DEFENCE FOR CHILDREN INTERNATIONAL
DEFENSE DES ENFANTS INTERNATIONAL
DEFENSA DE NIÑAS Y NIÑOS INTERNACIONAL

Annual Report 2007

Defence for Children International
International Secretariat

ANNUAL REPORT 2007

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I. Introduction

Sources estimate that at any one time, at least 1 million children worldwide are deprived of their liberty.

Since 2005, the international movement of Defence for Children International (DCI) has intensified its efforts in the field of juvenile justice to make the situation of children and juvenile justice in the world known internationally, promoting actions that aim to include juvenile justice as a priority item on political agendas on an international, regional and national level and to strengthen national juvenile justice systems, guaranteeing the rights of children and adolescents in conflict with the law.

In 2007, with the support of its donors, national DCI sections, associated members, and partners, DCI's International Secretariat (DCI-IS) has been a strong advocate on the issue of juvenile justice at the international level. DCI-IS has continued to raise awareness of the rights of children, particularly those in conflict with the law, via its website, newsletters, official statements, and participation in conferences and relevant networks. DCI has also continued to implement its global campaign No Kids Behind Bars! to reduce the number of children in detention. DCI-IS's work to coordinate actions in this field intensified in May 2007, when it began to host the permanent Secretariat for the Interagency Panel on Juvenile Justice (IPJJ).

Collaborating with 15 of its national sections, in the second semester of 2007, DCI-IS staff began mapping juvenile justice systems in 15 countries worldwide[1], identifying gaps in the implementation of international standards on juvenile justice. DCI-IS will use the findings of this research project to sharpen its advocacy objectives, strategies and messages, and identify areas where further research and action are needed by national sections.

In 2007, the actions of DCI-IS have been focused on, but not limited to, juvenile justice. DCI-IS renewed its commitment to providing follow-up to the UN Study on Violence against Children. In collaboration with DCI's Regional Office for the Americas, DCI-IS began to develop a tool kit to facilitate the advocacy and lobby work of DCI national sections on this issue; this is due for release in 2008. It also began preparing for an international conference on "Ending Violence against Children in Justice Systems" scheduled for September 2008.

DCI-IS is at the heart of the DCI movement, and in 2007 it continued to play a key role as its focal point, providing a link between national sections and UN bodies in Geneva. In particular, DCI-IS guided national sections through the institution-building process of the Human Rights Council and ensured their participation, where appropriate, in the new process of the Universal Periodic Review.

DCI-IS would like to extend its thanks and gratitude to all those who supported its work in 2007, including donors, national sections and associated members, DCI regional offices, and other external partners. With your support we have been able to advance our work, and as you will see in the report, make significant progress in improving the situation of children, particularly those in conflict with the law. We look forward to your continued collaboration in 2008.

Rifat Odeh Kassis
President

Rebecca Morton
Executive Director

[1] Albania, Argentina, Belgium, Bolivia, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, France, Ghana, Italy, Netherlands, Niger, Palestine, Sierra Leone and Uganda

II. Who we are

Defence for Children International (DCI) is an international human rights organisation that has been promoting and protecting children's rights since its establishment in 1979. DCI is represented in over 40 countries worldwide through its national sections and associated members, each working on child rights issues that are relevant to their national contexts including ending child labour, child trafficking and violence against children, and promoting child participation.

DCI's International Secretariat, located in Geneva, is the focal point of the movement. It represents the movement at the international level and develops projects which promote child rights globally and which support the activities and growth of DCI's national sections and associated members.

Our Mission

DCI is dedicated to ensuring on-going, practical, systematic and concerted international action directed towards promoting and protecting the rights of the child, as articulated in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), its optional protocols, and all the other human rights instruments.

Our Vision

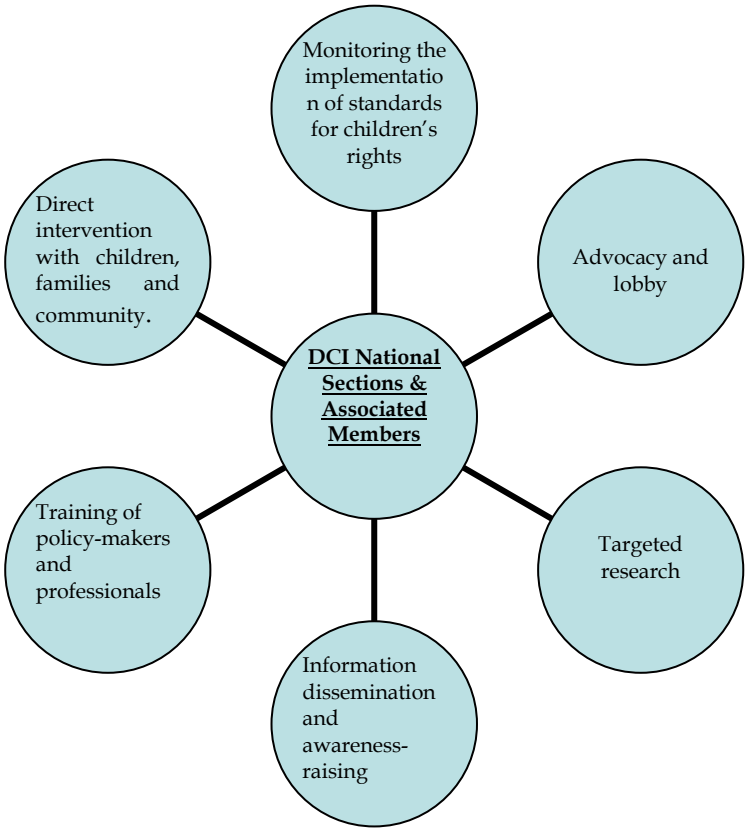
Children should enjoy and exercise their rights in a just and responsible society.

III. Where we work

DCI has national sections and/or associated members in the following countries: **In the Americas:** Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Paraguay, Mexico, Uruguay, and UN Representative in New York; **In Europe:** Albania, Belgium, Czechia, France, Italy, Netherlands, Macedonia, Switzerland, Slovakia, Serbia; **In Africa:** Angola, Benin, Cameroon, Congo, Gambia, Ghana, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo, Uganda; **In Asia & Pacific:** Australia, Japan, Pakistan, Sri Lanka; **In the Middle East:** Israel, Lebanon and Palestine.

IV. How we work

DCI's work on the national, regional, and international level is directed by the principles enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN CRC). Using this and other relevant international standards, DCI national sections develop actions according to the issues affecting children in their country. These actions can include:



DCI believes strongly in the importance of networking and building strategic alliances in order to strengthen its work. DCI therefore coordinates with various actors in the child rights area, including for example the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC). DCI has consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and the Council of Europe, and working relations with UNESCO, UNICEF and the ILO. DCI is also an active member of the NGO Group for the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its thematic working groups on juvenile justice, violence against children and the Human Rights Council. DCI is an elected member of the NGO Advisory Panel for follow up to the UN Study on Violence, and supervises the Secretariat for the Interagency Panel on Juvenile Justice.

V. A selection of key achievements in 2007

(for further information on these individual stories please consult DCI's bi-monthly newsletters available on www.dci-is.org)

National Level

• In Niger, the start of the school year is often marked by violence and uncertainty as the government and other social actors play out their disagreements on the question on education. **DCI-Niger supported children to return to school in a safe and secure environment by organising a Day of Reflection on Education.** The aim was to bring together government representatives, teachers, trade unions, and NGOs working on education, encouraging them to have constructive dialogue, which prioritises the rights of the child.
• **DCI-Albania promoted child rights in the print and broadcast media in Albania by organising a Child Rights Media Awards Ceremony.** "The media play an important role in informing the general public about children's issues and CRCA/DCI-Albania will continue in years to come to award journalists that promote and respect children's rights in Albania." (Mr Altin Hazizaj, Director DCI-Albania)
• **DCI-Canada, through its restoring peace project, supported children and youth affected by conflict in Angola, Burundi and Uganda, by helping them to develop practical life skills in order to re-build their lives.**
• **SPARC, DCI's Associated Member in Pakistan established the first formal Institute on Child Rights Education**. The Centre successfully conducted its first 5-day Course on "Training of Trainers" in May 2007.
• **DCI-The Netherlands succeeded in helping a child exercise his right to family life**. Eric moved from the Democratic Republic of Congo to the Netherlands in 2001, to join his mother and brother who had been granted asylum. When Eric applied for asylum, and later a residence permit in order to reside with his mother, his requests were denied – despite the tense situation in DRC and his young age (16). DCI-Netherlands supported Eric's appeal, bringing nationwide attention to the case, and basing their arguments on relevant articles of the UN CRC. Eric's case was overturned in February 2007.
• **DCI-Colombia commemorated the 18th Anniversary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child** by organising a day of reflection with other NGOs and external partners**.** DCI's national section gave special attention to the question of restorative justice and how to ensure its effective implementation in juvenile justice systems.

Regional Level

• Despite recent advances in juvenile criminal justice systems in the Latin America region, DCI's national sections have noticed a worrying trend towards the criminalisation of children and retributive justice approaches. In response to these trends, **DCI's Latin American sections have developed a regional campaign "No Adolescents behind bars: better opportunities and alternatives for holistic development"**.
• **DCI-The Netherlands, in collaboration with the Howard League for Penal Reform, DCI-Belgium and DCI-France, launched a study on:** ***Violence against Children in Conflict with the Law: A Study on Indicators and Data Collection in Belgium, England and Wales, France and the Netherlands***. The results will be published in March 2008
• **DCI's Latin American sections continued to implement a regional project on juvenile justice in 8 countries[2],** with the overall aim of strengthening juvenile justice systems in the region. In November 2007, in the framework of this project, **Latin American sections organised a regional consultation** in Sao Paulo, Brazil to promote greater cooperation between DCI sections and their partners to strengthen work on juvenile justice and increase regional impact**.**

International Level

• **DCI Launched a movement-wide initiative to provide follow-up to the UN Study on Violence against Children.** In collaboration with DCI's Regional Office for the Americas, DCI-IS began developing a "tool-kit" to facilitate the advocacy and lobby work of DCI national sections on this issue. This is due to be released in 2008.
• **DCI launched the "No Kids without Education" campaign**. The goal of the Campaign is to guarantee that 100% of school-aged working children and adolescents effectively exercise their right to access a complete and quality education. For further details, please visit www.dci-is.org

[2] Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Chile, Ecuador, Paraguay, Uruguay

VI. DCI – International Secretariat: An overview of programme activities in 2007

a) Strategic Plan of Action on Juvenile Justice

Since 2006, DCI's International Secretariat has been implementing a strategic plan of action on juvenile justice, the overall goal of which is to "make the situation of children and juvenile justice in the world known internationally, promoting actions that aim to include juvenile justice as a priority item on political agendas on an international, regional and national level and to strengthen national juvenile justice systems, guaranteeing the rights of children and adolescents in conflict with the law".

In 2007, with support from Kerkinactie, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Luxembourg and the Oak Foundation, the following outcomes were achieved:

1. Monitoring the implementation of the UN CRC, its optional protocols and other human rights instruments, in particular those related to juvenile justice

Outcomes:

- DCI-IS highlighted and raised awareness about gaps in the implementation of juvenile justice standards at national level by attending and preparing reports on the 44th, 45th and 46th sessions of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, drawing particular attention to discussions pertaining to juvenile justice. These reports were circulated electronically to DCI's network of partners.

2. Advocating for juvenile justice systems that are respectful of children's rights, and their vulnerability to sexual and other forms of abuse, and that aim at preventing situations where children come into conflict with the law.

Outcomes:

- DCI successfully lobbied for an ECOSOC resolution "Supporting national efforts for child justice reform, in particular through technical assistance and improved United Nations system-wide coordination" at the 16th Session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice. The resolution contains specific reference to the need for national action plans on juvenile justice, as put forward by DCI.

3: Lobbying for the inclusion of the issue of juvenile justice as a priority on political agendas, in order to prevent human rights violations and protect the rights of the child, particularly those in conflict with the law.

Outcomes:

- DCI drew attention to the importance of juvenile justice issues during the 4th, 5th and 6th sessions of the UN Human Rights Council by delivering written and oral statements calling for relevant Special Procedures to include issues affecting children in conflict with the law in their reports to the Council. In particular, DCI targeted the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, the Special Rapporteur on Torture and other forms of cruel and degrading treatment and the Working Group on Summary Executions. In addition to issuing statements, DCI also co-organised morning briefings for several of the Special Rapporteurs on child-rights related issues.
- DCI drew the attention of other NGOs to the issues affecting children in conflict with the law by widely circulating its statements and successfully encouraging several other organisations to co-sponsor them.

4. To network for building international alliances for the promotion and defence of children's rights, particularly those in conflict with the law.

Outcomes:

- Until September 2007 when DCI's mandate came to an end, DCI continued to convene the NGO working group on juvenile justice. In particular DCI facilitated the input of NGOs into the Committee on the Rights of the Child's *General Comment No.10.*
- DCI exchanged information and built the basis for new partnerships with organisations including ISS (International Social Services), YMCA World Alliance, and Y Care International.
- DCI was invited by the Interagency Panel on Juvenile Justice to host and supervise a permanent Secretariat for the Panel (*see point c)

5. To build the capacities of different bodies of DCI so that they are capacitated to defend children's rights in a more holistic and effective manner.

Outcomes:

- A representative of DCI-Sierra Leone, was selected by the Sierra Leonean national coalition of NGOs to present its alternative report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child in June 2007. The representative of DCI-Sierra Leone attributes his selection to a training provided by DCI-IS last October on reporting to the CRC.
- DCI-IS supported several of its national sections to produce articles and press releases, particularly on their work in the field of juvenile justice, to be posted on the DCI-IS website, disseminated and included in its monthly newsletters.
- DCI-IS, in consultation with national sections, specifically in the African region, developed a proposal for a twinning and partnership programme. The programme allows for intra and inter regional learning and exchange, and contributes to the development of a common regional vision and strategy for the Africa Region. DCI-IS will begin fundraising for the project in 2008.

6. To raise awareness among the public in general and targeted groups about the situation of children's rights and juvenile justice issues

Outcomes:

- DCI-IS developed a new communications strategy, with a focus on raising awareness of juvenile justice issues
- DCI-IS raised awareness of juvenile justice issues and the activities of DCI's sections in this field by publishing 6 editions of its bi-monthly newsletter on juvenile justice in English, French and Spanish, and distributing widely.
- The DCI-IS website was re-designed and re-launched in May 2007, immediately resulting in a greater number of daily visitors to the website
- DCI-IS monitored media coverage of DCI's activities in the field of juvenile justice, and began developing a media database.

b) Follow up to General Comment No.10 on Children's Rights in Juvenile Justice

In January 2007, DCI-IS developed a project proposal to provide follow-up to the latest recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the issue of juvenile justice, developed in their *General Comment No.10 on Children's Rights in Juvenile Justice.*

DCI-IS presented this proposal to Committee in March 2007. The Committee gave its full support for this project which combines advocacy, awareness-raising, and monitoring activities at national and international level, to ensure that the General Comment 10 is understood and used by States Parties.

DCI-IS successfully secured funds to begin implementation of this project with 8 of its national sections in: Albania, Cameroon, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, and Uganda. Pilot activities at national level will be launched in March 2008.

c) Interagency Panel on Juvenile Justice

The Interagency Panel on Juvenile Justice (IPJJ) was established by Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Resolution 1997/30 to act as a "coordination panel on technical advice and assistance in juvenile justice." Panel members include UN agencies such as OHCHR, UNICEF, UNDP, UNODC, and NGOs including Organisation Mondiale Contre la Torture, Terre des Hommes, Penal Reform International, and DCI. In September 2006, Panel members agreed on the importance of having a permanent Secretariat in order to provide closer coordination and follow-up of its activities. DCI-IS was invited to host and supervise this Secretariat, and in May 2007 established a permanent Secretariat for the Panel at its offices in Geneva. In 2007, the Panel Secretariat was funded through contributions from UNICEF, UNODC, Terre Des Hommes, and DCI.

Throughout 2007, key achievements of the Panel Secretariat include:

- Assisting Panel members in raising the visibility of the Panel internally and externally: by clarifying governance methods, membership and developing a map of Panel member presence.
- Facilitating the drafting of a common statement delivered by UNICEF at the ECOSOC Special Session in July 2007 and coordinating Panel representation and providing basic communication tools about the Panel at key events.
- Raising the external visibility of the Panel and juvenile justice as an issue by publishing the first edition of the Panel Secretariat's electronic newsletter in English, French and Spanish on Human Rights Day (10 December 2007). After the dissemination of the newsletter to a list of almost 600 contacts, including Panel members at country, regional and international level, academics, human rights and children's rights NGOs and other juvenile justice actors, daily visits to the Panel website increased from an average of 47 visits per day in June to an average of 111 in December 2007, covering 97 different countries.
- Finalising the translation of the French sections of the website, including translations of summaries of documents, and commissioned translation of the website into Spanish. The first part of the Spanish translation was posted online in December 2007 and the second part will be posted in January 2008.
- Finalising the Panel's expert roster 2007 (45 experts contacted, of which 29 experts have agreed to be on the roster as of December 2007).

d) Follow-up to the UN Study on Violence against Children

As an elected member of the NGO Advisory Panel for the follow up of the UN Study, DCI has been actively involved in pushing for action on the recommendations of the Study, including for the establishment of a UN Special Representative on Violence against Children.

As a means of continuing to contribute to this process, in 2007, DCI launched a movement-wide follow-up initiative to support action on the UN Study recommendations. This initiative is being coordinated by DCI-Costa Rica, DCI's Vice President for the Americas and DCI-IS.

DCI activities include developing a "kit" of tools and materials on various components of the UN Study. This kit will include: a mapping of good practices within the DCI movement; a manual on advocacy against violence; a summary of the regional consultations conducted in preparation for the UN Study; and a series of leaflets on the key themes in the UN Study.

As part of its participation in the follow-up to the UN Study, DCI is also planning an international conference to address the UN Study's recommendations for ending violence against children in institutions – and more specifically, in juvenile justice systems.

Institutionalised children, (including those in orphanages, prisons, juvenile detention facilities, reform schools) are often subjected to violence from staff and officials responsible for their well being, as well as from other prisoners in the case of police stations and detention centres for example. This violence can take the form of isolation, torture, beatings, harassment, rape, and humiliation.

Although the UN Study has been crucial in drawing attention to these issues, there remains an urgent need for concrete follow-up response and action. With this in mind, DCI will organise a conference entitled "Ending Violence in Juvenile Justice Systems: From Words to Action" with the aim of mobilising effective follow-up actions to the UN Study, specifically in relation to violence against children in juvenile justice systems. DCI began the planning process for this conference, scheduled for 2008, in early 2007.

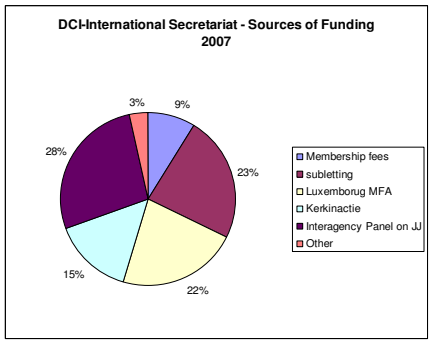
e) International Child Rights Advocacy

In addition to its thematic focus on juvenile justice, DCI-IS has maintained broader attention to other children's rights issues and where possible reacted to serious violations of children's rights on a case by case basis – particularly in countries where DCI has a national presence. These statements can be viewed on DCI's website: www.dci-is.org

Throughout 2007, DCI-IS has also made particular efforts to follow closely the institution-building process of the new Human Rights Council, and be involved in all lobby efforts to bring children's rights onto the agenda. In particular, DCI-IS has been an active member of the NGO working group for the human rights council. Key actions include drafting statements on behalf of the group, and attending lobby meetings with government representatives.

VII. DCI –IS: An overview of funding sources in 2007

Throughout 2007, DCI's activities were kindly supported by the following governments and organisations:
The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Luxembourg, Kerkinactie and the Oak Foundation – for DCI's Strategic Plan of Action on Juvenile Justice;
UNICEF, UNODC and Terre des Hommes, for the establishment of a permanent Secretariat for the Interagency Panel on Juvenile Justice;
DCI national sections in Niger, Sierra Leone, Australia, Sri Lanka, Italy, Netherlands, Slovakia, Switzerland, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Costa Rica, Paraguay, and Palestine;
DCI would also like to thank Rahn & Bodmer and Sparkasse des Sensebezirks for their donations to the work of DCI.



VIII. DCI-IS Staff and Executive Council in 2007

a) Staff of the International Secretariat

Executive Director – Ms Rebecca Morton
Communications & Advocacy Officer – Ms Julia D'Aloisio
Juvenile Justice Programme Officer – Mr Carlos Pampín Garcia
Secretariat Coordinator for the Interagency Panel on Juvenile Justice – Ms Davinia Ovett
Coordinator of the Resource Centre – Ms Camille Kryspin
Child Labour Programme Assistant (until March 2007) – Ms Cecile Madec

Interns:
Kate Bundra, Muriel Bataclan, Raquel Mora, Schahram Rezai, Christophe Chevalier, Charlotte Ducrot, Eleonore Lette, Rocío Gómez Zamora, Amal Sadozai, Shalini Ahmed, Abigail Luempert, Mariedominque Faye, Leonor Garrido

b) International Executive Council Members

President: Mr. Rifat Odeh Kassis
Treasurer: Mr. Benoit Van Keirsbilck
Vice President, Africa – Mr Laurencio Akohin
Vice President, Americas – Ms Virginia Murillo
Vice President, Europe – Ms Majorie Kaandorp
Vice President, Asia, Pacific & Middle East – Mr Masaaki Fukuda
Member – Mr Marcos Guillen
Member – Mr Innocent Garakumbe