

A choice  
for  
children



ANNUAL  
REPORT  
2017



International Child  
Development Initiatives



## Contents

<b>A choice for children</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>From the chairman of the board</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Projects and achievements for young children (0-8)</b>	
Europe: TOY-Plus and TOY for Inclusion	10
Ethiopia: research into the well-being of young children	12
Europe: social and emotional education and development for young children	13
Nepal: safeguarding the rights of girl infants	14
<b>Projects and achievements for children and youth (8-18)</b>	
Global: creating child marriage free communities	18
Europe: a life skills programme for immigrant mothers and children	20
Ethiopia: promoting girls' access to and retention in primary and secondary schools	21
Bulgaria: adolescents perceptions of healthy relationships	22
The Netherlands: a safe Nest for children in refugee centres	23
Ukraine: integration and psychosocial support for internally displaced children	24
<b>ICDI short-term assignments: advice, research and training</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Financial statement</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Board and staff</b>	<b>30</b>

### Acknowledgements

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# ICDI ANNUAL REPORT 2017: A CHOICE FOR CHILDREN

“ICDI implements programmes supporting psychosocial development, not only of the children themselves, but of communities as a whole”

Dr. Elly Singer, (former) Associate Professor Developmental Psychology and Education at the University of Utrecht and University of Amsterdam



“ICDI’s work revolves around the empowerment of children and young people and aims to support children’s rights”

Prof. Dr. Ton Liefwaard, UNICEF chair in Children’s Rights at Leiden Law School, Leiden University



## A choice for children

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

We are a knowledge organization, specialized in psychosocial development of children and young people growing up in difficult circumstances. We give training, we advise child-focused organizations and professionals, do research, and design and implement longer term projects for and with vulnerable children and youth.

An important guiding principle in all this is that children and young people should have a choice. The developmental pathways they take should not just depend on what gender they were born with, or on how much money their parents earn, or on the place they grow up in, or on their sexuality or on the color of their skin. They should also depend on equality and equity, and, maybe most importantly, on their individual rights, wishes and needs. This is one of the reasons ICDI worked hard last year on implementing the **HER CHOICE** programme (2015-2020) in which we combat early marriage in several countries, by giving girls the choice if, when and whom to marry.

It’s also important that we, as an organization, make the right choices. To help us do that, in September 2017 our **Committee of Recommendation** was formed: four members with impressive professional backgrounds have pledged their commitment to ICDI’s mission. With their warm backing and expert advice we will keep improving our work, providing training, research, advice and partnerships, from Nepal to Ethiopia, and from Kiev to Katwijk. To ultimately build a world where all children can make their own choices!



## From the chairman of the board

In 2017 the Board of ICDI said goodbye to Jeroen Wismans, who had been our chairperson for three years. Jeroen has embarked on a new professional adventure and is becoming a part-time farmer. He felt this would require too much of his time to be able to continue his work for the board of ICDI. Although Jeroen will of course be missed, I am looking forward to contribute to ICDI's vision and mission with my experience and expertise.

In 2017 the Board continued to implement its **new policy governance framework** (developed in 2015 and introduced in 2016) as its approach to supervision the organization. This means that the Board's primary focus is on monitoring if and how ICDI is achieving its goals. To be able to do that, information is gathered by Board members, not only from ICDI's director, but also by contacting stakeholders or by inviting certain external specialists to its meetings. An example of the latter was the presentation Danielle Zevulun, researcher at the university of Groningen, gave during the Board meeting in June. She informed the board on the impact of (forced) return on the psychosocial well-being children from asylum seeking families. This kind of information helps the Board in ascertaining if ICDI is fulfilling its mission and at the same creates space for new ideas for possible interventions by ICDI.

The Board applauds the achievements of ICDI in 2017. **The HER CHOICE programme**, which main aim is to reduce and prevent child marriage, has been taking off in Sierra Leone, Ethiopia, Bangladesh, Nepal, and Pakistan. A recent UNICEF research shows that the incidence of child marriage is reducing globally. Programmes such as Her Choice are contributing to this positive trend. The Board is also pleased with the growing importance of ICDI's **TOY (Together Old and Young) programme**, which promotes intergenerational learning between older people and young children. In a world where contact between generations is becoming more and more limited, TOY is strengthening such important bonds. In 2017 a specific subproject, **TOY for Inclusion**, has started to bring the benefits of this approach to marginalized Roma communities in several European countries.



Worldwide, around **50 000 children and young people** have directly or indirectly benefited from ICDI projects and programmes. Furthermore, ICDI and its partner organizations trained around **3 000 childcare professionals**, and approximately **15 000 parents and community members** were reached with training or awareness-raising activities. For the small organization that ICDI is, these are impressive figures.

The Board is continuing in its supervisory and supportive role for the organization. The 'playing field' in which ICDI operates is not becoming easier, with funding sources becoming scarcer and organizations more and more required to show measurable impact. At the same time, a knowledge organization as ICDI has clearly demonstrated added value for a range of stakeholders such as funders, governments, the general public, and most importantly, our target groups: children and young people and those that support them. Looking back at 2017 with pride, we look forward to 2018 and the years to come with great trust and confidence in the work of ICDI.

On behalf of the Board,

**Ewout van Galen**  
Chairman ICDI





# Projects and achievements for young children (0-8)

Healthy development in the early years of a child's life forms the essential foundation for future, positive outcomes. ICDI's **Early Years Team** focuses on this sensitive period, with the overall goal to stimulate and support initiatives that provide rich, safe and nurturing environments for young children, especially for those who are most vulnerable. In this chapter you can read about the projects the team worked on last year.

## Europe: TOY Plus and TOY for Inclusion

The TOY Programme started in 2012 with the objective to bring young children and older people together. Nowadays, TOY still continues to foster a vibrant community of practice on intergenerational learning, promoting connections between generations. TOY uses different approaches to facilitate exchange of knowledge and good practices across Europe and beyond, such as events, publications, the lively [TOY website](#) and two active projects: [TOY-PLUS](#) and [TOY for Inclusion](#).

## TOY-PLUS: sharing learning and scaling up skills

Through TOY-PLUS, we aim to create training opportunities and **share knowledge and methodologies** among professionals, about intergenerational principles and practices. In this way we want to ensure meaningful, high quality **intergenerational learning programmes** involving young children and older people.

TOY-PLUS also wants to encourage a cross-sectoral community approach stimulating collaborations across the fields of adult education and training, health, community development, early childhood education and care (ECEC), and care for elderly people.

**Donor** : European Commission - [Erasmus+ Strategic Partnerships](#) for Adult Education

“Grandparents told us the things that were done in the past, how the dishes were repaired because at that time nothing was thrown out. And they did not have Play Station! They played games with real stuff” a 6 years old girl taking part in intergenerational activities, Italy

“We can behave like children again. Simple things are fun, and with the kids together we do them over and over again” Chris, a 65 years old man taking part in intergenerational activities, Slovenia

**In 2017** together with partners in Greece, Ireland, Italy, Slovenia, Spain and the UK, we developed an **online course** on the TOY intergenerational approach for practitioners in early childhood education and care (ECEC), social care and community development. Specific modules in the curriculum focus on how **young children and older people learn together**, intergenerational learning for **social inclusion**, how to organise

an intergenerational programme, and quality and sustainability in **intergenerational learning**. The course will be freely accessible from autumn 2018.

we also worked on developing and testing the **TOY Quality Assessment Tool**. With this tool practitioners will be able to actively assess and continually improve the quality of intergenerational services and programmes.

## TOY for Inclusion: improve the integration of Roma children and their families through intergenerational activities

ICDI launched TOY for Inclusion in 2017, to address increasingly worrying issues like discrimination and segregation that hinder the psychosocial development of Roma children from a very early age. We do this by combining two approaches that have been successful in the TOY programme: promoting intergenerational learning opportunities between older people and young children (from Roma and non-Roma communities), and building community-based Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) services.

In 2017 and 2018, together with our partner organizations, we design educational resources and establish early childhood "Play Hubs" in eight European countries: Belgium, Croatia, Hungary, Italy, Slovakia, Slovenia and Latvia.

We envision "Play Hubs", which are run by local committees composed of representatives from both **Roma and non-Roma communities**, school and preschool teachers and local authorities. These are meant to be safe spaces where:

- relationships between Roma and non-Roma young children and their families are built;
- children and their families of all ages are welcomed to play games with each other;
- information about child rearing, health, early learning and development can be shared;
- local communities organize intergenerational activities involving young children and elderly people with and without Roma backgrounds.

**Donor**: European Commission – [DG Justice, Rights Equality and Citizenship programme 2014-2020](#) and [Open Society Foundations](#)

**In 2017** 136 kindergarten and primary school teachers, social and health workers, and Roma mediators were trained in 7 EU countries.

9 early childhood "Play Hubs" for Roma and non-Roma children and families opened in 7 EU countries.

“I have never felt so welcome and respected before. The new place I have just visited with my kids is something we should have had much sooner. My boys are happy to play with other kids from the village and nobody treats them any differently. They even have the chance to use books and toys I could not afford. What a perfect place!” a Roma mother at the TOY for Inclusion "Play Hub" in Spissky Hrhov, Slovakia.

## Ethiopia: research into the psychosocial well-being of young children

Some years ago ICDI developed the **UPSI-5 (Universal Psycho-Social Indicator for Five-Year-Old Boys and Girls)**, a simple, quick-to-administer, and thoroughly tested tool to measure the psychosocial well-being 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.

After previously being implemented in South Africa, last year we introduced the UPSI-5 in Ethiopia as well. In 2017 the first phase - data collection - started. **Local data collectors**, under the supervision of ICDI and our partner in Ethiopia, **Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)**, have been busy visiting schools and preschools in rural and urban areas.

**Donor**  
Stichting Dioraphte

**I became a teacher after completing 10th grade, without any relevant training. ICDI and ESD gave me the chance to train in Early Childhood Education and Care and now my daily practice is very different, better'**  
teacher of a rural preschool in Amhara region, Ethiopia.

### In 2017

we collected data about the psychosocial well-being of **1000 five-year children** (524 girls and 476 boys) using the UPSI-5. The analysis of the results of this research will be published in 2018.

school principals of **40 schools** were interviewed to get more insight into the local context and the challenges and opportunities faced by young children in their daily lives.

**62 parents, caregivers, teachers**, education officials and teacher educators were engaged to validate the findings of UPSI-5 and develop psychosocial well-being of children.

plans of actions were implemented in four school and preschool settings in rural and urban communities in 2 areas to the benefit of **500 four to six year-old children**. These focused on implementing changes to improve the quality of education and children's wellbeing at school and included: mobilizing local community to provide material support to create a more stimulating and safe learning environment indoors and outdoors; purchasing and making structures for outdoor play; training teachers of young children; adapting classrooms so they are more accessible for children with special needs.

## Europe: social and emotional education and development for young children

Paying more attention to young children's feelings and social relationships leads to happier kids who have a better and a more equal chance to grow up happily. This is the focus on our **SEED project**, which we kicked off in Budapest last December, together with our six partner organisations.

The overall goal of the SEED project is to improve psychosocial well-being and **healthy development of young children** (2,5 to 6 years old), especially children growing up in difficult circumstances, such as children in migration or living in poverty. In 2018 and 2019 we will conduct screening of psychosocial well-being of 5-year-old children in Croatia, Hungary, Latvia, the Netherlands and Norway, using the **UPSI-5 tool** developed by ICDI.

Based on the findings, we will develop and pilot an innovative development programme to **build practitioners' capacities** to support young children's psychosocial well-being and development.

**Donor**  
European Commission Erasmus+ Strategic Partnerships in Primary Education

**In our role as teachers, it is essential to create a safe pedagogical atmosphere. Only when this is realized can a child develop. By participating in this project, we will gain research experience and more insight into the social and emotional well-being and development of young children and how we as teachers can stimulate this'**  
one of the student teachers participating in the project.





## Nepal: safeguarding the rights of girl infants

In recent years in Nepal, prenatal sex determination and sex selective abortion has emerged as a serious gender and reproductive rights issue. Although Nepalese law criminalizes sex-selective abortion, it has not prevented such abortions from occurring, but rather created a climate where women resort to unsafe and clandestine abortions.

To break the silence on such issues, in 2015 ICDI and Nepalese partner **Donor** **CWIN** - Child Workers in Nepal Concerned Centre - started the 3-year project "Breaking the Barriers: Safeguarding the Rights of Girl Infants" in Kathmandu and six other districts. **Donor** European Union

‘Culture, religion and patriarchal mindset are still more powerful than national laws, and are barriers for gender equality. Our experiences during three years of action against sex selective abortion and discrimination against girls reveals that education, sensitization and multi-sectoral collaboration followed by social security work, helps us to move towards equality and even to make the implementation of laws more effective’  
programme officer CWIN-Nepal

### In 2017

**6 local partners** formed a **network** which advocates for local policies to combat sex selective abortion and discrimination of girls, and in general raise awareness on rights of girl children.

**15 service providers** like schools, child care homes, health posts started to regularly use ICDI's **Girls QUAT** - a participatory tool to measure quality of services for girls and young women - to improve their services.

different health institutions have formed **monitoring committees** to monitor the Nepalese health institutions on sex selective abortion.

local governments of **6 districts** have started programmes and allocated budget to actively combat sex selective abortion and discrimination against girls. Communities themselves have also been organizing **awareness activities** against sex selective abortion and discrimination of girls.

because of the project, the Parliamentary Committee for Women, Children, Senior Citizens and Social Welfare instructed the Ministry of Health to provide **materials to combat sex selective abortion** and discrimination of girls in each health care institution.







# Projects and achievements for children and youth (8-18)

Boys and girls from 8 to 18 years of age experience important psychosocial changes in their transition from middle childhood (8-12) to adolescence (12-18), and from adolescence to adulthood. ICDI's **Children & Youth** team works on projects that make such transitions as smooth as possible, so that children can fulfill their potential and become happy, well-balanced grown-ups. In this chapter you can read about the projects the team worked on last year.

# HER CHOICE – building child marriage-free communities

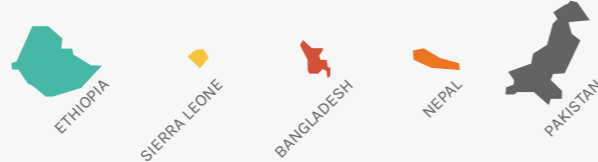
Child marriage is a widespread phenomenon which endangers the healthy development and well-being of girls and young women all over the world. Each year, 15 million girls get married before the age of 18. HER CHOICE is a 5-years project, which started in 2016 and aims to build child marriage-free communities where each girl is free to decide if, when and whom she marries.



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.



ICDI is proud to be part of the HER CHOICE alliance, together with Stichting Kinderpostzegels, The Hunger Project Nederland, and research partner the University of Amsterdam. These organisations combine their efforts with 27 local organisations to combat child marriage in eleven countries. ICDI is active in 5 of these countries: Sierra Leone, Ethiopia, Nepal, Bangladesh and Pakistan and focuses mainly on:

1. Increasing girls' control in **decision-making** regarding issues that shape their lives, and their access to opportunities such as education, health care and income generation;
2. Mobilising relevant community actors as **change agents** to address underlying factors, beliefs and processes leading to child marriage.

The members of the HER CHOICE alliance have all their own fields of expertise. By working as an alliance they complement each other. To exchange best practices among the organizations in the different countries, ICDI organized in November

**Donor:** Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs

“Thanks to HER CHOICE and CWIN, I am now aware about adolescent rights, adolescent education, child marriage, changes in the adolescent period, abuse and trafficking. I also get a lot of support from my peer group. I promise that I will protect my children from all the risks they face and make sure they finish school. I advise others not to get married at an early age. I also pledge that I won't let my children get married at an early age” Sabita, child bride and mother from Nepal

### In 2017

thanks to the work of ICDI and its HER CHOICE partners in Sierra Leone, Ethiopia, Nepal, Bangladesh and Pakistan:

over 9500 girls were reached through training on Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR), life skills, leadership, and economic empowerment.

nearly 1400 child care professionals (teachers, health workers) were trained in girl friendly approaches.

last year a five-day **linking and learning event** in Bangkok. 18 professionals working on the HER CHOICE programme in Nepal, Ethiopia, Bangladesh, Pakistan and the Netherlands were brought together to build relationships, exchange best practices, and to learn more about the impact of early marriage on the psychosocial development of children. Topics of the training included: ‘children as researchers’, the ‘multigenerational approach’ (in which the child marriage issue is addressed through a holistic approach that includes very young children as well as older generations), and ‘how to build children's resilience, so they can overcome traumatic experiences’. It was a week of mutual professional and personal enrichment. As Jayanta - The Hunger Project Bangladesh- said: "A big revelation for me at this morning's session was discovering that extreme stress of a mother can affect the development of her baby in the womb. After what I learned today about how babies learn in the first two years of life I have a new view about how I am fathering my two children aged one and three."

almost 400 women's groups have been created and/or strengthened. They now regularly meet, share knowledge and support each other and make the case for women and girls in their communities.

over 5000 community members (traditional and religious community leaders, parents, local and national authorities) were trained in alternatives to child marriage, SRHR, and other approaches that stimulate girls' participation.

## Europe: a life skills programme for immigrant mothers and children

Migration often involves the separation of families and changes roles within families. It can be a traumatic experience that affects children and mothers' sense of well-being. Moreover, severe post-migration living difficulties, such as delays in processing refugee applications, obstacles to employment, racial discrimination, and loneliness, can contribute to long term difficulties in the social inclusion of people into new communities and societies.

The **BONDS** project, a 2-year project that started in January 2017, uses the methodology of **Collaborative Comics Storytelling** to develop a specific life skills programme for immigrant mothers and children, focusing on the acquisition of key competences and soft skills for social inclusion and well-being.

**Donor**  
European Commission - Erasmus+ Strategic Partnerships

“The training by Comicdom and ICDI was very useful because we learnt more about comics and how to use them to help migrant and refugee kids and adults communicate. It was especially nice that we were given the chance to actually watch how it is used during a workshop with children in the refugee centre in Katwijk”  
a participant of the BONDS methodology training

### In 2017

we worked on the development of the BONDS **educational model and evaluation framework**.

we hosted the five day **Training of Trainers** course for the project partners, in which about **20 professionals** were

trained in Collaborative Comics Storytelling. Participants acquired competences to implement the BONDS model in the project countries (Greece, Italy, Spain, and Slovenia).

we organized a **field visit** to the **Nest centre** in the refugee centre in Katwijk where a comics story telling workshop was held with children.



## Ethiopia: promoting girls' access to and retention in primary and secondary schools

From 2015 to 2017 ICDI, together with local partner organisations **ESD** and **Hiwot**, implemented the Education Matters project to address high levels of school dropout among girls. In Ethiopia many girls stop going to school due to issues like child marriage, certain cultural norms that do not value girls' education, poor hygiene in schools, and so forth.

Through **Education Matters** we developed **local solutions** to overcome such barriers. The project was concluded with a conference in February 2017, where the project's main achievements were presented by students and community members through drama, personal stories and poems. It was very interesting and illustrative of the real engagement of everybody involved in the 'Education Matters' project, where girls, boys, teachers, social workers, and parents together designed activities such as girls clubs and awareness raising using community theatre.

**Donor**  
Stichting Dioraphte

“This partnership between boys and girls contributes a lot to achieve a better girl friendly environment in the schools”  
Eden, 17 years old girl

### In 2017

Some of the many highlights that were presented at the conference:

**around 2000 girls**, direct beneficiaries of the project, now show initiative and have the courage to tackle the problems they face in schools, family and communities. They use their knowledge and skills to improve their wellbeing and education, and in turn educate other peers, parents and the wider community. They do this in a creative, forceful and often entertaining ways. Girls have been enabled to attend their school classes regularly and dropout rates have decreased significantly. They also attain better academic results.

the **joint cooperation** established at the district

level between school management, teachers, and community leaders, law enforcing bodies, religious leaders and parents was a vital ingredient for success of the project. All actors supported, taught and monitored each other and in this way kept the focus on keeping girls in school.

mothers and school girls' club members have **prevented 50 child marriage arrangements** in their villages.

**boys became much more supportive** and are now actively involved with girls' issues. As an example: their financial contribution to improve girls' toilets was surprising and considered a significant positive change in attitude.



## Bulgaria: adolescents perceptions of healthy relationships

To combat child sexual abuse and exploitation, young people must develop life skills for the cultivation of healthy relationships. Adolescents tend to share their ideas about and experiences of (sexual) relationships within their peer groups. It is a pity that adolescents are rarely seen as 'experts' on their own life circumstances, and so their input is seldom sought for the development of effective interventions.

Taking this into account, and by using our youth-centred **peer research approach**, we have developed the project **Research into Adolescents' Perceptions of Healthy Relationships** together with 2 partners: the Institute of Social Studies of the Erasmus University and Animus, a child care organization in Bulgaria.

We expect valuable information on adolescents' perceptions and definitions of healthy relationships – the different types, influencers, perceptions of their parents' and peers' attitudes, and use of media, including social media. This will build youth capacities, while providing us with adolescents' authentic perspectives on healthy relationships in Bulgaria.

In 2017, ICDI staff has trained the staff of **Animus**, our local partner and teachers who in turn trained and now supervise the students during their research activities. Afterwards, and with great enthusiasm, 50 high school children in Bulgaria, from Sofia and the

town of Aitos, have begun their research activities into how their peers define "healthy relationships". During several visits to Sofia and Aitos ICDI staff met with the students and their teachers/supervisors to discuss the goals and aims of the research and share practical tools that they can use.

Students were trained on how to conduct proper research and how to implement this with their peers. They had to define what relationships are and had to develop questions and research methods that they would later use to conduct interviews and focus groups. The students designed a questionnaire themselves and **50 students** were able to administer almost **900 questionnaires** to their peers (age 10 to 18).

Donor  
OAK foundation

It is nice to experience that we can be so open. We can share different thoughts about relationships, for example that it is okay for a girl to ask a boy to start an intimate relationship. And we can prove that we are able to find solutions. For instance we decided to present what disrespect at school and at home means in order to show what needs to be done in order to transform "disrespect" into "respect"

Asia, 15 years old girl

### In 2017

Some preliminary interesting findings include:

**63%** of the interviewed feel that in a couple one partner should not have more power than the other one.

**65%** prefer to spend face to face time (rather than on social media) with their friends.

**20%** of the interviewed adolescents said they are sexually active.

## The Netherlands: a safe nest for children in refugee centres

The 'Nest model: a Home Away from Home' is an approach for after-school programmes developed in Bosnia and Herzegovina by Kinderpostzegels, IN Foundation and ICDI in 2009. In essence, the idea is to build safe, stable places for children coming from difficult backgrounds, where they can receive psychosocial and educational support.

The NEST model has been adapted to fit the **possibilities and needs of children in refugee centres** in the Netherlands. There are now four **Dutch Nests**: in addition to the ones in the refugee centres in Katwijk and in Burgum (operational respectively since 2014 and 2016), in 2017 a third Nest opened in Zeewolde, and a fourth one in the refugee centre in Drachten (the latter officially opened in January 2018). Hundreds of kids from refugee families growing up in very difficult circumstances can make use of Nest, to enjoy creative activities that stimulate their resilience and psychosocial well-being.

Donor  
Kinderpostzegels and  
Dutch Postcode Lottery

When you look at the impact on the young researchers themselves, you see that they have developed greatly. They understand what research entails and have acquired various social skills. They have been able to think and talk about matters that concern them, and have dared to sometimes tackle difficult subjects with peers and adults. They are proud of what they have achieved. They also enjoyed working in groups, and indicated that they have learned that boys and girls can work well together - apparently a surprise!

Eljanna, intern at the Nest Centre in Burgum

### In 2017

approximately **200 children** attended the Nest centres on a regular basis.

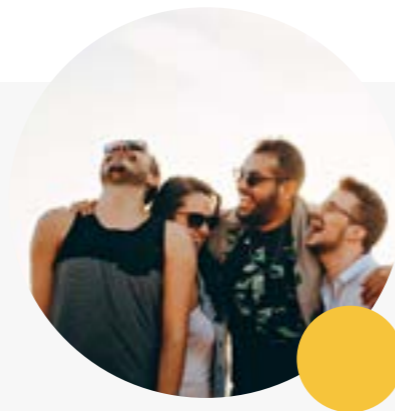
ICDI provided a **basic introductory training on the Nest method** for staff and volunteers of **Stichting De Vrolijkheid**, the main implementing.

ICDI also trained the teams of Nest Burgum and Nest Drachten in **child & youth participation**. In Burgum this has led to the formation of a "Children's Council", a group of children who is actively involved in running the Nest centre.

ICDI trained five **young refugees on carrying out research**, according to the "Children As Re-

searchers" methodology. These child researchers interviewed many of their peers and found out that over 80% of the children in their refugee centre regularly come to Nest and that they enjoy it very much. The respondents were also happy to give advice for improvements, such as their wish to have more activities organized outside the refugee centre.

the Nest approach for children in refugee centres in The Netherlands was featured as an **European Best Practice** in the publication: "Let Children be Children; Lessons from the Field on the Protection and Integration of refugee and Migrant Children in Europe", published by Eurochild and SOS Children's Villages.



## Ukraine: integration and psychosocial support for internally displaced children

Due to the conflict in the Eastern part of the Ukraine, there are now almost 2 million people internally displaced, many of them children.

As a response to this challenge, the project A **New Home**: integration and psychosocial support of internally displaced children in Kyiv and Odessa oblast, was designed and implemented by **Labour and Health Social Initiatives (LHSI)** and ICDI in 2016 and 2017.

The overall objective was to promote, strengthen and improve the **involvement of civil society organisations** in broader rehabilitation and reintegration programmes, to provide recovery and psychological assistance for internally displaced children.

**Donor**  
European Union

The New Home project has helped me to find my new friends here in the capital Kyiv. There are a lot of interesting things in the project. We, children that fled for the war from the East of Ukraine, and children from Kyiv together take part in activities, play and learn a lot of new things about family and friendship - how to help each other, how to make friends, how to prevent conflicts -and about ourselves - how to be happy and healthy'

Masha, 13 years old girl

### In 2017

584 internally displaced people, children and youth (8-15 years old), took part in summer and winter camps.

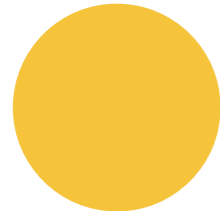
1326 internally displaced children and 791 families received social support from professionals trained in the project.

321 professionals from local organizations took part in several training sessions.

at the final conference of the project in November, 2017 ICDI presented the **Nest model** and met

several representatives of the government and child protection services, who are interested in using the NEST model to upgrade services for children in crisis situations.

We are proud to report that during two years of project implementation 3598 internally displaced children benefited from the activities.



## ICDI short-term assignments: advice, research and training

### Netherlands: Study visit on Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights for members of the Pakistani parliament

In March ICDI organized a study visit on Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) for five parliamentarians from Pakistan. These parliamentarians are very active in the fight for social justice in their country. ICDI had prepared an interesting programme, that consisted of training sessions by ICDI staff and guest speakers on topics such as 'gender and sexual identity development', 'transgender development', 'Sexual and Reproductive Health Right in relation to the Millennium Development Goals', and 'Dutch policies on LGBTI rights'. Next to that, we organized exchange visits to the Netherlands parliament, Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, [Defence for Children/ECPAT](#) and [Choice for Sexuality](#). The parliamentarians (in the picture, posing next to a self-portrait of the Dutch artist Rembrandt) were very enthusiastic about the week, which was rounded off with a visit to the Municipality of Leiden. It was a great occasion to exchange knowledge and ideas and get to know each other's cultures better.

### Honduras: Training on mental health issues of children and youth

In November ICDI's Nico van Oudenhoven contributed to a training for 25 educators/psychologists working in family homes of [Nuestros Pequeños Hermanos](#) (NPH), which operates in a range of Central and South American countries, and two Caribbean countries, Haiti and the Dominican Republic. This organization provides long-term care and education to children whose families cannot provide for them. The training sessions focused on mental health issues, including recognizing and preventing (risk of) sexual violence and suicide amongst children and adolescents.

### Netherlands: Presentation on resilience of war affected children for professionals working with refugee populations

On December 8th, during a program organized by the GGD Kennemerland (local mental health care provider) with the theme 'Education within refugee families', Mathijs Euwema gave a presentation to about 50 professionals. The theme of his lecture was the resilience of children. The focus was not so much on the problems that children face in or from war zones, but more on the often surprising resilience of these children and how professionals can support them in accessing and using that power.

### Albania: Expert support to the child protection system

ICDI's director and child psychologist Mathijs Euwema, was in Albania for a consultancy for [Save the Children Albania](#). He was commissioned to develop guidelines and a checklist on the Best Interest of the Child principle (one of the guiding principles in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child). With this, professionals in the Albanian child protection system will be able to make better decisions about what actions to take for children in vulnerable circumstances (for example children who face abuse).





**England: Presenting the paper 'Together Old and Young reinventing community' at the AAGE conference**

ICDI's Giulia Cortellesi and Jessica Harpley presented a paper titled 'Together Old and Young reinventing community' at the 2017 AAGE Conference "Culture, Commitment and Care across the Life Course" organized at the Oxford Brookes University, England. The paper described how intergenerational activities provide both young children and older people the opportunity to express and experience different identities, to be active learners and to be playful and spontaneous and that children and older people can co-construct knowledge. An audience of about 40 researchers from around the world attended the presentation.

**Global: Webinars on early childhood**

In 2017 ICDI moderated 3 webinars for the [Early Childhood Workforce Initiative](#), to support and empower those who work with families and children under age 8 (e.g. home visitors, preschool staff, community health workers), as well as those who supervise and mentor practitioners (e.g. supervisors, mentors, coaches, and trainers). Topics of the webinars included:

- early childhood practitioners as advocates and change agents;
- the challenges in scaling up the early childhood workforce;
- challenges and opportunities in integrating early years services.

In total about 150 participants attended these webinars.

**Belgium: ICDI presenting at the ISSA Early Childhood conference**

As a member of the [International Step-by-step association \(ISSA\)](#) ICDI participated in their annual conference in Ghent (Belgium). The focus of the 2017 Conference was: "Local Responses, Global Advances: Towards Competent Early Childhood Systems." ICDI's Giulia Cortellesi presented the [TOY for Inclusion](#) approach, together with her Italian colleague Francesca Petrucci from [Associazione 21 Luglio](#). Over 100 professionals from all over Europe attended ICDI's presentation about the benefits of non-segregated multi-generational play spaces.

**Netherlands: Keynote speech at Young Child Conference**

Young children are playing and learning all the time and everywhere. They don't differentiate between play and learning - although early years settings often do. Preschools and daycare centres tend to put the focus on play, and primary schools emphasize learning. On 6th October, [Windesheim University of Applied Sciences](#) in Almere organized a conference to debate this issue from different perspectives. In her keynote address, ICDI's Margaret Kernan pleaded for an approach to Early Childhood Education and Care and family support which embraces the informal, non-formal as well as formal ECEC and which builds the capacities of all generations in the community to be playing, learning and caring partners. The conference was attended by 150 lecturers, students, researchers and local policy makers.

**Global: ICDI advice on life skills curriculum for young people**

ICDI's Rutger van Oudenhoven was part of an advisory group who contributed to the development of the curriculum [Aflateen+ Life Skills and Financial Education through a Gender Lens](#), by [Aflatoun International](#). This curriculum was created in response to the overwhelming need for material that empowers young people to secure their own futures and contribute to societal and economic prosperity. It will be piloted in 8 countries in the course of 2018.

## Financial statement

In 2017 ICDI's total income from project subsidies was € 1.271.247. Of this, 84% was directly spent on ICDI's objectives for the 'Early Years' and 'Children & Youth' teams (in 2016 this was 85%). Total expenditures in 2017 were € 1.290.307, leaving a negative result of € 18.528. Just 16% of income 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. For the full financial statement and independent auditor's report, please visit our [website](#).

## Board and staff

### Staff:

Mathijs Euwema, Director & Team Leader Children & Youth  
Margaret Kernan, Team Leader Early Years  
Giulia Cortellesi, Senior Programme Manager Early Years  
Rutger van Oudenhoven, Senior Programme Manager Children & Youth  
Steve Smith, Senior Programme Manager Children & Youth  
Asia Koerten, Human Resources & Finance Manager  
Eugenie Polman, Communication Manager  
Nico van Oudenhoven, Senior Associate  
Rekha Wazir, Senior Associate

### Board:

Ewout van Galen (chair)  
Anneke Wensing (secretary)  
Patrick Roozeman (treasurer)  
Carla van Os  
Nina Schmitz





**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.

