defenceforchildren.org

DEFENCE FOR CHILDREN INTERNATIONAL
DÉFENSE DES ENFANTS INTERNATIONAL
DEFENSA DE NIÑAS Y NIÑOS INTERNACIONAL
الحركة العالمية للدفاع عن الأطفال
THE WORLDWIDE MOVEMENT FOR CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

2023 - 2024
Annual Report

TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Movement	4
Participatory governance	6
Child safeguarding	7
Strategic Framework	8
Socio-Legal Defence Centres	9
Justice for children	10
Child participation	12
Gender equality	14
Children deprived of liberty	16
Violence against children	18
Children on the move	20
Children affected by conflict	22
Financial report	24
Our donors and partners	25
Looking forward	26
Acknowledgements	27

FOREWORD

After our International General Assembly (IGA) in Mauritania in November 2022 and the COVID pandemic coming finally to an end, 2023 started for DCI with fresh momentum to implement the **Strategic Framework adopted at the IGA**. Under the overarching theme "Justice for Children", we adopted four key priorities: **Children deprived of liberty, Violence against children, Children on the move,** and **Children in armed conflict, Gender equality** and **Child participation** are crosscutting themes and are mainstreamed in all DCI activities.

Although organisations working to promote and defend children's rights continue to face ever-increasing challenges, if not backlashes, DCI's National Sections and regions have adopted national and regional action plans showcased in this report.

In October 2023, less than a month after **DCI-Palestine** was awarded the prestigious **Professor Thorolf Rafto** Memorial Prize for Human Rights (i.e. **the Rafto Prize**) for its persistent work to defend and promote children's rights in Palestine, an unprecedented war was launched by Israel on Gaza following the 7th October attack of Hamas. The number of children and civilians killed, maimed, injured, traumatised, internally displaced, tortured and detained since then proves more than ever that justice for children in

armed conflicts can only be achieved if international criminal law and international humanitarian law are enforced equally, and if all actors and stakeholders demand accountability for those committing war crimes.

Our National Sections in Africa and Latin America often face hostile environments and shrinking space for civil society including child rights organisations: In Latin America, DCI Sections advocate for the elimination of violence against children, organise monitoring to identify children in vulnerable situations to detect abuses, such as child trafficking and gender-based violence. African Sections are confronted with the erosion of social, economic, and cultural rights which impacts children and women more than any other groups. In Europe, DCI Sections strongly **criticise the EU Pact for Migration and Asylum along with many other NGOs**. The new legislation will "normalise the arbitrary use of immigration detention, including for children and families, increase racial profiling, …, and return individuals to so-called 'safe third countries' where they are at risk of violence, torture, and arbitrary imprisonment."

While children's rights violations and resource needs are increasing, funding for children's rights is decreasing in many parts of the world both at the national level, and from international agencies. It appears that for many governments children's rights are no longer a priority. Civil society colleagues alert us to offices being shut, reduction of activities or staff being let go because of lack of resources. The UNCRC is directly affected by the lack of contributions by some UN member states. We need to change the narrative, build new alliances, and better present our results and impact. At the same time, we need all states parties to respect the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child they signed in 1989, making it the most ratified, almost universal, human rights instrument globally.

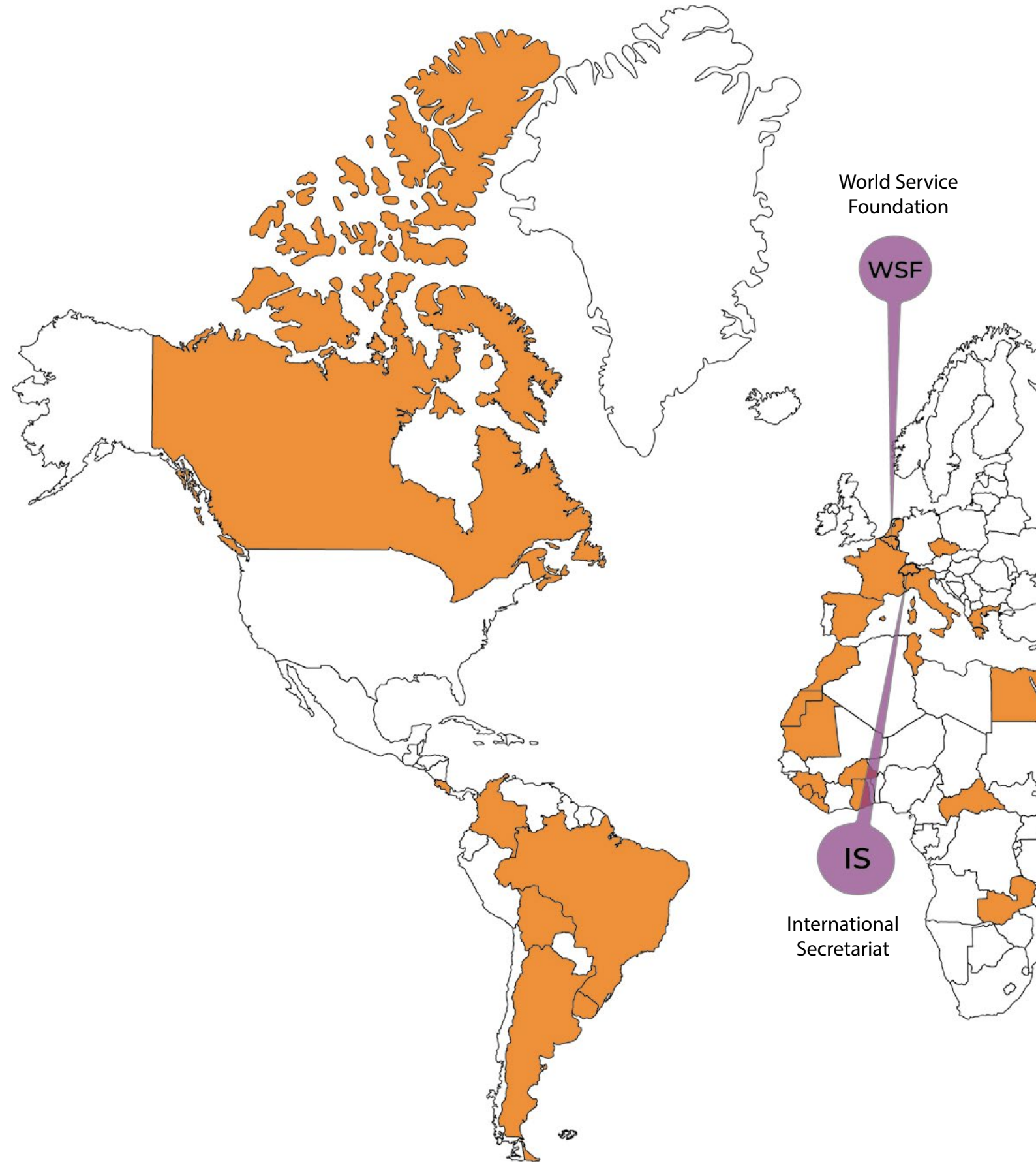
2024 is a year of anniversaries, the 45th of DCI, the 35th of the UNCRC, the 15th of the UN Mandate on Violence against Children, the 10th of the 3rd Protocol of the UNCRC on individual communications, the 5th of the presentation of the UN Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty to the UNGA. Let's join hands among the DCI Movement but also well beyond to create a dynamic of change, a movement of solidarity and of support with children. After all, anniversaries like this should be used to create momentum, monitor progress, and bring about new ideas and strategies to contain and even reverse the backlash against children's rights.

Our Movement remains guided by this vision: All children must be able to enjoy their human rights with dignity in a just and responsible society.

Khaled Quzmar
President

Alex Kamarotos
Executive Director

THE MOVEMENT



ACTORS FOR JUSTICE, ADVOCATES FOR RIGHTS

Defence for Children International (DCI) is a child rights-focused and membership-based **grassroots Movement**. Created during the International Year of the Child (1979), DCI coordinated the NGO input into the **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC),** the most widely ratified global human rights treaty in history.

DCI acts to promote the individual and collective **human rights of children** at local, national, regional, and international levels.

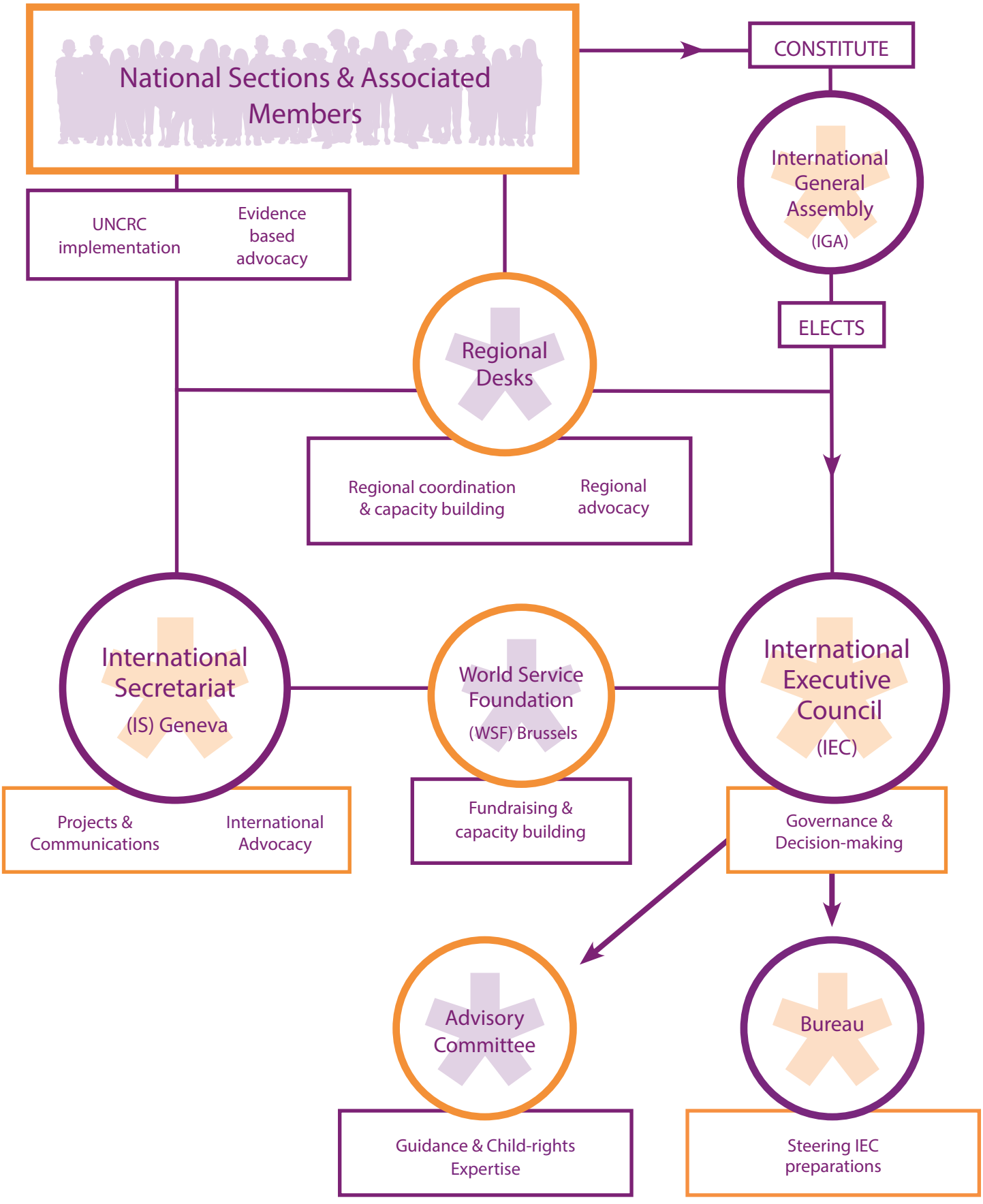
DCI's vision is that children are a driving force for change. All children know and enjoy their rights in a just and responsible society, fully supported by adults. Children are listened to and involved in all decisions that affect them. Where there are risks of child rights violations, children are defended and empowered to claim their rights and to advocate for change. New law, policy and practice integrate child rights impact assessments. Respect for children's rights translates into a more inclusive, just, and equal society.

As an international Movement, DCI is composed of some 30 National Sections — all of which have their own legal status and are often 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 four continents** and have an equal voice in the strategic actions the Movement leads.

They can consistently rely on the support of other DCI Sections, as well as relevant Regional Desks, the International Secretariat, strategically based in Geneva to engage with the UN Human Rights Council, Universal Periodic Review and Treaty Bodies mechanisms, and the World Service Foundation, located in Brussels, to connect the Movement with the European Union, international partners and access project opportunities within those fora.

"Thanks to DCI I learned about my rights!"
María, Costa Rica

PARTICIPATORY GOVERNANCE



CHILD SAFEGUARDING

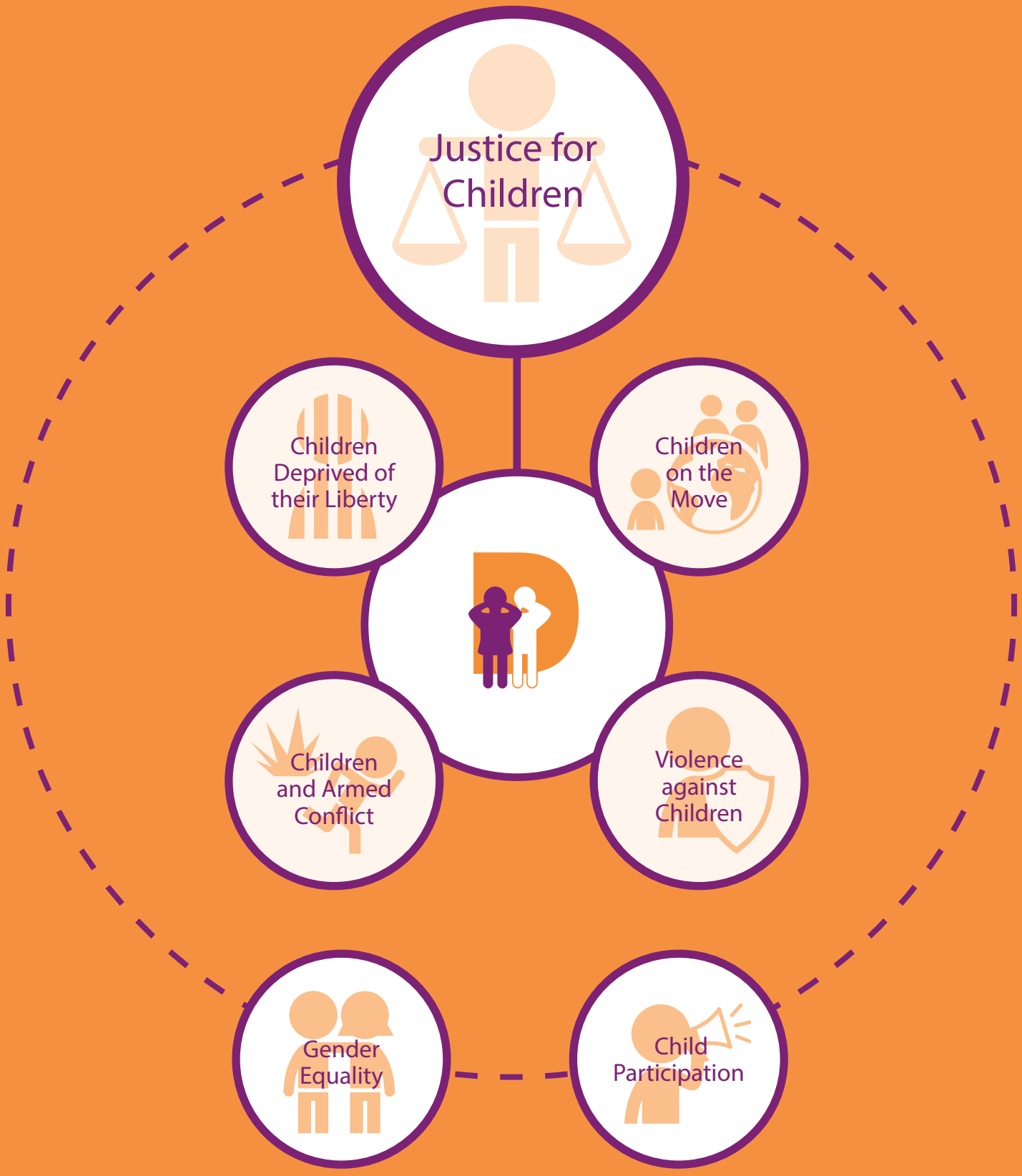
In our ongoing commitment to the safety of children, DCI has updated its **Child Safeguarding Policy** following a comprehensive internal review. These adjustments reflect our dedication to continuous improvement and respect of the highest standards in protecting children associated with DCI.

Key highlights of the review include: 1. Expanding the Scope and Principles through new provisions for partnerships, visitors, online aspects, and children's participation rights. 2. Enhanced Requirements for National Sections with a stronger emphasis on creating child-friendly documents. 3. The Code of Conduct has been revised to provide clearer guidance.

In 2023, various DCI National Sections implemented and updated their child safeguarding policies and practices. **DCI-Ghana** adopted a robust child safeguarding policy and ensured adherence to safeguarding protocols in all activities involving children, including the use of consent forms and the presence of chaperones. **DCI-Guinea** conducted extensive training on their newly adopted child safeguarding policies, while **DCI-Sierra Leone** provided both online and in-person training sessions for staff and volunteers. **DCI-Costa Rica** focused on policy compliance through eight indicators verified annually and training courses for staff and volunteers. **DCI-Belgium** updated their safeguarding policy in consultation with all their staff to ensure ownership, and they developed child-friendly tools and mechanisms, with a strong focus on risk assessment and management. **DCI-Italy** updated its policy and created a child and user-friendly version displayed in offices. **DCI-Palestine** took comprehensive approaches to child safeguarding, incorporating training, awareness campaigns, and digital security measures to address the unique needs of children in conflict-affected areas.

DCI-MENA region launched a training on safeguarding for all 8 National Sections in the Region in August 2023. This training was followed by individual coaching and review of all the national safeguarding policies, on the basis of the Movement's adopted policy and standards.

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK



SOCIO-LEGAL DEFENCE CENTRES (SLDCs)

The project ***Together for Child-friendly Justice*** by **DCI-Mauritania** enhances the protection of children in conflict with the law. It provides individualised legal and psychosocial assistance to children in contact with the law and advocates for the **UN Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty** and the minimum age of criminal responsibility. A centre for assisting children who are victims of sexual violence was established in Nouadhibou. In total, 140 children received support through the Socio-Legal Defence Centre.

DCI-Palestine's Socio-Legal Defence Centres defend and protect the rights of Palestinian children within both the Israeli and Palestinian court systems. In 2023, they provided legal services to 628 children in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. **DCI-Palestine**'s lawyers represented 383 children, including 173 cases in Israeli military courts and 210 children in conflict with Palestinian law.

DCI-Sierra Leone's Socio-Legal Defence Centres ensure access to justice for children in conflict with the law by visiting police stations and courts, providing support to children under arrest or investigation, and offering free legal assistance. In 2023, **DCI-Sierra Leone** provided training for 150 justice professionals. They also conduct family tracing and reintegration for children in conflict with the law or separated from their families. The programme has reached 2,669 beneficiaries.

To advance the objectives of Socio-Legal Defence Centres, **DCI-Yemen** worked to strengthen partnerships with key stakeholders, including government ministries and rehabilitation centres. The SLDC offers consultation services, community awareness campaigns, and training to foster a supportive ecosystem for child protection and successful societal reintegration.

DCI-Palestine

JUSTICE FOR CHILDREN

DCI-Guinea is improving access to justice for children in conflict or in contact with the law. Through socio-legal advocacy, **DCI-Guinea** provides services to enhance justice, rehabilitation, and reintegration for these children employing strategies such as legal assistance, meetings with authorities, and media engagement to address violations of children's rights. With a focus on strengthening Guinea's legal framework and child protection system, DCI conducts training and capacity building for youth and justice actors. As a result, 50 young activists were empowered to advocate for children's rights, and justice officials improved their skills in handling cases involving children, aligning with international standards for child-friendly justice.

DCI-Belgium and **DCI-Tunisia** collaborated on the ***'Child Rights Approach to Violent Extremism' (ADEVIO)*** project to address the treatment of young people involved in violent radicalisation. The project enhanced respect for the rights of these young people throughout the care process, focusing on their reintegration into society. It operated in two main areas: building the capacity of professionals working with these children and young people and changing public and decision-makers' attitudes towards them. Activities included analysing national contexts, developing tools for professionals, conducting capacity-building workshops, and implementing political advocacy strategies to promote equal treatment of all young people, including those in judicial proceedings for violent extremism.

DCI-Ghana

"Children need to develop in freedom, not behind bars."
Child representative, Child Justice Caravan

The Child-Friendly Justice European Network

The **Child-Friendly Justice European Network (CFJ-EN)** promotes child-friendly justice throughout Europe helping to ensure access to justice for children, building professional capacity, and advocating for child-friendly policies at both European and national levels. In 2023, CFJ-EN launched the **Child Justice Caravan** project to educate children and youth about their rights and empower them to advocate for themselves. Each year, a group of children visits European Union and Council of Europe institutions, where they interact with professionals in child justice and protection, gaining insights into legal processes and advocating for their rights. With the support of **DCI-Belgium**, Nigel, formerly incarcerated as a child, shared his experiences and recommendations with European Commission representatives, highlighting issues in the prison system and child protection services. Nigel's story inspired him to work towards rehabilitating incarcerated children in the Netherlands. Additionally, with support from **DCI-Greece**, youth ambassadors Ammar, Bakary, and Jamil also participated in the Child Justice Caravan, advocating for the rights of young migrants, and addressing challenges they face in Europe, such as administrative justice and safe migration routes. They engaged with European Commission officials to emphasise the importance of youth involvement in policy-making and the need for child-friendly asylum procedures and support for children transitioning into adulthood.

CHILD PARTICIPATION

Involving children meaningfully: The work of DCI's National Sections

In **Costa Rica,** DCI took the lead in promoting the participation of children. Through strategic alliances, such as with ***Solidaridad Internacional Infantil***, they amplify the voices of young people. They organised an initiative called ***Integravoz*** and created the podcast "Radio IntegraVoZ 77.2." Additionally, the ***ParticiParte*** project aims to mobilise young individuals. .

DCI-Costa Rica

As part of their international efforts, **DCI-Czechia** collaborated with other European organisations (in Austria, Greece, Italy, Serbia, and Slovenia) in the ***You(th)Part(ic-ipation)*** project under the Erasmus+ programme. Youth were empowered to create a Digital Toolkit for Youth Participation from 2022 to 2024. This toolkit will provide valuable resources and guidance for young people to actively engage in decision-making processes and advocate for their rights.

DCI-Ghana

"I know my rights and I know how to defend them thanks to DCI." Child, Guinea

The ***VOICE NOW*** project, coordinated by **DCI-Italy**, established the National Youth Council (CNRR) for the Italian Ombudsperson for Childhood and Adolescence (AGIA). The CNRR serves as a protected space and process where children from diverse backgrounds can freely express their viewpoints on issues related to their rights. The CNRR is a group of 50 teenagers aged 13 to 17 who engage in quarterly online and in-person discussions. Their recommendations contribute to a national report, promoting active youth participation in Italy.

The Transparency School project by **DCI-Yemen** empowers children to fight corruption through training and awareness initiatives, using age-appropriate audiovisual media, interactive plays, and advocacy activities. Social media groups engage children and parents, providing educational materials. Launched in 2021, the five-year programme targets Yemeni children aged 12 to 16 and is primarily self-funded with support from partners like the National Anti-Corruption Commission. The programme aims to educate hundreds of children in public and private schools, and has already trained 230 children.

The **DCI-MENA** region conference in Beirut, Lebanon, lasted three days and gathered representatives from all **DCI-MENA** countries. It highlighted meaningful child participation through a module where 22 children from 8 DCI Sections across the region presented their aspirations and engaged in discussions with national and regional stakeholders. The conference also reviewed survey findings on legislation and policies, aligning them with international standards. Capacity-building workshops covered advocacy, child safety, safeguarding, well-being, and international mechanisms**.**

Beirut regional meeting

GENDER EQUALITY

Gender equality is a primary focus within the DCI Movement, with an increasing number of National Sections incorporating both qualitative and quantitative data on gender in their projects. The ***She Leads*** programme implemented by DCI in **Ghana, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Lebanon, Palestine, the Netherlands** and at international level is building bridges between decision-makers and girls and young women and encouraging their participation and representation in local governance decision-making processes.

SHE LEADS

The ***She Leads*** programme, implemented by **DCI-Ghana**, aims to boost the influence of girls and young women in decision-making and alter gender norms across formal and informal institutions. In the 2023 district-level elections, there was a notable surge in girls' and young women's participation. For example, Ms. Patience Brefo Kwartemaa won the Assembly Member position in the Ampento electoral area, marking a historic achievement in Bosome Freho district. Similarly, Ms Belinda Asigiri secured a Unit Committee member position in Asante Akyem.

In **DCI-Lebanon**, ***She Leads*** focused on empowering Girl Scouts groups through updated organisational frameworks, democratic elections, and education on human rights, and women's rights. Creative methods, such as using music bands, are employed to promote gender equality and empower participants.

DCI-Ghana

During the 53rd session of the Human Rights Council, ***She Leads*** empowered three girl and young women activists: Lynne (17) from Lebanon, Margaret (24) from Kenya, and Rachael (26) from Uganda, each addressing climate change impact on girls and young women, media literacy and freedom of expression, and advocacy against gender-based violence, respectively.

The ***Support and Strengthening of Human Rights Defenders Networks for Sustainable Peace Consolidation*** project in the Central African Republic (CAR), led by **DCI-CAR**, focuses on empowering women to defend human rights, especially for children. It encourages women to become activists and ensures their protection from potential negative consequences.

The EU-funded project, ***Promoting a Protective Environment for the Human Rights of Children and Women Victims of Violence, Particularly Sexual Violence*** implemented by **DCI-Mauritania** over the past three years, established prevention, repair, and support mechanisms, enabling the reintegration of victims into various aspects of life. The project offered comprehensive care, including legal assistance, advocacy, capacity-building, research, and monitoring. Notably, it sensitised over 5,000 children to violence prevention.

"Ensuring the secure and fair inclusion of girls and young women in political spaces is not solely a matter of justice but also a strategic imperative."

Girl from the She Leads programme

The story of Fantisa from Sierra Leone

Fantisa (16) faced adversity when she dropped out of school for three years due to her father's death in 2021. Her single mother couldn't afford the fees. Through ***She Leads***, **DCI-Sierra Leone** life skills sessions, Fantisa decided to re-enrol in school. Despite resource challenges, she engaged in farming during mango season, selling the fruit to pay for her education. Now in Senior School Three, Fantisa aspires to become a nurse.

CHILDREN DEPRIVED OF LIBERTY

More than 170 non-governmental organisations have worked together since 2014 - in an NGO Panel co-chaired by DCI and ***Terre des Hommes*** - to support the Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty presented to the UN General Assembly in Geneva and New York in 2019. More than four years after the presentation of the Global Study, DCI is working to ensure that this issue remains high on the international agenda and that the Study's recommendations are implemented by member states at national level.

The ***Justice for Children Deprived of Liberty in the MENA Region project*** aims to significantly decrease the number of children deprived of liberty and promote child-friendly justice by implementing UN Global Study recommendations.

In 2023, DCI has maintained Socio-Legal Defence Centres and organised national meetings to establish and coordinate national coalitions on children deprived of liberty in **Lebanon, Yemen, Mauritania, Tunisia, Morocco,** and **Egypt**.

These coalitions are designing national implementation plans based on local needs and the Global Study's recommendations. The project has laid the groundwork for child-friendly justice in the MENA region by reducing the number of incarcerated children, providing holistic assistance, identifying capacity-building needs, and developing recommendations for implementing the Global Study and the 2023-2024 Roadmap for Action.

"I don't understand how a 12-year-old boy is not allowed to work, but they put him in prison... they say it's a reformatory, but it's not true, it's a prison... I spent two years there and I was a child."

Child 17, Costa Rica

DCI-Central African Republic, in collaboration with *Avocats sans frontières,* is implementing the project ***Respecting the Procedural Guarantees and Fundamental Rights of Women and Vulnerable Persons Deprived of their Liberty in CAR,*** funded by the crisis and support centre of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Data collected from Bimbo and Ngaragba prisons reveal that some children are incarcerated without trial, emphasising the importance of legal aid to uphold their rights. The project also highlights concerns about prison conditions due to the absence of regular monitoring by the Ministry. Conducting visits will enable addressing strategic issues and making representations for improvement.

DCI-Belgium

DCI-Sierra Leone implemented a programme within their child justice initiative aimed at reducing the incarceration rate of children in conflict with the law. Activities included monitoring detention centres, facilitating diversion and mediation, and tracing families for release. The programme benefited 980 boys (86%) and 161 girls (14%). Impact-wise, out of 1,141 monitored children, only 201 (17.6%) went through pre-trial detention, signalling a significant reduction compared to past practices. Additionally, the programme enhanced transparency in detention facilities and led to the adoption and application of diversion policies.

DCI-Belgium

VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

DCI-Costa Rica has been coordinating various actions through its Core Working Group on violence against children since 2012. This initiative brings together government institutions, NGOs, academia, international bodies, and independent experts. Notable actions include proposing modifications to the Children and Adolescents Code, providing training to parliamentary advisors on human rights and violence prevention, conducting campaigns for positive treatment within families and schools, and actively participating in the development of child and adolescent policies.

DCI-Belgium initiated a campaign to raise awareness about so-called educational violence within families and professional environments working with children. This campaign led to the adoption of a decree by the Parliament of the Fédération Wallonie Bruxelles on 4th October, 2023. The decree explicitly prohibits degrading treatment towards children and aims to promote their right to a non-violent education. It covers various sectors, including elementary and secondary education, early childhood care, youth services, and cultural and sports institutions. The focus is on preventing so-called ordinary educational violence, which encompasses physical, psychological, and verbal forms of discipline applied to children.

"I FEEL MORE INFORMED AS WE CAN BE EXPOSED TO THESE ABUSIVE SITUATIONS IN OUR COMMUNITY. THANKS TO THESE MEETINGS WITH DCI, I HAVE MORE INFORMATION." ZAIRA 15, COSTA RICA

The story of a young boy from Mauritania

A 16-year-old boy in Mauritania, forced into heavy labour by his uncle while repairing large trucks, suffered violent abuse. Through a free call to the hotline, he reached out to **DCI-Mauritania**. DCI discovered that while his father wanted him to work, the boy desired an education. DCI convinced the father to allow the child to return to school. The toll-free number for DCI in Mauritania is 1013. It's a free reporting hotline available 24/7 for children and women who are victims of violence and abuse.

DCI-Belgium

Defending children from all forms of violence

Towards the Barnahus model in Italy:
Italy launched an Operative Protocol on 29th June, 2023, aimed at enhancing the protection and rights of child victims of crime. This initiative, endorsed by relevant regional institutions in Nisida - Naples, draws inspiration from the Barnahus model. Over the past four years, **DCI-Italy** and the Italian Ministry of Justice collaborated on an action-research process in Naples. Their focus was on strengthening professional capacities, analysing child protection and justice systems, and identifying areas for reform. The resulting Operative Protocol involved contributions from various stakeholders, including the Centre of Juvenile Justice, prosecutors, regional authorities, and **DCI-Italy.**

Incredible Me Digital is an innovative project by **DCI-Lebanon** which involves the digitalisation of their signature Psychosocial Support Methodology, known as ***Incredible Me.*** This project aims to provide support to children affected by violence, abuse, and exploitation.
By creating a blended learning programme that combines online and offline components, **DCI-Lebanon** enhances the impact of their support services.
The methodology is currently being tested through a downloadable mobile application.

CHILDREN ON THE MOVE

In 2023, **DCI-Greece** established the ***Stepping Stone Academy***, to support refugee young mothers and their children in vulnerable situations. Recognising a gap in long-term integration and self-sustainability, the Academy offers a holistic approach addressing diverse needs. It provides traditional services like legal aid and psychological support, alongside educational and vocational training. Notably, it prioritises the well-being of both mothers and children, creating a nurturing environment where mothers can focus on personal development while their children receive care and engage in age-appropriate activities to foster social connections and overall well-being.

DCI-Sierra Leone is committed to combating cross-border child trafficking and ensuring the protection and reintegration of child victims. The strategy involves a multi-stakeholder approach and includes activities such as training police investigators and prosecutors to enforce anti-trafficking laws and cross-border meetings between security officials. Legal aid is also provided to victims. Operating in Kambia and Pujehun Districts, 120 victims have benefited, primarily girls. The impact includes improved detection of traffickers, heightened awareness among officials, clear victim referral pathways, enhanced expertise in handling cases, and the emergence of youth groups combatting trafficking.

DCI-Palestine

In 2023, **DCI-Netherlands** provided legal advice to 443 migrant children through the ***Children's Rights Helpdesk***, achieving 40 significant successes. Notably, they supported cases concerning the Closure Scheme for Long-term Resident Children, where appeals to the principle of equality led to favourable judgments although consistently appealed by the State Secretary. Despite developmental risks identified in behavioural research, residence permits were often denied, prioritising state interests over the child's. **DCI-Netherlands** advocated extensively on behalf of these children, launching the '***They are already home'*** campaign, which included a round table discussion in the House of Representatives and an event involving children sharing their stories with Members of Parliaments. The campaign garnered significant media attention and won the **Hoogvlieger Award from the Expertise Centre Humanitarian Communication.**

"I cannot wait to go to Germany and live with my sister. After the first rejection, I thought that I would never see her again and that I would stay forever in this Camp. But you made it happen!"
Abdul 18, Afghanistan

The story of Carman from Canada

Carman and her mother were stranded in Sudan, with complications arising from Carman's Canadian citizenship and her mother's lack thereof. Despite Carman's right to return to Canada, her mother required a visa, and transportation was difficult to access. As part of DCI-Canada's advocacy efforts, information was provided to courts and immigration officials, highlighting the rights outlined in the UNCRC and the challenges faced by Canadian children unable to return home. Additionally, Canada's Immigration Minister was contacted, and his office agreed to assist. As a result, Carman and her mother were able to board one of the last Canadian flights out of Sudan and are now safe in Canada.

CHILDREN AFFECTED BY ARMED CONFLICT

DCI-Belgium, mission in Palestine

According to the 2024 report of the UN Secretary-General on children and armed conflict, "in 2023, violence against children in armed conflict reached extreme levels, with a shocking 21% increase in grave violations." Several DCI National Sections have addressed the challenges of operating in conflict zones through diverse projects, empowering local communities and enabling children to advocate for their own rights, while others worked in the reception of many of these children escaping from war zones.

In 2023, despite challenges such as the increased violence since 7th October 2023 in the occupied Palestinian territory, **DCI-Palestine** stepped up its work to defend the rights of Palestinian children.

Advocacy efforts as part of the accountability programme were concentrated on addressing the implications of the Gaza war and the deteriorating conditions of military detention. **DCI-Palestine** publication **Arbitrary by Default,** a report on Palestinian children in Israeli military courts, garnered recognition from prominent global online platforms and media. **DCI-Palestine** pushed for legislative reforms in the US and initiated legal action against the US government to cease its support to Israel.

The story of Fahd from Palestine

In March 2023, **DCI-Palestine**'s researchers documented child rights violations following an invasion by Israeli military in Aqabat Jaber refugee camp. Among the injured children was Fahd, who suffered a severe leg injury from live bullets, ultimately leading to the amputation of his foot. "The pain was unbearable, but losing my foot changed everything," Fahd recounted. Returning home after extensive hospital treatments, Fahd withdrew into himself, rejecting offers to return to school and shunning his former friends. "I felt alone and misunderstood until **DCI-Palestine** reached out to me," Fahd confided. Incorporated into child-led protection teams, Fahd slowly regained confidence through workshops and council meetings facilitated by **DCI-Palestine** and the YMCA. Fahd's journey to recovery continued, with **DCI-Palestine** ensuring medical care and community integration.

"I FELT ALONE AND MISUNDERSTOOD UNTIL DCI-PALESTINE REACHED OUT TO ME"
FAHD, PALESTINE

Through the ***Socio-Legal Defence Centres,*** a total of 420 child justice actors received training, and legal services were provided to 383 children. Also, over 900 children affected by the Gaza conflict received psychosocial care.

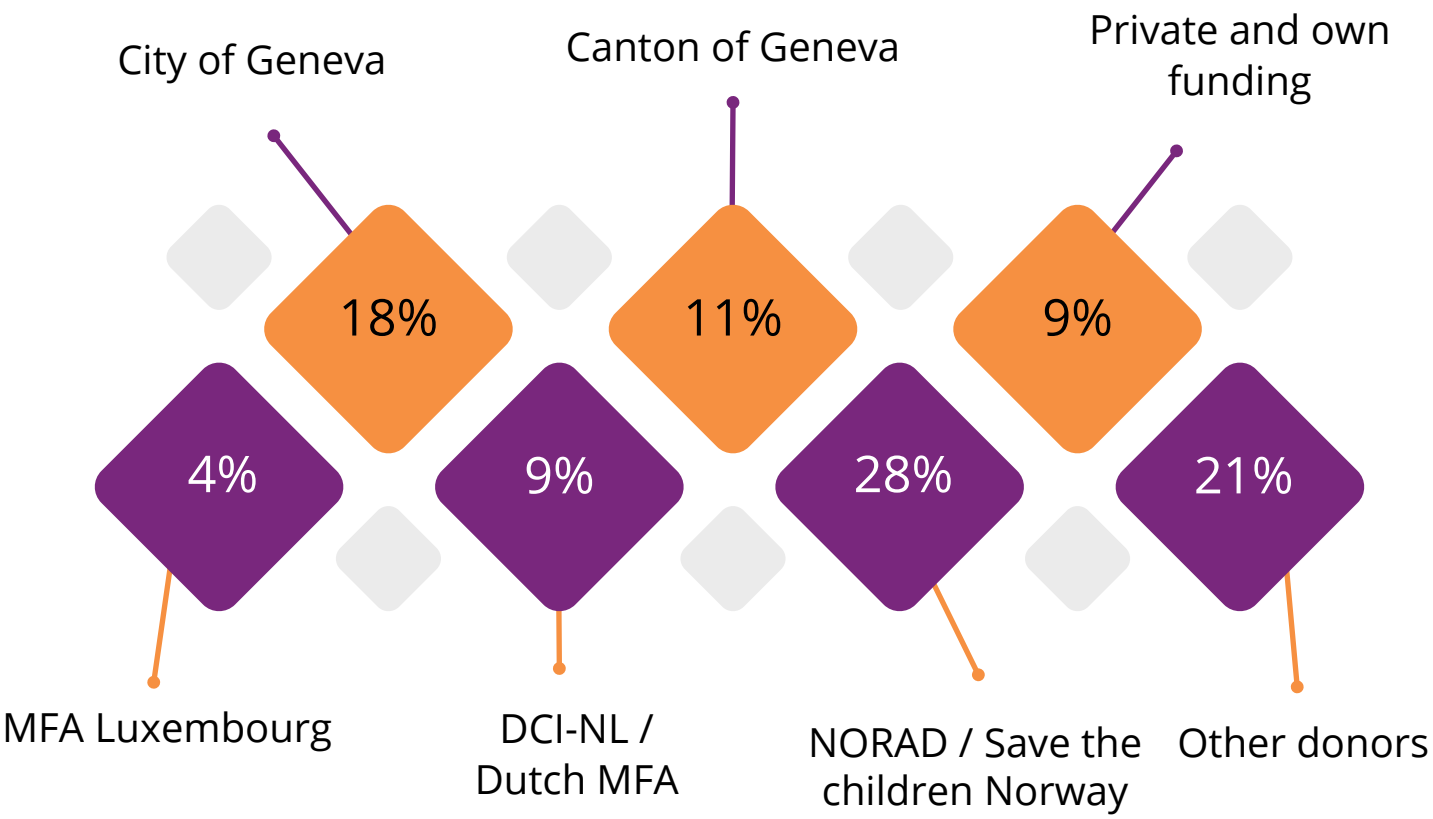
DCI-Palestine's work was recognised with the prestigious **Rafto Foundation Prize for Human Rights**, underscoring its pivotal role in exposing violations and exerting pressure on international bodies to take action.

DCI is present in other conflict zones, such as CAR and Yemen where the situation for children is also crucial despite less media coverage. DCI continues to convene the Child Rights Connect's Working Group on Children and armed conflict and has been preparing in this context joint statements and joint events, on specific country situations but also on relevant thematic issues, such as on the need **to strengthen accountability**

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

DCI Profit and Loss Accounts	2023 (CHF)	2022 (CHF)
INCOME		
Project activities income / Grants	536,556	234,620
Donations	9,895	14,574
Subrenting	39,800	38,400
International General Assembly provision	-	85,000
Other Income	26,356	30,480
Membership Fees	45,028	44,668
Total Income	657,634	447,741
EXPENDITURE		
Salaries and social charges	276,099	283,196
Training	-	659
Consultants	5,540	11,513
Strategic activities	324,114	103,808
Admin costs	50,939	45,262
Office rent	54,787	55,091
Total Expenditure	711,479	499,529
RESULTS BEFORE FUND VARIATION	53,845	51,788
Allocation of restricted funds	536,439	234,839
Use of restricted funds	542,984	236,949
RESULTS OF THE YEAR	-47,299	-49,678

OUR DONORS AND PARTNERS



We wish to warmly thank all the institutional donors who supported our work with children in 2023.

We are also grateful to our individual donors for contributing to DCI's mission and activities.

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 found here: **English version / French version**

LOOKING FORWARD

2024 : Three important milestone

45

Anniversary of DCI

35

Anniversary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

5

Anniversary of the Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty

On this occasion, DCI is organising a **Global Conference on Justice for Children Deprived of Liberty** on 17th-19th December 2024. The Conference will be the opportunity to take stock of the progress made in implementing the Global Study's recommendations as well as looking ahead to the next five years of their implementation.

This event is all the more timely as the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child has launched the process for its next General Comment (GC No. 27), which will focus on access to justice for children and effective remedies. It will therefore be an opportunity to bring together the main players in the field of justice for children, and children, to begin these discussions on how to improve access to justice for children and on the recommendations that can be made to states. Children from all regions and diverse backgrounds will have the opportunity to participate effectively in the consultations, ensuring that their perspectives help to inform the final document.

As part of this event, DCI will organise the 2nd edition of the Children's Rights Award. The aim is to encourage the participation of children through artistic creations. The Award ceremony will be an integral part of the conference, highlighting the importance of children's participation and recognising children as defenders of their own rights and agents of change.

INTERNATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Khaled Quzmar
President

Mirjam Blaak
Treasurer

Margaret Tuite
Vice-President Europe

BUREAU

Virginia Murillo Herrera
Vice-President Americas

Rouguiatou Diallo
Vice-President Africa

Manal Eid
Vice-President MENA

Ibrahim Simpore
Councillor

International Secretariat & World Service Foundation

Alex Kamarotos
Executive Director

Cecile Pilot
Senior Project and Capacity Building

Sasha Richards
Advocacy Officer

Susanna Tuccio
World Service Foundation Coordinator

Advisory Committee

Nigel Cantwell

Meskerem Geset Techane

Jaap Doek

Moushira Khattab

Rosa Maria Ortiz

MENA Regional Desk

Layaly Merie

Interns and Volunteers

Julia Peris
Azélie Ratel
Eslam Zyian
Laura Marchetti
Julià López-Arenas Enseñat
Veronika Tober
Susan Carswell
Andrés Cambronero

Defence for Children International
International Secretariat

1, Rue de Varembé
P.O. Box 88
Ch-1211 Geneva 20
Switzerland

+41 (0)22 734 05 58

info@defenceforchildren.org

defenceforchildren.org

Defence4children

@Dcisecretariat
@Dcidirector

dciinternationalsecretariat

@defenceforchildrenis

DEFENCE FOR CHILDREN INTERNATIONAL
DÉFENSE DES ENFANTS INTERNATIONAL
DEFENSA DE NIÑAS Y NIÑOS INTERNACIONAL
الحركة العالمية للدفاع عن الأطفال
THE WORLDWIDE MOVEMENT FOR CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

Scan the QR code!
Together we can support children to become actors for justice and advocates for their rights.

Cover page: ©A-Tardy-Plan-International

Back page: DCI-Belgium