, see and feel the story of ICDI!



Eugenie Polman
Communication Manager

"In the past 20 years I have been building a career in communication management in the profit sector, selling stories. For the next 20 years it is my ambition to use my skills for organizations that make a real difference in the lives of people, like ICDI. Instead of selling, I now want to be telling stories."

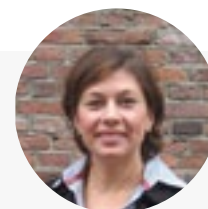
[READ MORE ABOUT EUGENIE >](#)



The Financial Tale

2016 has been a year of financial ups and downs. ICDI has a long track record of successful fundraising through proposal writing, and despite lean prospects at the beginning of the year we have again managed to realise all our budgetary ambitions. However, lack of structural funding remains a constant source of financial insecurity. Structural changes within the organisation, which have taken effect as of last year, have led to stronger ownership of the fundraising process among all ICDI staff members. It has also increased and improved communication between the finance manager and the project managers. We are just at the beginning of realizing our [Strategic Plan 2016-2021](#), but we are confident that we will succeed in building more strategic partnerships and stable sources of funding. The financial tale will continue also!

In 2016 ICDI's total income from project subsidies and other donations was €1.220.084. Of this 82% was directly spent on the objectives of the 'Early Years' and 'Children & Youth' teams. Just 18% was spent on overhead and fundraising costs; this latter figure falls well below the maximum of 25% for such costs, as set by Dutch standards for non-profit NGOs. For the [full independent auditor's report](#) please go to our website under 'Reports'.



Asia Koerten
Financial HR Manager

"Despite the ever growing reporting and administrative burden, I still have occasional opportunity to leave my desk and go out to the field. My trips are not only aimed at (financial) monitoring, but also often at delivering content related training. These visits are a welcome source of learning, new energy, and give me a positive vibe for weeks and months after return."

[READ MORE ABOUT ASIA >](#)

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.

