“We are never too young to lead, and they are never too old to learn.”

Mellicentia,
17-year-old human rights activist from Sierra Leone

This young girl is part of a Defence for Children International (DCI) project in Sierra Leone related to the Girls Advocacy Alliance.

At just 17 years old, she has already campaigned against school harassment, child marriage, teenage pregnancies, sexual abuse and female genital mutilation.

In September 2018, through DCI’s initiative, she participated in the Day of General Discussion of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). She was able to share her everyday experiences as a girl activist in her country with a panel of senior members of governments.

Girls like Mellicentia can make a huge impact in their communities, if only they are given the chance. Through the Girl Advocacy Alliance, DCI supported 960 girls from Sierra Leone like Mellicentia to get their voices heard last year, building a new generation of human rights defenders able to bring about change.
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Thirty-six years ago, DCI coordinated the NGO input to the drafting of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) up to its adoption in 1989. Today, we continue to promote the rights of children in more than 35 countries. In 2018, we contributed substantially to developing a holistic approach to child rights protection.

Our long-term experience in the field of justice for children has earned us the leadership required to contribute to national, regional and global studies. This year, we continued to lead the NGO support of the UN Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty. We accompanied the Independent Expert to organise regional consultations in Africa, Latin America and the Middle East, and to collect data in many countries where there are DCI National Sections or other members of the NGO Panel (170) co-convened by DCI and Human Rights Watch. Once the report is presented to the UN General Assembly (October 2019), we will promote its recommendations and best practices, showing that children’s place is not behind bars. We have also pushed for significant changes in the review of General Comment No. 10 of the UNCRC, on children’s rights in juvenile justice, leading to the UNCRC adopting new General Comment 24 in 2019.

In 2018, numerous victims of violence were supported by our Socio-Legal Defence Centres (SLDCs) – a tool developed by DCI to ensure holistic protection of children – to enhance their access to justice, the rehabilitation of their rights and community reintegration. Our DCI sections in West Africa also promoted the African Union campaign against child marriage, and grassroots action to end child marriage, female genital mutilation and sexual violence against children. The International Secretariat has used lessons learnt in the field to inform various global reports that have contributed to the work of the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children. Being convinced that meaningful child participation is the best advocacy for children’s rights, we also regularly gave the floor to youth and child human rights defenders, in order to stimulate action by the UN and Member States to end violence against children.

In all our work, a major lesson learnt is that the values of a society mostly determine the aspirations of its children. Hence, we will continue our work at grassroots level to influence changing values for better protection and advancement of the rights of children.

For the children’s sake, we need to strengthen our impact and further expand our work to other countries through new DCI National Sections and wider alliances. But we always keep in mind that our best allies will be this new generation of children and youth, human rights defenders, powerful advocates and actors for justice.
OUR MOVEMENT
DEFENCE FOR CHILDREN INTERNATIONAL (DCI) is a leading child rights focused and membership-based grassroots Movement, founded in 1979 the first International Year of the Child.

Our mandate is to ensure effective implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) at the local, national, regional and international levels.

Our vision is that children, as human beings, must be able to pursue a life in which they can exercise and enjoy their human rights with dignity, in a just and responsible society.

The creation of DCI in 1979 coincided with the international community starting to discuss adopting a binding treaty on the rights of the child. In 1983, DCI became the lead coordinator of the group providing NGO input to negotiations on the UNCRC – a role it continued until the treaty was adopted in 1989.

The UNCRC is now the most universally ratified international treaty the world has ever agreed on. It was a huge victory for defenders of child rights, and its adoption changed perceptions of children – from passive objects of care and charity to full human beings with a distinct set of rights. Since the UNCRC was adopted, DCI has focused on its implementation on the ground, through lobbying and direct action.

Our Movement is composed of 35 Member National Sections and two Associated Members. These are independent grassroots structures led by local child rights defenders. Each of them works on the child rights issues most relevant to their national contexts according to a Global Strategic Framework (2017–21) adopted by the International General Assembly of the Movement.

Our International Secretariat (based in Geneva, Switzerland) is the heart of the Movement; it acts as an international coordinator and focal point for the National Sections, which are spread across five continents. The International Secretariat engages strategically with the relevant human rights mechanisms located in Geneva, including the UNCRC, the Human Rights Council (HRC) and other human rights bodies. Our added value is that all our advocacy and lobbying activities are based on the grassroots work of our National Sections. To this end, the International Secretariat provides tailored capacity building and technical assistance to DCI National Sections, in coordination with the Regional Desks.

Since 2017, we have also had the World Service Foundation in Brussels. Directly linked to the International Secretariat in Geneva, the World Service is working to develop National Sections’ projects and to advocate at European institutions.

The International General Assembly is DCI’s highest governing body and is composed of all National Sections of our grassroot Movement on equal footing. Guided institutionally by DCI’s Statutes and Code of Ethics & Gender Policy, it meets every four years, adopting the strategic framework, priorities and position of the DCI Movement. It also elects the President and other members of the International Executive Council.

An Advisory Committee of renowned child rights and governance experts provides substantive and technical support to the DCI Movement.
Our work is based on a strategic framework (2017–21) approved by the DCI International General Assembly.

The DCI Movement works towards full implementation of the UNCRC worldwide. As a child rights organisation with local roots and global impact, our Movement has unique expertise and positioning. Based on this, in 2017, DCI decided to focus on four areas of work in which we think we can make the greatest impact:
CHILDREN’S RIGHTS

- Violence against children
- Justice for children
- Children on the move
- Children affected by conflicts
- Children deprived of liberty
- Child participation
- Gender equality
Despite some progress, many countries remain ill-informed about the special needs of children in contact with the law. Governments often fail to align with existing standards or to provide the child-friendly justice systems enshrined in the UNCRC.

Justice for children remains the overarching thematic priority of the DCI Movement. From the drafting of the UN Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice (1985) to the recent revision of the UNCRC’s General Comment No. 10 on Juvenile Justice (new General Comment No. 24), DCI has grown to become the go-to NGO for leadership, experience and technical expertise on justice for children.

As a result, most of DCI’s National Sections and Associated Members provide direct socio-legal support to children, through Socio-Legal Defence Centres (SLDCs). This is a holistic protection model that DCI has developed and implemented for more than 20 years.

Through the SLDCs, our teams on the ground are often the first witnesses of child rights violations in their countries. This thematic focus is particularly challenging, as the level of political will necessary to ensure compliance remains scarce. To this end, DCI’s presence and systematic advocacy within the UN, regional mechanisms, and national and local institutions prove to be essential. In 2018, DCI submitted 19 statements, joint statements or reports on the status of child rights to the Committee on the Rights of the Child and the HRC.

In 2018, DCI-Mauritania, through its 24-hour hotline and SLDC, has provided support for the following cases:

- 200 minors in conflict with the law
- 197 child victims of sexual violence
- 27 requests of support to access civil-status documents
- 24 requests concerning adoptions
- 4 abandoned children
- 2 child marriages

Over 1000 children received help.

“My name is Obaida. I am from Arroub refugee camp north of Hebron. I am 15 years old and I like to cook. I have been arrested twice by Israeli forces. I started to think, why we are so different from other children in the world? Why are we detained when we are young and made to suffer? Why others are happy playing sports and with many opportunities that we don’t have? Why are they like that and why are we like this? To this day, no one can answer me.”

Obaida, short film by Mathew Cassel, with DCI-Palestine’s cooperation.
Capacity Building

The child-friendly justice in action project

"Being able to assist children in conflict with the law is not a given," says Inês Carvalho Sá, lawyer at the European Criminal Bar Association. Juvenile justice systems in European countries remain widely maladjusted to the specific needs of children. Youth protection and juvenile justice professionals often lack skills in this area.

To support them, DCI sections from Belgium, Czech Republic, France, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands and Spain have been working together since 2018 to produce a child-friendly justice toolbox. They have already undertaken needs analysis workshops with targeted professionals and participatory workshops with children, enabling them to provide practical recommendations. The toolbox will also include good practices for child-friendly justice.

The final aim is for children to receive the special care they are entitled to, including when in contact with the law.

Awareness

Ringing the alarm bell on child violations

DCI-Liberia spoke out loudly about child violations in 2018. The grassroots organisation was concerned by a possible amendment to weaken the repressive national rape law. More generally, the organisation seeks to raise awareness among the population and the government about ongoing serious child violations in the country, such as child labour and trafficking. To this end, they held five press conferences, organised several radio talk shows and distributed 2500 information kits throughout the year.

They also spoke directly to particularly vulnerable communities about child violations, reaching up to 4000 people.
Research and Monitoring

Encouraging academic research on children’s rights

The Justice for Children Award encourages researchers across Europe to work on and document children’s rights. In 2018, the second year of the award, its focus was violence against girls in the justice system. Mr Philip Waszczuk, student in Anthropology and Human Rights at Sciences Po, Paris, won the first prize for his outstanding paper on disabled girls’ access to justice in Uganda.

On 2 October 2018, DCI and the World Organization Against Torture organised an awards ceremony followed by a discussion panel at the European Union Delegation to the UN in Geneva. Renowned human rights experts on justice for children – including the Chair of the UNCRC, Renate Winter – gathered together with the EU Ambassador to review the scope of violence against girls behind bars, and to raise concerns about this hidden topic.
Holistic Approach
DCI brings justice to thousands of children in the Occupied Palestinian Territory

In Palestine, the 70-year conflict means generations of children grow up in violence with their basic rights regularly violated. Hope for the future relies on today’s Palestinian children being granted justice. DCI-Palestine was created in 1991 to investigate and document grave human and child rights violations and empower children with their rights. Today, DCI is the only Palestinian human rights organisation specifically focused on child rights.

DCI Palestine’s work in 2018

Runs Socio-Legal Defence Centres

- 1787 children in conflict with the law supported
- 2537 people, of whom 2087 were children, benefited from child rights awareness sessions
- 1337 juvenile justice professionals provided with capacity building on child rights
- 120 Palestinian child detainees from the West Bank provided with legal aid (representation, consultation, monitoring visits to prisons and collecting affidavits). Most Palestinian child detainees are charged with throwing stones, and three out of four experience physical violence during arrest, transfer or interrogation.

Empowers and Educates

Most of the time, Palestinian children are not properly informed of their right to silence, are denied access to an attorney before and during interrogations and are not accompanied by a parent during questioning. Since 2013, through the “Know Your Rights” campaign, DCI-Palestine has reached thousands of vulnerable children in the occupied territories to inform them about their rights.
Monitors and Documents Child Rights Violations

Due to mass protests in the Gaza Strip in 2018, the death toll on Palestinian children increased dreadfully. DCI-Palestine reported 57 children killed and 218 injured.

Lobbies, through Evidence-Based Advocacy, for Stronger Measures to Protect Palestinian Children

On 18 May 2018, a special UN Commission of Inquiry on the 2018 protests was convened at the HRC. DCI delivered a statement during the session, which moved the HRC to adopt a resolution in which it decided to dispatch an independent, international commission of inquiry to investigate those violations. In parallel, the DCI Movement issued a press release condemning the unlawful killing of children in Gaza.

DCI, both in Geneva and Palestine, continued to lobby the UN decisional bodies through the year, and DCI-Palestine submitted a 57-page joint report to UN investigators in early January 2019.

On 20 November 2018, the International Secretariat co-organised, with Amnesty International and Médecins du Monde, an information session in Lausanne, Switzerland on the detention of Palestinian children and the violations of human rights.
VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

One billion children suffer some form of violence today, often in places where they expect to be safe, such as schools or homes. In many countries, the worst forms of violence remain lawful or tolerated. DCI was among the NGOs directly supporting the preparation of the World Report on Violence against Children, which was finally adopted by the UN General Assembly in October 2006. This work led to the creation of the mandate of UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children.

DCI Socio-Legal Defence Centres regularly support young victims of violence in their claims for justice. Moreover, several National Sections organise regular outdoor monitoring to identify the most vulnerable children. Their proximity also enables them to grasp widespread abuses, such as child labour, child trafficking and gender-based violence. Their response, adapted to children’s needs, usually includes individual psychosocial counselling and/or education programmes.

DCI also carries out regular preventative activities, such as child rights awareness campaigns, directed towards all levels of society – and first to children themselves.

"VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN IS A PERVERSIVE AND SILENT EMERGENCY, BUT IT IS NOT A FATE! WITH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD AND THE 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (SDG TARGET 16.2) TO END ALL FORMS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN, A WORLD FREE FROM FEAR AND FROM VIOLENCE IS WITHIN REACH, LEAVING NO CHILD BEHIND. PROTECTING CHILDREN FROM VIOLENCE IS EVERYBODY’S BUSINESS. IN THE COUNTDOWN TO 2030, EVERY CITIZEN CAN BE AN AGENT OF CHANGE."

Marta Santos Pais, Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children from 2009 to May 2019

Direct Support
Individual psychosocial support for street and working kids

In Burkina Faso, an unaccounted number of children experience child labour, mostly as housemaids or in the local goldmines industry. Thousands of even more vulnerable children live on the streets, where they are exposed to all kinds of dangers, such as violence, drugs and exploitation.

DCI-Burkina Faso works with these kids, providing them with individual psychosocial support. In 2018, though monitoring Ouagadougou Street twice a week, they identified 300 street children, who they tried to reconnect with their families and offer education. They also supported 209 victims of child labour by providing alternative livelihood to their families so they could afford to put them back in school.
Direct Support
Education against violence and exclusion

DCI-Morocco/Bayti owns two psychosocial centres, in Casablanca and Essaouira, as well as a farming school in the Kenitra region. In 2018, these centres welcomed 585 children and youngsters (ages 6–17) in difficult situations and providing them with educational and recreational activities (non-formal education classes, sport, arts, debates, etc). This personalised support helps children develop their skills, feel safe and be empowered.

Every year, door-to-door social monitoring is organised to identify out-of-school and vulnerable children. In 2018, 142 children were registered in non-formal education following this operation. An average of 30% of these kids pursue their education in the formal sector the following year.

For older children, the association provides vocational training and employment measures. In the farming school, for instance, students receive training on organic agriculture.

Advocacy
States faced with their responsibilities

The Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) is the body of 18 independent experts that monitors implementation of the UNCRC by its state parties. The Committee meets three times a year to review a selection of member countries. Of the countries under review by the Committee, DCI closely monitors those in which there is a DCI National Section.

At its 78th session in May 2018, the Committee reviewed the state of Argentina. DCI-Argentina submitted an alternative report and an information update ahead of the plenary session, as well as briefing the Committee at the pre-sessional stage. Topics of concern raised by DCI-Argentina included juvenile justice, the lack of a law conforming to international standards on children deprived of liberty, and violence against children – particularly children in rural areas, marginalised groups and children with disabilities – including violence towards children by state forces.

The Committee presented its recommendations on 1 June 2018. In 2018, DCI also contributed to the CRC’s reviews of other countries, such as Spain and Mauritania.

Awareness
Empowering children against sexual abuse

“[They have helped me to stand for my rights and follow my dreams.]”

Teenage participant in a DCI workshop.

DCI-Costa Rica is at the forefront of child rights education in schools. More specifically, they are running ongoing awareness campaigns against sexual abuse in communities across the country.

The Coloured Strokes Project (Proyecto Trazos de Colores) aims to form a Community Citizen Security Network to fight child sexual exploitation.

The 30/15 campaign, “Age difference matters in love”, denounces widespread relationship between adolescents and adults. In 2018, 150 teenage girls from three different communities participated in workshops to empower themselves, and some were involved in preparing a video on the topic that reached more than 6000 people.
Holistic Approach
Making a lasting difference for girls in Western Africa

In many countries, girls and young women face tremendous obstacles to realising their basic rights. Violence and economic exclusion are closely linked. Girls massively drop out of secondary and vocational education, especially due to child marriage, sexual violence, trafficking and the worst forms of child labour. Their chance of ever getting a decent job is therefore minimal. And vice-versa – without income and independence, they are more vulnerable to violence.

Since 2016, under the banner of the wider joint initiative Girls Advocacy Alliance (GAA), DCI-Netherlands has teamed up with DCI-Sierra Leone, Ghana and Liberia to improve the position of girls and young women in these three countries. The GAA considers violence against girls and young women and improving economic opportunities as two sides of the same coin, and therefore uses a dual approach.

**Examples of DCI activities in 2018:**

**Lobbying and influencing, from village leaders to ministers**
- Reached traditional leaders and mutual agreements about what happens when violence against a girl takes place, in the form of regulations and roleplaying as promoters with neighbouring communities. In Ghana, for instance, 20 key leaders and 70 community child protection professionals now actively advocate against gender-based violence in their communities.
- Lobbied at different levels of civil society and government to gain support for implementing certain laws. This included advocating for faster handling of cases of sexual violence, adopting a law prohibiting excision of underage girls and implementing legislation against child marriage.

**Engaging the private sector**
- Convinced local entrepreneurs to involve girls and young women in education and decent work.

**Promoting participation of youth activists**
- Trained girls and young women, but also some boys, as youth advocates. For instance, 960 girls from 16 girls’ groups received support in Sierra Leone. One group, Hope Girl Sierra Leone, is now officially registered as a civil society.
- Built network groups throughout the country that aim to protect girls in the community against abuse and violence and to improve access to education and the labour market. A positive side effect is that, by uniting, these young people protect and strengthen themselves. These groups are also the best chance of changing mentalities for generations to come.

**From the grassroots to global advocacy**
DCI has built an international advocacy strategy based on the results of this initiative. This includes oral interventions at the UN Human Rights Council, side events and lobbying for resolutions on issues related to the project, such as gender-based violence; child, early and forced marriage; and female genital mutilation.
CHILDREN ON THE MOVE

Up to 50 million children are forcibly displaced around the world today. They are refugees, child migrants, asylum seekers or internally displaced. Many lose their families on the way to exile and become unaccompanied minors, which makes them particularly vulnerable to the worst cases of abuse, such as forced labour, trafficking and detention without cause. These children and their parents are usually ignorant of the specific rights they are entitled to according to the UNCRC. Even more alarmingly, many youth professionals around the world also lack this knowledge.

Various sections of DCI are strongly involved in supporting children and their families in the context of migration. In Europe, DCI-Greece, Italy, Netherlands and Spain provide direct help with socio-legal support. At the European level, DCI tries to reach all professionals directly involved with migrants, from customs officers to social workers and lawyers, so they are sensitised to young migrants’ specific needs and rights. In Lebanon, the National Section has focused its efforts on bringing education, vocational training and psychosocial support to out-of-school refugees from Syria.

In parallel, DCI advocates strongly at the international level for the rights of child migrants to be acknowledged and respected.

Direct Assistance
Support for child refugees in Lebanon

There are approximately 1.5 million Syrian refugees in Lebanon today, accounting for 30 percent of the overall population. Among them, half are children. Their needs are overwhelming and go well beyond the present international help. Thus, DCI-Lebanon focuses most of its work on providing survival support and basic education to child refugees.

In 2018, they achieved the following:

- **5200 children** working in the worst forms of child labour provided with either literacy, numeracy and remedial classes, or vocational training for the oldest, so they can access safer jobs (led in partnership with local organisations and the Ministry of Social Affairs).
- **290 out-of-school refugee children** successfully integrated into formal education through the provision of support lessons, basic clothing and school materials. DCI made regular follow-up with school directors and teachers.
- **100 Syrian refugees** provided with livelihood training.
- **390 refugee children** offered psychosocial support activities.

Advocacy
New international norms to protect children on the move

The UN intends to adapt its international instruments to emerging trends and human rights crises. To this end, committees can issue General Comments as new legal recommendations for Member States. DCI has contributed to the drafting of a new joint General Comment on the rights of children in the context of migration, led by both the CRC and the Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families. The General Comment was launched on 16 April 2018 with the aim of providing better international protection for children on the move.

Also, in 2018, two Global Compacts were adopted including new recommendations to better handle the ongoing refugee and migrant crisis. DCI was part of the Steering Committee of an initiative to raise the questions of child rights in the drafting. Several child rights recommendations of this initiative were integrated. DCI now uses these new international standards in its advocacy work and actively monitors their implementation.
Direct Assistance

Children’s Rights Helpdesk set up in Greece

The Children’s Rights Helpdesk, set up by DCI-Greece in 2016, is now a reference for legal protection and support for children on the move. In 2018, the Helpdesk expanded to four different regions in the country and reached more than 500 children, supporting them with the asylum process, accommodation, detention, family reunification and sexual violence complaints. The children call the centre a safe space to tell their stories and find support.

DCI-Greece also runs information sessions in day centres, youth centres, camps and squats to inform as many children as possible about their rights and the asylum procedures.

Fufu – 29 years old, Democratic Republic of Congo

Fufu run from years of persecution in her country with her five-year-old daughter. Upon arrival to Greece after a harassing journey, she was arrested and forcibly separated from her little girl who was transferred to a hospital and then to a children’s institution.

For months, the mother received no news about her child. When DCI was alerted about the case, they found Fufu in total despair. They immediately mobilised and started pressuring the authorities for Fufu’s release, and, once achieved, did their utmost to reunite them. They also prepared Fufu for her asylum interview and helped her find accommodation so she would be allowed to host her daughter.

Five months after their forced separation, Fufu and her daughter were finally reunited. Their joy was wordless. The little girl, finally safe and with her mom, started attending local school in September 2018.
Today, around one in six of the world’s children are affected by conflicts. These millions of children are deprived of their childhood and basic human rights. Despite the protection that should be afforded to them by international law, they are especially vulnerable to a myriad of risks. They are all too often drawn into hostilities, either directly as child soldiers or indirectly by being separated from their families, detained, killed, injured or exploited in other ways. If they survive, they are marked all their lives by the many traumas of war.

In the Central African Republic, Iraq, Palestine, Somalia, Colombia and Yemen, our local sections work under very difficult conditions to provide direct support to child victims of conflicts and to raise awareness, locally and internationally, on child rights violations in times of war.

Direct Activities
Supporting young victims in the Central African Republic (CAR)

CAR has been in turmoil since a violent takeover of power in 2013. In this neglected emergency, two in three children are in urgent need of aid and protection. DCI-CAR focuses its support on vulnerable children affected by the crisis in the Bouca and Kaga-Bandoro regions in the centre of the country.

In 2018, they achieved the following:

- 10 unaccompanied children reunited with their families
- 11 former child soldiers and 9 victims of sexual violence received regular psychosocial support
- Psychosocial centres opened and 36 local youth workers trained to support children with psychosocial activities
- 30 host families received psychosocial training
- 586 villagers attended an awareness session in October 2018 on girls’ rights
- Capacity building of grassroots youth clubs to increase resilience and child protection within communities
- Training of community leaders and armed groups on child rights

Capacity Building
Promoting child rights amid the Yemeni crisis

DCI-Yemen’s goal is to protect Yemeni children affected by the war. The organisation works directly with not only children but also all layers of society, from parents to members of the government, to raise awareness of the special protections to which children are entitled in times of conflict.

In 2018, they achieved the following:

- Mothers trained about education and child rights protection.
- Government members, lawyers, social workers, psychologists and teachers trained on child protection in times of emergency.
- Awareness sessions in communities and schools.
- Survey conducted on the impact of war on children and their families. This report was used for international advocacy, in particular in the context of the Human Rights Council (HRC) and the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of Yemen (Pre-session in December 2018).
International Advocacy

Reporting on child rights violations during armed conflicts

The UPR reviewed the state of Colombia during the HRC of May 2018. UPR is a unique process that involves a periodic review of the human rights records of all 193 UN Member States.

This is a key moment for civil society to lobby governments by submitting alternative reports. DCI uses this mechanism regularly to propose documented reports on the state of child rights and raise concerns in cases of violation. On this occasion, DCI-Colombia submitted a collective stakeholder report on children and armed conflicts. Eight of the recommendations on how to end child soldier recruitment were accepted and one noted.
“Deprivation of liberty should be a measure of last resort and for the shortest appropriate period of time,” according to the UNCRC. We are, however, very far from this ideal in today’s world. Until the Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty is published, there is simply no reliable data on the numbers of child deprived of liberty in the world. Without these figures, the issue cannot be properly addressed, and the rights of millions of these “invisible children” will remain unrealised.

Since 2013, DCI mobilised all its influential stakeholders to adopt a UN General Assembly Resolution asking the Secretary-General to commission a global study on this subject. Since its adoption in December 2014, DCI has been the co-convener of the NGO Panel (170 members) in charge of accompanying the drafting of the Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty.

At the national level, several DCI sections (such as Palestine, Pakistan, Sierra Leone and Ghana) work directly within detention facilities and places of deprivation of liberty, monitoring the detention conditions of children, providing socio-legal support and offering education or vocational training when states do not comply with their obligations.

Alerted by its National Sections to the fate of child detainees, DCI campaigned in 2013 for the UN to conduct a global study to shed light on the scope and situation of children deprived of liberty. The call was eventually heard, and the UN appointed Manfred Nowak, professor of international law and human rights, as the Independent Expert to carry out the study. DCI co-convenes its NGO Panel.

In 2018, questionnaires were sent to all UN Member States and other stakeholders, including national human rights institutions and NGOs. At the end of 2018, the study was in its final stages: compiling the data received and preparing concrete recommendations for Member States.

Several DCI National Sections contributed directly or through national focal points to the study regarding the situation in their country. DCI, as co-convener of the NGO Panel, is closely following all stages and will prepare the next important steps: presentation of the report at the UN General Assembly in October 2019 and dissemination of its recommendations.
“2018 was a crucial year for the United Nations Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty, and Defence for Children International (DCI) remained, as ever, an important partner throughout the process. As co-convenor of the NGO Panel, which now has 170 members, DCI continued to play a central role in organising and coordinating civil society activities contributing to the study. This includes mobilising NGOs to contribute to data collection, joining research groups, coordinating regional consultations, and conducting significant advocacy and awareness-raising activities. I am also very grateful for the work and dedication DCI has provided to the research groups. The success of the study will be due, in no small part, to the contribution and perseverance of DCI.

I look forward to continuing to work together in such a fruitful way in 2019 and beyond as we launch the Global Study at the United Nations General Assembly in October in New York. The launch will only be the beginning and DCI will be instrumental in the successful implementation of the study’s recommendations and follow-up at the national and regional levels. My deepest gratitude.”

Manfred Nowak, Independent Expert leading the UN Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty
The participation of children in all domains and actions that affect them is one of our pillars. DCI believes that children are the best advocates for their rights. They are not only rights-holders in need of protection but also active members of society, capable of voicing their own rights. Our work on child participation is underpinned by the rights enshrined in the UNCRC: Respect for the views of the child and the right of every child to express his or her views. The Sustainable Development Goals also call for responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels (target 16.7).

Children’s participation is part of all the activities we undertake. Yemen is very active in this area, with the creation of a yearly Children Parliament to advocate directly for their rights. Other sections – such as DCI-Bolivia, Italy, Ghana, Costa Rica, Liberia, Palestine and Sierra Leone – actively support youth groups.

Direct Activities
The Yemeni Children Parliament

DCI-Yemen leads a yearly Children Parliament, which aims to build the capacity of children and civil society to advocate for children’s rights.

The Parliament is led by 66 children, who produce an alternative report with recommendations on the implementation of the UNCRC in their country. DCI shared the outcomes of this report through workshops in six provinces across the country. More than 26,114 people from 34 civil society organisations attended. These meetings were also the occasions for issuing 3978 birth certificates to attendees, who are often vulnerable internally displaced people.

In parallel, the association organised various meetings between members of the Children Parliament and local leaders in the capital Sanaa to develop an action plan for implementing the UNCRC recommendations.

Capacity Building
Youth organisations empowered in Bolivia

DCI-Bolivia’s headquarters are situated in Cochabamba, with activities in La Paz, Santa Cruz and Oruro regions. The organisation focuses on empowering local grassroots youth associations through socio-legal trainings, child right awareness sessions and vocational trainings.

In 2018, they achieved the following:

- 48 organisations received socio-legal training
- 53 organisations of children and teenagers were created and strengthened
- 48 adolescents developed 24 social entrepreneurship initiatives
- 2200 youth were trained in the exercise of their rights
- 751 adults (teachers and parents) were trained on child rights
Gender equality is a human right, but our world faces a persistent gap in access to opportunities and decision-making for girls and women. Our work on gender is underpinned by the rights enshrined in the UNCRC and the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women.

The gender perspective is considered in all DCI activities. In the awareness sessions we run about child rights, we always include the gender dimension.

In 2018, several DCI sections, such as Yemen and Costa Rica, led specific awareness campaigns on gender-based violence, child marriage and sexual abuse.

Some DCI projects are also directly targeted at girls, such as the Girl Advocacy Alliance Project, which aims to empower girls in Ghana, Sierra Leone and Liberia.

DCI adopted a Gender Policy in 2015 and used these principles in the last revision of the DCI statutes regarding, for instance, gender balance on the International Executive Council.

In Yemen, DCI has been active on raising awareness about girls’ and women’s rights. In 2018, the organisation reached 75,000 persons through radio spots condemning child marriage and other types of violence against women.

They also organised trainings for 50 children on managing gender-based violence debates. The kids were then integrated within child protection committees, which in turn advocate within their community against gender inequalities.

Moreover, they supported a group of young people who developed a play about the risks of child marriage featured in several public places such as gardens and malls.

It is common knowledge that trafficking, forced labour and sexual exploitation affecting migrant girls in the European Union is widespread. Tackling these forms of violence is, however, incredibly difficult, as very few statistics and reports exist on the scope of the problem. Besides, professionals often lack the knowledge to report these abuses and to bring adequate support to the young victims.

DCI-Belgium has engaged in a joint European project, entitled Bridge, which aims to collect data, raise awareness and provide innovative tools for professionals.

After a phase of data collection and research in partnership with its European partners, DCI-Belgium directly trained 118 child protection professionals on gender-based violence. They also made online training tools available, which benefited 1000 child protection professionals across Europe.
Advocacy
Lobby governments to put their commitment into action

In 2018, DCI worked to influence three resolutions at the Human Rights Council (HRC): violence against women, discrimination against women and female genital mutilation. The civil society group that DCI is part of influenced the resolutions by meeting bilaterally with co-sponsoring governments, sharing inputs, commenting on each of the drafts as they came out and attending negotiations.

The Girls Advocacy Alliance’s work on education for girls was presented on various occasions as a strategy to tackle gender-based violence and the economic exclusion of girls.
INDEPENDENT AUDITOR’S REPORT

The audited financial statements reflect only the accounts of the International Secretariat based in Geneva under Swiss law. DCI National Sections have individual accounting and auditing systems according to their national legislation.

The International Secretariat’s accounts comply with the Swiss Accounting and Reporting Recommendations (GAAP FER), including FER 21, and Swiss law. According to the DCI Statutes, the International Executive Council (IEC) approves the accounts for each year in between the International General Assemblies, which take place every four years. A copy of our full external auditors’ report, “Wuarin & Chatton S.A.”, can be requested from our financial department.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INCOME</th>
<th>2018 - CHF</th>
<th>2017 * - CHF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project activities income</td>
<td>347 135</td>
<td>372 665</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other income</td>
<td>2 903</td>
<td>24 176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donations</td>
<td>7 533</td>
<td>3 394</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-renting</td>
<td>51 934</td>
<td>45 488</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership fees</td>
<td>34 396</td>
<td>38 310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exchange rate</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3 751</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Income</td>
<td>443 900</td>
<td>487 833</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXPENDITURE</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Salaries and social charges</td>
<td>281 952</td>
<td>254 338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultants</td>
<td>26 626</td>
<td>28 611</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic activities</td>
<td>86 472</td>
<td>125 773</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DCI World Service</td>
<td>3 120</td>
<td>6 024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expenses International Executive Council</td>
<td>34 679</td>
<td>24 042</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative expenses</td>
<td>31 200</td>
<td>23 632</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office rent</td>
<td>60 242</td>
<td>55 195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>2 360</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Expenditure</td>
<td>526 651</td>
<td>518 216</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RESULTS BEFORE FUND VARIATION

- Allocation of earmarked funds: -345 927
- Use of allocated funds: 433 445

RESULT FOR THE YEAR

- 2017 reclassified

* 2017 reclassified
Report of the Auditor on the limited statutory examination to the Treasurer of
DEFENCE FOR CHILDREN – INTERNATIONAL, Geneva

In accordance with the mandate received, we have audited the accounting and financial
statements (balance sheet, profit and loss account, table of variation of own funds and
earmarked funds and annex) of the DEFENCE FOR CHILDREN - INTERNATIONAL,
Geneva, for the year ending December 31st, 2018.

The Treasurer is responsible for these financial statements in accordance with Swiss GAAP
FER, in particular FER 21, the legal requirements and the bylaws. Our responsibility is to
perform a limited examination on these financial statements. We confirm that we meet the
licensing and independence requirements as stipulated by Swiss law.

We conducted our examination in accordance with the Swiss standard on the limited
statutory examination. This standard requires that we plan and perform a limited statutory
examination to identify material misstatements in the financial statements. A limited
statutory examination consists primarily of inquiries of association and analytical
procedures as well as detailed tests of association documents as considered necessary in
the circumstances. However, the testing of operational processes and the internal control
system, as well as inquiries and further testing procedures to detect fraud or other legal
violations, are not within the scope of the examination.

Based on our limited statutory examination, nothing has come to our attention that causes
us to believe that the financial statements do not comply with the Swiss GAAP FER and
Swiss law and the company's articles of incorporation.

Geneva, March 29th, 2019

FIDUCIAIRE WUARIN & CHATTON SA

Patrick Ciocco
Licensed Audit Expert
Auditor in charge

Nadira Bennacer
Licensed Audit Expert

Enclosures:
Financial statements:
- Balance sheet
- Profit and loss account
- Table of variation own funds and earmarked funds
- Annex
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

**Donors**

We wish to warmly thank all the institutional donors who supported our work with children in 2018:

- Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs Luxembourg
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs Netherlands
- Swiss Foreign Affairs FDFA
- Canton of Geneva
- Institute of International Education
- US Foundation
- Loterie Romande
- Oak Foundation

We would also like to thank particularly our individual donors, whose number doubled in 2018.

**Partners**

The International Secretariat is an active member of NGO networks and coordinating mechanisms, such as Child Rights Connect, the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children, the initiative on child rights in the Global Compacts, Child Justice Advocacy Group and the African Child Policy Forum.
DCI’s International Executive Council (IEC)

Abdul Manaff Kemokai
President

Nirmal Busgopaul
Vice-President of Africa

Géraldine Mathieu
Vice-President of Europe

Vilma Gomez Pava
Councillor

Aloys Van Rest
Treasurer

Juan Pedro Fumeiro
Vice-President of the Americas

Khaled Quizmar
Vice-President of MENA & Asia-Pacific

Arwa Al-Fakih
Councillor

Advisory Committee

Nigel Cantwell
Founder of DCI and child protection specialist

Jaap Doek

Rosa Maria Ortiz Carrón
Former member and vice-president of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child (2003 -2011)

Sally Christine Cornwell
Former executive of the International Labour Organisation

Moushira Khattab
Former member and Vice-Chair of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child (2002-2010)

Meskerem Geset Techane
Human rights lawyer

International Secretariat Staff in 2018

Alex Kamarotos
Executive Director

Paula Trujillo
Projects & Communications Officer

Anna Tomasi
Advocacy Coordinator

Helen Griffiths
Advocacy Officer

Temporary Staff and Interns:


Special thanks to all our volunteers.
2019 MILESTONES

ALL YEAR LONG
A major capacity-building and empowerment project reinforcing Regional Desks and National Sections 2019–21

5 JULY 2019
The DCI Movement turns 40!

JULY TO NOVEMBER
2019
Child Rights 2019 Award for children 12–17 years old in countries where DCI has a National Section

8 OCTOBER 2019
Presentation of the Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty at the UN General Assembly in New York and official public launch

NOVEMBER 2019
- Strategic seminar (IEC, Advisory Committee and Regional Desks)
- Ceremony of the Child Rights Award and Roundtable
- Celebrations of the 30th Anniversary of the UNCRC
- Launch of the full report of the Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty (Geneva)
CREDITS

At DCI, we respect the privacy of the children we help – as many are working towards a fresh start in life. So, while their stories are true, names and images have often been changed to protect them. Thank you for understanding.

Scan the QR code or go to defenceforchildren.org/take-action-2/make-a-donation so that together we can support children to become actors for justice and advocates for their rights.