Although Jalox (16) and Maha (15) had experienced difficult moments,

“Thanks to DCI-Sierra Leone’s trained and empowered Community Mediators, they are back in the community and are the new champions of change.”

these former children in conflict with the law now mobilise and advocate among their peers and talk about the effects of children being in conflict with the law and the importance of staying in school.

“We hope to see a village free of violence, abuse, and exploitation” they said.
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2020 has been a year definitively marked by the COVID-19 pandemic. Its repercussions world-wide are still rising to surface reminding us how inequalities and children’s rights violations can be exacerbated by a health emergency worldwide. We saw more specifically in the areas DCI is working on directly how access to justice for children remains a challenge and in many cases is deteriorating; how the rights of children in the context of migration have been further jeopardised by national restrictions linked to COVID-19, similarly to other populations of children such as children deprived of liberty and children in armed conflicts.

We also observed how the reports of Member States cumulate in the “waiting list” of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (78 reports were pending review this autumn of 2021), as it had to deal with restrictions linked to COVID-19 together with other long-standing “chronic diseases”, such as understaffing and underfunding of UN treaty bodies... Human rights and child rights defenders need to be more than ever proactive and inventive, identifying new ways of keeping the pressure on governments and demanding accountability, paving new paths for action for duty holders. We need to prove that even in years of crisis, be it in a context of a health emergency or in the context of financial restrictions, defending children’s rights is in the best interests of all, including governments.

In 2020 and the first two quarters of 2021, the DCI Movement remained alert, mobilised on all continents and communities present to continue working on Justice for children in all the different settings directly affected by the pandemic. We worked on access to justice for children in contact with the justice system, where the pandemic deteriorated already malfunctioning, not child-friendly justice systems. We saw that, violence against children, including sexual abuse and gender-based violence (GBV), increased, in particular due to the closure of schools in many countries and continents. Specific prevention campaigns have been launched by many DCI National Sections on the basis of experience and data collected during previous health emergencies, such as Ebola in 2015, when DCI-Sierra Leone had a leading role in the management of the emergency but also in the prevention and redress related to human and child rights violations directly linked to it. In Palestine, Yemen, Lebanon, Iraq, CAR, Somalia, Mauritania and in the 38 countries where DCI National Sections and associate members are present, it has been 18 months without rest in order to continue the defence of human rights of children in the pandemic.

Undoubtedly, this crucial decade started with a lot of difficulties and challenges. 2020 will probably remain in history books as the ‘year of the pandemic’. The decade is supposed to end with impressive changes as a result of the process initiated by the 2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Seventeen Goals and 169 targets for 2030, and one main message affirming that ‘nobody should be left behind’. And what about children? All the goals are interconnected and interdependent, and many of them are seriously challenged by the impact of the current pandemic. 2021 will be instrumental in identifying accelerators and key innovative pathways to achieve the SDGs, and in particular those under examination such as Objective 16 on Justice. However, it has become increasingly clear that if we do not use a child rights lens to measure progress and guide action, the 2030 agenda will remain ‘another lost opportunity’.

While we never believed as child rights defenders that the SDGs will replace other specific human rights accountability instruments such as the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, we considered that they represent an excellent opportunity to integrate a different approach to child rights promotion and protection associating in these efforts of Member States to regularly report on progress (in particular through their Voluntary National Reviews, known as VNRs) to reach the objectives by 2030. While some objectives require more efforts in order to advance and take sufficiently into account children’s rights and involvement, the last 16 months of the pandemic have had an additional negative impact further deteriorating the situation of many children living in vulnerable contexts and exposed to violence. It is the case also of children deprived of liberty, of indigenous children, of children in the context of migration, girls affected by gender-based violence and harmful practices such as Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).
While millions of such children have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic, “building back better” supposes that Member States understand the new challenges and are ready to invest in the future, doubling their efforts and reinforcing holistic protection systems for children’s rights. While the Human Rights Council was in session in Geneva, discussions included the impact of COVID-19 and other health emergencies as well on gender discrimination and FGM… and the High-Level Political Forum had its annual session in New York on progress of SDGs with a long list of countries presenting their VNRs and reviewing specific SDGs including SDG 16 on Justice and 10 on the reduction of inequalities.

The 4th issue of our new newsletter Child Rights Observer was dedicated to SDGs bringing voices of distinguished colleagues, partners and child rights defenders such as Bruce Adamson, Children and Young People’s Commissioner from Scotland, or Professor Jennifer Davidson, Executive Director of the Institute for Inspiring Children’s Futures at the University of Strathclyde and our close partner on SDG16+ “Justice for Children - Justice for All” initiative and the COVID 4P App initiatives. As 2021 is also an important year for children deprived of liberty, the 5th issue of the Child Rights Observer is dedicated on this largely invisible group of children. This special issue of the Observer was launched at the same time as the 3rd Committee of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) in New York was debating the concrete follow up of the Study, consolidating an important coordination role by the UN Special Representative on Violence against Children, Dr Najat Maalla M’jid and asking for an update report at the 2022 UNGA. DCI, leading the NGO Panel on Children Deprived of Liberty together with Human Rights Watch, will be there to support these efforts together with the 170 members of the Panel and the 38 members of the DCI Movement around the world.

Last but not least, looking forward, 2022 will also be the year of the International General Assembly of the DCI Movement, an opportunity to take stake of both progress and challenges ahead, and adopting the new DCI Strategic Framework 2022-2026 now under preparation. We thank our governing body, the International Executive Council, for having accepted to prolong their mandate for 6 months, due to unprecedented circumstances linked to the pandemic.
OUR MOVEMENT
Actors for justice, advocates for rights

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 level.

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 the discussions about the adoption of a binding treaty on the Rights of the Child. DCI became in 1985 the lead coordinator of the NGO group providing the NGO input to the negotiations of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), until the treaty was adopted in 1989. The UNCRC is now the most universally ratified international treaty the world has ever agreed on. The Convention was a huge victory for defenders of child rights. Its adoption changed perceptions about children from passive objects of care and charity to full human beings with a distinct set of rights. Since the convention was adopted, DCI has focused on its implementation on the ground through lobbying and direct actions.

We work across five continents

Our Movement is composed of 36 Member National Sections and two Associated Members. They are independent grassroots structures led by local child rights defenders. Each of them works on child rights issues most directly relevant to their respective 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 and acts as a coordinator and a focal point at the international level for the National Sections spread around five continents. The International Secretariat engages strategically with the relevant human rights mechanisms located in Geneva, including the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC), 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 also have the World Service Foundation in Brussels. Directly linked to the International Secretariat in Geneva, the World Service works to develop the National Sections projects as well as with advocacy towards the European Institutions.

We apply a unique participative governance

An International General Assembly (IGA) is DCI’s highest governing body and is composed of all National Sections of our grassroots 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, the priorities and position of the DCI Movement. It also elects the President and other members of the International Executive Council (IEC).

The International Executive Council (IEC) is mandated to govern the DCI Movement in between General Assemblies. It is currently composed of eight members elected every four years.

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 (2017-2021) approved by the DCI International General Assembly.

The Defence for Children International Movement works toward the full implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child worldwide. As a child rights organisation with local roots and global impact, our Movement has unique expertise and positioning. Based on this, DCI decided in 2017 to focus on four areas of work where we consider that our organisation has the potential to make the greatest impact. In 2021, the process of the review of the Strategic Framework has started including all stakeholders at the national, regional and international level. The new Strategic Framework 2022-2026 will be adopted by the 13th International General Assembly in 2022 together with respective regional action plans.
Defence for Children International (DCI) has consistently shown its dedication to promoting children’s rights. In a context marked by COVID-19 pandemic and protracted conflicts, the African region reviewed achievements and challenges National Sections and the Movement as a whole face in the promotion of the rights of the child worldwide. The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated how our strategic priorities are relevant and how children living in already vulnerable contexts have been disproportionately exposed to additional risks during this health emergency. Health emergencies often highlight failures in child protection systems even when the threats towards children are predictable, such as the increase in of violence and sexual abuse, which DCI also witnessed during other epidemics in the African continent, such as Ebola.

Our child protection and advocacy programmes are driven by our aim that children, as fully fledged human beings, must enjoy and exercise their human rights with dignity, in a just and responsive society. As such, DCI is working on better equipping the African region to face the challenges and defend the rights of children in this continent.

### Regional Advocacy


In January 2021, DCI organised a **Regional Meeting in Freetown, Sierra Leone**, renewing with tradition that one Section from the Movement hosts this meeting.

The meeting took place from 26-28 January 2021 and was an opportunity for the African region to meet, prepare its input to the DCI Strategic Framework 2022-2026, strengthen capacity in international advocacy/projects, work on regional coordination and projects as well as consolidate a regional advocacy strategy for Africa. During this meeting, a workshop on DCI safeguarding policy and implementation was also held.

More specifically, the meeting successfully:

- Documented the status of children’s rights in the African region through DCI National Sections
- Raised awareness on the importance of the recommendations of the UN Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty and identify follow-up actions in the region
- Discussed regional inputs to the future strategic Framework 2022-2026
- Organised a field visit to assess DCI – Sierra Leone’s Socio-Legal Defence Centres – inspiring other National Sections
- Collectively planned 2021 for regional action plan in preparation of the International General Assembly 2022
- Improved outreach, communication, and fundraising
- Promoted Safeguarding and Governance issues amongst National Sections.
The workshop included presentations, panel discussions, group sessions to identify lessons learnt, best practices and challenges. Finally, DCI-International Secretariat and DCI-Sierra Leone met the Ministry of Gender and Children’s Affairs (Cabinet of the Minister) to share relevant information with the Chief of Cabinet on international human rights tools, including the follow-up of the UN Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty, and the ratification of the OPIC.

### Regional Project: Eliminate cross-border trafficking of children

Many girls, particularly from rural communities in Sierra Leone, live in exploitative conditions in Guinea and Liberia, most of them victims of trafficking. Following the launch in 2019 of a new project including three African sections (Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea), DCI intensified cross-border cooperation this year to rescue more child victims of trafficking.

In January 2021, the Sierra Leonean Embassy in Guinea, in collaboration with the Sierra Leonean Union, Conakry, identified two Sierra Leoneans girls, who were victims of trafficking. The Embassy reported the issue to the Ministry of Gender and Children’s Affairs, who immediately contacted Defence for Children International to support the repatriation and reintegration of the two victims with their communities and families in Sierra Leone.

DCI immediately visited the two girls in Conakry and traced their families in Sierra Leone. On 4th February 2021, the Ambassador of Sierra Leone to Guinea, His Excellency Alimamy Bangura, formally handed over the two children to the Ministry of Gender and Children’s Affairs and Defence for Children International in Kambia district. Meanwhile, the alleged perpetrator is in police custody helping the Family Support Unit with the investigation while DCI-Sierra Leone was working with the Ministry of Gender and Children’s Affairs to reunify the two children with their families in Sierra Leone.
Regional Desk Europe 2020

Progress and Achievements

In 2020, despite the obvious challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, DCI’s European sections continued their work to advance children’s rights in Belgium, France, the Netherlands, Czech Republic, Italy, Spain, Greece, and at European level through cooperation and advocacy. Their work mainly focused on championing child-friendly justice in Europe, and on supporting children on the move.

Unfortunately, the ongoing travel restrictions did not allow for any in-person regional meetings, but a total of four online meetings were held during the year. The meetings focused on the progress and planning for the Child Friendly Justice in Action project (CFJ-IA, see below) and, later in the year, on initial rounds of consultations to collect regional inputs into the upcoming new Strategic Framework of the Movement.

Achievements & Challenges

2020 saw the completion of the Child-friendly Justice: In Action project, which conducted research into the experiences of children in migration when undergoing administrative proceedings as part of their international protection application, and professionals’ knowledge of child-friendly justice principles.

The project, which consulted 113 professionals and 30 children across seven countries, culminated with a final event, held online, attended by over 80 representatives from civil society, the EU, and with a keynote address from the Council of Europe’s Head of Children’s Rights Division and Coordinator for the Rights of the Child, Regina Jensdottir. The project helped continue strengthening the Child-friendly Justice – European Network in terms of visibility and expertise and laid the ground for future projects from 2021 onwards.
The region was also successful in securing a new two-year grant to continue promoting access to quality child protection services for children in migration victims of violence, BECOME Safe, to start in 2021.

2020 was also a busy year for advocacy efforts at the European Union level for the region, linked to the new European Commission financial framework (2021-2027) and the new European Commission Strategy on Children's Rights. DCI European Regional Desk strengthened its participation in working groups such as the Child Rights Advocacy Group (CRAG), and released a joint position paper on the new EU strategy on the Rights of the Child, alongside 30+ leading Child Rights INGOs. Later on, DCI European Regional Desk joined efforts with Terre des Hommes to produce a policy brief specifically providing recommendations around child-friendly justice. Other advocacy contributions included inputs submitted to the First Regional Review of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, and the European Migration Network's report on the state of implementation of the 2017 Communication on the protection of children in migration. DCI European sections remain active in several other working groups, for example with the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights and with the Steering Committee for the Rights of the Child (CDNEF) of the Council of Europe, which oversees implementation of the Council of Europe’s Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2016-2021). DCI European sections consistently drew attention to the impact of the pandemic on the rights of children across Europe and beyond and called for responses and emergency measures to apply a child rights lens.

Child-Friendly Justice In Action

A TOOLKIT FOR MAINSTREAMING CHILD FRIENDLY PRINCIPLES WHEN WORKING WITH CHILDREN INVOLVED IN ADMINISTRATIVE AND JUDICIAL PROCEDURES
COVID-19: A coalition for the protection of the rights of adolescents deprived of their liberty in Latin America

The spread of COVID-19 generated much concern in the region, especially with regard to populations at high risk of infection, such as children deprived of liberty. Given initial evidence that adolescents in contexts of deprivation of liberty were excluded from state responses, DCI Americas, through a joint initiative with Juvenile Justice Advocates International, ILANUD, Fair Trial and Northwestern University, collected qualitative information on the actions taken in 11 countries in the region, through questionnaires addressed to the judiciary and directors of detention centres. The main findings were presented through the regional webinar “COVID-19 in Latin America: Actions of the Juvenile Justice System” and will be disseminated through a preliminary report.

In the midst of the second wave of the pandemic, which registered even higher morbidity and mortality rates than the previous one, the coalition continued with the collection of updated data to generate information, as well as the identification of new risks to the protection of adolescents in conflict with the law and facilitated the exchange of best practices among the various countries.

DCI-Americas: creating spaces for dialogue and regional exchange

Considering its commitment to children in contact with the justice system, the DCI Americas Vice-Presidency and the support of the Regional Coordination have created spaces for dialogue through regional webinars. DCI invited three judges specialised in children’s rights in the criminal justice system, Marta Pascual, Patricia Borges and Álvaro Burgos, who are regional and international references, to discuss the measures taken by the judiciary in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic in Argentina, Costa Rica and Uruguay respectively.
In December 2020, the Vice-Presidency of DCI Americas from Uruguay, with the support of the Regional Coordination, the Capari Institute from Mexico, and the organisation Práxis Vega Baja from Spain, organised the Ibero-American Conference on Juvenile Criminal Rights, with the aim of addressing a wide range of issues related to children’s rights in the criminal justice system, on procedures, custodial and non-custodial measures, the tools of restorative justice and also child sexual abuse. The 44 leading experts participated in these sessions as well as Dr Juan Fumeiro, DCI Vice-President for the Americas. This event had the broadest support and dissemination of the different networks on the rights of children and adolescents in Argentina, Mexico, Spain, Ecuador, Paraguay and Uruguay, among other countries, reaching agreements to give continuity to these events in the dissemination of the doctrine of Integral Protection and Minimum Criminal Law, as established in articles 37 to 40 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Towards the specialisation of operators in the child justice system

Within the framework of the agreement signed by DCI-IS and the National Pedagogical University of Argentina (UNIPE), DCI-America has developed a human rights training proposal with a regional scope aimed at judicial system operators, interdisciplinary technical teams and staff of civil society organisations working with children and adolescents with the objective of contributing to the strengthening of their capacities in the administration of justice and care for children and adolescents.

Through this course, the two institutions, within their roles as civil society, aim to contribute to the implementation of SDG targets 16.2 and 16.3 and to disseminate the principles and foundations of justice that respond to the needs of children and adolescents. The proposed course will include the participation of international and regional experts and will allow for interaction between participants and the building of a network of professionals interested in working on the same issues.
The regional programme aims at enhancing child justice and the protection mechanisms for children in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region based on the UNCRC and international law. DCI-Palestine acts as regional desk for the MENA regional programme. As such, it works with seven DCI National Sections and one Associate Member: Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Mauritania, Morocco, Tunisia and Yemen. The aim of the regional programme is to empower the regional National Sections to actively engage in child rights protection and supporting joint advocacy efforts addressing the Arab League, the UN and other international and regional bodies. DCI-MENA Region collaborates closely with the League of the Arab States (LAS) and acts as regional expert in all advocacy efforts to promote and defend the human rights of children in the region.

During 2020, the DCI regional programme has achieved the following:

**Supporting the Socio-Legal Defence Centres (SLDCs)**

DCI-Palestine as a regional desk for the MENA region continued to support the National Sections of the Region in establishing new SLDCs and consolidating the existing ones. In 2020, the SLDCs in Lebanon and Yemen, initiated their activities while another one, in Tunisia implemented the first phase of the project. In the region, DCI established SLDCs also in Mauritania and Morocco, in addition to the SLDCs in Palestine that have been established for more than ten years. Thus, we managed to reach six out of the eight National Sections of the MENA Region that currently have SLDCs.

To facilitate experience sharing and effective implementation, DCI-Palestine established a platform for online resources for the sections that have SLDCs. Tools and methodology supporting the SLDCs’ work were made available for all the DCI sections. DCI-Palestine also conducted training sessions for some of the sections to support them in financial and technical aspects.

**Collaboration with the Arab League**

In 2019, DCI-Palestine successfully developed the long-standing dialogue with the Arab League on children’s rights issues and the importance of adopting the Child Friendly Justice Manual. This is a new guiding manual with the best practices according to international standards for dealing with child victims of violence, and children at risk or in conflict with the law. Following multiple meetings and a presentation of the Manual at the Arab League workshop in 2019, it was adopted and then disseminated among member states.

In 2020, in partnership with the Women, Family and Childhood department of the Arab league, DCI-MENA region organised a two-day online workshop to introduce the Arab Child friendly Justice Manual to the member countries of the LAS. More than 50 official representatives from 15 Arab countries in addition to 7 DCI National Sections of the MENA region (Lebanon, Yemen, Egypt, Palestine, Jordan, Tunisia and Mauritania) participated in those sessions. Following the sessions, an implementation plan was developed and shared with LAS to be sent to the Arab Countries.

**Capacity Building opportunities**

**Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty**

Following the workshop conducted in 2019 in regard to the Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty, DCI-P in 2020, conducted a survey for all MENA sections to assess which of the study’s recommendations are the most important in their respective countries. This survey was analysed by DCI-Palestine that will support each section to develop a plan on how to implement those recommendations.

Following that, at the end of 2020, DCI MENA organised a workshop targeting 40 (18 females and 22 males) participants representing; a number of DCI MENA sections, the child justice sector in Arab countries, civil society institutions and international organisations, in addition to the participation of Benoit Van Keirsbilck, Director of DCI-Belgium and member of the CRC Committee.
The workshop discussed the recommendations of the Global Study and the mechanisms needed to include them in national plans and policies. It also highlighted the reality of children in conflict with the law in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Through the workshop three case studies were presented from Tunisia, Palestine and Jordan to highlight the work that has been done during the pandemic for children in conflict with the law.

The participants approved several recommendations at the regional level, following a review of some of the Arab experiences in protecting children in conflict with the law amidst the pandemic. Based on those recommendations and outcomes, DCI-Palestine will follow up with the DCI MENA sections to move forward with them.

“Incredible Me” Model
In 2020, a training was organised using virtual platforms on the “Incredible Me" Model adopted by DCI-Lebanon. This training aimed at building the capacity of DCI MENA sections' social workers on using this model to support children psychosocially. Following the training DCI-Lebanon social workers continued to support and follow up with the trainees to implement this model. Positive feedback was provided by the social workers who applied this methodology following the training, mainly during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Alternative to detention
DCI-Palestine conducted a workshop for DCI MENA sections on alternatives to detention and restorative justice. The training was conducted virtually targeting 30 (8 females and 22 males) practitioners, mainly social workers and lawyers from the SLDCs from the National Sections.

Fundraising and administrative support
- Supported Jordan and Lebanon to be included in the She Leads programme and to grant funds to implement the project within their respective countries. DCI-Palestine was also included in this project to implement activities at the regional level. Involved sections played a main role in developing the proposal for the programme along with the other partners.

- Granted Lebanon and Tunisia some additional funds from DCI-Palestine to support the establishment and development of the SLDCs.
- Supported the sections in submitting proposals including supporting Lebanon to apply for Al Madad Foundation.

- With the Support of WSF and IS, Submitted/ worked on two proposals for the regional projects to both the UN Democracy Fund and Euro-Mediterranean Foundation of Support to Human Rights Defenders (EMHRF).

- Supported with Regional coordination, training and capacity building the two projects funded by the Canton and the City of Geneva respectively.

Furthermore, DCI-Palestine also supported the International Secretariat in translating the Child Safeguarding Policy and Principles Appendices and the Code of Conduct in Arabic, shared with MENA sections. The MENA Regional coordination will be supporting the development of capacity in child safeguarding and the writing of specific policies in each National Section of the region.
Monitoring Child rights violations and generating reports

Through the SLDCs, DCI MENA sections enhanced the role of the sections in monitoring and documenting child rights violations and addressing them accordingly. A report on the situation of children in the Arab world was drafted based on those documented cases as well as secondary review data. In 2020, this report was finalized.

Supporting the sections through the pandemic

DCI-Palestine followed up with the sections to discuss the impact of the pandemic on their work and on the implementation of the projects. DCI-Palestine also participated and coordinated with them on filling in the DCI Global Survey on the impact of COVID-19 and the #CovidUnder19 survey that highlighted the impact of the COVID-19 on children’s rights.

Consultative session on DCI strategic framework

DCI-Palestine has organised a consultation workshop with the MENA sections to seek their input and conduct a review process for the DCI current strategic framework (2017-21). The aim of the workshop was to gain more in-depth understanding and collect needed feedback to be able to shape the new strategic direction for DCI globally for the next five years. The results of the workshop were presented in the DCI International Executive Council meeting and will be included when developing the first draft of the new strategic framework 2022-2026.
The overarching thematic focus of the DCI Movement is Justice for Children, through persistent work on the issue over the past four decades. This thematic focus remains challenging as the level of political will necessary to ensure compliance is not always present. To this end, DCI’s presence and systematic advocacy within the United Nations, regional mechanisms, national and local institutions proves essential.

**AWARENESS-RAISING**

Throughout 2020, **DCI-Argentina** led an advocacy project on addressing a letter of request for universal and cost-free vaccination for COVID-19; **DCI-Brazil** carried out a teen mortality survey to focus on the high homicide rates of black boys and girls, an initiative which reached 3000 adolescents who were accompanied by their defence centres. **DCI-Canada** led “Cross over Youth Project on COVID-19”, an initiative to raise awareness on the easy movement of children in child welfare to youth justice and the provision of information to staff at all levels in these sectors to prevent this movement.

In Africa, **DCI-Guinea-Conakry** led a project on child-friendly justice and the fight against child trafficking, with the aim to improve measures for the realisation of the rights of the child and access to justice for children in contact with the law.

**CAPACITY BUILDING**

**Youth lab**

Led by **DCI-Italy**, **DCI-Netherlands** and **DCI-Belgium**, the Youthlab regional project aimed at contributing to the capacity building of 380 juvenile justice professionals in Italy, Belgium and the Netherlands, using a child participation-based training model to foster high child-participation during judicial proceedings affecting children. The project gave young people the opportunity to share their experiences of the justice system in a constructive way and provided a space for exchanges for the co-creation of practical tools to improve communication between young people and child justice actors.

During the two-year course of this project, the professionals have the potential of reaching at least 5000 children after having received the training, and of strengthening the child-friendly communicative competences of 380 lawyers, prosecutors and judges in Belgium, Italy and the Netherlands. So far, the project has reached 11 young people who have been involved in judicial procedures and who are involved in the project as trainers of professionals following a specific training course dedicated to them and already tested in the Netherlands, 10 justice professionals (including judges, lawyers, social workers, educators and other professionals working in the field of justice), and four young people who attended the pilot training on October 2020.
Advocating for child-friendly justice and justice for children

DCI-Costa Rica’s “Pasos para la Inclusión Limón 2.0.” (Pathways to Inclusion 2.0) provided training for 22 officials of the Judicial Branch and NGOs and reached 17 young people serving alternative sanctions or suspension to trial or restorative sentence through a virtual course on personal and work skills. Likewise, DCI-Italy spearheaded the MIRI regional project (Minor’s Right to Information in EU Civil Actions), which aims to identify national good practices that allow for the best enjoyment of children’s right to information, and to make EU law and national legal systems more child-oriented and child-friendly, with the aim of creating guidelines on common best practices for EU Member States.

DCI-Belgium also led numerous advocacy activities on child-friendly justice and justice for children, including ADEVIO (2019-2023), created along with partner DCI-Tunisia to change the perceptions of the population and decision-makers vis-à-vis young people in conflict with the law through awareness-raising and advocacy activities. It also comprised the construction of integrated care for violent extremism adapted to children’s rights, the development of tools to support professionals in contact with young people in conflict with the law in their care, and support work on reintegration. Further, DCI-Netherlands continued its project on ‘Child Protection System Strengthening for Children in Conflict with the Law (MATRA)’, with the aim to protect the rights of children in conflict with the law. The project led to the implementation of a juridical analysis and research on child protection and child justice systems, and to the subsequent development of a national report on the outcomes of the analysis. In addition, thanks to the traineeships, professionals who directly worked with children were informed on how to better protect the rights of these children in accordance with international and European standards.
DIRECT SUPPORT TO CHILDREN’S RIGHTS

National advocacy initiatives

In 2020, DCI-Tunisia led a project to provide support for young people involved in acts of radicalism and violent extremism, so as to improve respect for the rights of young people in conflict with the law at all stages of care in order to promote their reintegration into society. The national initiative targets all children affected by the phenomenon in Tunisia and will conclude in the year 2023.

Through the Socio-Legal Defence Centres (SLDCs)

Through its National Sections worldwide, and with Associated Members, DCI provides free legal aid and psychosocial support to children through their Socio-Legal Defence Centres. Socio-Legal Defence Centres proactively promote, and reactively protect the human rights of children as set out in the UNCRC, particularly in its four guiding principles: non-discrimination; best interests of the child; right to life, survival and development; and child participation. Their proximity also allows them to identify and react to 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 educational programmes. Thus, children in conflict with the law, child survivors and witnesses, as well as adults confronted with child rights violations, can have direct access to justice and corresponding quality socio-legal support, which includes information provision, referrals to other service providers, psychosocial counselling and free-of-charge legal advice and representation – including in court. An increasing number of DCI sections are implementing this model including in Argentina, Brazil, Belgium, Ghana, Greece, Lebanon, Mauritania, Morocco, Netherlands, Palestine, Sierra Leone, Tunisia and Yemen.

DCI-Palestine created an SLDC to ensure the rights of Palestinian children in the Israeli jurisdiction system and the Palestinian juvenile justice system are defended and protected. The centre provided legal aid and psychosocial support for children in conflict with the law, awareness-raising, and capacity-building programmes on child-friendly justice for all stakeholders in the country that come in direct contact with children; advocacy efforts with the Palestinian duty bearers to enhance the situation for children in conflict with the law, and efforts to enhance the child justice system mechanisms by promoting alternatives to detention. In total, 1612 children & 526 adults benefitted from this project.

DCI-Lebanon opened a new SLDC to provide first aid, psychosocial support and follow up for children affected by the Beirut Blast who were residing in the neighbourhoods of Beirut suburbs. In total, 415 children received socio-legal support through this project, including free psychosocial support and therapeutic sessions to support their emotional recovery. The centre also conducted awareness-raising and sensitisation sessions on key messages around COVID-19 for 113 parents of children. DCI-Lebanon also led a national initiative to provide socio-legal support, protection, and rehabilitation to 150 vulnerable children at risk of being exploited, abused, and arrested, to empower them with basic life skills to protect themselves. The project improved general awareness on legal rights among vulnerable children and their families and enhanced the capacities of 10 national actors involved in combating violence against children to improve protection of children and prevent those at risk from being exploited, arrested, or abused.

DCI-Yemen created two new SLDCs to provide psychosocial rehabilitation and legal aid for children in conflict with the law and child victims of violence, as well as to promote capacity-building and advocacy about child-friendly justice and monitor and document violations of children’s rights. The first SLDC reached 137 children through direct intervention, and 430 through indirect awareness; while the second SLDC reached 99 children, who received direct intervention and 320 children through indirect awareness raising. Through both initiatives, 100% of boys and girls who had been in contact with the law/victims of violence were provided with assistance through the SLDC and rehabilitated, in particular free legal aid. In addition, the projects created a notification and complaint mechanism for legal defence and psychosocial support, provided training to 20 civil society organisations (CSOs) and governmental institutions, and to 20 people from community organisations and government institution partners in the legal, psychological and social defence of child victims, which became active in the guidance of children.

DCI-Argentina led the establishment of two SLDCs, one of which provided socio-legal support to children from popular neighbourhoods affected by the effects of health measures in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, who were in a situation of institutional violence, subjected to discrimination, and/or who were in a situation of abuse and conflict with the law. The second SLDC set up in Argentina provided comprehensive social, legal and psychological assistance for 86 children in the area and in public institutions, accompanied the families of the victims, presented legal actions to facilitate access to justice and engaged in dialogue with state representatives, territorial institutions and organisations.
DCI-Sierra Leone opened an SLDC to enhance access to justice, rehabilitation and reintegration services for children in conflict with the law and victims of violence, as well as providing training for child justice actors - including law enforcement officials, community leaders and CSOs. So far, the project has provided socio-legal support to 1180 children and has led to the release of 70% of children in conflict with the law and the rehabilitation and reintegration of 65 children into their families and communities. Moreover, as a consequence of DCI-Sierra Leone’s efforts, the average number of children in pretrial detention at a remand home in Freetown dropped from 35 in 2019 to 15 in 2020, and in Bod district from 45 in 2019 to 30 in 2020; additionally, the police hardly ever detain children in conflict with the law now.

DCI-Mauritania implemented the initiative “Ensemble pour la justice” (Together for Justice), to provide assistance to child victims of gender-based violence and in conflict with the law. The project, which is still ongoing, has resulted so far in the creation of a socio-legal defence centre in Nouadhibou thanks to the support of the Canton of Geneva in partnership with DCI International Secretariat, thus providing 42 children with socio-legal support through this project.

DCI-Morocco continued the project “Strengthening of the psycho-socio-legal defence centre model, in favour of children in contact with the law, mainly child victims of violence”, aimed at providing rehabilitation, support and legal defence to children in contact with the law and victims of violence. In addition to awareness-raising workshops on child-friendly justice and training sessions on child justice and alternatives to detention, 156 children benefited from psychosocial rehabilitation activities, 50 children received administrative and legal assistance, and 68 children benefited from psychological support.
The world is at a crucial point with regard to the lives of a generation of children who will be most affected by COVID-19. All must be done to ensure that children do not become the main victims of the pandemic, and to build a better world where their rights are promoted and protected and where no child is left behind.

– Najat Maalla M’jid, UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence Against Children.
The COVID-19 pandemic has harmed the physical and mental well-being of children. The risk of children experiencing or being exposed to violence at home has increased due to school closures, confinement, movement restrictions, disruption in the provision of already limited child protection services, and added family stresses related to job loss, isolation and anxieties over health and finances.

As sexual violence, child marriage and female genital mutilations continue to destroy the lives of girls everywhere, DCI reported high levels of impunity among the greatest challenges to access to justice. As part of the Girls Advocacy Alliance, the DCI National Sections of Ghana, Sierra Leone, Liberia and Netherlands made submissions in response to two calls launched by the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, Dubravka Šimonović. DCI supported the investigations of the Special Rapporteur to give special attention to “Rape as a grave and systematic human rights violation and gender-based violence” (GBV) in her UN General Assembly thematic report for 2020 and to her annual report on the “Intersection between the COVID-19 pandemic and a worrying surge in GBV cases,” particularly domestic violence. In the long term, DCI contributes to a process of review and harmonisation of national criminal laws and practices with international standards to criminalise and prosecute GBV.
DIRECT SUPPORT

Prevention and protection of child victims of sexual violence in Mauritania

DCI-Mauritania (AMSME) reinforced the successful holistic approach to protect child victims of gender-based violence in Nouackchott and extended the project by launching a new Socio-Legal Defence Centre in Bassiknou. Supported by UNICEF from June 2020 to May 2021, this project involved psycho-social support for 279 survivors of sexual violence, trainings for the economic empowerment of 40 young women and girls, and literacy lessons for 40 children who suffered GBV. In one year only, DCI reached out to 353 survivors of GBV who received direct support.

Supporting survivors of child marriage in Ghana

In Ghana, DCI has long been working for the respect of equal rights and opportunities for girls and young women. With the Girls Advocacy Alliance, DCI-Ghana produced in 2020 a research report on ending GBV and child marriage in the communities with the involvement of traditional Leaders, the Obuasi Municipal Chief Executive, and Obuasi Municipality Policy. A waiver of medical fees for victims of GBV was adopted by the Obuasi East District Assembly which was a concrete progress for the dignity of GBV survivors. The programme was supported by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs in partnership with DCI/ECPAT-Netherlands, Plan International and Terre des Hommes.

Addressing gender-based violence against migrant children in Belgium

In Belgium, DCI strives to strengthen the response to gender-based violence (GBV) against children and young people affected by migration. In the Bridge project coordinated by Terre des Hommes Hungary, DCI-Belgium worked closely with the Belgian Red Cross, Fedasil, Terre des Hommes Romania, Kopin (Malta), Arsis (Greece) with financial support of the Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme of the European Union (2014-2020) and the Francophonie. The project collected data on GBV in reception centres in French-speaking Belgium, and conducted capacity-building trainings for professionals and young people through blended learning. 80 professionals and 15 young facilitators were trained, 250 professionals benefited from online training and 250 migrant children, and 1,750 professionals were sensitised. This project developed a regional community of practice for professionals through a Child Protection Hub.
CAPACITY-BUILDING

Trainings on child trafficking in Costa Rica

With the support of the Ministry of Education, DCI-Costa Rica led a teacher training process on human trafficking, migrant smuggling, and child labour. The project designed and implemented a training plan carried out in a total of 78 workshops aimed at all officials of the Ministry of Public Education who fulfill a role as counsellors. A student consultation strategy was presented on the prevention and protection of children against crimes of labour, sexual exploitation, trafficking and smuggling of migrants. In 2020, DCI managed to hold virtual trainings for 487 education ministry officials on reporting and addressing crimes of child labour and sexual exploitation, trafficking and smuggling of migrant children, as well as other associated crimes.

In July 2020, DCI launched a new Child Safeguarding Policy for all the Movement, in line with Keeping Children Safe standards. DCI is a member of the Keeping Children Safe network. The aim of this document is to set out DCI policy and principles at international level, for the Movement as a whole, and to enumerate clear responsibilities for National Sections and the International Secretariat, to ensure that DCI staff, operations and programmes do no harm to children, that is that they do not expose children to the risk of harm and abuse, and that any concerns the organisation has about children’s safety within the communities in which they work, are reported to the appropriate authorities. This document is complemented by the individual child safeguarding policies of the National Sections and of the International Secretariat. In 2020, DCI launched an internal Working Group joined by many sections interested to raise awareness, develop capacity building and mutual learning on this issue.
AWARENESS RISING
Reporting violence against children at the Universal Periodic Review

The Universal Periodic Review (UPR) 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 on violations. In 2020, DCI submitted three CSO reports for the review of Mauritania, Liberia, and Sierra Leone.

By linking local, national, and global advocacy, DCI had a significant impact in 2020. Through the Girls Advocacy Alliance programme, DCI-Sierra Leone reached out to:
- 200 traditional leaders including chiefs, heads or practitioners of FGM made a commitment to end FGM, sexual violence, and child marriage in the communities.
- Five thousand people from 50 communities with sensitisation messages on gender-based violence.
- 250 cases of GBV against girls and young women were identified and prosecuted by community leaders of the Family Support Unit of the Sierra Leone Police.

Child consultations in Zambia ahead of the UN CRC review

In the last quarter of 2020, DCI-Zambia (Ubuchingo) conducted numerous activities on child safeguarding and advocacy. Some of these activities included: Children’s Public Hearings and the virtual Civil Society Organisations (CSO) engagements on Alternative Reporting. Ubuchingo DCI-Zambia undertook a 2-day public hearing exercise from the 16th to the 20th of November 2020 in three selected districts, namely, Kasama, Ndola and Chisnali. The main objective of the hearings was to obtain children’s views on the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in Zambia. Over 500 children from different backgrounds were engaged in the exercise. They provided recommendations against corporal punishment and detention of children. These were children from rural areas, children in care centres, children in conflict with the law and also children with special needs. The recommendations that were made by children will be included in Zambia’s 2021 CRC alternative report.
DCI advocates at the international and local level for the dissemination of the UNCRC, raising awareness on the rights of children on the move, especially unaccompanied children, and advocating for their rights to be acknowledged and respected. Up to 50 million children are forcibly displaced around the world today. Children on the move are often subject to racism, discrimination, and detention. Although children on the move face variable challenges specific to their individual circumstances and their (perceived) status, DCI aims at ensuring that all children on the move benefit from appropriate protection measures and can claim their rights. DCI continued collaborating with the UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants, providing a submission to his timely report to the UN General Assembly on Immigration Detention with information from DCI-Greece and DCI-Belgium.

DIRECT SUPPORT

Children’s Rights Helpdesks in European National Sections

DCI sections in Europe are working together to improve the situation of children on the move by giving legal support on child rights, as well as advocating at the national and European levels. The Children’s Rights Helpdesk established in 2018 brings together non-governmental organisations from various countries (currently DCI-Netherlands, DCI-Greece, and DCI-Italy) providing psychosocial and legal support to unaccompanied children on the move and aims to protect and actively promote their rights and to strengthen the knowledge and implementation of international, European human rights and national law by institutional actors, professionals, and practitioners.

DCI-Netherlands conducted a successful campaign to repatriate to the Netherlands the unaccompanied children stranded in refugee camps in Greece. As a result, there was great support for the reception of these children in the Netherlands: a ‘Coalition of the Willing’ consisting of more than 117 municipalities declared themselves willing to take in children, and more than 100,000 people signed a petition, initiated in part by DCI-NL, asking the government to provide reception. Eventually, after the so-called ‘Moria deal’, the government decided to take in 100 children. Likewise, DCI-Italy spearheaded numerous efforts on the topic of children on the move, including Sempre Diritti, oriented towards promoting the rights of unaccompanied children in Liguria through research and consultation work involving a group of unaccompanied children.

Another project in the European region was the European Child Rights Help Desk, an initiative to develop an independent observatory to verify the state of implementation of guarantees and rights of children on the move present on the territory, by means of guidance, assistance, analysis, monitoring, training, and awareness-raising, through a constant dialogue with civil society and institutional and non-institutional actors operating in this field. In 2020, through the European Child Rights Helpdesk, the sections provided legal support to 2,194 children on the move in Greece, Italy, Poland, Belgium, Ireland and Sweden, which helps to ensure that children’s rights are addressed in the procedures. Even during the COVID-19 lockdown, the Helpdesk provided legal advice in 1,040 individual cases in which children’s rights were at stake. In Italy, this project resulted in the provision of social-legal assistance to 77 unaccompanied children, and the elaboration of a Protocol representing the different roles of the main actors of the reception system for unaccompanied children, which has been recently forwarded to the Juvenile Court and the Regional Ombudsman for Childhood and Adolescence for review and signature.
VERIFY THE STATE OF IMPLEMENTATION OF RIGHTS OF CHILDREN ON THE MOVE IN EUROPE

GUIDANCE ASSISTANCE
ANALYSIS MONITORING
TRAINING AWARENESS-RAISING

EUROPEAN CHILD RIGHTS HELPDESK

2,194 CHILDREN RECEIVED LEGAL SUPPORT
1,040 CASES RECEIVED LEGAL ADVICE DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC
Promoting the rights of child refugees in Costa Rica

DCI-Costa Rica led throughout 2020 a project on promoting the human rights and integral development of child refugees and asylum seekers in Costa Rica, particularly in the north and in the San José Metropolitan Area. In total, 258 children received individual attention and were referred to institutions with competencies to attend to their needs; through care for families, 559 children were impacted, improving their living conditions; 172 children and adolescents participated in needs assessments and expressed their opinions regarding the enjoyment and exercise of their human rights; 154 adolescents requesting refugee status participated in empowerment training processes and 91 food and hygiene packages were delivered to refugee families during the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, the initiative resulted in the elaboration of a manual which establishes the necessary care routes so that children in refugee conditions, asylum seekers and stateless persons have access to international protection in Costa Rican territory and the enjoyment of their rights, as well as various other child-friendly documents to foster child participation.
Assisting and protecting unaccompanied and separated children

DCI-Morocco led the project “Assistance and protection of unaccompanied and separated children in Morocco”, focused on providing psychosocial, medical, and administrative support to unaccompanied and separated migrant children in the city of Casablanca. The programme also entailed providing accommodation and humanitarian assistance, as well as the distribution of food kits, hygiene and clothing kits. The initiative reached 525 migrant children, as follows:

- 135 were informed about COVID-19
- 88 received vocational training
- 60 received psychosocial assistance
- 60 benefited from accommodation or accommodation assistance (leaving squatters camps)
- 60 benefited from hygiene kits and another 60 benefited from food kits and hot meals
- 20 ENAS migrant children benefited from medical consultations
- 40 attended awareness-raising workshops on the dangers of the street and irregular immigration
- 2 received social support to ensure family reunification.

CAPACITY-BUILDING

Preventing child trafficking in Sierra Leone

DCI-Sierra Leone continued implementing its initiative on ending cross border child trafficking (2016-2020) by providing training to 100 border security officials, community leaders and CSOs on the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) to prevent and respond to child trafficking and the legal framework of child trafficking in collaboration with DCI-Liberia and DCI-Sabou Guinea. The project also focused on ensuring protection, access to justice, rehabilitation and reintegration for child trafficking victims, and advocated for reforms of policies and laws to ensure persecutions of perpetrators. Such efforts resulted in the arrest of over 10 perpetrators and the rescue of at least 20 victims of trafficking at border immigration checks, the inclusion of a child-rights perspective within police training manuals, increased awareness in communities through youth-led Mano River Youth Network sensitisation and advocacy, and the reform of immigration and migration policies which are currently awaiting cabinet approval.

Empowering child refugees through social reintegration

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. DCI-Lebanon focuses most of its work on providing survival support and basic education to child refugees whose mental health suffers, including from post-traumatic stress disorder.

DCI-Lebanon is currently leading “Early Learners: Early Childhood Education for Refugee Children and Children Affected by Displacement (2018-2022)”, a national project to support Syrian refugee children aged 4-6 in preparing them to be integrated into formal education. The initiative led to the provision of preschool preparatory courses to 1,030 Syrian refugees to allow them to enrol in state schools. In addition, the project also comprised the establishment of 6 preschools in 3 regions, training for teachers and social workers on child safety and creative online teaching tools, awareness-raising sessions for parents of targeted refugee children on children’s rights to protection and education and on key messages around COVID-19.

The ‘Incredible Me’ project aims at supporting refugee children in developing new strengths within themselves, overcoming daily challenges and past experiences, and rebuilding a meaningful course of life. Since 2016, the project has helped more than 2000 children in Mount Lebanon, North Lebanon, Beirut and Southern suburbs based on movement therapy and sophrology practice.
In 2021, we mark the 25th anniversary of the Graça Machel report. The first Global Study of this kind commissioned by the UN Secretary General followed by the one on violence (2006), known as the Sergio Pinheiro Report and the one on Children deprived of liberty (2019). It is clear that the situation of children in armed conflicts is included in all three global studies. Graça Machel’s quote above could be written today. Together with the celebrations of the 25th anniversary, DCI National Sections around the world which have the sad ‘privilege’ of being present in the context of an armed conflict have given their priority to implement recommendations and defend the rights mentioned in the Graça Machel report but also in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and its 2nd Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflicts.

The 2020 health pandemic gave no “truce” for children and armed conflict. Their situation around the world continued to be of great concern despite the lack of reliable data due to COVID-19. As the UN Secretary-General mentions in his June 2021 report: “The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic aggravated existing vulnerabilities of children, including by hampering their access to education, health, and social services, limiting child protection activities and shrinking safe spaces. The socioeconomic impact of the pandemic exposed these children to grave violations, notably recruitment and use, abduction and sexual violence...”.
INTERNATIONAL ADVOCACY

DCI has been involved on international advocacy on this issue, together with National Sections in particular in Palestine, Yemen, Iraq, Central African Republic, Somalia, Lebanon, Colombia, Burkina Faso and the Democratic Republic of Congo. All of them are followed by the UN Special Representative on Children and Armed Conflict (UN SRSG CAAC) with whom we are regularly in contact, both as DCI but also as a convener of the Child Rights Connect Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict. In 2020, we raised the situation in the countries where DCI is present and gave specific alerts for Colombia, Palestine, Yemen, Central African Republic, among others to the office of the UNSRSG CAAC, the Human Rights Council and the UNCRC.

DIRECT ACTIVITIES

DCI-Yemen

Protecting children and promoting a culture of peace

Despite the fact that UN data collection has been gravely disrupted by COVID-19 pandemic during 2020 in Yemen, the UN verified 4,418 grave violations against 1,287 children. From the experience of DCI-Yemen, which never interrupted activities due to the pandemic, these figures are seriously underestimated. While peace negotiations are ongoing at the highest level, the situation of the rights of the child in Yemen has been seriously deteriorating with intensification of the fights all over the country and grave violations of human rights, including children’s rights.

Within this context, DCI-Yemen continued activities, despite concrete obstacles and a shrinking space for civil society within this conflict. DCI-Yemen continued with the Children’s Parliament which prepared new elections, promoting meaningful child participation (see below on Child Participation).

In another initiative in partnership with UN Women, DCI-Yemen promoted awareness among school children to build a peace culture, support young leaders and ambassadors for peace and community coexistence in schools. Finally, a pilot project on socio-legal defence for children in conflict with the law, in partnership with the Ministry of Justice, had a tremendous impact and demonstrated an enormous potential in this area (see details in Justice for Children priority above). This project is even more crucial realising the risks that these children are exposed to in terms of recruitment in the armed conflict despite the 2018 road map to end and prevent child recruitment and use of children in Yemen. As the Secretary-General says on Yemen in his 2021 report, “I am gravely concerned by the continuing rise in the number of grave violations including recruitment of children...”.
AWARENESS RAISING

During these last 18 months of the COVID-19 Pandemic DCI mobilised awareness raising around deprivation of liberty of children in the context of armed conflicts. Supporting the Secretary-General’s call to release children, together with many colleagues from the NGO Panel on Children Deprived of liberty, we collected data and supported the implementation of the recommendations of the Study to release children respecting their best interests. In many countries where this was possible, we sought to accompany children in armed conflicts in this process so that they can be regrouped with their families or other caregivers, as releasing children without any follow up is not good practice, and during the COVID-19 pandemic this could be even more dangerous.

CAPACITY-BUILDING

DCI-Central African Republic
Rethinking peace through vocational training for former child soldiers and monitoring of population movements

With 899 grave violations in Central African Republic verified in the annual report of the Secretary-General, electoral violence, and high levels of child recruitment the UN Secretary-General remained in his 2021 report “alarmed at the elevated numbers of grave violations, including the sharp increase in recruitment and use, sexual violence, abduction and attacks on schools, including by parties that have signed action plans with the United Nations.” Despite that, a considerable number of children were released (497 according to the UN Secretary-General’s report) and DCI-CAR focused, among others, on offering hope and a better future to children including vocational training as well as sensitisation on the rights of the child. Another new initiative of DCI-CAR, in partnership with the International Organization on Migration (IOM) implemented a mechanism for monitoring population movements, aimed at quickly reporting concrete data to identify locations, demographic characteristics, risk of violations, and identify the most urgent needs of the populations affected, in terms of access to services throughout the prefecture of Nana Gribinzi.
Deprivation of liberty is a cross-cutting issue as it is applicable to all DCI’s priority themes: justice for children, violence against children, children on the move and children affected by armed conflict. Justice for children is, and has historically been, one of DCI’s main areas of expertise. DCI’s activities range from contributing to the drafting of the UN Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice (1985), the follow-up to the UNCRC’s General Comments No. 10 and 24 on Child Justice (2019), to the leading and coordination of the campaign for the UN Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty (GSCDL), in addition to the direct work DCI National Sections carry out for and with children deprived of liberty across the globe.

INTERNATIONAL ADVOCACY

Global Study for Children Deprived of Liberty

After launching the call for a UN Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty in 2014 and co-chairing the NGO Panel for the Study made up of 170 NGOs for five years, the report of the Study was delivered to UN General Assembly in October 2019 by the Independent Expert Prof Manfred Nowak followed by the official launch of the full study a month later in November 2019.

The work of the NGO Panel of 170 NGOs co-led by DCI will now focus on how to best disseminate and implement the findings of the study around the world, including by ensuring that an effective follow up mechanism is in place and that data collection can continue in the future, whilst also meaningfully creating a space for children to express their views and participate in decisions that concern them.

AWARENESS RAISING

Raising the profile of the Study in international fora

During the 43rd 44th, and 45th, session of the United Nations (UN) Human Rights Council’s (HRC), DCI delivered statements on the behalf of the NGO Panel for the Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty, participated in the plenary sessions and organised side events, meetings with different stakeholders and conducting advocacy. The NGO Panel called on States to continue to contribute to and support the development of the Study and its follow-up, and to implement its recommendations.
We need to give visibility to the Global Study, show it everywhere it can be shown, disseminate the recommendations, and talk about it so as nobody can say ‘we did not know how we treat children’, said Benoît Van Keirsblijk, director of DCI Belgium at the Geneva launch of the Global Study, “we have been harming children for many years and this has to stop.”

Since the official launches in New York and Geneva, regional and national launches have taken place around the word with the involvement or participation of DCI. DCI and the NGO Panel remain very committed to share the important recommendations of the Global Study and, together with relevant UN bodies and States, identify the most appropriate follow up after the implementation of the good practices identified.

Online event underscores COVID-19’s impact on children deprived of liberty

On 16 July 2020, Defence for Children International (DCI) and Human Rights Watch (HRW) hosted a webinar on COVID-19’s impact on children deprived of liberty, which was attended by more than 250 participants from different countries. This online event highlighted the key findings of the United Nations Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty (GSCDL) in the context of COVID-19 and was moderated by the UN Special Representative of the Secretary General on Violence Against Children, Najat Maalla M’jid. It was co-sponsored by the Permanent Mission of Austria to the UN Geneva and the Permanent Mission of Uruguay to the UN New York and featured the participation of the UN inter-agency Task Force for the GSCDL.

EU Parliament called on to reduce the number of children deprived of liberty

An online expert roundtable was held on 8th July 2020 to present the United Nations Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty to the European Parliament. This Webinar was organised by DCI-Belgium together with Saskia Bricmont, Member of the European Parliament (MEP) and co-chair of the European Parliament Intergroup on the Rights of the Child. The UN Global Study was presented by Prof. Manfred Nowak, Independent Expert appointed by the UN General Assembly to lead the Study, who remarked that “child deprivation of liberty is a form of structural violence”, he also noted that the COVID-19 pandemic represented a very good opportunity for implementing the Study’s recommendations, including the release of children deprived of liberty in different contexts.

Launch of the UN Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty in the Netherlands:

On December 18th 2020, the UN GSCDL was launched in the presence of UN expert and leader of the study Manfred Nowak during an online meeting in which Dutch politicians and policymakers, youth experts, representatives of children’s rights organisations, academics, local and national governments, judiciary and international organisations took part to discuss the recommendations of the UN GSCDL. In the Netherlands, children are detained in police cells, in detention centres for children in conflict with the law, immigration detention or are deprived of their liberty in secured residential youth care. The MPs responded to the recommendations from the UN Study for the Netherlands. They have committed themselves to prevent the deprivation of liberty of children now and in the next cabinet term. As a result of the event, relevant parties, like staff members on the Ministry of Public Health, Wellbeing and sport, the inspection youth services, and also lawyers, judges and staff members of residential institutions and children were informed of the findings of the UN Global Study.
DIRECT SUPPORT

Children in conflict with the law in Morocco

Throughout 2020, DCI-Morocco led an initiative on providing psycho-social support for children in child protection centres to ensure the continuity of their education, training and rehabilitation programmes. The project took place in the Greater Casablanca region and resulted in the provision of education to 101 young people regarding protection against COVID-19 through psychological support sessions, workshops and discussion groups. Additionally, it resulted in the release of 92 children directly and indirectly detained, and in a change of measures for 46 children deprived of their liberty, who were returned to their families, placed nearby to keep the family bond, or placed in open centres.

No Life for a Child - Life in Immigration Detention

With refugee lawyers and the Senior Counsel of the Refugee law Office, Legal Aid Ontario, DCI-Canada has been carrying out advocacy, lobbying, and awareness raising on detention centres and the conditions within which children are being detained.

ROOTED—a firm foundation for the Future of Black Youth in Ontario’s Care System

Concerning children in institutions, DCI-Canada has implemented a programme using the lived experience of young people, to develop and provide recommendations for change in the systems of care for black youth in Ontario. DCI-Canada’s Les Horne Award will be used to provide Leadership Training Workshops.

Activites in DCI-Sierra Leone to enhance access to justice for children in conflict with the law and victims of violence

1. Build the capacity of child justice actors including law enforcement officials, community leaders and CSOs to facilitate access to justice for children;

2. Increase the chances and opportunities for children to access justice, rehabilitation and reintegration services by providing social legal support to them;

3. Advocate for legal and institutional reforms.

7.2 MILLION CHILDREN DE FACTO DEPRIVED OF LIBERTY

- 670,000 in institutions
- 410,000 in pre-trial detention and prisons
- 330,000 in migration-related detention
- 35,000 in the context of armed conflict
- 19,000 living in the prisons with their caregivers
- 1,500 detained on the grounds of national security

Source: responses to the Global Study questionnaire, UN Secretary-General, UNICEF, UNODC, UN Women, Children’s Champion, UNICEF (2020), World Prison Brief, literature review.
“When girls are raped they do not have a safe space to turn to. Instead they are forced to remain in the same community as the alleged perpetrators. The lack of safe-homes, sexual and gender-based violence Fast-Track Courts, as well as the lack of trained nurse at sexual and gender-based violence units in hospitals are some of the key factors that deny girls from accessing justice. This is coupled with the limited number of female police officers and female public defendants to hear the cases of rape victims. Child marriages and female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) are also a major problem”

Miatta, 16 year-old, Liberia Young Human Rights Defender from the Girls Advocacy Alliance.

DCI considers that children are advocates for their rights. They are not only rights-holders in need of protection but also active human rights defenders, members of society, capable of voicing their own views and defending their rights. Children have the right to be heard and have a say in all decisions affecting them, be that at home, in the community, at school or in individual legal and administrative matters.

Child participation is a key strategic objective for the promotion of children’s rights and also a cross-cutting approach that is mainstreamed by DCI into the organisation’s standard-setting, monitoring and sector specific work. Our work on child participation is underpinned by the rights enshrined in Article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child which states that children have the right to participate in all decision-making processes that affect them and to influence decisions taken in their regard.

DCI also advocates for States to ratify the Third Optional Protocol to the UNCRC (OPIC) which allows individual children to submit complaints regarding specific violations of their rights under the Convention and its Protocols. For their participation to be meaningful, children need support, particularly in the form of access to information, as well as education and trainings.

DIRECT ACTIVITIES

The Yemeni Children’s Parliament

In a country where children’s lives are impacted by war, famine and COVID-19, DCI fights for children to be heard. For their rights to be respected and those of future generations, DCI-Yemen is running a child parliament with child-led committees which monitor and represent children of Yemen when advocating for the implementation of UNCRC recommendations and concluding observations. In 2020, DCI-Yemen strengthened coordination mechanisms between civil society and the government representatives, including the Ministry of Education, the Higher Council for Motherhood and Childhood, the Yemeni Parliament, as well as UNICEF and the Local Council. DCI-Yemen successfully conducted the 9th Children Parliament election with advocacy plans, awareness sessions and meetings. Two radio flashes about the UNCRC were produced to raise public awareness and 78 children were involved in various activities of the parliament.
Creation of a Municipal Council for Children in Morocco

In 2020, DCI-Morocco worked together with the French Embassy in Morocco to set up a municipal council for children in the city of Essaouira. The objective of the project is to contribute to the promotion of children’s rights and to advocate local authorities to include children in all decisions that affect them. As a result, more than 300 children have participated in the preparatory activities involving DCI with 10 associations working towards the realisation of children’s rights. One hundred and four children directly participated in the creation of the municipal council for children and 13 children were elected as members to sit in this council, accompanied by DCI’s support. This successful experience will be replicated in 2 rural towns and 3 municipalities around Casablanca.

An award for indigenous children in Canada

In Canada, DCI rewarded young people who distinguished themselves by their action to provide education on issues affecting indigenous and minority children, including child detention. DCI organised youth panels and a lecture, visibility in the media and sent letters to officials. DCI advocated for the reform of regulations affecting children in immigration custody. Currently there are no reliable statistics on the number of children in immigration custody nor is there information about numbers released. A total of 350 children, including children from a vulnerable background, participated in activities organised by DCI-Canada in 2020.

CAPACITY-BUILDING

Empowering children to fight hate speech in Brazil

In Brazil, ANCED, DCI-Brazil, was particularly concerned by the discrimination against the Black community, encouraged by the political elites themselves. DCI builds the capacities of children and adolescents through its socio-legal defence centres in the country. Even more during the pandemic, DCI-Brazil pursued relentless efforts to boost child participation virtually in order to give them the tools to lead the fight against racism at the local level. Following the training, DCI-Brazil provided certification to 500 participants including 100 children and adolescents, who carried out an advocacy campaign at the national level to combat hatred against minorities. A regional conference to exchange good practices in Argentina

In November 2020, DCI-Argentina participated in BICE Regional Conference “Tracing Futures” to reflect on prevention of violence in the context of COVID-19 and exchange good practices among participating countries on considering the best interests of children. The conference was held with financial support from Oak Foundation. DCI advocated for Argentina to join as a “pioneer country” in the Global Alliance to put an end to violence against children and adolescents. The conference was held in a virtual format with the participation of 25 Argentinian children and 100 children from other countries of South America. Working sessions were organised to interact with children on INSPIRE advocacy messages and a proposal on how to eliminate violence in Argentina.
AWARENESS RISING

Child human rights defenders advocate for their rights

Side event: 9th July 2020 – Girl Human Rights Defenders on the frontline of COVID-19 response

When DCI conducted a COVID-19 impact survey, it was observed that child participation had been heavily affected by the pandemic. The closure of public spaces and schools worsened the situation, while the global gains on the 2030 Agenda were likely to be reversed. As a response, DCI organised a Girls Advocacy Alliance (GAA) virtual debate with and for girls to involve them in GAA lobbying and advocacy actions. It was one of the first events giving the floor to children to participate and express their views on the impact of the COVID-19 on their life. Alongside the Human Rights Council 44th session and the High-Level Political Forum, six girl human rights defenders called up on the United Nations and its Member States to ensure the participation of children and youth in the COVID-19 response and beyond during an online child-led conversation on States’ response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

This Webinar was organised by Defence for Children International (DCI) together with the Girls Advocacy Alliance (GAA), and was moderated by Mellicentia, a Sierra Leonean child rights defender. It also featured the participation of Dutch youth representatives to the UN, Aoife Fleming and Hajar Yagkoubi, and Memory Banda, a Malawian children’s right defender well-known for her activism against child marriage. The children and young people shared their views, experiences, and challenges. While COVID-19 is having a disproportionate impact on girls, DCI thought it was essential to recognise their unique power to better respond to the pandemic. For us an effective response to the pandemic means tackling the violence and inequality faced by girls.
The COVID-19 4P Log app for children's wellbeing

The COVID-19 4P Log is a smartphone app project, led by the Institute for Inspiring Children’s Futures at the University of Strathclyde, to gather real-time insights into the successes, challenges, innovations and learning of practitioners and policymakers. The questions were specifically about their experiences as they set out to support children through protection, provision, participation, and prevention, during the pandemic. Phase 1 of the study collected 3300+ real-time responses from practitioners and policymakers, in over 20 countries and across 5 continents, across 8 weeks of questions, in late 2020.

The COVID-19 4P Log was a collaborative process, developed in close partnership with 17 international key partner organisations —including DCI — while also engaging with children, and with 13 in-country dissemination partners. These rich multi-stakeholder partnerships are a great example of the key elements called for in SDG 17, aiming to deliver capacity-building, and policy and institutional coherence. Findings from the study, and more information on the COVID-19 4P Log app project are available here: https://inspiringchildrensfutures.org/covid

The #COVIDUnder19 initiative:

To find out how children around the world experience the pandemic, the #CovidUnder19 initiative was launched by Terre des Hommes to bring together a group of children, the UN, academics and around 30 civil society organisations, including DCI, to develop an international survey. Queen’s University Belfast led the design and analysis of the survey, involving children and partners as part of the innovative approach to child rights-based research developed at the Centre for Children’s Rights. More than 26 000 children and young people aged 8 to 17, from 137 countries, participated in the Life under Coronavirus survey, making it the largest global child-participatory research and advocacy process during the pandemic. Children engaged as peer researchers to contribute to the data analysis and their insights, views and involvement are reflected in the findings. The results of the survey were published in December 2020, available in an ‘everyone-friendly’ format in four languages.

The #COVIDUnder19 initiative led to collaboration amongst a number of organisations to foster meaningful inclusion of children in the work which follows the results of the survey – through activities like Virtual Skillz Camps and collaborative workstreams with partner organisations.
GENDER EQUALITY

“When they are at school, pregnant girls need special facilities and support.”

– Abdul Manaf Kemokai, President of Defence for Children International and Executive Director of DCI-Sierra Leone.

DCI-ECPAT Netherlands, Plan International-Netherlands, and Terre des Hommes-Netherlands concluded 5 years of Girls Advocacy Alliance programme in strategic partnership with the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Run in 10 countries - among which Sierra Leone, Ghana, and Liberia where DCI is active - this innovative programme and first ever joint international coalition for girls reached out to 16,000 girls and young women at the international, regional, and national levels. DCI worked with partners working on influencing the public, religious and traditional leaders, and school systems to create a change in norms that will contribute to the ending of violence and economic exclusion of girls.

As a result, the capacity of CSO organisations and networks in the programme countries, including children’s rights organisations, are strengthened. The national partners influence the government to implement changes in law that will contribute to the rights of girls, but also to better implementation of existing laws and compliance of international ratified conventions. The partners influenced regional organs such as the African Union, the Economical Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and international human rights instruments such as the UN Child Rights Committee, the Human Rights Council, the Universal Periodic Review and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). In communities, DCI observed a change in behaviour. Youth and traditional and religious leaders are more committed to ending violence against girls. For example, child marriages are more often stopped and reported. A close collaboration has grown between traditional leaders, local authorities, and other involved actors in the communities. Because of this, actors intervene and collaborate in the field of girls’ rights. At a national level, partners have become established experts, contributing to policy change in the field of girls’ rights.
DIRECT SUPPORT

End child early and forced marriage in Ghana

In Ghana, DCI has long been working for the respect of equal rights and opportunities for girls and young women. With the Girls Advocacy Alliance, DCI-Ghana produced in 2020 a research report on ending GBV and child marriage in the communities with the involvement of traditional Leaders, the Obuasi Municipal Chief Executive, and Obuasi Municipality Policy. A waiver of medical fees for victims of GBV was adopted by the Obuasi East District Assembly which was a concrete progress for the dignity of GBV survivors. The programme was supported by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs in partnership with DCI/ECPAT-Netherlands, Plan International and Terre des Hommes.

Empowerment of young women and girls in Guinea

In Guinea-Conakry, DCI opened a new chapter with a young nominated Director. The national section was founded in 2012 by a group of Guinean child rights activists who realised that given the appalling situation of children in Guinea, an organisation like DCI should be in Guinea to help resolve children’s issues in vulnerable situations, more specifically children in conflict with the law and children in situations of trafficking. Since its creation, DCI-Guinea rescued and reintegrated 30 victims of trafficking and children on the move in Guinea and beyond the borders with Sierra Leone and Liberia in the Mano River Union project. In 2020, DCI-Guinea developed a project on gender and the economic empowerment of young women and girls. In 2021, DCI was to launch this programme dedicated to support young mothers to prevent human trafficking and help young women and girls to survive the socio-economic crisis.
CAPACITY BUILDING

Preventing GBV by disrupting gender stereotypes in the EU

In Italy, DCI implements an innovative project called ‘Fairytales’ which aims at deconstructing negative stereotypes from early childhood in the EU. A gender analysis of nine classical fairy tales for children was led by NAIA Association (Bulgaria) with DCI-Italy in collaboration with the Convitto Nazionale Colombo of Genoa and the Cultural Association La Stanza and Anti-Violence Centre of Women in Karditsa – Greece. The project, funded by the EU Commission, trained 60 teachers from childcare for pre-schoolers from three EU countries on introducing gender issues in pre-school children’s education (5-7 years old), using classical fairy tales. The trainings are realised based on a methodology and practical guide for gender education in pre-school age through the use of classic fairy tales. At the end of the project, 180 teachers will have completed the training process in the European Union.

AWARENESS RAISING

Major breakthrough: Litigation to lift school ban on pregnant girls

As a protective measure during the Ebola epidemic in West Africa, Sierra Leone in 2015 officially banned pregnant girls from attending school. During the epidemic, thousands of orphans whose parents died of Ebola turned to prostitution and street trading to survive, according to DCI-Sierra Leone. Some 14,000 adolescent girls were pregnant at the time, according to UNFPA figures—pregnancies often caused by rape and sexual exploitation.

This policy galvanised girls’ and child rights defenders, and DCI-Sierra Leone was on the frontline to challenge the government and advocate for girls’ rights. After their appeals to the national authorities failed, DCI-Sierra Leone together with civil society groups appealed to the Court of Justice of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). The regional court ordered in December 2019 the immediate lifting of the ban. The court also ordered the integration of girls into the education system.
of sexual and reproductive health resources into school curricula. Following the Court decision, pregnant girls in Sierra Leone will return to school after the government of Sierra Leone decided to lift the ban. Following the decision, DCI realised the following activities:

Verified that 1500 pregnant girls attended formal schools and took public exams in 2020 which is a demonstration that they are now allowed to continue schools unlike before the ban was lifted
Trained 200 teachers on the National Code of Conduct for Teachers and also Child Safeguarding
Was part of the Technical Working groups established by the Ministry of Social Welfare and the National COVID-19 Emergency Response Center that developed the National Framework for Psychosocial, Gender and Child Protection responses for COVID-19 and led trainings of 200 frontline social workers, mental health workers, and CSOs in Bombali and Kenema district
Empowered 420 girls and young women on reproductive health rights, and access to essential services to reduce teenage pregnancy, child FGM, and child marriage.

For DCI, it is important to recognise and elevate the contributions of girls and young women in civil society and activism to the advancement of human rights. Throughout its activities in the field, DCI examines the gendered and intersectional barriers, reprisals and backlashes faced by girl human rights defenders. At the international level, DCI-International Secretariat led the CSO contribution to the report of the Special Rapporteur on the Rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, Clément Nyaletsossi Voulé, in June 2020. The Special Rapporteur used a recommendation from the Girls Advocacy Alliance report urging States to: “Enable the formation of girl-led groups and young feminist associations and encourage and facilitate girls’ participation in public life, including by providing them with relevant role models of women in civil society and activism and creating, in partnership with civil society, mentoring programmes”. The Special Rapporteur has submitted his report to the 75th UN General Assembly (UNGA) in October 2020.
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.

### DCI Profit and Loss Accounts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2020 (CHF)</th>
<th>2019 (CHF)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>INCOME</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Project activities income</td>
<td>442,088</td>
<td>730,362</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other income</td>
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<td>Donations</td>
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<td>Subrenting</td>
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<td>Membership Fees</td>
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<td><strong>Total Income</strong></td>
<td><strong>539,620</strong></td>
<td><strong>830,698</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>EXPENDITURE</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Human Resources</td>
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<td>Consultancies</td>
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<td>133,281</td>
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<td>DCI World Service</td>
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<td>International Executive Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>Administrative expenses</td>
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<tr>
<td>Office rent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Training</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Expenditure</strong></td>
<td><strong>673,051</strong></td>
<td><strong>580,945</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>RESULTS BEFORE FUND VARIATION</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Allocation of earmarked funds</td>
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<td>249,754</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use of allocated funds</td>
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<td>-702,362</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>RESULTS OF THE YEAR</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,300</strong></td>
<td><strong>636</strong></td>
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</table>
Report of the Auditor on the limited statutory examination to the Treasurer of DEFENCE FOR CHILDREN – INTERNATIONAL (DCI), Geneva

In accordance with the mandate received, we have audited the accounting and financial statements (balance sheet, profit and loss account, change in equity and restricted funds and notes) of the DEFENCE FOR CHILDREN – INTERNATIONAL (DCI), Geneva, for the year ending December 31st, 2020.

The Treasurer is responsible for these financial statements in accordance with Swiss GAAP FER, in particular Swiss GAAP 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 17, 2021

FIDUCIAIRE WUARIN & CHATTON SA

Raymond Bühlmann
Licensed Audit Expert
Auditor in charge

Patrick Ciocco
Licensed Audit Expert

Enclosures:
Financial statements:
- Balance sheet
- Profit and loss account
- Change in equity and restricted funds
- Notes
We would also like to thank particularly all our individual donors who continued supporting DCI activities over the critical COVID-19 period.

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, Watchlist on Children in Armed Conflict, Keeping Children Safe.
## GOVERNANCE INTERNATIONAL

**EXECUTIVE COUNCIL (IEC)**

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**Composition of the International Executive Council IEC**

**DEFENCE FOR CHILDREN INTERNATIONAL**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>DCI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>President</td>
<td>Abdul Manaff Kemokai</td>
<td>DCI-Sierra Leone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treasurer</td>
<td>Mirjam Blaak</td>
<td>DCI-Netherlands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice President Africa</td>
<td>Nirmal Busgopaul</td>
<td>DCI-Mauritius</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice President Americas</td>
<td>Juan Fumeiro</td>
<td>DCI-Uruguay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice President Europe</td>
<td>Margaret Tuite</td>
<td>DCI-Belgium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice President MENA &amp; AP</td>
<td>Khaled Quizmar</td>
<td>DCI-Palestine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Councilor</td>
<td>Fernando Sabogal Báez</td>
<td>DCI-Colombia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Councilor</td>
<td>Arwa Al-Fakih</td>
<td>DCI-Yémen</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# ADVISORY COMMITTEE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Role/Additional Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nigel Cantwell</td>
<td>Founder of DCI and child protection specialist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sally Christine Cornwell</td>
<td>Former executive of the International Labour Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moushira Khattab</td>
<td>Former member and Vice-Chair of the UNCRC on the Rights of the Child, Member of the Committee of Experts on the Rights and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosa Maria Ortiz</td>
<td>Former member and vice-Chair of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meskerem Geset Techane</td>
<td>Human Rights Lawyer, Member of the UN Working Group on discrimination against women and girls.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jaap Doek</td>
<td>Former Chairperson of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child</td>
</tr>
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# INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Role/Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alex Kamarotos</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sasha Richards</td>
<td>Advocacy Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cecile Pilot</td>
<td>Project &amp; Capacity Building Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Begoña Santaella</td>
<td>Communications Associate</td>
</tr>
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</table>
## REGIONAL DESK OFFICERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Region</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Luna Mazzilli</td>
<td>Americas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vanessa Buvens</td>
<td>Europe, World Service Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prodigio Kabunga</td>
<td>Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lina Qumsiyeh</td>
<td>MENA</td>
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## INTERNS AND VOLUNTEERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Role</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gonzalo Carvajal Montejo</td>
<td>Blanca Ginés</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marissa Messinger</td>
<td>Anna Carol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carlo Carvajal Aguilar</td>
<td>Jana Thebian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fabiana Montaño-Bascope</td>
<td>Raúl Saucedo Ortiz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Andrés Cambronero (Designer)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SPECIAL THANKS TO ALL OUR VOLUNTEERS IN GENEVA AND AROUND THE WORLD WITHOUT WHOM OUR MISSION WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE.**
LOOKING AHEAD 2021-2022

ALL YEAR LONG

JANUARY 2021
Strategic regional meeting for Africa, Freetown, Sierra Leone.

FEBRUARY 2021
NGO Panel Core group adopts new multiyear implementation strategy and action-plan.

SPRING 2021
Launch of the new five-year programme on girls’ participation in decision making: « She Leads »

MAY 2021
DCI-Palestine and the Movement mobilise in front of the dramatic events and civilian casualties in Gaza strip. Intervention in the Special session of the Human Rights Council.

JULY 2021
DCI’s participation to the High Level Political Forum in New York, and organisation of a special session on « Solutions to deprivation of liberty » with UN Task Force and Dr. Najat Maala M’jid (UN SRSG VAC)
The newly elected member of the UNCRC, Benoit Van Keirsbilck, and Director of DCI-Belgium, participates to 88th Session of the UN CRC in Geneva.


DCI organises a workshop in the World Congress on Justice on the follow up of the Global Study.

DCI-Palestine convenes a regional meeting and training for the MENA region in Amman-Jordan.

DCI Movement is invited to contribute to the UN Special Report for the celebration of the 25 years of the mandate of UN SRSG on Children and Armed Conflict (CAAC). Chapter on VOICES OF CHILDREN (from DCI-Palestine, Yemen, CAR...)


13th DCI International General Assembly
I am not just a girl.
I am the pride of nation.
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.