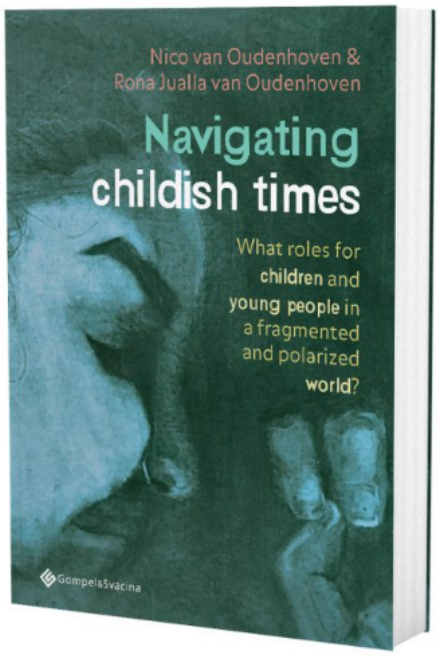

Nico van Oudenhoven & Rona Jualla van Oudenhoven

Navigating Childish Times. What roles for children and young people in a fragmented and polarized world?

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The narrative told in this book deals with the following questions: Why is it that 'good' and 'just' people, or those who think they are, often vehemently disagree with each other, even to points of hating, vilifying or waging war on one another? Would not a better understanding of the underlying mechanisms and processes of human behaviour dynamics lead to the creation of conditions and situations that could build bridges between the opposing parties or otherwise resolve their differences in an amicable and fruitful manner? And if so, what are these mechanisms and processes and how could they best be introduced and made common good? Can there be unity in diversity? And, central to this account, how do we engage young people in this debate? What do we, adults, tell them, what do we expect from them, hope and wish for them? What do they see as their roles in a world that is seemingly becoming increasingly, childish, fragmenting and polarising?

Nico van Oudenhoven is co-founder and now a senior associate with International Child Development Initiatives – ICDI, an NGO based in Leiden, that works, always with local partners, at the intersection of research, policy, intervention, training and advocacy with the aim to improve the life chances and outcomes of children and young people exposed to toxic environments (see: www.ICDI.nl).

Rona Jualla van Oudenhoven is an independent management consultant. She has had a career as a professor and researcher, held senior positions in the Ministries of Public Administration and Social Development, Trinidad and Tobago and at Durham College, Canada. She is a social justice advocate who adopts a rights-based approach to policy and programming initiatives, in particular, those that pertain to vulnerable and marginalized persons.

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