DEFENCE FOR CHILDREN INTERNATIONAL
OUR PRESENCE

30,000
Estimated number of children directly supported by DCI every year

Over 30
National Sections

28,000
children, professionals and community members participating annually in DCI empowerment programs and activities

200
Number of Staff and Volunteers

International Secretariat (IS)
consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) since 1991

World Service Foundation (WSF)
based in Brussels, Belgium, a legal entity under Belgian law
DCI is a leading child rights focused and membership based grassroots movement placing all members on equal footing. Created during the International Year of the Child (1979), DCI coordinated the NGO input for the drafting of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) - the most widely ratified human rights treaty in history. Presently, DCI’s mandate is to ensure ongoing, practical, systematic and concerted action directed towards effective implementation of the human rights codified in the UNCRC and its Optional Protocols. DCI is also strategically based in Geneva to engage with the UN Human Rights Council, Universal Periodic Review and Treaty Bodies mechanisms.

DCI has an active membership within key networks and fora, in particular Child Rights Connect and its different thematic Working Groups, the Global Partnership to end violence against children, the Inter-Agency Working Group (IAWG) to End Child Immigration Detention, and Child Justice Advocacy Group (CJAG), among others.

**OUR VISION**

DCI takes actions to promote the individual and collective human rights of children at local, national, regional and international levels. We believe 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.

**OUR MISSION AND PRINCIPLES**

We work to recognise every child as a rights-holder and empower children to claim their rights; raise awareness of children’s rights at local, national, regional and global levels; proactively and constructively inform and influence policy makers and service providers on children’s rights, at local, national, regional and international levels and to contribute to the development of legislation and policies and their implementation in accordance with the rights of all children as set out in the Convention.
OUR HUMAN RIGHTS &
CHILD CENTERED APPROACH

As an international movement, DCI is composed of some 30 National Sections — all of which have their own legal status and are guided by local child rights defenders who are committed to upholding the rights of the child through strategic action and effective empowerment of children.

DCI National Sections are present across 4 continents and have an equal voice in the strategic actions the Movement leads. DCI’s National Sections can consistently rely on the support of other DCI Sections, as well as relevant Regional Desks, the International Secretariat (Geneva) and the World Service Foundation (Brussels).

For nearly 40 years, DCI has actively contributed to protecting and promoting the rights of children worldwide. Over the years, DCI went on to become the “go-to” NGO for leadership, experience and technical expertise on the topic of Justice for Children: from the drafting of the UN Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice (1985), to the follow-up to the UNCRC’s General Comment No.10 on Juvenile Justice (2007), and up to the coordination of the NGO Panel for the UN Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty and the organization of the Global Forum on Justice for Children and Deprivation of Liberty.
WORLDWIDE MOVEMENT
PARTICIPATORY GOVERNANCE

International Secretariat
Geneva

Regional Desks

International General Assembly

Advisory Committee

International Executive Council

WORLD SERVICE FOUNDATION
Brussels

National Sections and Associated Members

Monitoring
Direct services to children
Expertise and capacity-building
Advocacy and awareness-raising

Coordination
Support/capacity-building
International Advocacy

Coordination
Support
Regional Advocacy

Governance and Guidance

CONSTITUTES

ELECTS
The DCI World Service Foundation (DCI-WS) was established by the DCI International Movement in 2016 to strengthen its work and guide the implementation of the Movement’s Strategic Framework by supporting the development of projects, mainly by providing technical expertise and conceptual advice to DCI’s National Sections and Regional Desks.

DCI-WS is responsible for ensuring a systematic approach in the Movement’s relations with donors, public and private partners, who would like to actively contribute to the growing impact of DCI’s activities around the globe.

The DCI-WS is strategically located in Brussels, Belgium, to connect the Movement with EU and international partners and access related project opportunities within that fora.

The Foundation – a legal entity under Belgian law – is supported and directed by its Board consisting of three founding members (from DCI Belgium, DCI Netherlands and the International Secretariat in Geneva), as well as the DCI President and the four Vice-Presidents of the International Executive Council elected by the DCI International General Assembly (IGA).
HOW YOUR CONTRIBUTION WILL IMPACT CHILDREN DIRECTLY

OVERARCHING PRIORITY:

Justice for Children

• Our overall, long-term objective is to: Promote justice in all its forms (criminal, civil and administrative as well as economic, environmental, social and cultural justice) that respects children’s rights and meets their needs and to defend children’s access to justice and to justice systems that respect and guarantee their rights, empower and support children to claim all their rights, and are adapted to the needs of children.

• DCI National Sections operate Socio-Legal Defence Centres (SLDCs) where children receive psychosocial support and legal counsel and representation, in a child-friendly and centered approach. An estimated 30,000 children benefit yearly from these direct interventions.

• DCI is an active founding member of the Child Justice Advocacy Group (CJAG). The group unites key international nongovernmental organisations working in the field of justice for children. Its position paper “Bringing Children Home” emphasises the rights of children set out in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and asserts that children must never be criminalised for their association with or membership in a terrorist group.

• DCI co-convenes the NGO Panel for the UN Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty together with Terre des Hommes International Federation, for ensuring effective Civil society participation in the compilation of the Study (more than 170 civil society organizations form part of the Panel as of July 2017).

Without Defence for Children International there would simply be no Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty

Professeur Manfred Nowak
UN Independent Expert entrusted to lead the Global Study
Children Deprived of their Liberty

• Until the Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty was published, there was simply no reliable data on the numbers of children deprived of liberty in the world. Without these figures, the issue cannot be properly addressed, and the rights of millions of these “invisible children” remain unrealised.

• Three years after the publication of the Global Study, the Global Forum, organised by Defence for Children International, Terre des hommes and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children was an opportunity to take stock and define action for the coming years. In this sense, the Global Forum was aimed at discussing, analysing and pointing out new recommendations on the pressing issues of justice for children and the deprivation of their liberty.

Violence against Children

• In countries like Mauritania, Sierra Leone and Liberia, DCI actively contributes at country level to improve national legislation and domestic policy frameworks on preventing violence against children. DCI has led the drafting process of national bills aimed at improving response on issues such as gender-based violence and sexual violence.

• On a daily basis, through its Socio Legal Defence Centres, DCI protects thousands of children from violence and develops their own life plan, through access to psychosocial support, healthcare and life-skills training.
Children on the Move

- The challenges that come from human mobility and migration are currently some of the biggest concerns for our society. In this complex, changing context around 14% of the world’s migrants are children. This means that more than 34.7 million children are on the move around the world each year.

- DCI ensures that the most basic needs of refugee children are met (particularly through its National Sections in Lebanon, Tunisia, Italy and Greece), by providing quality healthcare services and ensuring access to education and economic opportunities, as well as by defending their human rights as refugees and migrants.

- DCI systematically advocates against the use of detention in migration settings (in line with international standards) and carries out relevant activities which involve - inter alia - the empowerment of children themselves.

Children and Armed Conflict

- In the Central African Republic, DCI creates new life prospects for former child soldiers through education. In Colombia, DCI ensures that children are an integral part of the nation-wide peace-building process. In the occupied Palestinian territories and Yemen, DCI monitors child rights' violations and provides legal assistance to children detained and tried before military courts.

- DCI published the Children in War report, a publication that listened to children’s concerns regarding meaningful participation, as well as providing them with safe pathways. DCI is also an associated member of the Watchlist on Children Affected by Armed Conflict.
CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES:

- In all of its actions, DCI consistently integrates two major cross-cutting issues: children, child participation and gender equality.

Child participation

- Child participation means involving children meaningfully in all matters that affect their rights and well-being. This applies not only in DCI activities, but in all matters that are undertaken by local, national and international authorities and institutions. For their participation to be meaningful, children need support, particularly in the form of access to education, as well as special training and briefings.

- Support child led initiatives, such as the Children’s Parliament in Yemen, Child Rights Clubs in Bolivia and Girls’ Rights Clubs across West and Central Africa, to ensure that children are primary actors of change.

Gender Equality

- In 2019, DCI renewed our commitment to gender equality in our Code of Ethics and Gender Policy by establishing minimum standards that will guide DCI as a Movement in order to ensure equal participation and access to positions and resources to women and men at all levels of the organisation and to promote gender awareness and sensitivity.

- In 2021, DCI joined the She Leads consortium. Its objective is to increase sustained influence of girls and young women on decision-making and the transformation of gender norms in formal and informal institutions.
DCI PUBLICATIONS:
Research and reports based on field data

ANNUAL REPORT
2021-2022

globalchildren.org

Follow-up of the Global Forum
Nouakchott, Mauritania
8-9 November 2022

2023-2024
ROADMAP FOR ACTION
ON JUSTICE FOR CHILDREN
AND DEPRIVATION OF LIBERTY

Roadmap Launch:
15 March 2023

Round up
Global Forum on Justice for Children and Deprivation of Liberty
Nouakchott, Mauritania
8-9 November 2022

I had to think as a mature person I could not be weak

children in war
2022