



Newly emerging needs of children and youth





Newly Emerging Needs of Children and Youth

During much of last year we looked at, what we called, 'the newly emerging needs of children and youth'¹. We collected data from all parts of the world, scrutinized media reports, and spoke with children, their parents, educators and a range of other people interested in children in many and diverse places. The outcome of this exploration was issued early 2006 and copies are available at ICDI and with the publisher. Our starting point was that we believed that children continuously experience new challenges, problems and opportunities but that many of these are not recognised or given adequate attention. When we started our research we were, of course, conscious of the many pressing 'old needs of children' that were still unmet and, as it happens, it is mainly those that we are trying to address as part of our regular ICDI work, at the same time, however, we also felt that we have to anticipate and prepare for what lies ahead of them.

When we started this process we became aware of a series of seemingly unrelated events that could not be subsumed under standard children's issues. These ranged from reports about children with multiple parents and with open access to adult information and experiences to children's increasing vulnerability to certain diseases previously associated only with adults. As the frequency and range of these events increased, they began to ask themselves some questions. Are these stand-alone aberrations or portents of things to come? Are there connections, linkages and common roots between them? Do they have the potential to become 'big'? And, most importantly, what is their impact on children's wellbeing and development and are there policy responses to address them?

The emergence of new needs and opportunities will naturally challenge and contribute to our perspectives on childhood. The practical implications of these developments are immense and their ramifications for children have not yet been fully explored. We intend to do this during the coming years.

One of our major findings was that many things that seem to threaten the wholesome development of children arrive in their lives at ever earlier ages, are grimmer, meaner, harder to comprehend, more multifaceted and potentially more devastating. We also realised that the available means to reach out to these children, to support them and to guide them are under great pressure or have already collapsed. One of our foremost recommendations to cope with these threats is that all children, including the older ones and adults, should be part of a human chain - including family and neighbours - ready to help them with real problems, remind them of their real potential and connect them to real pathways and possibilities. It is the maintenance and strengthening of this 'human chain' that we see as crucial to our work.

¹ "Newly Emerging Needs of Children: An Exploration", by Nico van Oudenhoven and Rekha Wazir, Garant, Antwerp, 2006. This study is part of a major research programme within ICCYS, the International Centre of Child and Youth Studies, which we jointly run with the Institute of Social Studies in The Hague. This programme is financed by Plan Netherlands.

What is ICDI?

ICDI's mission

ICDI is concerned with children living under conditions of poverty, discrimination and social exclusion. It works for marginalised children and youth. However, it is not a 'single issue' organisation. It assists counterpart organisations that work on single issues by helping them locate and look for solutions to problems in a broader social context. It recognizes and acts on the fact that children's lives are shaped and affected by their circumstances and by many inter-linked processes and events that constrain their options. For this reason, ICDI works on a range of issues that concern children as parts of one equation - family support, child protection, alternative care systems, psycho-social development, child participation, child rights, and transition from pre-school to basic-school education. It is concerned with all the things that can go wrong with children in a particular environment, with the underlying reasons why they do go wrong and with viable solutions, taking on issues such as child labour, street children, child abuse and neglect, HIV/AIDS, child trafficking, commercial exploitation of children, children in prison, child soldiers and domestic violence within this general perspective.

Guiding principles of ICDI are the holistic development of children, the need to empower families and communities, and the need to build on available knowledge and local strengths. It believes that children's needs must be understood in their local and in the broader global context, and that children and youth should feature high on political agendas throughout the world. It works internationally, collaborating with NGOs, government agencies and research institutions. It is also active in international networks for children and youth and acts as a liaison between donors and local civil society organisations.

The CRC poses to children and young people, possibly, the greatest challenge of all. Coming at the end of a decade-long process of negotiations between governments, international agencies, and researchers, it represents a worldwide consensus on giving children rights that are legally binding. In the new rights discourse, the relation between children and adults is that between 'rights-holders' and 'duty-bearers'. This is often in sharp contrast to their real life worlds where even their most basic rights are violated on a daily basis. As governments and agencies struggle to implement the CRC, it is becoming obvious that this instrument is creating new challenges and needs for children, families and professionals that they are at present ill equipped to meet.

Taken from 'Newly Emerging Needs of Children, an Exploration'

ICDI's products

The core competence of ICDI lies in its expertise in a wide range of relevant fields that are needed to fight impoverishment, discrimination and the social exclusion of children, and its ability to help specialist organisations step back from their immediate problems, understand underlying causes, and analyse how they can tackle them most effectively. ICDI has a strong track record in policy formulation, programme and project development, monitoring and evaluation, programme management, local capacity building, networking and coalition formation, action research and training and teaching in relation to the problems of children and youth living in marginalised situations. These are our 'strategic instruments' to assist field organisations in their endeavours to combat poverty and marginalisation.

We do this by providing analyses, policy reviews and evaluations, technical advice on project design and implementation, training, collaborating on academic courses and developing capacity strengthening programmes for specialist NGOs.



Strategic goals

ICDI is a non-profit organization that is practice and policy-oriented, and that has been highly successful in meeting the needs of local organizations helping exploited and deprived children in South and East Asia, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, the Caribbean, The Netherlands and other areas. However, we are by choice a relatively small organization and, as demand for its expertise has increased, it has become aware of the need for a rigorous mission statement, a sharp focus and clear priorities if its efforts are to remain coherent and if it is to be as effective as possible. With that in mind, a strategic plan was discussed with its Board at various meetings and this Annual Report updates its thinking in the light of subsequent developments.

Key Features of our Strategic Plan

- ICDI strengthens and assists counterpart organizations that work with children in poverty, faced with discrimination and social exclusion. It provides advice, assistance in policy development and training, and help through action-oriented research;

- The distinctiveness of its approach is that it looks at underlying causes. It looks at specific issues and localised problems in their broader context;
- For the coming years, ICDI will focus on those regions in which it is most experienced and in which it has comparative advantage---South and South-East Asia, Central and Eastern Europe, Suriname and Palestine;
- Increase inputs in the International Centre for Children and Youth Studies (iCCYS) ICDI being a co-founding partner with the ISS;
- ICDI will expand with at least one new programme specialist a year;
- It will also increase the number of outside experts on its Board with one person to enhance its professionalism and to monitor quality;
- Networks and partnerships that facilitate its work will continue to be developed, both abroad and in the Netherlands.



PORTO SEGURO
BAHIA-BRASIL

ICDI, the Netherlands and beyond

ICDI is a small organisation, sharing experience with development thinkers, practitioners and other stakeholders within as well as outside the Netherlands. Together, they enable ICDI to remain open to views, experiences and lessons from the 'South' and to stay in tune with the situation of children and youth in poverty and the best practice aimed to assist them. Currently, staff members represent ICDI on the following boards of educational and development organisations, or enjoy strategic relationships with them:

- The Balkan Children and Youth Foundation
- CARDEA, a regional children and youth care organisation in the Netherlands
- Children of Slovak Foundation
- The Children in Suriname Programme, a collective initiative in which a range of local NGOs participate
- The Civil Society Development Foundation, Romania
- Comenius Foundation, Poland
- EUKEF, the European Knowledge Exchange Forum
- EFSCW, the European Foundation for Street Children World Wide
- MBN, a group of specialists involved in the evaluation of major international development efforts sponsored by key Dutch agencies
- The Free and Democratic Bulgaria Foundation
- IDPAD, the Indo Dutch Programme on Alternatives in Development
- IFCO, the International Foster Care Organization
- ISS, the Institute of Social Studies, with which we manage ICCYS
- ISSA, the International Step-by-Step Association
- De 'Leidse Sleuteltjes', a musical children's group, the Netherlands
- MV Foundation, India
- New Perspectives Foundation, Russia
- National Home for Child Rights (Kinderrechtenhuis Nederland)
- Friends of Prelukye, a youth prison in the Ukraine
- RAAK, Reflectie- en Actiegroep Aanpak Kindermishandeling, the Netherlands
- Sardes, the Netherlands
- The Trust for Early Childhood, Family and Community Education in Jerusalem
- SPOLU International
- UNESCO Newsletter on Early Child Development
- VBJK, the Research Centre for Early Childhood Care and Education, Belgium

In addition, ICDI plays a prominent role in a range of other activities that relate directly to its mission and that it considers fundamentally important:

- The Children, Youth and Development Diploma Programme This initiative falls under the umbrella of ICCYS (the International Centre for Children and Youth Studies, of which ICDI is a co-founder). A major activity is the three-month course 'Children and Youth in Development'; which is an excellent opportunity for *mid-career* professionals on children's issues to step back from their day-to-day work, enhance their skills, share and compare experiences, and learn from the different backgrounds of the other participants.
- Connecting People This project enables practitioners and researchers who are following the Diploma Programme to establish professional contacts with individuals and organisations with which they have common interests. ICDI staff also benefit through the contacts that are built up and from the participants
- Living Room Seminars These are informal, low key meetings on issues critical to children, organised under the ICCYS label, of invited policy-makers, researchers,

practitioners, other international agencies, fund-raisers and donors. These gatherings are much appreciated as an informed but informal platform for communication and discussion.

- **Programme meetings**
ICDI has initiated programme meetings, bringing together interested parties around the issues and countries it is engaged with. They have so far been held for its 'Children in Surinam Programme' and for the Palestinian 'Trust of Early Childhood, Family and Community Education'. These meetings will be expanded to include other areas
- **Kinderrechtenhuis Nederland (Children's Rights Home, The Netherlands).** This is an initiative that brings together Dutch organisations that work in the spirit of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- **Exchange visits.** Delegations from transitional and developing countries regularly visit ICDI which, as part of its support function, organises contacts with other Dutch organisations that are felt are relevant to the needs of these visitors. This has also proved a valuable learning exercise for ICDI, reinforcing its networks in the Netherlands.
- **Participation in NIZW/VWS meetings.** The 'International Centre' of the Nationaal Instituut voor Zorg en Welzijn, together with the Ministry of Health, Social Welfare and Sport of The Netherlands organizes regular sessions on children's and welfare issues in which ICDI takes part.
- **Fellows.** ICDI welcomes scholars and practitioners from developing countries who work on areas related to its mission to spend a short sabbatical period working with its staff on projects of mutual interest. This initiative falls largely under the aegis of the Plan Nederland/ICCYS Distinguished Fellows' Programme; in 2006 we hope to welcome Vessela Banova, of the State Agency of Child Protection in Bulgaria and Yvonne Caprino, of PCOS Foundation in Suriname. Both are in the vanguard of the struggle to create better life chances for socially excluded children and youth and will have a great deal of experience and expertise to share with us and our colleagues.

- **Action research.** ICDI places considerable value on action research as 'active listening' to the South. It considers it an essential part of its work which, as a matter of policy, is demand driven. It maintains field awareness, forces ICDI staff to keep continually abreast of pertinent publications and 'grey' materials, and brings them face-to-face with children, youth, their problems and their care givers.
- **The ICDI website, its publications and public appearances** are some other means by which ICDI interacts with colleagues (both inside and outside The Netherlands), engaging them in debates on major issues of concern on which it has accumulated experience.

There are multiple signs that things are changing for the better for girls, wherever they live, and they are catching up with boys, and even surpassing them in some spheres. Things may also be getting worse in some respects as some 'old' problems are coming back with a vengeance. Honour killings appear to be on the increase across the globe, traditional practices such as bride burning and female genital mutilation are extensively reported and sati, where the widow is burnt on the funeral pyre of the husband, is reappearing in India. New technologies are being used to determine the sex of the unborn child to enable sex-selective foeticides and deprive the girl child of the right to be born. Equally worrying is the trend, reported earlier, of girls catching up with boys on a range of negative behaviours.

Taken from 'Newly Emerging Needs of Children, an Exploration'



The year under review

In global terms, 2005 was not much different from the years before, as it was again not a happy time for the world's children. The trend of many countries sinking further back into poverty continued, with people living shorter lives, fewer children going to school and more children dying than ever before. Wars keep on raging on, taking heavy tolls on families and their support systems, and consuming inordinate resources that could otherwise be used to provide children with safe and healthy environments. How many schools could be built or how many midwives trained and equipped for the amount of money needed to keep one attack helicopter on the ready? Or the sheer numbers of footballs or dolls, we often think, as we visit places where these items are considered pure treasures. How long is it ago that children enjoyed high priority? If judged against this backdrop alone, ICDI's mandate of improving the situation of children and youth is more needed than ever before. We are now capable of delivering products of good quality that satisfy all parties involved. We feel we are justified in thinking that we can make a difference.

During 2005, ICDI was involved in four longer-term field projects, these were: the 'Children in Suriname Programme', 'Non-Negotiables: No to Child Labour; Yes to Education in Andhra Pradesh, India'; 'Building Civil Society by Strengthening the Life Skills of Institutionalised Children in Bulgaria' and 'Children and Youth as Builders of Civil Society' in Romania. We are also content with the developments within iCCYS, the International Centre for Child and Youth Studies, the joint initiative of the Institute of Social Studies in The Hague, the Netherlands, and ICDI. We are pleased to report progress with the Kinderrechtenhuis Nederland, or the national Home of the Rights of the Child, that we, together with other key agencies, are trying to establish

Children in Suriname Programme

This is an inter-active collection of projects and activities with children and youth as their focus. The core is made up by the NGOs VPSI (institutional Care, children with handicaps, general child advocacy and training), Klimop (early child development) and SPCS (foster care). The programme is a success story and has grown in importance, both in terms of its effects on the development of children and youth as well as an instrument of advocacy. It is now poised to grow both in cohesion as well as outreach. The Schiefbaan Hovius Foundation has kept up its position as the major donor of the Programme. Other sponsors are Stichting Katholieke Noden and De Groot Fonds. Although not directly funding the Programme, several other organisations have supported ICDI's efforts in Suriname in other ways. These include: CORDAID, Stichting Kinderpostzegels, UNICEF and UNESCO.

Young in the Caribbean, the bi-annual newsletter that promotes, inter alia, the programme in Suriname, the Caribbean, the Netherlands and among donors got a new lease on life with support from De Oude Beuk Foundation and the first issue new style appeared in November.

ICDI's initiative to bring together major donors with an interest in Suriname received a major boost by the meeting organised by Stichting Katholieke Noden (SKAN) in September. It is obvious, however, that a lot of pushing and pulling is continuously needed to keep this initiative going.

The Children in Suriname Programme celebrated its tenth anniversary in Suriname in November with the apposite slogan 'Bondru kon na wan, gi den Pikin fu Sranan' – 'working together for the children of Suriname'. Children, educators, decision makers and a range of NGOs participated in a number of festive and instructive events, which received wide media

coverage. We now hope that more people and organizations will join the Programme.



Fantasy and reality have always been blended by children, but now, with the ever-faster expanding virtualities, totally new situations present themselves which make it even more complex for children to separate the real from the non-real and to make choices that benefit their well-being and development.

Taken from 'Newly Emerging Needs of Children, an Exploration'



Non-Negotiables: No to Child Labour; Yes to Education

This project was implemented in collaboration with the MV Foundation in Andhra Pradesh, India. It began in September 2002 and was completed in August 2005. Funding for training is provided by the Liberty Foundation via Van Stokkom Management. The MV Foundation seeks to radically eliminate child labour by working on the premise that child labour is not inevitable and the only way to combat it is to involve local communities in universalising education. Training sessions have been held for a wide variety of groups such as youth organisations, volunteers, education activists, teachers, community organisers, elected local bodies and local governmental officials so that they can implement the project in their own local areas. In addition, MVF staff have also undergone training in organisational principles and decision-making and attended courses on issues such as democracy, development, poverty and civil society. ICDI, on its turn, draws on the experience of MV Foundation in its own work and, especially, when it enters the debate on child labour and education.

Building Civil Society by Strengthening the Life Skills of Institutionalised Children in Bulgaria

This MATRA project started in June 2004 in collaboration with the Free and Democratic Bulgaria Foundation. The project focuses on a major issue that needs to be addressed before Bulgaria joins the EU. The most affected by the continuous deterioration in the child welfare system in the transition years have been the 30,000 odd children and youth growing up in institutions. Our project contributes to the efforts underway in Bulgaria to modernise the child-welfare system. It seeks to prepare caregivers in fourteen institutions to work in a de-institutionalised environment and to apply modern methodologies in their every-day work with children. Even more important, it brings a real contribution to the quality of life and the chances of success and social realisation of some 1200 children by stimulating them to further their life skills. A special highlight was a conference held in Sofia in October. Its main focus was opening channels of communication between the different stakeholders in the child protection system. We evaluate the event as a success and feel encouraged to keep on working in this direction.

Children and Youth as builders of Civil Society

This three-year project is also financed by the MATRA programme of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It is carried out with the Civil Society Development Foundation in Bucharest. It seeks to strengthen the participatory and democratic skills of youth leaders as well as of children and youth. Some 30 NGOs will participate in a series of training sessions provided by a small team of Master Trainers. In turn, they will provide nationwide training for youth leaders and workers. The project started in the autumn and it is still in its early days but all participants are enthusiastic about it we are already thinking of expanding the impact of its results.



A variety of longer-term initiatives gained momentum during 2005. The most significant of these are:

iCCYS

With our colleagues in the Institute of Social Studies, we managed to take our joint venture iCCYS to a higher platform. The Children, Youth and Development (CYD) diploma course was rated as excellent. Again, the Connecting People initiative in which ICDI staff brought CYD participants in contact with colleagues from NGOs in the Netherlands formed a welcome element in this course. This highly-appreciated initiative was financed by Fonds 1818.

We also started the first phase of a three-year research programme on Rethinking Childhood financed by Plan Netherlands. This first phase was undertaken by ICDI, as reported above, and will continue with our colleagues at ISS taking the lead with the participation of ICDI staff.

We collaborated with ISS in the delivery of a refresher course for alumni from South and Southeast Asia. This two-week course on Children, Youth and Development took place in Kathmandu, Nepal and was co-hosted by the Netherlands Alumni Association of Nepal (NAAN). Eighteen participants attended this course and the evaluations were very positive.

Kinderrechtenhuis (Home of the Rights of the Child)

ICDI has its offices on the premises of what used to be the Heilige Geest Weeshuis (Holy Ghost Orphanage), established in the late Sixteenth Century. It will now be renovated and turned into a Child Rights House that will house child-oriented NGOs and will also be available for activities with and for children and young people. In addition to ICDI, Defence for Children International, Cardea, ROC Leiden, and the original Trustees of the Orphanage, and one of the oldest foundations in the country, the Holy Ghost Orphans and Poor Peoples Home Foundation, have now formed a separate foundation to materialize these plans which has the backing of Leiden Municipality

IFCO

The International Foster Care Organisation and ICDI continue to explore ways of co-operation as their mandates have much in common and their first collaborative effort proved to be successful. The ICDI publication 'Stakeholders in Foster Care: An International Comparative Study' has now been issued into Bulgarian, English, Spanish and Ukrainian and widely distributed, while a Romanian version is in the works. We are now looking for ways to follow up on this study and would like to look at foster care and its place within the range of other alternative child support systems. We believe that we, and many others, stand to learn a great deal from the accumulated international experience in this domain.

Among the most accomplished and fabled tribes of Africa, no tribe was considered to have warriors more fearsome or more intelligent than the mighty Masai. It is perhaps surprising, then, to learn the traditional greeting that passed between Masai warriors: 'kasserian ingera', one would always say to another. It means 'and how are the children?' It is still the traditional greeting among the Masai, acknowledging the high value that the Masai always place on their children's well-being. Even warriors with no children of their own would always give the traditional answer 'Sapati ingera'. 'All the children are well', means life is good.

Taken from 'Newly Emerging Needs of Children, an Exploration'

In addition, the following short-term projects and activities were completed in 2005:

- Bulgaria: Discussions with policy makers on social policies benefiting children
- Bulgaria: Discussions with children, parents and teachers on ‘newly emerging needs’
- Bulgaria: Discussions with Free and Democratic Bulgaria Foundation on progress of joint Project ‘Building Civil Society by Strengthening the Life Skills of Institutionalized Children’
- Georgia: Discussions with key ministries on Child Protection laws and regulations
- Nepal: Refresher course for alumni on Children, Youth and Development
- Nicaragua: Discussions with children, parents and teachers, and NGO staff on ‘newly emerging needs’
- Romania: Discussions with the Civil Society Development Foundation on the joint project ‘Children and Youth as Builders of Civil Society’
- Slovakia: Discussions with the Children of Slovakia Foundation on jointly establishing a training and action research centre based on the notion of ‘respect for diversity’
- Suriname: Field discussions on progress and future of the Children in Suriname Programme
- USA: Seminar with UNICEF, New York, on ‘Newly Emerging Needs’
- Vietnam: Field discussions with Plan Vietnam on the feasibility of a Child Rights Learning Initiative

Visitors

We received a regular flow of visitors, which stimulated our thinking, helped us to move along. We remember, with pleasure and gratitude, all of them.

Publications and papers

ICDI books, papers and reports seek to meet the interests of academics, policy makers and practitioners by drawing on research data, but also on field impressions and responding to needs expressed by all stake holders. In all events they contain concrete pointers for action. For our list of publications, please, check the website, www.icdi.nl.



The Board and staff of ICDI

The Board of ICDI remained unchanged and on 31 December 2005 comprised the following persons: David Dunham, Thijs Malmberg, Thanh-Dam Truong, Nico van Oudenhoven, chairman, and Rekha Wazir, secretary/treasurer. At that date the following staff were employed: Bregje van Bemmelen, office manager, Iordan Iossifov, and Rutger van Oudenhoven, programme managers. Our international trainers were Ales Bednarik, Hans Kok and Barbara Henkes. Nico van Oudenhoven and Rekha Wazir were also involved in executive tasks.

ICDI Office

The ICDI premises have been widely used, not only for ICDI and iCCYS activities, but also by groups in the Leiden area and beyond. Visitors never fail to be moved by the fact that for four hundred years orphans occupied the space where we now work and meet other people on behalf of children. We will be moving from our trusted place to the adjacent building, Hooglandse Kerkgracht 21, by the end of 2006, as the whole compound has to be emptied for the massive renovation, which may take a full year. The sacrifice will be worth it, as we will get in return a splendid location for the national 'Home of the Rights of the Child', or Kinderrechtenhuis Nederland.

ICDI financial administration

SynCount auditors at Bodegraven (their Financial Report for 2005 is available separately) provided their technical support to ICDI, while Heemskerk Financial Advisers in Leiden kept on supervising ICDI's bookkeeping.

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