

FICE International Annual report

2023



FICE

CONTENTS:

FICE INTERNATIONAL

- 1 Foreword
- 4 About FICE International
- 5 FICE in 2023

THE REGIONAL NETWORKS OF FICE

- 18 FICE Africa Network
- 19 FICE Europe Network

THE MEMBERS OF FICE INTERNATIONAL IN 2023

- 20 FICE Austria
- 22 FICE Brazil
- 26 FICE Bulgaria
- 29 FICE Canada
- 32 FICE Croatia
- 35 FICE Czech Republic
- 36 FICE Finland
- 38 FICE Germany
- 42 NENESZ, Hungary
- 44 Udayan Care, India
- 49 FICE Israel
- 53 FICE Japan
- 57 FICE Kenya
- 63 Himaya, Lebanon
- 68 FICE Lesotho (Bahlabini Initiative)
- 73 FICE Netherlands
- 75 FICE Romania
- 83 FICE Serbia
- 86 FICE South Africa (NACCW)
- 92 FICE Spain
- 94 FICE Switzerland
- 100 FICE USA
- 102 Ukrainian Educational Platform

FOREWORD

Dear Readers, Members and Friends

Welcome to our Annual Report for 2023, marking the 75th year of FICE International. This report highlights the key challenges, creative solutions, and successes achieved by our Members at national, regional (Africa and Europe), and international levels.

When FICE International was founded after World War II on July 10, 1948, in Switzerland's Pestalozzi Children's Village, millions of children were displaced. Some were returning from concentration camps. FICE was created by children's communities to collaborate on how to best support these children. In many of these communities, children actively participated in the management, e.g. through "children's governments." Gábor Sztehlo of the children's community Gaudiopolis, Hungary, wrote to the FICE founding assembly: "Laws enacted by the boys themselves and by their councils are much more effective than the leadership of grown-ups." (Sztehlo, 1948)



*The Prime Minister of Gaudiopolis (second from left) and some of his electors.
From: <https://www.zeit.de/zeit-magazin/2016/38/budapest-staatsgruendung-gaudiopolis-kinder>*

FICE International was founded by 14 children's communities from France, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, and Switzerland. Soon after, 80 additional children's communities from 11 countries joined. In the early 1980s, FICE expanded its focus from residential care to include foster care and other alternative care models. While the emphasis on youth participation had waned for some time, it was reinvigorated after the 1989 adoption of the United Nations Rights of the Child, and by FICE's role in the participatory development of the Quality4Children Standards for Alternative Care from 2004 onwards.

In 2023, FICE International included 20 National Sections, 4 member organizations and 5 individual members in 29 countries on 5 continents. Participation of young people in care and care leavers remains central, with several national sections pioneering work in this area. FICE also fosters collaboration with the International Care Leavers' Community.

The year 2023 presented a number of challenges for our national sections, including funding shortages and resource constraints. Adapting to political and economic shifts, along with securing support for alternative care models, remained difficult. There was also a strong need for continuous professional development and training. Emergency adaptation posed its own set of difficulties, and effective advocacy remained crucial yet complex amidst local and international dynamics.

Despite these challenges, FICE International's members made notable progress in 2023. Advocacy and policy influence were key areas of success, with many sections driving reforms in child protection policies and securing increased government support for vulnerable children. FICE members expanded their programmes and services, for example in foster and kinship care as well as early childhood development. Efforts to foster capacity building and professional development included conferences and training programs. The ongoing Task Force "Hand in Hand" supported children affected by the war in Ukraine and formulated recommendations for situations of war and crises elsewhere. Research also played a vital role, with members sharing best practices and informing policy. Public awareness campaigns raised attention to the needs of children in alternative care, while partnerships with various organizations expanded FICE's reach globally. Preparations for the 35th FICE International Conference in 2024 Split, Croatia, promised further cross-border collaboration. New national sections like FICE Canada added fresh energy to our mission.

Throughout the year, FICE International provided platforms for sharing experiences and knowledge such as the FICE Cafés, the three Strategic Working Groups (“Quality in Care,” “Leaving Care & Empowerment,” and “Task Force Ukraine and further Emergency Situations “Hand in Hand”) as well as the online Live Forums and in-person Federal Council.

Whether in 1948 or 2023, advocating for children who cannot live with their families remains vital worldwide. Ensuring quality care services is equally important. We find strength, hope, and inspiration in our exchanges, collaborations, and especially in working directly with young people. As the founder of the Pestalozzi Children’s Village noted, children’s openness can help us adults broaden our perspectives and find new solutions (Corti, 2022). I hope that in the years ahead, we continue to learn from the young people and each other, and succeed in further contributing to, as Corti put it, «a world where children can live.

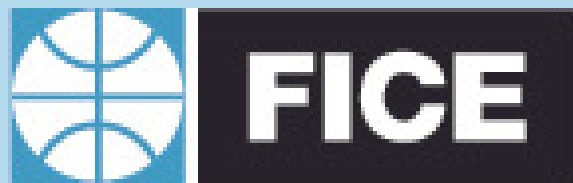
A big thank you to every member, collaborator, and supporter for your invaluable contributions to this ongoing journey.

With kind regards and very best wishes,



Dr. phil. Anna Schmid

President FICE International



Bibliography:

Lane, D. (2018, June 1). 70 years of FICE. (T. I. Care, Ed.) *The therapeutic care journal*.

Lasson, S. M., Knöpfel Nobs, I., & Anglin, J. P. (1990, September). FICE: Striving to build a world in which children can live. *Child and Youth Care Quarterly*(19), pp. 187-198.

Mächler, T. (no date). *Dem 50. Geburtstag entgegen – die FICE 1992 bis 1998*.

Shaw, R. (2008). *Children, families and care. Reflections on the first sixty years of FICE*. Stoke on Trent: Trentham Books / FICE.

Sztehlo, G. (18 May 1948). *Report on the children's settlement of Pax Social Foundation: Gaudiopolis, the Boys' Town, Budapest, Girls' Castle, Budapest, Tildy Zoltánné Girls' Town, Pilis. Budapest, Hungary*.

ABOUT FICE INTERNATIONAL

Who are we?

The International Federation of Educative Communities - FICE-International is an international network founded in 1948 in Trogen - Switzerland under the patronage of UNESCO. FICE unites organizations and professionals, working in the field of child and youth care, from a number of countries around the world.

What is our vision?

Our vision is to create networks across continents worldwide to support actions and people working with children at risk, children with special needs and children and young people in out-of-home care.

What is our aim?

FICE's main aim is to contribute to the out-of-home care development of children and young people. All activities aim to respect the personality, interests and needs of the child or the young person and are completely in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

What do we stand for?

- Children in out-of-home care
- Children with special needs
- Children at risk
- Young people leaving care

How does FICE work?

FICE operates through its national sections and brings together professionals from various disciplines involved in child and youth care.

- National Sections: FICE operates through its national sections, These sections serve as the local branches of FICE in different countries.
- Professional Exchanges: FICE facilitates and promotes professional exchanges among its national sections to share knowledge, experiences, and best practices in the field of child and youth care.
- Conferences and Congresses: FICE organizes professional conferences and congresses on initiatives aimed at improving the quality of care for children and youth.
- Transnational Exchanges: FICE encourages and coordinates transnational exchanges of young people from child and youth care facilities.

Overall, FICE plays a crucial role in fostering collaboration, sharing knowledge, and advocating for the rights and well-being of children and youth on an international level.

FICE INTERNATIONAL 2023: ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS AT INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

FICE International works at a country level through its national sections, at a regional level in the case of the FICE Africa and FICE Europe Networks, and at an international level where all its members come together. The activities, achievements and positive impacts at the Regional and National levels are described in the later chapters.

At the international level, the delegates of all members had the great pleasure of meeting in person again for the first time after the pandemic at a General Assembly and Federal Council in Belgrade, Serbia. Both in Belgrade and in a number of online Live Forums, they fulfilled their two central member roles. On the one hand, the members exchanged and discussed good practices, jointly produced knowledge and collaborated in activities to benefit children and youth in alternative care as well as the quality of the support and promotion they receive. Professional discussions, best practice exchanges and the development of knowledge and new collaboration among members also took place in the formats of the Strategic Working Groups, the FICE Online Cafés and the Editorial Board. Additionally, the Coordinating Body held online meetings and took the decisions necessary to steer FICE International and its strategic activities. This included the decision to participate in preparations for the 35th FICE International Congress in collaboration with FICE Croatia which is to take place in September 2024 in Split, Croatia.

Throughout 2023, the merits of the new organisation model that the members had developed jointly and implemented since 2022 shone through. A larger number of members became more actively involved in professional discussions and in the leadership and management of FICE International. Their diversity in combination with their ability to collaborate productively as well as their mix of both long-standing, highly experienced members and newer, younger members resulted in a dynamic, productive, rich and enjoyable year of collaboration and a good basis for the further work of FICE International.

1 - International collaboration in three Strategic Working Groups

Towards the end of 2022, the members of FICE International had decided on three main strategic themes and formed Working Groups (initially called “thematic bundle groups”) to pursue them. The three themes are:

- Quality in alternative care
- Leaving care and empowerment
- Special task force Ukraine and further emergency situations “Hand-in-Hand Group”

The Strategic Working Groups consist of, and are led by, voluntary members of FICE International and, upon invitation, further voluntary experts, including young people with experience of the situations and experiences addressed. All three groups organise themselves, define their concrete goals within the overall goals of FICE International and involve the entirety of FICE International in their topics and discussions at regular intervals. In 2023, they became fully active and enriched and oriented the discussions and decisions within FICE with their insights and questions. The “Hand-in-Hand Group” that had started building its activities earlier, namely soon after the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, was able to successfully implement a number of concrete activities to benefit children and professionals affected by the war directly.

1.1. Quality in Alternative Care

The “Quality in Care” group is coordinated by Bettina Terp (MA) and Dr. Christian Posch of FICE Austria. In 2023, the group held five Zoom meetings and one in-person meeting during the Federal Council in Belgrade. A core group of five to ten participants from seven National Sections regularly attended.

The key topics identified during discussions led to the following conclusions: there is no need to create new standards, as many already exist, including recent ones from FICE Austria. Instead, the long-term goal, which will require careful planning over several years, is to focus on how FICE International and its national sections can enhance the actual quality of programs for children and families. A major concern is the gap between established standards and delivering consistent, high-quality experiences in daily practice (the “implementation gap”).

To gain insight into quality in care across different national sections, a questionnaire was distributed and will be completed by mid-2024. The group agreed with FICE Austria's proposal to create a Quality in Care Virtual Exchange and Learning Platform on "Implementing Quality," which will present the questionnaire's findings. The idea is to begin quarterly exchanges, aiming to learn from the various legal, organizational, and professional approaches of different countries to foster innovative development in our work.

1.2. Leaving Care and Empowerment

In 2023, the "Leaving Care and Empowerment" group was coordinated by Donald Nghonyama (MA) of FICE South Africa and Lisa Albrecht of FICE Germany.

The Leaving Care and Youth Empowerment bundle was created to offer virtual access for organizations and national sections to engage, share, and learn about innovative approaches to preparing and supporting youth as they transition out of care. Youth who grow up receiving child and youth care services in non-residential facilities or community settings also require continued support to live independently. Therefore, youth empowerment is essential for both those in residential care and those in non-residential settings who receive services from child and youth care workers.

The goals of the bundle remained unchanged in 2023 and were reaffirmed for continued focus. The bundle's objectives are as follows:

- Sharing, learning, and exchanging innovative models that support youth leaving care and promote youth empowerment at national, regional, and international levels.
- Exchanging documents and legislation related to youth leaving care and youth empowerment.
- Sharing available opportunities for youth leaving care and other youth empowerment initiatives on national, regional, and international platforms.

Achievements of the group were:

- The Leaving Care and Empowerment group developed a concept paper and shared it all members who had registered their interest in the group. However, despite a shared understanding of the need to support care leavers and empower them for life after care, the bundle faced challenges in retaining members in 2023.

- A presentation by FICE Germany on the CLS Study and JustBest project sparked discussions about the global quality of the leaving care process. It became clear that the process, as well as its legal frameworks and resources, depends heavily on national contexts. Some countries, like Germany, are better resourced, while others struggle to implement policies and reforms effectively. The bundle decided to compile a synopsis of best practices from various countries to offer adaptable solutions and learning resources.
- The group also identified International Care Leavers' Week as an advocacy opportunity. Some countries already use this to push for policy reform, and the bundle aims to leverage it further, involving international care leavers' associations in advocacy efforts.

At the Belgrade congress, a meeting reaffirmed the group's commitment to promoting standards with practical outcomes. It was clear that countries are at different stages in supporting care leavers—some have well-developed policies, while others, particularly in Africa, lag behind. Despite diverse national contexts, youth globally face similar challenges, which highlights the need to strengthen care leavers' organizations internationally and foster transnational collaboration. The group's objective is to facilitate international comparisons and exchange best practices on the implementation of care leaving policies and standards. It advocates stronger collaboration with care leavers' organizations, research institutions, and experts to ensure these standards move from paper to practice.

Among the concrete goals for 2024 are:

- Create online meetings with Care Leavers from various countries within FICE, with the goal of reviewing and updating the Standards developed by Care Leavers at the 33rd FICE International Congress in Vienna in 2016.
- Launch a comprehensive social media campaign aligned with the bundle's objectives and publish a special edition of a magazine highlighting best practices within FICE.
- Aspires to actively engage with INTRAC, a renowned research reference, as well as the International Forum. This collaboration with INTRAC is aimed at strengthening our efforts and contributing to the process of updating the Vienna standards.

1.3. Special Task Force Ukraine and further Emergency Situations “Hand in Hand”

The “Hand in Hand” Strategic Working Group and initiative is a collaborative effort between FICE International, its organisation member Ukrainian Education Platform (UKREDU), and the Revised Gymnasium Principals of Ukraine (RGU). Led by Marianna Bilyk (MSc.) from UKREDU and Dr. Alex Schneider from FICE Israel, this initiative aims to provide support to children and teenagers affected by the war in Ukraine and to gather insights that may inform FICE International's broader work regarding children in emergency situations.

The ongoing task force goals for 2023 were:

1. **Psychosocial Support and Guidance:** The initiative seeks to provide psychosocial support, counselling, and guidance to educators and caregivers who work with children and families impacted by trauma, violence, and displacement.
2. **Emotional Literacy Tools:** Emotional literacy tools help children organize recreational and educational activities while coping with stress.
3. **Training and Mentoring:** The initiative focuses on training and mentoring social workers, educators, and volunteers who serve children and families in need.
4. **Advocacy for Children’s Rights:** It advocates for the rights and needs of children and teens in Ukraine, particularly those who are unaccompanied, separated, or evacuated from institutions.
5. **Collaboration and Coordination:** The initiative collaborates with humanitarian organizations, local authorities, and communities to ensure the effective and efficient delivery of services and assistance.

Throughout 2023, the task force Co-chairs conducted weekly meetings (37 meetings) to advance these goals. Additionally, a general task force meeting was held in the form of round tables to discuss and promote the agenda topic.

A detailed description of all activities and achievements can be found [here](#).

In 2024, the Task Force will continue with its ongoing task as in 2023. In particular, it plans to conduct an international seminar, in collaboration with FICE Switzerland, that will empower specialist staff with the necessary skills to effectively promote and support children from residential and foster care affected by the war who had to leave their homes in Ukraine temporarily for their protection. The out-of-home care sector plays a vital role in providing these children and young people with quality education and care, helping them cope with the impacts of the crisis and prepare for their future. However, the sector also faces many challenges and needs, such as a need for more resources, coordination, standards, and guidance.

The planned seminar aims to address these challenges and needs and facilitate the exchange of best practices and lessons learned among the participants and professionals working with Ukrainian youth in Ukraine and other countries. The seminar will also identify potential partnerships and resources to support the out-of-home care sector in Ukraine and create a platform for a strong support network for educators and caregivers. It will focus on the future possibilities of children in Ukrainian foster and residential care currently residing abroad in a foster or home family, with the ultimate goal of improving the lives of these vulnerable children.

[Link to the full report](#)

2 - Continued education, knowledge development and networking

2.1. FICE International Online Cafés

The online “FICE International Cafés” originally created by Martine Tobé (MSc; FICE Europe Network Co-President and member of the board of FICE The Netherlands) in 2020 proved popular in 2023 once more. The Cafés provide the members of FICE International (including the members of the National Sections and Member Organisations) as well as interested guests with the opportunity to:

- Discuss current child and youth care realities,
- Exchange good practices,
- Exchange project ideas,
- Support each other with an amount of intervision,
- Inspire each other.

In 2023, a total of 60 persons participated in six online Cafés, many of them several times. They profited from them not only regarding their personal expertise but also brought back topics, insights and ideas to the FICE networks and organisations in their countries. They were from the following 16 countries on five continents:

Austria	Germany	Netherlands	Spain
Brazil	India	Romania	Switzerland
Canada	Israel	Serbia	USA
Croatia	Kenya	South Africa	Ukraine

The Cafés were moderated by Dr. Patrick Reason (FICE Brazil; Secretary General of FICE International). All Cafés consisted of a presentation by a FICE member, followed by a discussion about the topic presented, and concluding with a general exchange by the participants. The topics presented were:

February	FICE Germany's Projects: Care leavers, working with young people, specialists and the Federal Ministry in Germany.	Josef Koch and Tabea Möller, FICE Germany
May	Project "Domus Ludens": play as a decisive role in the integral development of children and young people from an emotional, physical, intellectual and social well-being perspective.	Jara Mena, Resilis & FICE Spain
June	Creating Futures. Young people and youth homes discover and develop their strengths together.	Anna Schmid , FICE International & FICE Switzerland
August	FICE International Gathering in Belgrade	Zeljka Burgund, FICE Serbia
October	Alternative Care with children from Ukraine	Petra Hrvoj, FICE Croatia
December	Global Kinship Care Guidance	Jonathan Hannay, Secretary General of ACER (Associação de Apoio à Criança em Risco) Brasil.

2.2. Federal Council and Live Forums

In 2023, three online Live Forums of two hours each were held (4 April, 27 June, 28 November), as well as an in-person Federal Council meeting in Belgrade (18 – 19 September). Overall, 45 representatives of 19 National Sections and organisational members, as well as some individual members from five continents:

National Sections

Austria	Finland	Romania	The Netherlands
Brazil	Germany	Serbia	USA
Bulgaria	Israel	South Africa	Zambia
Canada	Japan	Spain	
Croatia	Kenya	Switzerland	

Organizational Members: NENESZ (Hungary), Himaya (Lebanon), Udayan Care (India) and UKREDU (Ukraine).

Individual Members from Romania and Australia.

The in-person Federal Council and online Live Forums are the Member Assemblies which serve the joint coordination and leadership of FICE International (reported under 3. below). However, they also include exchanges and discussions on topics directly related to the quality of services for children and youths. Throughout the year, the professional focus of these meetings lay on the collaboration of the three Strategic Working Groups and their exchange with all members. The Federal Council additionally saw a special focus on Kinship Care as a result of FICE Europe's leadership in the discussions around the subject, which resulted in a declaration on the importance of Kinship Care and its equal support that was subsequently adapted and approved for the FICE Africa and all the additional national sections outside of Europe. This coincided with the approval to promote regionally and nationally the Kinship Care Guidance and the Global Kinship Care Alliance, which were published as a collaborative work at the end of the year.

Following the Federal Council, the conference titled “Alternative Care in the XXI Century: Development of Policies and Best Practices for Children, Youth, and Families” was held, expanding on the FC's themes with a broader audience. The event brought together both Serbian and international experts who discussed key issues such as kinship care in Europe, residential care practices, and the specific needs of children affected by conflict, especially in Ukraine.

Zeljka Burgund, president of FICE Serbia, and her team organised these events excellently. The FICE International members present were delighted to meet their Serbian colleagues, to congratulate them on FICE Serbia's 20th anniversary and the highly impactful work it has done over the years, and to wish it much success in the coming years.



2.3. International Congress

After the organization of the 35th World Congress of FICE International was postponed twice due to circumstances beyond FICE International's control (see Annual Report 2022), members were delighted when, in 2023, FICE Croatia stepped forward to host the Congress in Split, Croatia, in October 2024. This initiative was led by Dr. Emmanuel Grupper, Vice President and Chair of the Editorial Board of FICE International. FICE Croatia presented a mature and well worded proposal for the 35th International Congress to be held in Split and as a hybrid online event. Under the title "SHAPING TOMORROW'S CARE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH: Quality and innovation in alternative care" the dual focus of both quality in care and innovative practices will promote excellent academic and practice-based discussions and learning, whilst always ensuring that the child's best interests is at the centre. A Core organizing team was established as follows:

- **Congress chair:** Lucija Vejmelka, PhD, Associate professor, FICE Croatia.
- **Congress coordinator:** Petra Hrvoj, President of FICE Croatia
- **International Organising Committee** composed of Patrick Reason FICE Brazil, Cristina González Villanueva- FICE Spain, Josef Koch- FICE Germany, Alex Schneider- FICE Israel, Martine Tobé-Kinderperspectief, FICE Europe.
- **Scientific Committee** with chairs, Emmanuel Grupper, FICE Israel, James Anglin- FICE Canada, Marijana Majdak- University of Zagreb, FICE Croatia and the Scientific board members Anna Schmid- FICE International President and FICE Switzerland, Friedhelm Peters- FICE Germany, Kiran Modi- Udayancare, Mori Shigeyuki- FICE Japan, Zeni Thumbadoo- FICE South Africa and Christian Posch- FICE Austria.

FICE International is extremely grateful to FICE Croatia and their boldness and generosity in hosting what will be such an important and inspirational Congress.

2.4. Editorial Board

In 2023, Dr. Emmanuel Grupper (Vice President of FICE International and President of FICE Israel) continued to play a key role as Chair of the Editorial Board. As part of his leadership for the upcoming Congress, he successfully arranged for papers from the Congress to be published in two key outlets: the peer-reviewed, research-focused International Journal of Child, Youth and Family Studies, and the practice-oriented publication by CYC-Net. These dissemination opportunities are immensely valuable for FICE International and the broader community of experts participating in the Congress.

3 - FICE International Organisation and Coordination

FICE International is an association and, therefore, a member led network. At the international level, and with the exception of a part-time paid Technical Assistant, its management and activities are all completed in the form of voluntary and unpaid work by members. The same is the case at the level of the Regional Networks and for the greater part of the National Sections.

In 2023, the new organisation model, co-created by all members, led to an increase in active collaboration by members also in the organisation and management of FICE International. They did so in a number of Member Assemblies: The Extraordinary General Assembly, one in-person Federal Council and three Live Forums.

3.1. Extraordinary General Assembly

The General Assembly meeting is where the FICE members complete the statutory business of FICE International. In 2023, the hybrid (in-person as well as online) Extraordinary General Assembly meeting was held on 18th September in Belgrade, Serbia. It counted with the participation of 41 representatives of 17 National Sections, 2 organisational members as well as 2 individual members from five continents:

National Sections:

Austria	Germany	South Africa	West Africa
Brazil	Israel	Spain	Zambia
Bulgaria	Kenya	Switzerland	
Canada	Romania	The Netherlands	
Croatia	Serbia	USA	

Organizational Members: NENESZ (Hungary) and UKREDU (Ukraine).

Individual Members from Romania and Australia.

The meeting began with a speech by President Dr. Anna Schmid, commemorating the 75th anniversary of FICE International. In her address, she highlighted the organization's historic roots, its evolution over the years, and its mission for the future. Dr. Schmid emphasized the importance of strong youth participation, international collaboration with diverse perspectives, and the need to remain open-minded, continuously exploring and engaging with relevant issues. [[link to full speech](#)]

The Extraordinary General Assembly approved reports from leadership. Treasurer Mr. Rolf Widmer announced his upcoming departure in 2024, while Neculai Virgil Botezatu joined the Audit Committee. Both FICE Croatia and FICE Canada were promoted to full National Sections. NENESZ from Hungary also requested Associate National Section status, which was endorsed by the Assembly.

3.2. Federal Council and Live Forums

In the in-person Federal Council and the three Live Forums, the Members (see numbers and countries above in 2.2) discussed and decided on a range of matters regarding the organisation and management of FICE International, such as:

- The new technical assistant, Cristina González Villanueva, was appointed under a new agreement with FICE Spain.
- Memberships and fees were reviewed, leading to updates on financial compliance and confirmations.
- The cancelled 35th Congress was replaced with events in Serbia on September 18th and 19th, including the Extraordinary General Assembly, Federal Council, and the 75th anniversary celebration of FICE International.
- Discussions on the 35th FICE International World Congress in Croatia were held, with a formal proposal anticipated from FICE Croatia for its hosting in 2024 (more details in section 2.3.).
- Two live forums and the in-person Federal Council meeting were scheduled for 2024 to align with the FICE 35 Congress in Split, Croatia.
- Preparations for electing a new Treasurer began, with a call for candidates initiated.

3.3. Coordinating Body

The Coordinating Body serves as the board of FICE International. In 2023, it comprised the President (Dr. Anna Schmid, Switzerland), Vice President (Dr. Emmanuel Grupper, Israel), Treasurer (Rolf Widmer, Switzerland), and Secretary General (Dr. Patrick Reason, Brazil), all of whom were elected for a three-year term in May 2022. Both two Regional Networks hold permanent seats on the Coordinating Body as well. Region Africa was represented by Donald Nghonyama (MA, South Africa) and Simon Peter (Kenya), while Region Europe was represented by Martine Tobé (MSc, Netherlands) and Elena Matache (Romania).

The coordination, facilitation, and integration of increased collaboration among FICE members require significant effort and ongoing process management by the Coordinating Body members, resulting in a notable rise in activity. Consequently, the Coordinating Body held six two-hour online meetings in 2023 and remained in continuous collaboration throughout the year.

For several years, FICE International has benefited from the valuable support of a part-time Technical Assistant. In 2023, this role was filled by Cristina González Villanueva. FICE International is most grateful to FICE Spain for making her support possible.

Among various tasks, the Secretary General and Technical Assistant worked together to strengthen FICE International's social media presence on platforms like [LinkedIn](#), [Instagram](#) and Facebook. A notable example is the video clip prepared by Cristina González Villanueva, in which members of FICE International share what FICE means to them and why they are actively involved [[link here](#)].

National sections participating in FICE Africa Network

Full members national sections that are participating in the network are: South Africa, Zambia, West Africa and Kenya. Lesotho still remains an associate member and it was agreed that FICE South Africa provides mentorship until they are in a position to apply for full membership.

Ghana, Namibia and eSwatini are still in a process of development.

A process of signing a MoU is underway with the Regional Psychosocial Support Initiatives (REPSSI) which operate in 13 countries in the East and Southern Africa. It is expected that the MoU will form a basis to introduce child and youth care work in these countries.

Meetings held and topics discussed

FICE Africa held three virtual meetings in 2023. The meetings were well attended and with all countries national chapters represented. In this year FICE Africa set itself to increase membership. The continental network was joined by eSwatini who are a member of REPSSI. The activities that took place during the course of 2023 included:

-The national chapters were all given an opportunity to share their work with the network in each meeting. The sharing provides an opportunity for exchange of knowledge and it is also a platform for learning from one another.

-The FICE International congress planned to be held in South Africa jointly was cancelled and this came as sad news to the continent. However, the reasons provided were accepted and wished South Africa well in its financial recovery.

-Members were also saddened by the resignation of Maximilian Ullrich who was a member of FICE Kenya. Members were thankful for his contribution to FICE Kenya and FICE Africa. They wished him well for his future endeavour.

-In an effort to promote child and youth care work training members countries who received training of trainers were asked to sign MoU to use the trained members to provide training in their own countries.

-Members have resolved that country response to gender-based violence be reported during the FICE Africa meetings as this remains a big problem in many countries in Africa. The report serve as a learning opportunity for members on how to respond to gender-based violence as well as any available models.

-South Africa held monthly webinars where various international experts in child and youth care work are invited to speak on different topics. The webinar is open to everyone in the membership as well as international. It has attracted many child and youth care workers on various levels of responsibility from the continent.

-Simon Peter (FICE Kenya) and Dr Djibril Fall (FICE West Africa) represented Africa at the FICE International General Assembly and congress held in Belgrade in September 2023 .

-FICE Africa discussed the membership fees and affordability due to the value of different currencies. A letter was written to the FICE International General Secretary to request a discussion and a possible review of the fees paid by low currency countries. This meeting is still to take place.

-A meeting was held by FICE Africa and the Namibian Ministry of Welfare to present child and youth care work. Namibia continues exploring improvement of child care and protection. The establishment of FICE Namibia has been identified as another way to connect the officials to the work of FICE Africa and access information that could support their intervention. Namibia continued to participate in the FICE Africa meetings.

Documents to support the work of FICE Africa:

The minutes of the meetings and the presentations are saved and they form part of the supporting documents for FICE Africa activities.

Partnerships:

There was no formal partnership created in this year.

Projects:

There were no special projects implemented in this year.

National sections participating in FICE Europe Network

FICE Europe (Fédération Internationale des Communautés Éducatives) is a European network (under the umbrella of FICE Inter) that advocates for the rights of children and youth, particularly those who are in care. FICE Europe collaborates with national and international organizations to promote the welfare of young people and to ensure their active participation in the society. The organization has a membership base of national sections from various European countries. FICE Europe is composed by National sections from 12 European FICE member countries and FICE Israel.

Meetings and Events:

In 2023, FICE Europe organized two significant gatherings for its members, both serving as Extraordinary General Assemblies.

Online Meeting (May):

- The first assembly took place virtually
- David Ruiz from FICE Spain and Elena Matache from Romania were officially appointed as new board members.
- Meeting revolved around key topics such as kinship care, youth participation, and child protection guidelines.

In-Person Meeting (September):

- First in-person meeting post-COVID, held in Belgrade.
- Functioning as a General Assembly, served as a platform to say farewell to Roland Stubi, who stepped down as the treasurer after years of active involvement in FICE Europe.
- Marianna Bilyk from Ukraine and Ilana Tischler representing FICE Israel were formally installed as board members.
- The session included the sharing of a statement drafted by FICE Europe concerning kinship care. This statement received unanimous support, with all present countries endorsing it. The statement emphasizes the recognition of kinship care as a legitimate form of alternative care, advocating for corresponding financial and professional support for kinship carers.
- In addition to the statement, FICE Europe issued an English-language press release, easily shareable on its members' websites, further disseminating the importance of acknowledging and supporting kinship care.

FICE Cafe Sessions:

FICE Europe members actively participated in the FICE Cafe sessions organized by FICE Inter. These sessions provided a platform for members from different parts of the world to share their experiences and discuss issues related to the welfare of children and youth.

Conclusion:

In a landscape characterized by uncertainties, FICE Europe persisted in its commitment to advocating for the rights and welfare of children and youth.

FICE Europe eagerly anticipates the 35th FICE International Conference scheduled to take place in Split in 2024. This event promises to be a crucial platform for fostering collaboration, sharing insights, and further strengthening the collective efforts to improve the lives of children and youth in alternative care on the European continent.

FICE AUSTRIA IN 2023

Bettina Terp, Christian Posch - Co-presidents

There are 42 members in total; of which 30 organisations and 12 individual members. As of 2022, there are seven more organizations and one more personal membership.

Biggest Achievement 2023

FICE Austria consistently pursues the goal of further developing quality in child and youth welfare.

After an important milestone was set in 2019 with the "Quality standards for professional alternative child and youth care in group homes", the "Dual practice-oriented further training for professionals in alternative child and youth care" curriculum represents another important step towards realising state-of-the-art quality in the care of children and young people throughout Austria.

The curriculum was presented on 26 January 2023 at a kick-off meeting at the Vienna Ombudsman Board.

>Implementation of the "Curriculum

The FH Campus Vienna has developed an academic university course "Academic Social Pedagogy-Social Therapy in In-Patient Child and Youth Welfare Services" from the "Curriculum for dual practice -

oriented further education for professionals in alternative child and youth care". In Tyrol, "Jugendland" will offer a training (100 hours) based on the FICE Curriculum for future CYC-workers.

>Handbook (Decision-Making and Responsibility)

Together with many people involved in development processes, FICE Austria comes to the conclusion that it is time to describe the highly complex, professionally and humanly demanding work in the Austrian child and youth welfare in a detailed, practical way in the form of a "handbook" using the example of alternative care.

The areas of action covered in the book are based on the quality standards and are intended to be conveyed in a practical way with many practical elements (examples of cases and methods, practical tips and reflection questions). A publication is planned for 2025.

>QUALITY STANDARDS for mobile services in the context of educational support

After more than two years of project work, the "Quality standards for mobile services in the context of



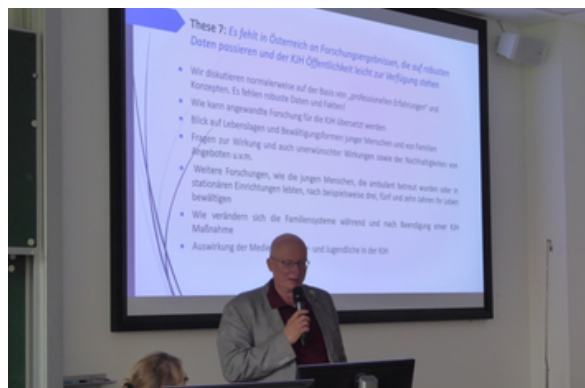
educational support" have finally reached the final stage. The involvement of experts from the child and youth welfare authorities in the sounding board and the exchange with (senior) child and youth welfare staff in the federal states led to important reflection processes that played a major role in the further negotiation and writing of the "Quality standards for mobile services in the context of educational support".

>FICE conference at the University of Applied Sciences Upper Austria

On 17 May 2023 we held the FICE conference with the support of FH Upper Austria with the title: "Keeping pace? Design it? Develop quality further?"

Around 80 interested people from child and youth welfare services, organisations and associations followed the presentations on the topic of "Designing qualifications and further training in social pedagogy in the context of educational support" held by Mag.a Dr. in Marianne Forstner, Course leader Academic socio-educational counsellor, COL3 and Mag.a Elke Gornik, Scientific Director COL3 (Centre of Lifelong Learning at the University of Applied Sciences Upper Austria).

„What should Child and Youth Care provide in 2023?" Assumptions on needs for development and ambivalences" held by Dr. in Monika Lengauer and Dr. Christian Posch – FICE Austria



>General Assembly (17 May 2023)

The General Assembly took place after the FICE conference in Linz.

Exchanges on the topic of child and youth welfare

In 2022, Fice Austria has already started a series of networking meetings. These virtual networking meetings were successfully continued at regular intervals in 2023 and will continue to take place.

For 2024, FICE Austria is planning biannual impulse days ("Impulstage") to discuss/exchange the further development of the entire child and youth welfare in Austria and also to critically question the framework conditions of social work with children and work out possible proposals for improvement.



FICE BRAZIL IN 2023

Isa Guar - President & Patrick Reason - Vice-President

The Brazilian National Movement for the Rights of Children and Adolescents to Live in Family and Community is a result of a sustained process headed up by a number of NGOs that led to the publication of the Brazilian National Plan for the Rights of Children and Adolescents to Live in Family and Community in 2006. The Movement works on two fronts: Technical Incidence and Political Advocacy.

The Brazilian National Movement for the Rights of Children and Adolescents to live in Family and Community has a Steering Group of 10 institutions (2 per macro region) and approximately 60 member organisations across Brazil.

Seminars and Events

FICE BRASIL partnered with the Brazilian National Movement for the Rights of Children and Adolescents to Live in Family and Community to host the "Seminar of the National Movement for the Rights of Children and Adolescents to Live in Family and Community - Promoting Dialogue on the Guarantee of the Right to Live in Family and Community." This event took place at The Pontifical Catholic University of Minas Gerais in Belo Horizonte in November 2022.

The seminar featured panels addressing key topics such as the Prevention of Family Breakdown, Quality in Care, Foster Care and other Family-Based Care Models, and Adoption Based on the Best Interest of Children and Adolescents. These panels were subsequently compiled and published in 2023 as an academic publication by the University Editorial Body.

In March 2023, in collaboration with the University of Campinas and their Child and Adolescent Observatory, FICE BRASIL organised the IV International Foster Care Seminar, attracting over 600 participants. Despite this, statistics reveal that only approximately 7% of children in care in Brazil are in foster care, while the majority, 93%, are placed in small residential and group care settings accommodating up to 20 children or teens.

To address this disparity, FICE BRASIL partnered with the Brazilian Federal Government to publish guidebooks in 2022, which were widely distributed across Brazil through local events and seminars. These guidebooks cover various aspects of foster care and are available for free download on the organisation's website "Familia



Acolhedora(www.familiaacolhedora.org.br), along with audiovisual training materials and an interactive platform.

The six guidebooks encompass:

1. A Guide to Foster Care Service
2. Implementing a Foster Care Service
3. Parameters and Practical Aspects of Foster Care
4. Mobilisation and Selection of Foster Care Families
5. Support for Foster Families, Children, Adolescents, and their Families
6. Managing Transitions: A Guide to Dealing with Arrivals and Departures

Brazil has set an ambitious goal of increasing the proportion of children and adolescents in foster care from the current 7% to 20% by 2025. This objective reflects the nation's commitment to enhancing the welfare and rights of vulnerable youth through family-based care.



The Brazilian National Council of Child and Adolescent Rights

NECA, represented by researcher Dayse Bernardi and other members of the Brazilian National Movement for the Rights of Children and Adolescents to live in Family and Community, currently hold seats on the National Council of Child and Adolescent Rights for the years 2023 and 2024. This council plays a pivotal role in both funding and policymaking concerning child rights at the federal level. FICE Brasil representatives play a crucial role in ensuring continued financing and implementation of the ongoing evaluation for the revision of the National Alternative Care Plan, a significant policy document for alternative care and child-centred adoption in Brazil.

Evaluation of the National Care Plan
 In 2023, the evaluation process of the National Plan for the Rights of Children and Adolescents to live in Family and Community concluded, resulting in the publication of six national reports. These reports were extensively disseminated across the country by members and working groups and are available for free download on the [official website](#).





Revision of the National Care Plan

The revision of the National Plan for the Rights of Children to Live in Family and Community necessitated time and renewed political support in 2023 to ensure the continuation of the process, now entering its 5th year. The return of the central-left Labor Party in 2023, historically supportive of the National Plan established in 2006 under their government, introduced a new dynamic. However, there was inherent scepticism regarding the work done on the plan's revision during the previous government's tenure from 2019 to 2022, impeding progress. The National Movement played a crucial role in advocating for the National Plan, both within the National Child Rights Council and directly with the new Federal Government. This underscores the pivotal role of Civil Society in promoting children's best interests beyond partisan politics. Collaboration between Civil Society, technicians, researchers, and youth with care experience is essential to advancing care policy, particularly in Brazil, with its longstanding challenges. Although progress in 2023 may not be easily quantifiable, it has laid the groundwork for the much-awaited publication of the Revised National Care Plan in 2024 or early 2025. As we approach the sixth

anniversary of this process, there are still stages to complete, such as a national open call for contributions. The legitimacy of this democratic process is crucial, ensuring that care policy remains in the national spotlight.



Seminars and Training across Brazil

Given Brazil's vast size, the dissemination of information and the promotion of critical thinking in care practices vary significantly across regions. NECA has committed itself to participating in numerous seminars and workshops nationwide to address this challenge. While it's impractical to list all engagements, NECA has strategically divided its efforts across Brazil's five macro-regions:

- In the North, NECA supervised the implementation of Foster Care in Belém, Pará State.
- In the Northeast, NECA contributed to seminars in both Fortaleza, Ceará, and Salvador, Bahia.
- In the Central-West, NECA engaged in events in the capital, Brasília.



- In the Southeast, NECA participated in multiple events in São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Uberlândia, and Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais.
 - In the South, NECA attended an event in Porto Alegre, Rio Grande do Sul.
- Additionally, NECA's online seminars and TVNECA on YouTube continue to disseminate high-quality, child-centered care practices to Brazil and the Portuguese-speaking world.



FICE Brasil's Participation in FICE International

Our Vice-President, Patrick Reason, has continued his role as Secretary General of FICE International. In 2022, he led all the COVID Cafés with assistance from FICE's Technical Assistant and distinguished speakers from various FICE chapters worldwide, including Germany, Spain, Hungary, Switzerland, Serbia, Croatia, Ukraine, and Brazil. Patrick also played a key role in organising the Federal Assembly in Belgrade and spoke at the FICE Serbia Jubilee Conference. FICE Brasil members actively participated in all FICE International Thematic Bundles and remain committed to contributing to future endeavours.



FICE BULGARIA IN 2023

D-r. Dashenka Krалеva - President

FICE-Bulgaria is a Bulgarian NGO, which was founded in 2001. FICE-Bulgaria is a membership organization. Its members are professionals working in the field of child and youth care, more than 20 individuals, public bodies and organizations – social service providers for children and families, non-governmental organizations, psychologists, teachers, social workers, students. The highest body of the organization is the General Assembly, and the operational management is realised by the three Board members: President - D-r. Dashenka Krалеva, D-r. Rossitsa Simeonova and mag. Vessela Alexieva. The functions of the General Assembly include: defining the strategic plans and program of FICE-Bulgaria; election of the Board of Management; acceptance and exclusion of new Members; revision of the statutes; approval of the annual activity and financial reports, etc. The GA of the organisation takes place every three year and includes the voting process for Board members. FICE-Bulgaria has an educational center and a head office located in Sofia with a current address: 1000 Sofia, 50b Gladston str, 0 fl.

FICE-Bulgaria has a long-term experience in international and national training of professionals, working in the field of child care. It has several accomplishments in advocating for a change in the legislation in Bulgaria regarding children, youth and their families. The mission of FICE-Bulgaria is to work actively for improvement of the quality of life of the children in Bulgaria. To achieve this mission, FICE Bulgaria adapts and develops new methodologies for working with children at risk (children without parental care, with disabilities, with educational difficulties, from disadvantaged backgrounds, from minorities, young people in transition to adulthood, young people facing unemployment and social exclusion, etc.), provides training, supervision and consultations to professionals working with children and families at risk, develops and participates in projects for exchange of knowledge and good practices with organizations from Europe and the whole world.

In 2023 FICE-Bulgaria hosted a variety of face-to-face and online courses and trainings. They covered topics such as Trauma Pedagogy, Socio-emotional skills and values for

kids, Life in small groups – model for residential care for children, Individualized parent capacity assessment tool, Case work and case management. The team of professionals of FICE-Bulgaria also developed and introduced a few new trainings essential to the work of child care's specialists. They included Modern methods and techniques for working with children on the autism spectrum, Realization of the rights of children and youths in social services, Protection from abuse, violence, harassment and discrimination and others. The specialized course for trainers of candidate-adoptive parents which was developed in 2022 remained popular in 2023 as well and it was one of the most successful trainings held face-to-face in FICE-Bulgaria's office in Sofia. Thanks to the improvement of its social media channels, the organization continues gaining new members and followers as well as new participants in its trainings. In 2023 their total amount reached 788.

Besides training, FICE-Bulgaria continued implementing the regulation and quality standards for social services in Bulgaria by providing several child and youth care services with supervisions and professionals consultations. Usually

the supervisions are dedicated to discussing a specific case of a user of social services, an Individual Needs Assessment and an Individual Support Plan, working with families and loved ones, internal team relationships or a topic related to management, documentation and requirements regarding the quality of social service, etc. The team of supervisors of FICE-Bulgaria consists of 5 people.

Furthermore, in 2023 FICE-Bulgaria continued improving the work of its Centre for Professional Education. More than 70 people successfully completed a 3-month remote course in two directions: Social work with kids and families at risk and Social work with kids and elderly people with disabilities and chronic diseases. Although the courses were happening remotely they ended with theoretical and practical exams face-to-face in the organization's office. After passing the exams and getting the needed qualification in either one of the two professions or both the professionals can perform a certain range of tasks in different sectors of the social network: assisting the social worker in examining the situation of persons who are subject to social assistance and social services; working in non-governmental organizations for the



implementation of social protection of marginal groups of individuals, etc.

In the past year FICE-Bulgaria didn't host a General Assembly, Annual Meeting or Federal Council. The last General Assembly was held in the summer of 2022. The organization participated actively in FICE International and FICE Europe activities - FICE CAFÉ, FICE LIVE FORUMs, Thematic Bundles, etc.

The president of FICE-Bulgaria Dashenka Krалева PHD and the technical assistant of the organization were honoured to attend the Federal Council of FICE-International in September in the city of Belgrade, Serbia. They were part of the General Assembly of FICE International and FICE Europe. They took part in the vote on the budgets of both organizations, as well as in the discussion and admission of new members. They actively participated in various working groups, presenting the activities of the Bulgarian organization over the past year - its goals and successes. Dashenka Krалева focused on the quality of social services in Bulgaria, while as the youngest participant in the congress, Simona had the honor to present the strategies which were discussed and developed in the working groups about improving the quality of care for children and young people.

FICE-Bulgaria works to improve the policies for children and especially the process of deinstitutionalization. The organization is a member of two major NGO networks in Bulgaria: The National Network for Children and the Childhood 2025 Coalition, jointly lobbying for a change in legislation and improving the well-being of children in Bulgaria. FICE Bulgaria is open to various partnerships on the topics of children with international participation.

Project "CYCLES"





FICE CANADA IN 2023

James Anglin - President

FICE-Canada was incorporated as a non-profit society in Canada in March 2022. The remainder of 2022 was preparing the way for our first membership drive and putting in place committees and workgroups to prepare the way for accepting fee-paying organizational members.

On April 28, 2023, we held our first formal AGM. It was a virtual meeting due to the great distances our members would have to travel to attend in person. We discussed our 2022 annual report, draft bylaws, received reports from committees and approved the members of the Executive for the coming year.

The Executive and Board held monthly meetings except during the summer holiday period and December, and committees met on a periodic basis and as needed. Members of the Board were active in FICE-International Thematic Bundles (Varda Mann-Feder – Leaving Carel James Anglin – Quality and “Hand-in-Hand”).

As part of our membership engagement, we held two virtual sessions for new members. The first was in May on FICE-International Activities with Displaced Families and Refugees from Conflict Zones featuring Emmanuel Grupper (Israel),

Rolf Widmer (Switzerland), Marianna Bilyk (Ukraine) and Martine Tobe (Netherlands) who all made superb and informative presentations, followed by discussion. The second event was a membership networking webinar in June connecting new members for discussion of topics raised by individual members. The challenges being experienced across the country related to worker recruitment and training were especially highlighted.

Our membership drive resulted in 19 fee-paying organizations who became Founding Members of FICE-Canada, and Certificates suitable for framing were presented to each organization. Member organizations include service delivery agencies, professional worker associations, post-secondary educational programs and an accreditation agency. In total, these organizations represent hundreds of child and youth care practitioners and allied professional workers, as well as undergraduate and graduate students and faculty members.

A major focus over the latter part of the year was working with a graduate student from the Human Systems Intervention Master’s program at Concordia University in Quebec to adapt the “Unique Search Process”



for use in strategic planning for FICE-Canada. This process will include members from across the country in a virtual pre-planning exercise and strategic planning process in the Spring of 2024 as a basis for a 3-month and 3-year work plan.

A disappointment was not having any members attending the Serbian conference and FICE-International Council meeting in Belgrade in October. Our president had to cancel his presentation and attendance due to last-minute, unanticipated medical procedures.

FICE-Canada has been primarily focussed on forming and developing the organizational structure and communication mechanisms. Canada is a very large country crossing 5 time zones 10 provinces, 3 territories, and two official languages, as well as being a multi-cultural society formed of many Indigenous communities (First Nations, Métis and Inuit) and immigrant populations. Under the Canadian constitution, each province and territory is responsible for its own health, welfare and education system. This means that forming national associations and societies can be very challenging.

FICE-Canada is committed to developing a diverse and inclusive organization that supports the

development of child and youth work in all of its dimensions. This includes all forms of alternative care (e.g., foster, kinship, residential) as well as CYC in schools, hospitals, youth centres, day cares and family support services. We also support the process of professionalization of the child and youth care field and discipline that requires training, education and suitable working conditions for workers in order to address the complex needs of children youth, families and communities.

For more information on FICE-Canada, go to our website at <https://ficecanada.ca>

Out-of-Home Care for Children and Youth in Canada

For detailed information on the out-of-home child and youth care system in Canada, see “Residential Care for Children and Youth in Canada: Making Sense of the Mosaic” (Anglin, Girons & Trocmé) in *Revitalizing Residential Care for Children and Youth: Cross-National Trends and Challenges*, Oxford Press, 2023).

Some key take-aways from this analysis include:

- There is a need for enhanced support for consistent and centralized data collection across the provinces and territories relating to



the needs and characteristics of children coming into care, the nature and quality of placements, and the outcomes achieved (Fallon et al., 2017).

- The situations of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit families and communities need to be understood and responded to through culturally grounded and locally governed services that emphasize early responses and family-supportive initiatives (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2012).
- Out-of-home care needs to be understood as a continuum of alternative care options, with residential care valued and resourced to provide intensive therapeutic care and treatment (Anglin, 2004, 2011).
- The expertise and resources of education, health, juvenile justice, and child welfare professionals need to be made available in a flexible and integrated manner to all young people in residential care settings (Anglin, 2002a, 2008).

Upcoming National Conference in 2024

The Child and Youth Care Workers' Association of Manitoba is excited to announce that registration for the 2024 National Child and Youth Care Conference here in Winnipeg, MB. from June 5-7 is now officially underway! Below you will find the link to register for tickets which also includes Education Day on June 4.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding registration please feel free to contact Jenna at conference@cycwam.ca.

Registration Link: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2024-child-and-youth-care-national-conference-tickets-806231950467>



FICE CROATIA IN 2023

Petra Hrvoj - President

The FICE Croatia organization currently has 25 members, of which 2 are members of the organization, and 23 are individuals. In 2023, 6 new members joined.

The greatest success in 2023 was the continuation of continuous work in the field of alternative care through the association's programs and projects, advocacy work and numerous national and international collaborations. We were helped in this by support through the retention of employed persons, which we consider a key factor in the development of the association and an opportunity to achieve quality work and good results of all activities carried out. As a success, they would also cite numerous events and educations at the international level in which we participated this year, thereby strengthening the competences of the association's human capacities and expertise in the field of alternative care. Also, the extension of activities to other vulnerable groups through activities, projects and cooperation with other organizations with which we have achieved a large number of cooperative and partnership relations is significant.

Where we achieved financial sustainability this year were mostly EU funds, and the problem was local and national funds, through the lack of tenders in the field of our activities, insufficient funding or the inability to meet the evaluation criteria. Continuing to receive Institutional Support from the National Foundation for the Development of Civil Society is also one of the successes that helps us maintain the sustainability, growth and development of the organization. The approved support enabled our organization to continue implementing activities, programs and projects, as well as greater recognition and visibility of the association in the field of alternative care. We have been enabled to continue to implement and develop programs and projects in the field of alternative care and in the field of work with children, young people and experts who work with them, but also to expand the field of activity to other vulnerable groups, the inclusion of foster parents and experts from the child care system in projects that we implemented independently or in partnerships, at the local, national and international level.



We continued to implement 2 national projects from 2022 as holders, and 2 in partnership, and we started 1 national project as holders, and 1 EU project as part of the Erasmus+ project, and 1 in partnership, as well as numerous other national and international activities. Furthermore, we were also able to educate our staff in the field of alternative care due to the possibility of attending education and international events and through the possibility of membership in international organizations. This was extremely important to us due to the possibility of conducting joint activities at the international level, transferring knowledge and examples of good practices from other countries to the care system in Croatia, and enabling the inclusion of children, young people and experts in international activities such as the Erasmus+ program. The support also enabled us to be more visible on the part of other civil society organizations and other relevant stakeholders in the field of children and youth, which is why we have better interdepartmental and intersectoral cooperation, and the possibility of greater influence in improving alternative care for children and youth in Croatia.

National activities:

- Institutional support for the stabilization and/or development of associations, 2022-2024, National Foundation for the Development of Civil Society
- "Voice of Youth" project, 2022-2023..., City of Zagreb
- "Ready to leave care" project, 2022-2023, City of Zagreb
- "FICE Croatia for Ukraine" project, 2022-2023, SOLIDARNA Foundation
- Partnership on the "Gora" project, holder Suncokret OLJIN, ESF, 2022-2023.
- Partnership on the project "Forum for NON-VIOLENCE", holder Forum for quality fostering of children, 2023, Central State Office for Demography and Youth
- "Improving media literacy and digital competences in the child care system", 2023, Electronic Media Agency
- "Youth PARTICIPATION", Agency for Mobility and EU Programs, Erasmus+ program, 2023
- "Ready to leave care-phase 2", City of Zagreb, 2023.
- Other national activities (volunteer, advocacy, education...)

International activities:

- Erasmus+ project "EXPERIENCE", 2023, Cepora



- Project: SOCIEUX+ Montenegro - Developing specialized and urgent foster care measures
- Project: "SOCIEUX 2023-23 NORTH MACEDONIA » Development of counseling standards and services for children and youth at risk
- Participation in FICE Int. conference in Belgrade, Serbia, 2023.
- Meeting in Brussels as part of the presentation of the results of 'Reaching-In: promoting children's participation in inclusive public decision making', 2023. Eurochild
- Other international activities (participation in EC and FICE INT. and EU activities...)

Other activities:

- Increase in the number of employees, members and the same number of volunteers
- Work in the field of alternative care
- Cooperation
- Education

In 2023, we held the annual general assembly on December 19 in an online format. 12 members of the assembly participated. At the assembly, we presented the annual report on the activities carried out with FICE Croatia in 2023 and the financial report for 2023.

Also, the work plan and program for 2024 as well as the financial plan for 2024 were presented. At the assembly, the plan for hosting the 35th FICE International Congress in Split in October 2024 was also presented to the members, which was enthusiastically accepted by all members.

The story we would like to highlight is also this year dedicated to children from care from Ukraine who are placed in Croatia and with whom FICE Croatia has been doing activities in 2023. In addition to the activities with them that we carried out as part of the project, we must emphasize that we also carried out various activities at the volunteer level. What we would like to point out is the provision of a summer vacation for some of the children from the group with whom we spent a few days on the beautiful island of Silba in Croatia. In addition to many activities such as workshops in which they participated, we had the opportunity to spend time with them on fun activities such as swimming and spending the day at the beach, eating ice cream, walking by the sea and many others.

The end of 2023 would certainly mark the acceptance of our application to host the 35th FICE International Congress in Split, Croatia. We are extremely happy and proud to have received the trust and opportunity to organize such a large and significant international event in the field of alternative care. We used the end of the year to start organizing and planning this event, and we plan to continue the same during 2024.

FICE CZECH REPUBLIC IN 2023

PaedDr. Jana Koubová - Chairman

FICE Czech Republic has 40 children's homes, representing approximately 700 children and young adults. At the same time, there are 70 active members in the organization.

Biggest achievement in 2023

FICE Czech Republic biggest achievements in 2023 were organizing two important seminars, which were attended by experts from abroad. In particular, we managed to establish fruitful cooperation with the Office for the Protection of Human Rights.

The organization regularly organizes leisure competitions and national meetings in the field of culture and sports. We publish circulars, prepare research and cooperate with universities and relevant line ministries

FICE Czech Republic's committee meets twice a year in person, and we also have regular virtual meetings

In the regular meetings were discussed current topics related to the requirements of the target clientele. FICE regularly have comments on current legislation on our agenda, and we point out sensitive topics connected to the issue of institutional education.

Story of children that FICE worked with.

Recently, FICE Czech Republic have been able to increase the number of successful children, have a book in preparation in which we will retell their stories.





FICE FINLAND IN 2023

Ulla Siimes - President

The CUCW has 138 member organizations all together, which of 99 are NGO's and 39 are municipalities/associations of municipalities.

During the operating year, there was extensive influence on the realization of the rights of children of various ages. The CUCW provided information for the vision phase work of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health's comprehensive reform of child protection legislation and participated in the hearing of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child regarding Finland in Geneva. The Committee's recommendations for Finland were received in June, with some being urgent. The recommendations have been discussed at several events, and their implementation is being monitored.

At the national child protection congress, the theme was "Permission to Shine," and approximately 1200 professionals working with children and young people participated. The days highlighted themes of equality, non-discrimination, and diversity. We organized an annual youth event for young people with personal experience in child protection.

The youth gathered messages for improving child protection, and these messages were published at the child protection congress and on our website.

The centrally coordinated Children's Rights Week continued to grow and now reaches almost half of Finland's primary schools and a large portion of early childhood education units. The communication theme for Children's Rights Week was the child's right to well-being.

Most important activities in 2023

Central Union for Child Welfare has kept the perspective of children's rights at the forefront of decision-making through statements, consultations, opinions, and other advocacy efforts.

In the parliamentary elections of 2023, the CUCW aimed to influence particularly the importance of investing into services for children, youth, and families, the inclusion of children in decision-making structures, and the maintenance of the financial capacity of families with children. The CUCW emphasized that adjustments in public finances affecting children should not be made without assessing their impact on children.

The new government of our country



began its work by implementing extensive cuts to social security. In addition to close ministerial advocacy work, the CUCW appealed to the government not to seek economic balance by cutting children's welfare. In its statements on government proposals regarding social security, the CUCW highlighted that the planned cuts would increase child poverty and jeopardize children's growth and development. Even towards the end of the year, the CUCW, along with other organizations, expressed concern about the long-term effects of policies that increase child poverty. The CUCW aimed to influence the lowering of the age limit for aftercare, stating its opposition to the government proposal. In its statement, the CUCW opposed the reduction of the age limit by two years and the obligation of the welfare region to provide aftercare ending no later than when the young person turns 23.

Development of child protection has been actively pursued by producing a guide and workbook for those working in foster care and by participating extensively in work against intimate partner violence. The publication "Child Protection from the Client's Perspective" gathers extensive information from experts by experience on the functionality of child protection and produces new information on the topic. The CUCW

also conducted a study on the representation system for unaccompanied children, with young people also participating in this knowledge production. In the beginning of the year, the Social Innovations in Child Protection coordination project (Soila), led by the National Institute for Health and Welfare (THL), was launched, in which the CUCW is involved alongside Pesäpuu ry. The project aims to reduce the number of placements, develop support for families in connection with placement situations, and improve aftercare and other aspects of the child protection service system, particularly focusing on substance abuse and mental health challenges. Towards the end of the year, a national Family Center Conference was held.

One of the key objectives of the CUCW is to bring together Finnish child welfare NGOs and municipalities to promote children's rights. The CUCW has three advisory boards, which continue to gather throughout the year 2023, to discuss the current issues in child protection, child and family policy and participation of children.

During the CUCW General Assembly Finnish ombudsman for children Elina Pekkarinen held a presentation about the concerns regarding the mental wellbeing of the youth. Another crucial topic was the presentation and approval of new strategy of the CUCW.



FICE Germany/ IGfH in 2023

Prof. Dr. Nicole Knuth and Prof. Dr. Hans Ullrich Krause (first chairmen), Josef Koch (managing director)

The FICE Germany is a nationwide and internationally active professional association in child and youth welfare. It particularly advocates for the rights of young people who have spent a part of their lives in "residential care" and foster care assistance. Currently, IGfH has over 1300 members, including institutions, youth welfare offices, ministries, and individual members. It comprises seven nationwide expert working groups, various regional and topic-specific working groups.

In the reporting year 2023, IGfH primarily initiated activities focusing on the following topics:

- Empowering young people in their subjective legal status,
- Strengthening self-representation of young people in child and youth welfare,
- Making the experiences and demands of young people visible in the current discussion on legal reform: Inclusive Child and Youth Welfare,
- Situation of accommodation and care for unaccompanied minor refugees,
- Strengthening parental participation and self-representation in child and youth welfare,

- Impacts and solutions of the skilled labor shortage in Germany. All information can be found on our website: www.igfh.de.

Most important activities in 2023

Selected major conferences

- Queering Child and Youth Welfare – Towards Intersectional Feminist Girls' Work
- Online Expert Conference, March 24, 2023
- Parental Support – Parent Cooperation: Approaches in the Light of Inclusive SGB VIII. Joint Expert Conference of Professional Associations for Educational Assistance
- Organizers: IGfH with professional associations AFET, BVKE, EREV) on May 23, 2023, in Frankfurt am Main
- "PROFESSIONALS in SCARCITY"?! Professional Development in Educational Assistance
- Expert Conference by the Technical University of Dortmund and IGfH on September 25, 2023, in Dortmund

Some (selected) expert discussions

- Nationwide Exchange Forum on the Accommodation Situation of Unaccompanied Minor Refugees. Good Practice Exchange Forum



- January 19, 2023 | Digital Expert Forum | IGfH in cooperation with BumF and terre des hommes Deutschland
- International Advisory Board Meeting "Long-term Studies in Child and Youth Welfare – International Perspectives" within the CLS Project
- May 4-5, 2023, in Frankfurt am Main
- General Assembly FICE International and Expert Conference on Kinship Care of FICE International in Belgrade, Serbia, from September 18-19, 2023
- Exchange of young people from residential care and foster care assistance, as well as municipalities in Germany and England. National Leaving Care Forum; Young People's Benchmarking Forum on November 7-10, 2023, in Birmingham
- Integrated social-structural assistance – still a success?! Expert discussion of the Integrated Educational Assistance expert group and IGfH; November 8, 2023, in Erfurt
- Expert Meeting Cooperation: Where do the child and parents stand in the collaboration of professionals? Expert discussion IGfH, DIJuF, DGSF, and Federal Forum Guardianship and Custody on December 7, 2023, in Frankfurt am Main

Expert discussions and workshops with young people

- Participation and consultation of young people and the BMFSFJ in the Self-Representation Council as part of the participation process "Together to the Goal – We shape Inclusive Child and Youth Welfare."
- On the way to inclusion...? What do you think about inclusive youth welfare? What does it take for it to succeed? Workshop with young people with and without disabilities with experience in residential youth welfare from September 15 to 17, 2023, in Berlin
- (Host Bundl and Careleaver e.V. with the support of IGfH within the Self-Representation Council of the BMFSFJ)
- Rethinking self-representation in inclusive child and youth welfare. Self-organization meets municipalities, professional associations, and law
- November 6, 2023, in Frankfurt am Main
- Hearing in the German Bundestag with young people, parents, and foster parents in foster care assistance: Impulses for the further development of foster care assistance in Germany on November 27, 2023, in Berlin
- Discussion and presentation of the results of the workshop "On the way to inclusion...?"



- with Careleaver e.V. and Bundl with the support of IGfH with State Secretary Ekin Deligöz, Jana Borkamp (Department Head BMFSFJ), Dr. Heike Schmid-Obkirchner (Department Head BMFSFJ), and Anne Dahlbüding (Scientific Assistant BMFSFJ) as well as 20 young people on December 4, 2023, in Berlin at the BMFSFJ

Statements (a selection)

- Comments and positions of IGfH on the session documents of the BMFSFJ for the five working group meetings "Inclusive SGB VIII"
- January 2023: Ensure the well-being of all children and young people! The accommodation situation of UMF is becoming increasingly precarious: Professionals and UMF must not be left alone!
- March 2023: Avoid system-immanent poverty risks of foster parents! Introduce parental benefits for foster parents and secure pension contributions
- May 2023: Young adults and Careleavers* in SGB VIII. Three demands for the SGB VIII reform process
- May 2023: Child Basic Security: Broad alliance criticizes the inactivity of Federal Minister of Labor Heil in the fight against child poverty

- August 2023: Protecting children means preserving trust! Strengthening cooperation between child and youth welfare and medicine - for the abolition of § 4, paragraph 6 KKG!
- September 2023: Careleavers* receive parent-independent child basic security! Careleaver e.V., SOCLES, Leaving Care Specialist Agency, IGfH, AFET, BVkE, EREV, and Uni Hildesheim criticize the draft from August 30, 2023

Publications (a selection)

- Valeria Anselm (2023): This is (not) my home
<https://igfh.de/publikationen/das-ist-nichtmein-zuhause>, IGfH self-published in cooperation with Walhalla-Fachverlag, Regensburg.

- Stephan Maykus, Heinz Müller, Eva Christina Stuckstätte (Eds.) (2023):
Assistance for Education and School
<https://igfh.de/publikationen/fachbuecher/hilfen-zur-erziehungschule>
Basistexte Series, published by IGfH at Beltz/Juventa Weinheim

Topics of the specialist journal "Forum Erziehungshilfen" (circulation of 2500 copies)

- Issue 1/2023: Self-organization and self-representation of young people and parents

- Issue 2/2023: Child and youth welfare and criminal justice
- Issue 3/2023: Life situations of people with disabilities
- Issue 4/2023: Conditions of sexualized violence
- Issue 5/2023: (Outpatient) family assistance

Some central projects of IGfH 2023

1. Promoting and enabling self-organization of parents in inclusive child and youth welfare – Requirements and needs of parents in residential child and youth welfare

Duration: 09/2023 to 02/2024 (6 months)

Project management: Prof. Dr. Hans-Ullrich Krause (Kinderhaus Berlin-Mark Brandenburg; ASH Berlin) and Prof. Dr. Nicole Knuth (FH Dortmund).

Link to the project: <https://igfh.de/projekte/selbstorganisation-von-eltern-inklusive-kinderjugendhilfe-foerdern-ermoeglichen>

2. Taking into custody – Potentials of the field of action with a focus on young people and their parents

Duration: 10/2022 to 9/2024

Project management: Perspektive Institut/Bonn and IGfH

Link to the project: <https://www.perspektive-institut.de/projekte/inobhutnahme-perspektiven-impulse>

3. Consultation and Development Forum YOUTH STRENGTHEN: Bridges to Independence (Scientific Accompaniment and Practice Development)

Duration: 01/2023 to 12/2027

Project management: Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Schröer (University of Hildesheim) and Josef Koch (IGfH)

Link to the project: <https://beratungsforum-jugend.de/>

4. Care Leaver Statistics – Social Participation in the Life Course of Care Leavers*

Duration: May 2021 – December 2024 (Panel study approved for 10 years)

Project management: University of Hildesheim, German Youth Institute, GISS Bremen, and IGfH

Link to the project: <https://cls-studie.de/>

NENESZ, HUNGARY IN 2023

Szántó Edina Anna - President

NENESZ has 25 private members and 4 supporting members, 1 new member joined in 2023.

NENESZ held a General Assembly and participated at the General Assembly and Federal Council organized by the 75-year-old FICE International and FICE Serbia. The participation was inspiring, because the focus was on sharing ideas and brainstorming, where theoretical and practical knowledge could be put into a common "knowledge base".

The main goal of NENESZ is to provide as many opportunities as possible for children living in children's homes to spend their free time usefully with cultural and sports programs, to help with talent development, career guidance and career choice. Reports and short films about NENESZ's activities are available on the website: www.nenezs.hu.

The aim of our cultural programs is to transmit and receive pedagogical value by education through theatre. The purpose and essence of the program is to provide a lasting theater experience for the children through

thematic cultural-pedagogical education.

Within the framework of the "Sports for Children" program talent development, healthy lifestyle education, sports events, camps, and the useful use of free time activities are provided for children and young people. Sport activities are an educational tool, emphasizing team spirit and mutual attention in addition to nurturing talent.

"The future is in our hands!" - provides talent management and a successful career choice for children and young people living in children's homes.





Main activities

1. Our campaign's Never aim is to prevent child abuse. The book Never is a professional and mostly emotional guide that helps us understand which of our experiences as a child, parent, teacher or educator is considered abuse. NENESZ is committed to fighting against child abuse, contributes to ensuring that the rights of all children are respected and that neglect and abuse never become an accepted norm in our society. During the campaign, we'll hold interactive lectures in institutions with the involvement of professionals. NEVER (nenezs.hu)
2. The purpose of the Mentor Program is to nurture talent and to spend free time usefully. We are currently implementing the program in 3 areas: culture, literature-poetry, sports, with a particular emphasis on freestyle soccer. The mission of the mentoring program is to increase the self-confidence of young people, develop their creative expressiveness, and steer their lives in a positive direction. Program activities include the assistance and guidance of volunteer mentors who are experts in their fields. Mentor program (nenezs.hu)

In the year 2023 the programs implemented and supported by NENESZ reached almost 1,900 children, young people, educators and caretakers.





UDAYAN CARE, INDIA IN 2023

Kiran Modi – President

Founded in 1994, with 1 group home, Udayan Care is now present in 15 states and have a strong operational focus on family strengthening across all their interventions

In the year 2023, Udayan Care's advocacy work continued to focus on ensuring and enhancing rights of children and youth without parental care. While the practice on child and youth care (CYC) had been entirely based in India, our advocacy efforts have a larger global presence. Being CYC practitioners at heart, Udayan Care focusses on evidence based practice and practice informed advocacy and research.

Publications

- "The Procedural and Preparedness Challenges of Deinstitutionalisation in India: Learning from the Families Together Initiative in Delhi" was published in Relational Child and Youth Care Practice Journal, delving into the aspect of deinstitutionalisation and family strengthening in India during the post-pandemic

period.https://www.rcycp.com/docs/RCYCP_Vol35-3_sample.pdf

- "Assessment of Strategies to Develop Resilience in Children in a Residential Child Care Model of India" was published in Journal of Social Work and Social Development Journal, investigating the longitudinal 5-year sample of 121 children without parental care, living in group residential homes in India.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1aHguoSCEa1c7u6lrXoHUPUMbu-fhifbs/view>

- "Overcoming the odds: Demonstrating aftercare model of providing targeted support to care experienced youth" was published in the Scottish Journal of Residential Child Care, highlighting the targeted interventions with Care Leavers by Udayan Care. https://www.celcis.org/application/files/1017/0049/2896/2023_SJRCC_Vol_22_No_2_Modi_Kalra_Overcoming_the_odds.pdf



- “Family Strengthening Interventions: A Practitioner’s Perspective and Insights from the Field” was published in CYC - Online, an e-journal of the International Child and Youth Care Network, with insightful practitioners’ perspectives into the intricate realm of family-focused interventions in the context of family strengthening and highlights the role of Udayan Care as a practitioner. <https://cyc-net.org/cyc-online/feb2024.pdf>

Advocacy

5th BICON - Biennial International Conference on Alternative Care for Children in Asia. Udayan Care along with partners successfully delivered the 5th BICON conference on Alternative Care for children in Asia, held in Kathmandu, Nepal, on September 6th and 7th. BICON has been a leading conference focusing on the rights of children and young people without parental care, since 2014. Previously hosted by Udayan Care and now delivered by care experienced youth, as well as a coalition of organisations

consisting of Better Care Network; Family for Every Child; Forget Me Not, Hope and Homes for Children; Lumos; Save the Children; SOS Children’s Villages, Udayan Care. Guided by a care experienced reference group, care leavers advocated for themselves and spoke up for the millions of young people worldwide who have endured the hardships of institutionalisation. This event brought together over 400 delegates, both in-person and online, including several practitioners, government representatives, academicians, and care leavers from across Asia, to discuss challenges, best practices and explore emerging trends in care reform and children’s rights in Asia. Ms. Surja, and Mr. Rakesh shared their experiences and challenges as care leavers. Ms. Karishma Singh presented in the opening and closing sessions. www.bicon.asia

•Celebrating the First Decade of publishing our journal on alternative care and family strengthening: a decade of academic engagement of the Institutionalised Children Explorations and Beyond (ICB) Journal's academic engagement.



To mark this achievement, a special September issue titled "The Evolution of Alternative Care in South Asia over the Last Decade and Way Forward" was launched at 5th BICON, 2023 in Kathmandu, Nepal, by esteemed guests and global experts. This special issue provides a real, raw and compelling view of Alternative Care in seven countries which seeks to delve into the multifaceted process of child protection system reform across these nations, thereby examining the challenges, progress so far, and lessons learned from the past ten years providing a direction to the way forward. In an effort to delve into the lived experiences of care leavers, this issue presented a collection of written interviews conducted with care experienced youth from Bhutan, India, Nepal and Sri Lanka to amplify their voices.

•The March 2024 issue of the ICB journal, has been published, which marks ten years of academic engagement of the journal. With broadening its scope to the global space with a focus on Asia, the journal aims to broaden and deepen its reach in the Asia region

,along with beginning an investigation of social and cultural factors that complicate the lives of children without parental care and contribute to their institutional care and placement, along with taking into account the preventive and reintegrating aspect of family strengthening. This issue begins with an interview of Khadijah Madihi, a child rights specialist and the primary visionary behind Asia Family First, followed by 8 research papers from the global space. This issue was released on 19th of March at 2nd Annual Round Table on 'Strengthening and Empowering Families: Advancing Evidence-Based Practices in Alternative Care for Stronger Communities' held at India International Centre, Delhi.

• On the occasion of World Social Work Day on 19 March 2024, Udayan Care successfully convened its 2nd Round Table 2nd Annual Round Table on "Strengthening and Empowering Families: Advancing Evidence-Based Practices in Alternative Care for Stronger Communities" in a hybrid mode. With over 60 participants in person and more than 40 joining virtually, the day saw children, families, care leavers



,practitioners, social workers, researchers, academia, and partners come together to discuss community-led approaches to support families in India and how evidence facilitates driving positive change and fostering sustainable change.

• Release of podcast: On the jubilant occasion of 10 years engagement, ICB Journal is hosting podcasts featuring internationally distinguished personalities who possess remarkable expertise and experience in the fields of family strengthening and alternative care. The podcast series aims to serve as a platform to listen to the insights and wisdom of the subject experts that can empower different stakeholders, including policy makers, practitioners, and academicians working in this field. With these engaging and interactive conversations, the reach will be widened to a broader audience. We are grateful to our publishing partners, Sage India and to iPartner India for supporting this series of podcasts.
<https://open.spotify.com/show/2jfvQsi9PkXJIYRbKswluh>

•Strengthening the Global Care Leavers Community: [New tab \(careleaverscommunity.org\)](https://careleaverscommunity.org): with other partners, Udayan Care continued to manage the secretariat for this community, extending its support to the care leaders to become a strong community beyond borders.

*** 10 Cafe sessions by Care Leavers were held in the year, with members of the community leading the sessions end to end: 10 care leaver sessions from 6 countries: by, with and for care leavers**

- 1.April, 2023 on “Creating Memories” by Tanja, Germany
- 2.May, 2023 on “Regional Advocacy and Sustainability of Networks” by Generation Never Give up (GNG) Network, Sri Lanka
- 3.June, 2023 on “Celebrating fruits of Care leaver connection” by Lourdes, Namibia
- 4.July 2023 on “Support Provided to Care Leavers during Pandemic” by Aditya, India
- 5.Aug 2023 on “How to apply for Chevening Scholarship” by Pooja, India
- 6.Sep 2023 on “Emotional Well Being” by Jeffereyes, Zimbabwe



- 7.Oct 2023 on “Sharing BICON Experience” by Surja and Rakesh, India
- 8.November 2023 on “Creating Memories part-2” By Tanja, Germany
- 9.December 2023 on “Resolution Revolution - Resetting on the realistic and achievable goal” by Akpene, Ghana
- 10.January 2024 on “what do you turn to/speak to” by Moses Akash, Sri Lanka

Additionally, the **GCLC Campaign on Vision 2024** was organized for year 2024, documenting individual hopes from all Global Care Leavers Members, and had been updated on website with photos, name and country of each members. The GCLC website is managed solely by a care leaver from New Zealand. The website carries (careleaverscommunity.org) showcases direct voices of care leavers, has a banner on the Café sessions, a video on the GCLC journey etc.

Participation in FICE monthly Cafe and Workshop

- 1.Participated in 7 Cafes each cafe was around a unique theme on children and youth Care and support.
- 2.In June, care leavers participated in task force “hand to hand” interactive session
- 3.In July, participated in “Leaving Care and Youth Empowerment Thematic Bundle” workshop
- 4.In September Joined hands in the celebration of the Federal Council Session.
- 5.Participated in FICE Serbia 2003-2023 Jubilee Conference.

The GCLC has also improved its processes of forming a Core Group for leadership role, which is engaged in drafting its long-term Vision and Terms of reference

GCLC members have also participated in the INTRAC data collection and verification workshop to document the grand challenges of leaving care.



FICE ISRAEL IN 2023

Emmanuel Grupper - President

In 2023, FICE Israel managed a substantial network of around 220 out-of-home programs for at-risk children and youth. This network included approximately 100 therapeutic residential care and treatment centers, where children were referred by ministries and community welfare services, and about 120 residential and educational care and treatment centers, providing crucial support for children and youth in need of rehabilitative and advancing programs.

The Welfare Services Frameworks operate through four main projects:

- **Therapeutic Residential Care and Treatment Centers**
- **Post-Hospitalization Framework:** As an alternative to psychiatric hospitalization for children and youth.
- **Crisis Centers**
- **Therapeutic Day Residential Care and Treatment Centers:** Established to treat children and their families without removing them from their natural environment.

The Ministry of Education's Residential Education and Youth Villages in Israel are dedicated to providing a unique and nurturing environment for children and youth in need. These youth villages, which are specialized out-of-home facilities, offer a safe and comfortable environment. These villages' educational and rehabilitative efforts focus on social education for peer groups and provide opportunities for agricultural, scientific, and artistic education.

Currently, about 22,000 students in Israel are educated in out-of-home frameworks for children and youth at risk, a testament to the significant impact of these programs. This inspiring statistic highlights the potential for a brighter future for these children and youth.

In Israel's boarding school education system, two significant issues have emerged over the past year:



Instructor Salaries: The salaries of caregivers are being underfunded by government ministries, leading to a severe shortage of qualified individuals to fill these vital positions. This urgent need for qualified caregivers must be addressed to ensure the continued success of the boarding school education system.

Closure of Day Residential Care and Treatment Centers: The Ministry of Welfare decided to shut down the day boarding schools that were previously operating within the regular boarding frameworks. These schools provided comprehensive educational and therapeutic support to their students. The closure is a cause for concern, as the alternative community program with significantly reduced funding may lead to diminished services for at-risk children and youth, a situation that demands attention.

Initiatives such as awareness campaigns, advocacy meetings with policymakers, and media engagements are being carried out to increase public understanding of these two critical issues.

The representatives of FICE Israel actively participate in these efforts, consistently sharing their well-informed perspectives throughout the process.

FICE Israel's Contribution to the "Hand in Hand" Task Force Activities

Support for Ukrainian Refugees: Upon the invasion of Russia into Ukraine, many people, including teens, fled Ukraine. Israel had an existing infrastructure for Jewish teens needing out-of-home placement, which was adapted to accommodate and educate them during the war. The Management for Residential Education & Youth Aliyah opened a dedicated program for refugees from the war in Ukraine. Representatives of the Jewish Agency offered mothers who fled with their children to neighboring countries the option to send their children to Israel through an expedited process, often without preparation and psychological screening. In some cases, these refugee youth were on a plane within three days of the initial conversation.



The youth villages that received the teens had to quickly recruit educational teams, vacate and prepare rooms, and organize all logistical preparations within several days.

Leadership Convention: On January 24, the Israeli Teachers Union (ITU) held a leadership convention in Tel Aviv. They invited Mrs. Tanya Zhornitska, the principal of School No. 26 in Odesa and the Ukrainian High School Principals' Association (RGU) vice president, to share her experience of leading a school during times of war. Mrs. Zhornitska addressed the convention, providing firsthand insights into how she managed a school with 650 children despite the ongoing conflict. Her presence at the convention highlighted the challenges children, youth, and their educators faced during the war and the efforts made to overcome them. FICE Israel, led by Professor Emmanuel Grupper, held a special welcome event in her honor at one of the youth villages.

Round Tables Event on Children's Rights: During a round table event dedicated to children's rights from kindergartens to high schools,

Michal, the State Coordinator for the Realization of Children's Rights at the Ministry of Education of Israel and the head of ITU external relations presented methods and tools used to preserve children's rights in Israel. These methods and tools were shared for potential implementation in Ukrainian education.

Educational Delegation Visit: In March 2023, a group of Ukrainian school principals, representatives from educational departments of communities, and the UEP program director visited Israel. They were accompanied by the head of the UEP's child protection department and a FICE representative in Ukraine. The purpose of the trip was to visit educational institutions, including youth villages in Israel, and learn from their experiences organizing educational services during and after wartime. The goal was to provide the participants with information on improving educational services during wartime and to familiarize them with Israel's best practices, which they could implement in their respective communities and schools.



Additional Activities of FICE Israel members:

Professional Contributions: Members of FICE were actively involved in writing professional articles and delivering lectures at national conferences, sharing their expertise and insights.

Graduates: This year, programs for Youth villages and residential centers graduates were expanded to include those from out-of-home arrangements without family support. More apartments were established for this population, additional positions were created, and programs were formulated to help integrate them into civilian life.

Professional Tour in Romania: In September 2023, a delegation of 29 educators from FICE Israel went on a professional tour in Romania. They were warmly hosted by FICE Romania, which was very open and generous. Unfortunately, a planned reciprocal visit by a delegation from Romania had to be canceled due to the war in their country.

On the 7th of October, a devastating event unfolded as a result of a terrorist attack carried out by the Hamas organization. The boarding school system sprang into action swiftly and decisively to safeguard the well-being of its students and staff. Boarding schools and youth villages located in the country's southern regions were evacuated quickly. At the same time, institutions in central areas, such as Neve Hadassah and Ben Shemen Youth Village, generously opened their doors to accommodate and support the evacuees and staff. Furthermore, boarding facilities in central areas also provided refuge for civilian families forced to flee their homes in the southern and northern regions due to the ongoing conflict.

FICE JAPAN IN 2023

Shigeyuki Mori - Chief Director

Japanese Society of Social Pedagogy (FICE Japan), headquartered in Kanagawa (the prefecture adjacent to Tokyo) since January of 2018. It was founded by a group of practitioners and researchers in the field of child welfare, child mental health, and related fields who are working with children and youths at risk or under out-of-home care wishing to join the international network under integrated framework.

Main activities

We reports on the activities of FICE Japan grouping them in three: organizational reformation, conferences, and other activities.

1) Organizational reformation

FICE Japan(Japanese Society of Social Pedagogy) has 80 members (the end of 2023) adding some members in 2023. Looking back, however, we need to concede that our organization was not able to expand or hold activities as planned due to the outbreak of the Covid-19 shortly after its establishment. The overcrowding of work at each member's workplace, especially at the hospital where the secretary function was in charge, made

administrative work difficult. The fact that practitioners and researchers from many fields joined the core membership at the time of its establishment also made it difficult to integrate the entire organization. Therefore, over the course of 2022-2023, the working group within the board held frequent online meetings (av. every other week) to discuss basic policies. As a result, it was decided to focus on out-of-home care for the time being, to revise the Articles of Society with the Board limited to members in this specialized field, and to place the secretariat in a foundation in the child welfare field to facilitate its operation. The new structure was decided at board meeting and the general meeting in December 2023 as a step to our new beginning.

2) Conferences

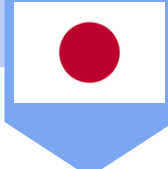
The biggest achievement of FICE Japan in 2023 was the two times organization of conference on the practice and theory of out of home care. The first, the 9th conference, was held on Sunday, January 29, 2023, on the theme "Alternative Childcare as Family Support," with 40 participants. A keynote speech



and two breakout sessions were held on the continuum of care between residential and foster care. In the keynote speech, Mr. Yasuhiro Koya, Director of the Child and Family Center Yawaragi, gave a practical report on the support for families and foster parents in the community. Mr. Koya argued that family support specialists can provide a continuum of care by working with foster parents and parents in need of support through the provision of support and time limited alternative care for parents in the community. In breakout session 1, the participants reported on their care practices as foster parents and the experiences of caregivers in group homes under the theme of alternative foster care as family support. In breakout session 2, there were reports and discussions on the relationship between theory and practice in child welfare facilities addressed by social pedagogy.

The 10th Conference was held online on Sunday, July 9. There were 40 participants. The theme of the conference was "How Do We Become Alternative Care Practitioners?." The process of becoming a child care practitioner is different for each individual practitioner as they enter the field

of practice and as they accumulate their own experiences, and it involves a great deal of personal feelings and emotions as well as encounters and relationships with others. There is a great deal of significance in sharing experiences with each other, rather than keeping them to oneself, while reevaluating such "individual" experiences. Social pedagogy is based on and systematized by a variety of disciplines, including sociology, psychology, and education, and a philosophical perspective can also make an important contribution. In order to facilitate such exchanges and to discover personal experiences, Mr. Shinzo Nakazato, researcher of Tokyo University, introduced phenomenological methods in the field of philosophy. The keywords were embodiment, distancing, and otherness. He carefully described the relationship between children and caregivers, and explained how, through qualitative analysis based on phenomenology, the being of individual can be experienced with a greater sense of reality. Afterwards, three residential childcare staff who have become practitioners through many years of experience shared their real experiences in their own words, reflecting on their own experiences,



and provided an opportunity to think together about the process of becoming alternative care practitioners.

There are many differences between care in an institution, such as a foster home, and care in a foster home, but one of the major differences is the presence of a supportive family member in the alternative foster care setting. We would like to examine the strengths, similarities, and continuities between the two by contrasting institutional care, primarily in children's homes, and foster care, in order to determine what impact living in a foster care space where children have their own family image but with another family structure has on their development.



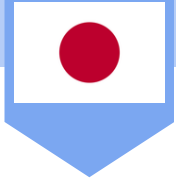
The flyer of the FICE Japan 9th conference with translation of the key parts
 A keynote speech: "Alternative Childcare as Family Support" by Yasuhiro Koya
 Break out session 1: "Alternative foster care as family support" organized by Takahiro Hoshino
 Break out session 2: "How we connect theory and practice in daily life situations" organized by Shigeyuki Mori

The 9th: Alternative Foster Care as Family Support.

Alternative foster care is a type of social support used when it is difficult for a child to spend time with his or her family or when spending time with them would be hurtful to the child. While the child lives apart from his or her family, how the child situates the family in his or her life becomes an important issue and a support goal for the support provider. A new vision for social foster care was released in 2009, emphasizing the importance of foster care in social foster care.



The flyer of the FICE Japan 10th conference with translation of the key parts
 A keynote speech: "Toward a Phenomenology of Childcare" by Shinzo Nakazato
 Symposium: "Thinking together about the process of becoming an alternative childcare practitioner" organized by Shigeyuki Mori



The 10th: How Do We Become Alternative Care Practitioners?

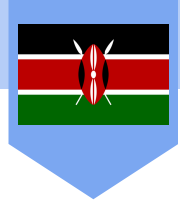
There are various systems and theories to support alternative child-rearing. In order to improve our daily practice, it is of course important to make use of the available systems and to continue training and study in search of theories that can be used. However, the process of becoming a practitioner by entering the field of practice and accumulating experiences, and the process of choosing again to stay in the field of practice cannot be explained by systems and theories. There are different processes for each person, involving a great deal of personal thoughts and feelings, as well as encounters and relationships with others. There is a great deal of meaning in re-evaluating individual experiences and sharing them with each other, rather than keeping them to oneself. Sharing within our daily personal relationships is important, but what can we find by reflecting and sharing in a more open setting? Let's think together through "phenomenology", a way of finding out about our own experiences.

3) Other related activities and their background

In 2023, a policy was implemented that could be a major turning point for child support in Japan. This was the establishment of the Children and Families Agency, Government of Japan. Until now, policies related to children have been stove-piped by various ministries and agencies with jurisdiction over education, justice, health and welfare, and other areas, making coordination difficult. With the creation this year of a new independent administrative agency for children and their families, it is expected that child-centered measures will be enhanced. Hence, the importance of FICE Japan's role in enhancing alternative care in Japan is growing.

Some of our members including the president and a board member have lead a research and training trip to Germany organized by Family Home Research Group in September 2023.

In Japan, two books on Nordic social pedagogy have been published in Japanese by FICE Japan members in the past few years. In addition, several studies, practices and workshops on social pedagogy have been conducted by our members.



FICE KENYA IN 2023

Simon Peter - President

Every year FICE Kenya members realize several activities in support of children in out-of-home care. The FICE Kenya Annual report combines information regarding the activities realized by both FICE Kenya and its members which then form part of FICE International annual report.

Biggest achievement in 2023

The launch of the Craft and Business Centre took place in November 2023 amidst a vibrant celebration, marking the culmination of construction financed by Africa Awee and equipped by COMUNDO. Following nearly a year of construction from December 2022 to November 2023, the center was inaugurated with great pomp and ceremony. Distinguished guests from Africa Awee, the COMUNDO Country Director, a representative from Coop bank, Make Me Smile International, TVET director, the Director of Make Me Smile Kenya, and various other attendees graced the occasion.

This momentous launch signified the transition from a craft center to a fully-fledged business hub, where Adolescent Girls and Young Women (AGYWs) could now undergo training in a spacious environment furnished with an increased number of sewing machines and comfortable seating, thanks to the generous funding from COMUNDO. The provision of both advanced and manual sewing machines aimed to enhance training effectiveness and meet production deadlines, driven by heightened demand in the new business setup.

The newly established business center accommodates three essential shops: a barber, salon, and textile outlet, all meticulously equipped ahead of the launch to ensure seamless operations. The event not only marked the beginning of a new chapter but also served as a prime marketing platform for showcasing the center's training programs, products, and services, directly engaging



customers with sales on the day. Reflecting on the occasion, the business center was christened "SMILES HUB," a name that resonates with its mission. Plans for strategic expansion included setting up a retail outlet in Kisumu CBD, envisaging increased employment opportunities for graduated AGYWs as production and sales personnel, thereby bringing products and services closer to a discerning clientele. Additionally, recognizing the need to address a gender gap, future plans included integrating boys into the training programs, a necessity identified during initial inquiries.

Important activities in 2023

- MMSK DREAMS Project expansion: DREAMS program expanded from wards of implementation to 15 wards of interventions plus 2 wards as pocket implementing areas. The program conducted inception and entry process successfully. Stakeholders' engagements involved meetings and establishment of safe spaces the program provided interventions using the Kenya Layering Table

across the 14 main safe spaces, 117 satellite spaces with additional interactions facilitated virtually across existing 18 virtual platforms.

- IMMSK empowers 14,950 AGYW through assorted social Asset Building intervention. The services involved innovative and integrated safe spaces model targeting those of older age cohorts, the innovations included the safe spaces library services at Nyalenda Health centre main space; other initiatives included basketry, tailoring, hairdressing, ICT skills, alongside services specific on HIV prevention. Across the safe spaces the program provided youth friendly services target at reducing HIV incidences and reduction of unplanned pregnancies.

- MMSK participation during National and international days: DREAMS program participated during multiple days commemorated over the year including the international Women's days celebrations (IWD), World Aids Day, 16 days of gender activism, the day of

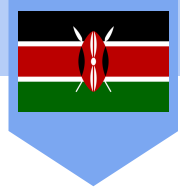


the African child, world menstrual health day and the respective safe space open day activities. The project also organized for legal clinic bootcamp sessions, gender-based violence screening; talent nurturing, academic and career guidance, mental health and disability assessment and education, menstruation, HPV vaccine education and uptake and COVID 19 vaccination.

- MMSK DREAMS ambassadors participate during ICASA and Women Now conference: Two DREAMS ambassadors represented the program under the USAID 4TheChild program during the 22nd International Conference on AIDS and Sexually transmitted infections in Zimbabwe- Harare on December 4th to 9th 2023, themed AIDS IS NOT OVER: address inequalities, accelerate inclusion and innovation; provided an opportunity for international practitioners and experts to highlight challenges and successes of HIV, hepatitis and STI responses across the African continent. The conference was attended by

8,600 delegates with over 800 abstract presentations and 105 exhibitions ranging from clinical, community and industrial experts with the aim of exploring African solutions for African problems.

I MMSK DREAMS ambassadors participate during FAWE conference: Three USAID 4TheChild DREAMS program staff participated in the FAWE Triennial Conference on Girls Education on 21st and 22nd November 2023 in Nairobi, Kenya. The conference brought together like-minded individuals from all over Africa, delved into innovative discussions and learning strategies aimed at propelling gender equality across educational landscapes. The program made both an oral presentation on TVET (Technical and Vocational Education and Training) as an integral part for formal education for girls, and full presentation on education subsidies for AGYW re-enrolling into school emphasizing their respective roles within the DREAMS project.



- MMSK DREAMS Participated during PEPFAR @20: USAID 4TheChild participated during commemoration of PEPFAR at 20, For over 20 years, USAID has played a critical role in the global HIV/AIDS response, and since 2003 has helped lead the implementation of the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), which has helped over 50 countries curb their HIV epidemics. The program was represented by staff and one of the champions, Ruth Ramogi who is currently a local administration leader shared how DREAMS enabled her to finish her education and ultimately secure a steady job with her local government during the commemoration. She received empowerment through the DREAMS programming growing to be a mentor for her peers and finally growing to be an assistant chief Buoye Sub location in Kolwa East ward, Kisumu Kenya.

- MMSK OVC Program supports 20,000 orphans and vulnerable project. Caregivers supported with 87 productive assets ie.

Warmers, sewing machines, hair blow dryer, chips electric fryer, big umbrellas, frying pans, hair dryers, Thermos flasks, Ice coolers, and shed nets.

- 30 OVC Households supported with one year health insurance worth Kshs. 180,000.00

- 64 Households supported with business boost worth Kshs. 350,000.00 through MMSK OVC project

- 9 Households supported with emergency funds worth Kshs. 72,000.00 through OVC project

- In April, 33 Adolescent Girls and Young Women (AGYW) underwent training with the National Industrial Training Authority (NITA).

- On July 14th, 2023, the Make Me Smile Kenya craft center celebrated its 3rd graduation ceremony in the Mayenya community with 33 students graduating.

- The launch of the Craft and Business Centre took place in November 2023 a midst a vibrant celebration, marking the culmination of construction financed by Africa Awee and equipped by COMUNDO. The spacious building has training



lunit that will see more trainees being admitted, Production unit to produce more clothes and textile products for sale, baby unit to accommodate babies when their mom's are being trained, Textile shop for selling finished products, Salon and Barber shops for beauty and hairdressing.

- Purchase of more new electronic machines such the embroidery and the knitting machine to boost up the production capacity at the craft centre.

- A total of 93,054 people were reached with information and messages on reproductive health and gender equality in 2023 through the MMS-K reproductive health and gender equity project.

- 35,212 people successfully received SRHR services including 65 cases presented in courts of law with 35 legal outcomes.

- Make Me Smile Kenya conducted a situational analysis of the provision of Sexual and Gender Based Violence and Reproductive health services in Kolwa East and Miwani within Kisumu County.

- A position paper, reflecting the demands of the residents of Kolwa East and Miwani on SRHR Service delivery was drafted and presented at the launch of a gender equality advocacy conference held with top County and National Government officials representing various ministries and departments.

- In 2023, Make Me Smile Angola Health facility safely conducted 132 deliveries, this was an improvement from the previous year where the deliveries stood at 89 this huge leap is attributable to the Make ME Smiles' support that provide staffing, pharmaceuticals and non-pharmaceutical supplies and food items.

- Angola Health Center in collaboration with Make Me Smile Kenya organized a CCC open day and Health Center Open Day in April 2023. The Event took place at Angola Health Centre and was attended by representatives from Make Me Smile Kenya, Local Administration, Health care providers (from within and outside the facility) and



Approximately 113 participants were drawn from both HIV- and HIV + Population.

I- The Make Me Smile Kenya Future Hub centre was able to train a total of 296 young people (232 girls and 64 boys) on basic computer skills in 6 groups spread throughout the year.

- Make Me Smile Kenya also supported “Future Hub” with 20 new desktops, 4 laptops and a big television set to facilitate easy training and instructions.

- Leveraging the OVC and DREAMS platforms, the project successfully trained 152 Adolescent Girls and Young Women (AGYW) and OVC caregivers in June, August, October, and December. The focus was on nutrition and the importance of establishing kitchen gardens.

- The project conducted ecological building training sessions in June, August, October, and December, benefiting 94 OVC caregivers and AGYWs.

- Two permaculture project leads and one gardener attended a beekeeping and maintenance training organized.

by Hive Limited Kenya in July, enhancing our expertise in sustainable practices.

- 380 indigenous, medicinal, and food trees were planted in November at Mayenya community demonstration farm.

- I Supported the planting of 3700 indigenous trees, medicinal plants, and food trees in November 2023 at Kajulu hills.

- Donated and planted 1000 tree seedlings during the NGO week at Maragoli hills

- Continued reforestation efforts with the planting of 1500 trees in May on the adopted 2 hectares of land at Kakamega Forest

- Supported one permaculture lead to attend the African Climate Summit in September, aligning with our commitment to climate change mitigation.

- Make Me Smile Children safe-park was able to conduct 4 community awareness on gender equality, 12 children's club sessions and one sport tournament in 2023.



HIMAYA, LEBANON IN 2023

Serge Saad - Director

In 2023, himaya achieved significant milestones, establishing itself as a leading force in humanitarian efforts across the country.

In 2023, himaya renewed its contracts with the Ministry of Justice in two governorates and continued to support and supervise the MoJ-mandated NGO in a third governorate. Himaya built the capacity of lawyers and CP social workers on child-friendly communication, Judicial Protection & Family-based Alternative Care in the Judicial pathway. Himaya participated with the Ministry of Justice, in the drafting of the operational procedures for the implementation of the law criminalizing human trafficking.

Himaya was also a speaker at the annual meeting of “The Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action”, detailing the impact that himaya has achieved and its advocacy efforts since its establishment in 2008.

Himaya participated in the workshop organized by the parliamentary committee of “Woman and Child” on “the implementation of the law

criminalizing sexual harassment and rehabilitating its survivors”.

Himaya in partnership with governmental and international actors, worked on reactivating the parliamentary proceedings to amend law 422/2002 (Child Protection Law).

Himaya, on behalf of the CP sector in Lebanon, conducted the mapping of residential care centers across the country, which included recommendations and standards that would ensure the safety of children in such institutions. On behalf of the Child Protection (CP) sector, Himaya enhanced the capabilities of frontline workers in Lebanon for early, safe identification and referral of non-CP actors, aiming to integrate CP concepts across various sectors.

Himaya initiated two key prevention activities: 1. Youth Child Protection Network: himaya established the "Youth Network for Child Protection" to enhance the Child Protection (CP) network in Lebanon. This network engages youth in decision-making processes and advocates for Child Rights. Through this initiative, youth volunteers are empowered to represent their peers, address child



abuse issues, and implement CP campaigns on a national level. 2. Child Municipal Council (CMC): The CMC aims to promote good governance and empower children by providing them with a platform to voice their opinions and needs within their communities. Through inclusive and participatory processes, children develop leadership skills, promote Child Protection and Rights, and engage in community development activities. Himaya launched the CMC in Jouniyeh municipality in 2023 and expanded the initiative to three other municipalities.

Himaya has done many important achievements under the component of direct response to child abuse:

1. Offer case management and family psychosocial support to 2240 maltreated children, 28% of them are subject to physical abuse, 26 % to neglect, 16% to exploitation and 11% to sexual abuse.
2. Offer cross border case-management to 17 children & their families under the umbrella of “International social services “
3. On the component of quality service provision, 1376 cases of children who benefited from specialized psychosocial support were closed successfully out of

1778 closed cases, which elevate the success rate in case management to 77% in 2023.

4. On the component of community trust and collaboration, Himaya’s referrals were 62% coming from citizens, community actors and donors (national and international) and 19% from our 24/24 operating national hotline, 13% from families themselves, 9% from prevention Himaya team activities and 4% from judges and prosecutors.

5. Himaya took active part in “ISS Madrid Case workers Coordinator’s meeting” on 27 & 28th of September 2023, an international network meeting of “International social services “reflecting on practices serving the best interest of the children.

6. To capacitate the social workers in their competencies addressing maltreatment and specifically the ones with a specific focus on caregivers’ partnership enhancement, several trainings has been put in place from which: in-depth application of motivational interview, and partnership and engagement of fathers within the protection action plan.

7. Three other workshops took place to capacitate direct response team members (psychologist, social workers and senior case managers)



on assessing abuse for children with specific needs, precisely children with mental retardation, children with social and communicational disability (autistic spectrum) and children with neuro-developmental disability such as cerebral palsy. 8. himaya, amidst challenges in funding, was able to engage the psychologists working in all governorates in monthly collegial support groups to enable them to discuss technical challenges and mitigate those challenges through discussion on theoretical concepts linked to practice. Furthermore, the Psychologists benefited from four days of practical analysis with an external psychoanalyst to strengthen their capacities on understanding countertransfer specifically in transcultural and transgenerational trauma setting and therapy.

Stories of children

Sarah's healing path Nine-year-old

Sarah, a Syrian girl, resides in Bourj Hammoud with her mother, father, and three siblings . Sarah attends a nearby public school with diligence and has a keen interest in the arts. She enjoys crafting and drawing. During a parenting session with himaya's prevention team, Sarah's mother revealed to the facilitators

that Sarah's 16-year-old cousin had been harassing her daughter sexually.

The case was referred to the resilience team to conduct a psychosocial assessment. The beneficiary and her parents told the psychologist and the social worker during the sessions that Sarah's cousin had sexually harassed her during the night when she was sleeping at her home. He entered her room in the middle of the night and touched her private parts while her parents slept in their own bedroom. Upon discovering the abuse, the parents made up a reason to expel him from their home without disclosing their knowledge of the harassment. However, since he was not confronted with why he was asked to leave the house, the abuser kept visiting the family frequently since his grandmother was living with them. The psychosocial evaluation also confirmed the impact of the abuse on the child: Sarah displayed distressing behaviors, including bedwetting, aggressive behavior toward her siblings, stealing money from her parents, persistently breaking house rules, and night terrors, which included screaming when she woke up in the middle of the night. Sarah's relationship with her father was greatly impacted by



these symptoms; he began using physical violence as a form of discipline since he was unaware of the initial source of the symptoms. Sarah often stated that she no longer felt that her father loved her. Given the severity of the abuse and its effects on Sarah and her family, the parents and the psychosocial team created an action plan with the overall objective of shielding Sarah from future abuse.

After 6 months of intervention, Sarah developed understanding of the trauma she had endured. She had the awareness she needed to defend herself going forward, and she was also able to communicate her feelings about it. The father realized that Sarah's actions were a direct result of her abuse. He demonstrated an interest in strengthening his bond with his daughter; as a result, he ultimately started to communicate his feelings to her, spent quality time with her, and managed to communicate in a healthy way with her. The mother played a crucial role in strengthening this bond between the father and Sarah by consistently reminding him that Sarah needs his love and giving him the authority to step in as the family's primary protector. The abuser's parents advised him to

stop coming for whatever reason after realizing the detrimental effects of having him see Sarah. Consequently, Sarah's symptoms decreased. Her bedwetting and night terrors had ended, and she was getting better sleep at night. She was also able to be less hostile toward her sibling and, overall, was not using inappropriate behaviors as a way to express her frustration. In summary, the family's involvement enabled the psychosocial team to accomplish their goals, and by closing the case, they were able to reassure Sarah and her siblings that their parents would take all necessary precautions to keep them safe.

Kamal self image through clay play and clay modelling

Kamel, a 9-year-old child born Agenesis (without fingers), faced many challenges stemming from both physical and psychological abuse. His experiences included bullying, verbal abuse labelling him as "disabled", and even instances of self-harm encouragement. This mistreatment extended to his family, where his brother's hurtful words significantly impacted his emotional well-being. Moreover, rejection from schools due to peers' fears about his differences further isolated him, leading to



feelings of inadequacy, shame, and isolation.

During the five-month intervention, significant progress was observed in Kamel's emotional well-being. One essential aspect was addressing his feelings of inadequacy and dispelling the belief that surgical intervention was the only path to happiness. Kamel found a way for self-expression and empowerment through clay play and clay modelling, allowing him to effectively project his emotions and elaborate on his thoughts. This newfound outlet for creativity led to a shift in perception. Kamel began to focus on his capacity to create and shape things despite the absence of four fingers due to Agenesis. As the intervention progressed, Kamel developed a more positive self-image and a heightened sense of his capabilities. He no longer felt limited by his condition and was able to compile a list of activities and achievements he could pursue confidently. Notably, he began expressing himself during sessions using gestures and his hands without reservation, signifying a remarkable increase in self-assurance and acceptance.



FICE LESOTHO IN 2023

Itumeleng Kimane - President

Bahlabani Initiative has significantly seen growth in the work we have done this year and has done great work through advocacy and set forth the necessary steps for Policy reform and for the recognition of children in policy and in the financing of State funds through Public Finance for Children. Through relations and partnerships formed this year, FICE Lesotho has strived to advocate for the recognition of children as treasure and ignite the political will 'dedicated to our national treasure: The children of Lesotho', which comes very close to slogan the organization used in presenting its submission on the country's daycare centers to the Social Cluster Parliamentary Portfolio Committee as shown below – note emphasis on children being a treasure.

Through the FICE International, Lesotho was able to connect with Catholic Relief Services through the FICE International Website. FICE Lesotho has striven to maintain relationships with the Parliament (Social Cluster Portfolio Committee), UNICEF, NACCW, Adoptionscetrum, Seriti, Lesotho National Broadcasting Service (LNBS), SOS Children's Village, UNFPA, WHO, GIZ, FICE International and FICE Africa.

Mission of the organization: We seek to create an environment whereby government, business sector and civil society, families and communities work collaboratively to find innovative solutions that enhance the well-being and quality of living for children and youth, as well as contribute to the development of a new generation of productive and responsible citizens who are fully aware of their human rights and responsibilities and willing to readily invest in getting Lesotho out of the socio-political and economic stalemate it is currently embroiled in.

Who we are: Bahlabani Initiative (BI) is a Lesotho membership-based civil society organization founded and legally registered under the Societies Act in April 2009. The broad mandate of the organization is to promote and protect the human rights of young people (children and youth) as enshrined in key international instruments particularly, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. The organization is committed to ensuring that domestic policies and laws affecting children and the work done by itself and other partner



organizations in the country stand in compliance with provisions of these two above-mentioned child rights instruments. BI is neutral regarding politics and religion, and its founders and membership consist of individuals from diverse educational and professional backgrounds and are human rights leaders driven mainly by social entrepreneurship aspirations to work with people particularly, children and youth.

What we do: Organization's Strategic Areas of operation are:

Alternative care (adoption (domestic and inter-country), foster care and formal residential care).

Justice for children (J4C).

Improving livelihoods of vulnerable households.

Child Rights research, monitoring, and evaluation.

Reporting on the implementation of Child rights in the country.

Advocacy for the realization of children's rights areas covered under the CRC and the ACRWC.

Partnerships and collaboration with other key child rights players nationally, regionally, and globally to promote and protect child rights.

Strengthening and professionalization of child and youth care workforce.

ACTIVITIES IN 2023

BI members have actively participated in various partnerships, networks, collaborations, and projects. To fulfill its broad mandate, the organization recognizes the need for three essential components: a robust child governance system, a highly skilled and dedicated child and youth care workforce, and sustainable partnerships. This understanding has allowed BI to accumulate valuable knowledge and experience, enabling the successful implementation of numerous initiatives, as outlined below:

Participation in Regional and International Forums: BI has been active in activities of FICE Africa and FICE International and in 2016 they got for Lesotho an associate membership status on FICE International at the organization's Congress in Austria. The country seeks to attain full membership status in 2024.

Mobilization of Civil Society Organizations for the establishment of the Lesotho Association of Child and Youth Care Workers (LACCW): since April 2016 BI has been actively mobilizing state and non-state stakeholders and the response is amazingly positive. Which is an ongoing process



Formulation/reform of evidence-based child rights policies, legislation, and other strategic documents: participated in the Mapping of Services for victims of Gender Based Violence as Violence against Children and Trafficking in Persons in all the 10 districts of Lesotho under UNFPA.

Development of FICE Lesotho: Establishment of the national chapter of FICE International under FICE Africa chapter.

Positive Parenting Seminars: hosting positive parenting seminars for parents and children aimed at building positive relationships between children and parents using different media platforms – TV, radio, life events, training workshops, virtual online engagement with government and non-government stakeholders, as well as the public, etc.

Documenting Experiences of Implementing the IMPACT Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, and World Health Organization Project in Lesotho: In September 2018, the Kingdom of Lesotho embarked on the [IMPACT](#) (Interactive Media Peer Assistance and Coaching for Teens) project through the 2gether4SRHR Programme

for which WHO, in collaboration with UNICEF, UNFPA, and UNAIDS has recently been granting support to the Ministry of Health Ministry (MoH) and Ministry of Education and Training (MoET). Under this intervention named the Joint UN Regional Programme, the objective is to empower all young people exercise their SRH rights through exposure to protective and promotive behaviours including, opening greater opportunities for them to access integrated quality services.

Trained Child and Youth Care Workers: 1 Professionally trained with a BTech. Degree and 5 trained by NACCW with funding from Adoptionscentrum to acquire a Basic Qualification in Child and Youth Care Certificates.

Child and Families Department: worked with 5 client's cases of child neglect, facilitate unlawful denial of access of a parent in providing care, drawing of a care plan and administering a clear referral to the relevant service provider such as the Lesotho Mountain Police (Child, Gender and Protection Unit), and Children's Court where necessary.

FICE Africa Meetings: successfully attended the quarterly meetings with FICE Africa meetings.



Advocacy for Strengthening of Daycare Centres Services in Lesotho: advocacy services in the realization and Catalysing Quality Sustainable and Replicable Daycare Services with the support of the Catholic Relief Services Lesotho. Deliverables included development of flip charts and posters for awareness raising and results dissemination. BI successfully attained the approval by CABINET to mandate the Ministry of Education and Training as the custodian of the 0-3years cohort who had been left behind.

Review of the Child Protection and Welfare (Amendment) Bill, 2023: BI actively participated in the review of the Child Protection and Welfare Act (Amendment) 2023 clause by clause.

ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2023

Bahlabani Initiative (BI) lead an advocacy campaign that aimed to Catalyzing Quality Sustainable and Replicable Daycare Services (given the nomenclature of 'Ke Ngoana Rona' in Sesotho). This project is co-funded by CRS and Bainum Family Foundation and has been running since October 2022 and will end in September 2025.

CRS sought to improve nutrition, health, and developmental outcomes for the 0-3-year-old children (newborns, infants, and toddlers) by implementing an affordable and replicable model of quality Early Childhood Development (ECD) day-care services using standardized guidelines already drafted with the support of ECD stakeholders from relevant government and non-government organizations in the field. BI recognized that as the domestic policy and legal frameworks illustrates the future of children in Lesotho, from birth to five years of age, depends on developing a unified national commitment to expand and improve early childhood services. The organization further recognized the pivotal role the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) has played in leading highly participatory processes that culminated in the current National Policy and Strategic Plan for Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development. The unity of vision and purpose found in these documents was achieved through developing a strong collaboration among several ministries and non-governmental, faith-based, community-based and private sector organizations of the sectors of education, health, nutrition, sanitation and protection.



BI developed an Advocacy Strategy that laid out a step-by-step process in the approach to follow during the advocacy process. The process was successful and as a result the nomination of a Host Ministry for the 0-3 years cohort was achieved. This followed deliberations that led to goals of the project and advocacy which resulted in the nomination of Ministry to house the day care centres and children aged 0-3 years. After a session of heated deliberations, consensus was reached that, with its demonstrated strengths in coordination of human and financial resources during the development of the guidelines for daycare centres, the Ministry of Education and Training would act as a host and house day care centers and that the approach as set out in the IECCD would strive to ensure that the multisectoral approach involving collaboration with other stakeholders in the ECD field would be at the core of the provision of replicable quality services to the 0-3 age cohort.

BI played a pivotal role in the development of the Information Paper that set forth the Cabinet Memo informed by the research undertaken in the situation analysis: Support was afforded to the MoET perpetuated by deliberations with the PS MoET, the Chief Education Officer (CEO) Primary was nominated as the contact person and BI supported the development of an Information Paper that informed the Cabinet Memo, approved 09th April 2024.



Defending the rights of
children in Lesotho

FICE NETHERLANDS IN 2023

Willem Loupattij - President

FICE Netherlands continued its commitment to foster international collaboration and knowledge exchange in the field of youth care. Notable activities included hosting a delegation from FICE Finland, participation in FICE Inter, and contributions to the FICE Federal Council meeting in Belgrade. Moreover, FICE Netherlands played a pivotal role in the preparation and launch of the FICE Europe Kinship Care statement.

Visitors from Finland

In September, FICE Netherlands had the privilege of hosting 12 professionals from various organizations in Finland. The visit aimed to provide insights into the Dutch youth care landscape. Collaborating with professionals from FICE Netherlands-affiliated organizations, we facilitated a day of knowledge sharing and best practices exchange. The visit commenced with an overview of the preventive approach adopted by the Wijkteams Enschede. Attendees gained insights into the presence of neighborhood team workers, their supportive role, and the referral process.

Additionally, the utilization of social media platforms for disseminating information was highlighted. A session on child protection was conducted by Jeugdbescherming Overijssel, focusing on complex divorce cases and ensuring children's voices are heard in planning. Through a fictional case study, attendees learned about involving children in decision-making processes. Yes We Can Clinics presented an intensive 7-week program for youths with behavioral, psychological, or addiction issues. An experiential session provided insights into the program's effectiveness and post-rehabilitation outcomes. Kinderperspectief showcased the Kwikstart app and discussed youth participation through interactive sessions, emphasizing appropriate approaches by caregivers. The day concluded with a presentation on foster care, particularly emphasizing small-scale housing for youths previously placed in closed institutions. Notably, Finland signed the FICE Europe Kinship Care statement during the event.

Board Members and International Engagements:

The board for 2023 comprised Willem Loupattij (Chairman), Martine Tobé (Treasurer), Elianne Zijlstra (Member), Peter van de Pol (Member), and Stephanie Koenderink (Member). Active participation in FICE Inter, the FICE Federal Council meeting in Belgrade, and Martine Tobé's role as the Chair of FICE Europe underscored our commitment to global collaboration. Board members of FICE Netherlands actively participated in the thematic bundles of FICE International.

Statement Kinship care FICE Europe

Additionally, FICE Netherlands played a significant role in the development and realization of the FICE Europe Kinship Care statement. Dutch representatives were actively involved in the drafting process and contributed to the production of printed materials, demonstrating their commitment to promoting kinship care and enhancing support for kinship care families across Europe.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, FICE Netherlands remained dedicated to facilitating knowledge exchange, promoting best practices, and advocating for the welfare of youths. We extend our gratitude to all members, partners, and stakeholders for their support in 2023.

For more information and updates, please visit the website at www.fice.nl

FICE ROMANIA IN 2023

Prof. Toma Mares - President

FICE Romania continued, in 2023, its activity on the educational and social coordinates consistently followed since its foundation in 1990: defending children's rights, especially those in difficulty, supporting continuous training of professionals in education and social protection, involvement in the analysis at the level of society, specialists and the elaboration at the state level of regulations in the field, development of international relations in the field.

Programmes, projects, campaigns
Also in 2023, the programmes, campaigns, reference actions, own initiatives of FICE Romania were carried out:

- "Collegial Solidarity" campaign, through which communities, branches, members and sympathizers of FICE Romania tried to contribute through collections and donations to support children, families and educational establishments in need.

The current edition of the Collegial Solidarity campaign - an expression, in fact, of a continuity - was also addressed, through FICE Romania communities and branches, primarily to students. The appeal is to direct a thought, a

gesture from the heart, a gift, a support according to one's own possibilities to other children. It is worth thanking the FICE communities of the kindergarten no.268 (prof.Dr.Georgeta Matei), the secondary schools no.97 (prof.Gabriela Nicolae,prof.Nicoleta Peltecu),96 (prof.Doina Comoli),98,150 (Iuliana Coarnă) "Mircea Sântimbreanu" and other schools of the FICE sector5 branch (Victoria Păduraru), "Ion Barbu" Theoretical High School (Prof.Dumitru Georgeta) from Bucharest, FICE branches from Caras-Severin (Prof.Manuela Stan),Argeş (Tatiana Eftime),Teleorman (Prof.Ioana Panagoreţ), Iaşi (Elena Filiche), Suceava,Vaslui (Roxana Hriscu),Ialomita (Romaniuc Florina). Together with the gesture of giving something, beyond making a charitable gesture, the campaign was also a contribution to achieving specific educational objectives:

- raising awareness of the interest towards fellow human beings in difficult living conditions
- educating children in the spirit of caring by donating items (which they no longer need or work on) to other children



- reaffirming the social benefit of creating the best possible conditions for education and learning, including by ensuring that as many children as possible have access to everyday objects and appropriate means and materials. In order to achieve such objectives, the actions have been accompanied by dialogues between children and between adults and children, to understand who their approach is aimed at and how it should be done so that it is useful without heightening sensitivities.

-The National Children's Book Festival "The Joy of Reading" has reached its 19th edition (festival director - Prof. Sorin Ivan) - approved by Order no. 3.612/31.01.2023 of the Ministry of Education in the Calendar of national and international educational activities without funding no.24952/06.02.2023, position 3. and had and has the objective of developing interest in reading, cultivating creativity based on reading. Children and teachers from schools, kindergartens, high schools, children's clubs, welfare institutions, etc. were involved in the activities. We congratulate the members of FICE Romania and its supporters who succeeded in organizing actions dedicated to reading, books, knowledge and creation.

219 diplomas were awarded to

children for section I and 41 diplomas for section II.

- The campaign "19 days of activism to prevent and combat abuse against children and young people", launched globally by the Women's World Summit Foundation (WWSF) and promoted nationally by FICE Romania, was supported by the county school inspectorates, which stimulated teachers from 41 counties.

More than 170 workshops, round tables, debates, participation in local, regional and national TV broadcasts; more than 3,000 direct activities with and by children in participating kindergartens and schools; more than 250 activities with parents or grandparents and children's relatives (when parents work abroad); more than 600 meetings with specialists (police, doctors, psychologists, priests, etc.); more than 220 compassion circles.

The national partners involved in the campaign were: Tribuna Invățământului magazine; National Authority for the Protection of Children's Rights and Adoption (ANPDCA); Association of Romanian Municipalities, AcoR; Radio Romania - Romanian Broadcasting Society; Association of Directors of General Directorates for Social Assistance and Child Protection; National Anti-Drug Agency;



These activities were complemented by conferences, seminars and symposiums on topics such as: civilized behaviour, prevention of juvenile delinquency, prevention of the consumption of risky substances, multiculturalism and tolerance, education in rural areas, road safety education, creativity in pre-school education, etc. The scientific events were attended by professionals from academia, state institutions, non-governmental organizations, educational establishments, child and youth care and upbringing, who presented results and aspects of their professional work and expressed ideas on the topics under debate.

A special event was the organization by FICE Romania, at the Palace of Parliament, under the patronage of the European Affairs Committee of the Romanian Senate, of the national conference "Violence in Romanian schools. Means to combat an anti-educational and anti-social scourge", in partnership with the National Authority for the Protection of Children's Rights and Adoption, the Association of Directors of General Directorates of Social Assistance and Child Protection, the Association of Romanian Municipalities and Tribuna Invatamantului. The event, which took place in the context of the serious cases that have recently

occurred in several educational establishments, was part of the concerns of FICE Romania for several years, with constant work, research and meetings on the theme of violence by some young people and acts of violence against young people.

The Romanian Parliament, the Ministry of Education, the School Inspectorate of the Municipality of Bucharest, the Ministry of Family, Youth and Equal Opportunities, through the National Authority for the Protection of Children's Rights and Adoption, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, through the Romanian Police and the Capital Police, the Romanian Orthodox Church, general directorates for social assistance and child protection, higher education, pre-university education, local public administration, media were represented at the current meeting.

The debate, presentations of projects, case studies and best practices for preventing and combating violence highlighted a series of observations, proposals, ideas considered of interest to state authorities, education and social protection professionals, as well as parents and students:



The participation in the debate of a large number of members and sympathizers of our organization, as well as representatives of government institutions and civil society organizations, as well as the echoes of the conference, confirmed the distinct position that FICE Romania holds in the area of education and social protection of children, the family.

Another debate was "Juvenile delinquency as a consequence of increasing violence in society" organized by the General Directorate of Social Assistance and Child Protection of Ialomita in partnership with FICE Romania.

The topics discussed were: factors that favour the appearance of juvenile delinquency, ways of non-violent conflict management to avoid the appearance of delinquent behaviour, team intervention in the prevention of violent behaviour and juvenile delinquency, development of communication skills and the ability to mediate spontaneous conflicts in school and society.

The conference "The importance of kindergarten - school - family - community partnership for the optimal integration of children in primary education" was organized by Kindergarten 268, Bucharest, in partnership with FICE - Romania.

The speakers were: professor emeritus Dr. Ioan Neacsu, professor Badea Andreea, professor Gabriela Dumitru, professor Dr. Adrian Sămărescu-rector of the University of Pitești (RSAMSE), professor Silvia Borțeanu-methodist CCD Bucharest, professor Dr. L. Sămărescu, Zamfirescu Cristian Nicolae-parish priest of the church of St. Trinity-Ghencea, professor Toma Mareș-president of FICE Romania.

In Alexandria, Teleorman county, a conference "Teachers, parents and local authorities - partners in the protection and promotion of children's rights" was held in October 2023 and was publicized locally and nationally.

Organizers: Alexandria City Hall, Teleorman County Council, FICE Romania, ISJ Teleorman, "Valahia" University of Târgoviște, Faculty of Science and Engineering Alexandria. Between 29.05-04.06.2023 a delegation of 26 experts and professionals in the field of education and child protection from Israel is conducting a fact-finding visit - exchange of experience and best practices in Romania.

It was a conference that attracted great interest and was attended by over 300 participants.

From 28.05-30.05.2023 the delegation from Israel, led by Mrs. Ira Kostinsky, inspector in the rural



department of the Ministry of Education in Israel, visited Cumpăna commune, Constanta county.

On 30.05.2023, the international conference "Romanian village - an opportunity in the cohesion and development policy of the European Union in the field of education and social assistance" - Inspiring projects and initiatives illustrating different aspects of villages as a basis for cohesion and development policy of the European Union" was held.

Together with the delegation from Israel, representatives of FICE Israel and FICE Romania, representatives of the Association of Romanian Municipalities, the General Directorate of Social Assistance and Child Protection of Constanta, the County Agency for Payments and Social Inspection of Constanta were also present, County Centre for Educational Resources and Assistance Constanta, Centre for Prevention, Evaluation and Antidrug Counselling Constanta, mayors and specialists in the field of social assistance from other localities in Constanta County, directors of educational establishments in the commune of Cumpăna and via skype participated: Anna Schmid -president of FICE International (and FICE Switzerland) and Emmanuel Grupper - vice-president of FICE International (and president of FICE Israel).

During the conference important information in the field of children's education, their parents, the form of organization in the field of education and child protection in the two countries were discussed and exchanged. In these two fields of activity, persistent and continuous work must be done to develop projects in rural areas, aimed at supporting the beneficiaries, i.e. children, so that they can create a healthy lifestyle, away from abuse, violence, drug use, etc..

The importance and the special role of exchange of experience and best practices in the field of education and child protection was the conclusion of today's conference.

Mayor Mariana Gâju organized the visit of the main sights in Cumpăna, Constanța, Danube Delta, Jurilovca and exchanged ideas and experiences.

Argeș county was the host of the delegation from Israel, led by Ira Kostinsky, representative of the Ministry of Education and Yoav Apelboim, vice-president of FICE (International Federation of Educational Communities) Israel, a delegation which included specialists in the field of social assistance and education areas in this field that support adults and children with disabilities.

The Israeli delegation visited the three sheltered housing complex and



the Day Centre in Băbana commune and the Services Complex for children with disabilities in Trivale, and in Curtea de Argeş they met volunteers from the Handrom Humanitarian Foundation.

In Băbana, where services are provided for adults with disabilities, the delegation was received by the President of the Argeş County Council, the Vice-President, the Public Administrator and the General Director of D.G.A.S.P.C Argeş, Tatiana Eftime. Specialists from Israel were interested not only in the conditions at the complex, but also in the services of social counselling, independent living skills, psychological counselling, habilitation and rehabilitation, development of work skills, preparation for employment and support for job retention, social and civic integration and participation.

In December, in a moment of review, a remarkable event of distinct significance was the FICE Romania 2023 Gala, hosted in the Great Hall of the Children's Palace in Bucharest, where FICE Romania, in partnership with the Association of Romanian Municipalities (ACoR), organized an event celebrating educational, social, civic and moral values, assumption, involvement and responsibility, solidarity and institutional efforts made in favour of children and young people, in the

name of education, emancipation and development through education. The Gala started with speeches by experienced people from Romania who, over the years, have worked in FICE Romania for the welfare, education and protection of children from disadvantaged backgrounds. Also, merit diplomas were awarded to outstanding personalities from the social life of Romania, involved over the years in the work of FICE Romania.

In the 33rd year since the foundation of FICE ROMANIA, the gala continued with the carol show entitled "After the ancient tradition". Children from Kindergarten No. 268, sector 5, Secondary School No.96, sector 4, Secondary School No.97, sector 4, Bucharest, carolled.

The commune of Cumpăna, member of F.I.C.E. since 2016, was represented at the Gala by the children of the folklore ensembles "Româncuța" and "Mugurașii Cumpenei". On stage there were also children from Osica de sus, Olt county, Mărăcineni, Argeş county, Măgurele din Moeciu, Prahova county, with an audience of over 700 people.

The show impressed the audience, the fruits of the children's and coordinating teachers' work being appreciated with roars of applause.



The FICE Cafe and FICE Live forum online meetings continued last year, focusing on ways of caring for children and young people, exchange of best practices, project ideas; participants getting to know each other; organisation of thematic working groups, contagion of ideas (ideas, suggestions among participants), analysis of quality standards of residential/non-residential services for children and young people, multiple crises in the contemporary world: wars, migration, poverty, illiteracy, the link between pandemic and mental health of young people, support for young people leaving the protection system, the role of the family in the education of children, etc. FICE Romania participated in these international online meetings of FICE International, the summaries being made by Ravaru Cleopatra (FICE Vaslui branch) and distributed to members all over the country.

Publishing activity

In 2023, the journal of social assistance and pedagogy "Child Social Protection" continued to appear: appreciation and thanks for the publication of the journal and for the scientific level of its content are due to all those who contributed to the publication of the issues planned annually, especially to the members of the editorial board of the journal and of the Commission for training

and professional development activities, who ensured the conditions of presentation that meet the requirements of such a publication. Also under the aegis of FICE Romania, the papers presented at national and international conferences were published in volumes.

Partnerships, collaborations

In 2023, FICE Romania continued its collaborations, partnerships and cooperation with local public administration institutions, governmental institutions, pre-university education establishments, higher education institutions, school inspectorates, non-governmental organisations, proving that it represents an authoritative voice, a professional reference in the training, education and protection of the young generation. We appreciate the close cooperation with the Association of Romanian Municipalities, an emblematic organization of local public administration, partner and supporter of our organization in a variety of actions with recognized social benefits.

FICE Romania has a long-standing collaboration, reaffirmed in 2023, with the National Anti-Drug Agency, whose representatives constantly participate in educational events and actions appreciated for their information content by teachers,



parents and students.

In 2023, FICE Romania has also developed a partnership with the Association of Directors of General Directorates of Social Assistance and Child Protection, an organisation that is permanently involved in social, educational and scientific activities, targeting children with a variety of problems requiring help and guidance.

During the past year, the dialogue with the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity, the Ministry of Family, Youth and Equal Opportunities, the National Authority for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the National Authority for the Rights of the Child and Adoption, the National Agency against Trafficking in Human Beings, the Commission for Culture, Education and Health of the Romanian Senate was actively maintained through the presence and involvement of Senator Gabriela Cretu. FICE Romania has benefited, in the past year, from the support and the solicitude granted by the National Children's Palace, through Mrs Teodora Bentz, director.

FICE Romania thanks the Mayor of Cumpăna, Mrs. Mariana Gâju, for her involvement in the organization and realization of FICE actions at national level, when welcoming the delegation from Israel.

Conclusions

The FICE Romania National Committee Bureau has followed the quality of the actions and has periodically analysed the activities in accordance with the FICE Romania Statutes, based on the annual activity programmes, with a wide participation of some sections/branches such as those from Vaslui, Neamt, Caras-Severin, Calarasi, Constanta, Iasi, Arges, Tulcea, Suceava, Ialomita, sector 5 Bucharest.

The Bureau of the National Committee of FICE Romania appreciates that the results and concerns of 2023 belong to all the members of FICE Romania, who have accumulated and used an experience that guarantees to continue the quality of the efforts and achievements made for the education and protection of children in our country.



FICE SERBIA IN 2023

Zeljka Burgund - President

We celebrated the Anniversary of the Association-Jubilee- 20 years since the foundation.

„FICE Serbia“ was founded in 2003 as a vocational association of professionals in the field of child, youth and family care in Serbia. The foundation was supported by FICE International, after the stabilization of the newly formed republics after the breakup of the former Yugoslavia, which was a long-term member of FICE International.

- Members of FICE Serbia are institutions for accomodation and care of children without parental care (Children's Homes),Homes for children with disabilities, Foster Care Centers, Institutions for children and youth with challenging behavior and a number of organizations that provide social services for children, youth and families in the local community. Also, the members of FICE Serbia are regional and republic Institutes for social protection and representatives of the Department of Social Work on the the Faculty of Political Sciences. FICE Serbia has 27 collective members, with more than 1000 children, youth and family care professionals and several individual members.

Honorary members of FICE Serbia are Anton Tobe, former president of FICE Netherlands and Roland Stuebi, former president of FICE Switzerland, who, together with Rolf Widmer,trasusrer of FICE Inter made a great contribution to the formation of the FICE Southeast Europe network (2000-2011), as well as the foundation of national FICE sections in the area of the Western Balkans. In 2023. FICE Serbia has maintained our membership at the same level as in previous years.

Main activities FICE serbia in 2023 were those planned, such as: the Association Assembly, the organization of the FICE Serbia and Jubilee with a set of activities(September 2023.), the professional exchange of professionals in the field of alternative care between Serbia and the Netherlands(November 2023), as well as the Program AKADEMIA (June 2023.), which we have been implementing since 2014. and some extraordinary activities, organized with the goal (an online event /sort of workshop) to support professionals ,members of FICE Serbia, after the unimaginable tragedy that befell Serbia on May



3rd and 4th 2023. when two teenagers killed 16 children and young people with firearms and wounded dozens of people. Such unpredictable and tragic situations confronted us with all the shortcomings of many key systems in the country (school, security, legal, etc.) and the fact that we are never ready for everything that is part of our work and life, but we realized the importance of our own support network, because that event made us equal in pain and helplessness with many citizens in the country.

- Assemblies of the FICE Serbia Association are held every year and this festive Assembly in 2023. was the 20th in line. 43 delegates were present on September 19th in front of 23 of FS members. The other 4 members sent us congratulations and apologies for not being able to attend. At the assembly, plaques were awarded to those present by the association, for commitment to the mission and active participation in the organization.

So far, as an Association, FICE Serbia have held only one assembly online, in 2020, due to the situation with the Covid-19 pandemic. The theme of this year's jubilee assembly was summarizing the results of our joint 20 years of activities. At the Assembly, a presentation of FICE Serbia prepared for an International

conference, was presented and the members were asked for suggestions and comments. Serious situation with the lack of staff in the social protection sector, as well as the ban on employment in the public sector, employee burn-out...and seeking answers to the question of what FICE Serbia could do, were the most important topics on FICE Serbia assembly in 2023.

Particularly significant activities that we still implemented in 2023. they were:

- Federal Council of FICE International in the period from September 18th to 21th 2023. in Belgrade, which was organized in person after several years, and which FICE Serbia hosted. This event was attended by representatives of 15 sections of FICE International, the general secretariat of FICE Inter and FICE Europe. , honorary members and guests. In total, over 40 participants.

- On the occasion of the Jubilee, FS organized an International Conference titled "Alternative care in the XXI century" in Belgrade, September 20th 2023. at the Faculty of Political Sciences-Department for Social Work and Social Policy , which donated the space and moderation of the event, with the participation of presenters, eminent experts from the academic community and practitioners of FICE Serbia and FICE



International, and with the partly financial supported of the UNICEF office in Belgrade.

- We also organized a Round Table for young people, former users of residential and foster care services, entitled "Your opinion is important to us", where young people, using their complex life experience, gave their recommendations for the protection of children and young people in the XXI century. (document is attached) These last two activities were carried out not only by our own efforts, but also with the significant support of our long-term partner, Kinderperspectief, a member of FICE Netherlands.

The words we would use to briefly describe the existence of our organization in the field of child and youth care in the last 20 years are continuity and now identity. We strive to constantly improve the quality standards of our members services, especially through the improvement of the professional competencies of those who work with children and young people, which are the key goals and essence of the FICE Serbia organization's mission.

As the greatest achievement in 2023. FICE Serbia believes that **survived last 20 years in the turbulent social circumstances of Serbia** and that in the year 2023 **we were able to summarize the results of our two decades of activities**, as well as that **young people, former beneficiaries of social protection services, trusted us and cooperated with us again**, as and many times until now. FICE Serbia is honored with their confidence.





FICE SOUTH AFRICA (NACCW) IN 2023

Elwin Gallant - President

FICE South Africa is a membership organisation of both individuals and organisations. Since COVID the renewal of membership has declined where some have communicated their difficulties in keeping up with membership renewal due to economic hardships.

The organisation continues to have some members who are joining as new members and some renewing their membership.

Main activities

NACCW, as a membership-based professional organisation conducted the following activities in this period:

- NACCW implemented activities throughout its provincial and national membership structures across the nine provinces of the country.
- NACCW's training department trained people in the Level 5 Occupational Certificate in Child and Youth Care Work and other child and youth care-related training.
- NACCW generated knowledge about child and youth care work through its journal, Child and Youth Care Work, engagement in evaluations, and knowledge sharing through social media platforms.

- NACCW advocated for the increasing professionalization of child and youth care through engagement with the South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP) and other government and non-government structures.

NACCW, as a membership-owned non-profit organisation (NPO), supported children and their families by deploying CYCWs in the following:

- The Isibindi Ezikoleni school-based model in 6 provinces. NACCW also implemented the Isibindi Ezikoleni in schools through the Basic Education Employment Initiative Programme (BEEIP) in 3 provinces.
- The Isibindi Impilo health model across two programmes: a) the May'Khethele Programme for orphaned and vulnerable children and b) the Implementation of Community-Based HIV Services, both in KwaZulu-Natal.
- Other interventions, namely, Youth Forums, Safe Parks, Child Protection Programme, Young Women and Men's Empowerment Programmes and the Matric/Post-School Education initiative



NACCCW has implemented 16 programmes in the past year across 7 provinces, reaching over 130,000 children and youth through close to 600 trained CYCWs. The programmes fall under the following models of care, a) Isibindi Ezikoleni and the Basic Education Employment Initiative, b) CYC Community-Based Services and c) Isibindi Impilo/May'Khethele OVC programme.

NACCCW partnered with the Free State, Eastern Cape, and the Northern Cape Provincial Departments of Education (DOEs) to improve the wellbeing of school communities by implementing the Isibindi Ezikoleni programme in schools. This was done by training youth in modules of CYC in each province. These newly trained learner CYCWs are employed by the DOEs under Phase Two of the Basic Education Employment Initiative Programme (BEEIP). The Free State began in January 2022, and Eastern Cape and Northern Cape in March 2022. In total, the programme was implemented in 17 districts.

NACCCW supported the implementation of what was previously known as the Isibindi (meaning "courage" in isiZulu) model through CYCWs. The model has since been renamed 'Risiha' and restructured as the community-based

prevention and early intervention programme implemented directly by local CBOs and Department of Social Development through the deployment of CYCWs, NACCCW supports the implementation of this model in the Northern Cape in partnership with the De Beers Trust, local CBOs and DSD through providing complementary services with community-based CYCWs. In this period, over 4,000 beneficiaries were served in Northern Cape through specialized programmes.

NACCCW implemented the Isibindi Impilo (Impilo meaning "Life" in isiZulu) model across two different programmes. The model aims to intensify HIV services to orphaned and vulnerable children and youth and their families to prevent occurrences of new infections, increase access to – and enrolment into – HIV care and treatment services, and support retention in those services. CYCWs work closely with health facilities to provide services to those most in need of HIV prevention, care, and support. The programmes that drew on the Isibindi Impilo model are as follows:

- May'Khethele Programme: The May'Khethele (meaning "I choose for myself" in isiZulu) programme started in Oct 2019 and is currently still being implemented between NACCCW and CINDI in the eThekweni district in KwaZulu-Natal.



- Implementation of Community-Based HIV Services: NACCW implemented the Community-Based HIV Services Programme in the eThekweni district in 2022. The project was implemented in partnership with UNAIDS and the Masisizane Service Centre. The programme reached youth and community members with a tailored set of services to increase the uptake of HIV testing, treatment initiation and return to care through demand generation activities and anti-stigma dialogues.

NACCW offers consulting and mentoring services to CYCWs, organisations and programmes. These services may be of an advisory nature and provided to persons and institutions seeking counsel on CYC work. The services may also be in the form of NACCW's mentor staff enabling service delivery to children and youth through mentorship and supervision in its programmes. NACCW's mentorship structure includes Senior Mentors, Mentor Supervisors and Mentors. The Senior Mentors and Mentor Supervisors oversee the programme delivery and Mentors provide mentorship and supervision of CYCWs and the programme on the ground. The mentorship team includes 54 mentor staff.

Youth Forums bring young people together to experience themselves as capable change agents in their lives; engage in advocating for positive change in communities; and understand their roles as youth in a democratic South Africa. Youth meet in groups monthly and have key members that make up a committee of 10 young people. This includes a Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson, Secretary and Deputy Secretary. Youth, supported by CYCWs organize activities guided by a year plan that brings together youth as well as other stakeholders in communities. Youth Forums are implemented with support from Adoptionscentrum in Sweden and the NACCW provincial membership structures. In this year, 104 youth forums were held and 1 673 youth attended the meetings.

Safe Parks are areas for the supervised recreational or educational pursuits of children living in poor communities. The parks are either formal or informal. A formal park is fenced and contains structured play equipment. An informal park is set up in a public space by CYCWs, contains toys kept in the community, and 'fenced' using bunting, string or other items. Safe Parks are important spaces for reinforcing the services provided through the CYC models, and for special programmes to be implemented. The parks are local



spaces near or at schools demarcated for services in communities by CYCWs and partners involved in the programme. CYCWs identify child survivors of abuse and neglect in existing programmes and these cases are reported to the NACCW and to other relevant stakeholders such as SAPS and DSD. CYCWs work with these children to help them through their healing processes. There are child survivors of abuse that participate in a Child Protection Programme, which is run in collaboration with Childline and DSD.

The programme brings together a group of children and their caregivers for several days, during which they receive therapeutic support. The children and family continue to receive ongoing aftercare support from the CYCWs. In this period, this programme was run in the Northern Cape with the support of the De Beers Fund. 625 child survivors of abuse and/or neglect were supported through the FICE South Africa programme and 39 children received child protection services from the Northern Cape Province alone.

NACCW partnered with the Little Sun Foundation to distribute 685 Solar Chargers to orphaned and vulnerable children and youth. The beneficiaries were selected based on having limited or no access to

electricity, and who were assessed as having greater need based on their participation in the NACCW Virtual Connection and related programmes.

Support to Grade 12 learners is implemented through NACCW's matric initiative. The programme includes the establishment of study groups, focused homework and study support and the provision of past exam papers. CYCWs also provide support to young people to access tertiary education through applications to colleges and universities, and bursary funds including NSFAS. The matric results show positive results as these young people are impacted in large part by their specific socio-economic contexts. The learners mainly come from quintile 1 to 3 schools which are situated in the poorest communities and are no-fee schools. Several success stories show the impact of the support to learners by CYCWs in partnership with school staff and community members.

In 2022, NACCW started working with the International Children's Mapping Network (ICMN) and the University of Carleton in Canada on a Children's Mapping partnership project. Children and youth from NACCW programmes conducted mapping exercises to map out their worlds, and submissions of these representations were made for a competition on children's



worldviews. Close to 200 maps of the world were drawn by children across different NACCW projects, of which just over 60 were submitted for the Barbara Petchenik Children's World Map Competition, and 3 were accepted as competition entries. The competition promotes the creative representation of the world in graphic form by children. The competition winners were announced at the 31st International Cartographic Conference, and although the NACCW entries did not win, we are very proud of all the children who participated in the children's mapping exercises. There were approximately 10 children's mapping preparatory meetings held in this reporting period, and NACCW had two abstracts accepted for the conference which was held in August 2023.

The NACCW training department continued to provide online training for the NQF Level 5 Occupational Certificate: Child and Youth Care Worker ID 99510 (OCCYCW) during this year. A total of 365 learners were engaged in child and youth care training in the level 5 qualification during this period. This brings the total to 823 enrollments in the OCCYCW since the inception of this qualification.

NACCW's journal has reached its 40th issue having started in the early 1980's with its first journal. In this period, NACCW published two

issues of its journal for the year. The journal provides leaders, ranging from learners to seasoned practitioners, with information, on regulatory matters in the field, and programme-related information. The journal issues for this period covered topics on reflections of CYC work during Covid-19; the professionalization of and hope in CYC work; the circle of courage; community-based CYC, mindful practice in CYC, social assistance, characteristics of relational CYC work, and therapeutic stories in healing from trauma.

The NACCW was the key driver of the process of achieving the statutory regulation of child and youth care workers, having advocated for professionalisation since 1994 – and prior to that. This function is now the responsibility of the SACSSP, as the juristic body responsible for the registration of social service professionals, and the PBCYC, as the body tasked with profession specific responsibilities. The NACCW has continued to be support the SACSSP and the PBCYC during the past year.

The NACCW advocates for the realization of the rights of children in numerous ways. At a membership level this involves learner child and youth care workers being taught ways in which they must uphold and protect the rights of children. It also involves members advocating for



children in their organisations and communities and in their provinces – with various authorities as necessary. In this regard the NACCW also draws national attention to important child rights issues through engaging members in campaigns and celebrations. This year Child Protection Week was marked by a series of national events and activities on the subject of child protection, and members were involved in these activities at national and regional levels. Child and Youth Care Workers' week was likewise marked by a program of daily events, including an address by the Acting Deputy Director-General Ms Isabella Sekawana, and an address by the Registrar of the SACSSP. The theme of the week was "Valuing a resilient Profession". At the level of the professional services team this includes engagements with the government departments dealing with children's affairs, primarily the Department of Social Development and the Department of Education. It also includes speaking on media platforms to conscientize the public about children's rights and to directly advocate for their rights being respected.

Child protection story

Sexual abuse: A 12-year-old girl was crying in class and referred to the CYCW. The child was reluctant to speak to the CYCW at first but during a second lifespace session, she told the CYCW that she was sexually abused by a pastor. The CYCW immediately arranged a meeting with the principal, the caregiver – her aunt, and the learner. The caregiver was reluctant to report the abuse, but the CYCW explained that the case had to be opened at the police station and that the CYCW would be duty-bound to report it if the caregiver did not. A case was opened at the police and the pastor was arrested, he was denied bail and is currently in prison. The CYCW referred the learner for counselling at ABBA. The caregiver informs the CYCW when the learner goes to court. The CYCW collects schoolwork from class teachers when she is not at school and helps her to complete it. With the support from the CYCW, the learner passed grade 5 and has progressed to grade 6 despite having a very difficult grade 5 final term.



FICE SPAIN IN 2023

Monica Concepción Gómez - President

FICE Spain reflected in 2023 the organization's commitment, along with its member entities, to promote and protect the rights of vulnerable children and their families. Through a wide range of projects and programs, FICE Spain works to enhance the quality of life for over 33,000 individuals served, with a focus on community prevention, child protection, and the promotion of alternatives to institutionalization.

FICE Spain's network, comprised of 9 member associations, spans various regions of Spain, including the Basque Country, Navarre, Galicia, Aragon, La Rioja, Catalonia, Andalusia, the Balearic Islands, Extremadura, and Castile-La Mancha. These entities develop a diverse array of programs, including community prevention, socio-educational and psychosocial support, foster care, employment programs, and training, among others.

Main activities

In 2023, one of our biggest achievements at FICE Spain was the successful implementation of the Redes AFE project. Redes AFE is a pioneering initiative aimed at promoting specialized family foster care for children and adolescents with special needs or circumstances. This project represents a significant step forward in

our mission to provide the best possible care and support for vulnerable children and families across Spain.

Redes AFE was developed in collaboration with various stakeholders, including government agencies, social services, and our network of member organizations. Through this initiative, we aimed to create a network of highly trained and specialized foster families who could provide tailored care and support for children and adolescents who have experienced significant trauma or have complex needs.

One of the key achievements of the Redes AFE was the recruitment and training of a diverse and dedicated group of foster families. These families underwent extensive training and preparation to ensure they were equipped with the skills and knowledge needed to provide high-quality care for children and adolescents with complex needs.

Additionally, Redes AFE involved the development of comprehensive support systems for both the foster families and the children in their care. This included ongoing training, counseling, and access to specialized services to ensure the well-being and stability of both the children and their foster families.

Through Redes AFE, we were able to



provide a more nurturing and supportive environment for children and adolescents who may have otherwise struggled to find stability and security. By focusing on specialized family foster care, we believe we can make a significant and lasting impact on the lives of these vulnerable young people, providing them with the opportunity to thrive and reach their full potential.

Simultaneously, FICE Spain hosted two international volunteers during summer activities as part of the Meeting Point initiative. These volunteers supported staff, promoted activities on social media, and raised awareness of the European Solidarity Corps program, co-financed by the European Commission. This endeavor exemplifies our commitment to engaging with diverse stakeholders and fostering international cooperation to achieve our goals.

Moreover, FICE Spain participate in the "Entrepreneurs for a Sustainable Territory" project, addressing youth unemployment in rural areas and promoting sustainable tourism as a means to create job opportunities for young people. By facilitating exchanges among various social actors, including local institutions and youth organizations, we aimed to empower communities and foster economic resilience.

At the end of 2023, we developed TIC Impulsa3, a digital transformation initiative aimed to optimize and

streamline all processes related to their services and operations through an innovative Software as a Service (SaaS) program. The ultimate goal was to enhance the quality of care provided to the individuals they serve.

Additionally, our communication efforts through the 24SIETE platform reached millions and engaged potential foster families through a short film on specialized foster care. This initiative underscores our dedication to providing a supportive environment for children with special difficulties, ensuring their well-being and stability.

Furthermore, the launch of the ARMADURAS EMOCIONALES campaign highlights our commitment to raising awareness of the needs of children and adolescents under guardianship, advocating for specialized foster care to address emotional damage and promote healing.

These achievements collectively demonstrate FICE Spain's unwavering commitment to promoting social inclusion, supporting vulnerable populations, and advocating for sustainable solutions to societal challenges.





FICE SWITZERLAND IN 2023

Patrick Seigerschmidt - President

The greatest achievements of FICE Switzerland in 2023 lie with its Creating Futures Initiative. The goal of the initiative is to promote the self-empowerment of young people in residential care: their ability to take charge of their own lives, create their own ideas of the future and realise them sustainably. To achieve this, Young Experts (aged 14 to 24), leaders and staff of youth homes work together to develop innovations to promote the self-empowerment of young people. They do this in a way that is empowering for all of them and for the organization as a whole. The approach combines participation and empowerment with organizational and quality development in a novel way. In doing so, it opens up new perspectives for inpatient facilities in Switzerland, Hungary and internationally.

Creating Futures as an approach and initiative has been created and is led by Dr. Anna Schmid (member of the board of FICE Switzerland, president of FICE International). Creating Futures was co-developed and tested by leaders, staff and more than 200 Young Experts in youth homes in Switzerland and Hungary (2015 – 2018) and successfully

implemented in the pioneer project (2019 – 2022). The pioneer phase ended in February 2023. Among its results are:

- More than 30 concrete innovations in the participating organizations (from shared vegetable gardens to the participation of young people in personnel selection and pedagogical concepts revised together with them).
- Most important results and effects from the perspective of the participants: insights, innovations and newly practiced forms of participation, collaboration and development.
- Creating Futures Codex of Young Experts and “Attitudes Codex” by leaders and staff; Summary rap by the young people.

The feedback from participating Young Experts, leaders and staff was very positive. For example, one young expert from Switzerland who participated aged 16 to 18 wrote:

“A lot happened during the project. I changed, I had the social pedagogues from the youth home behind me. I took something unique with me.”



As she finished her commercial apprenticeship and left the youth home, she opened a LinkedIn profile and mentioned her work experience in the Creating Futures core group, where she had been involved in the design and steering of the project as well as in working on content and innovations. She gained employment as an attorney's assistant in a law firm of repute not least because of the confidence and orientation she had gained, and skills (such as English language skills, interacting with diverse people, meeting coordination etc.) which she had honed during the project.

Participating leaders and staff also gave very positive feedback regarding the pioneer phase of Creating Futures. A leader from one of the Swiss organisation wrote: "Working with this basic attitude [of the Creating Futures approach] is very satisfying because you can see the successes (less opposition, less evasion, better and more sustainable relationships [among youth and between youth and staff], cooperation of the young people, personal development steps of individual young people, etc.)". Mercator Foundation Switzerland, who had funded the project from 2019 to 2022, called it "impressive" and "with a focus on what is truly important".

The invitation to publish about Creating Futures in the first handbook on Participation in residential care for youth in Switzerland, published in May 2023, was a great honour. In two articles, written independently of each other, Anna Schmid describes the project and its main results and learnings, while Sandra Rüegg and Ulrich Meyer from the participating Stiftung Jugendnetzwerk describe impressively the concrete impulses and developments the project has brought to their youth, staff and organisation as a whole. The full handbook is available as a free pdf (in German).

A special website was set up for Creating Futures (in German; can be read using automatic translation; Hungarian version almost ready) which includes three films and several publications in English as well as in German and Hungarian, as well as a rap in which Young Experts as well as the leader and some staff from one Swiss organisation summarised important learnings concerning the relationship between youth and staff.

On 31 March, the members of FICE Switzerland decided at the Annual General Assembly that FICE Switzerland should continue to promote, disseminate and further develop Creating Futures. The Swiss and Hungarian youth homes that have participated so far, all members of FICE Switzerland and FICE member NENESZ in Hungary respectively, also decided to continue working on anchoring the approach



sustainably in their organisation, to support its dissemination to further youth homes and to collaborate in its further development. Following the General Assembly, Anna Schmid together with the current Community of Practice and the Board of FICE Switzerland therefore worked on a scaling-up strategy for Creating Futures as well as the design of several different services on the basis of Creating Futures. On 3 November, Patrick Seigerschmidt, president of FICE Switzerland, welcomed 20 participants to an expert exchange regarding Creating Futures, among them ten leaders and staff as well as two Young Experts from youth homes that have not been involved yet. Together with Anna Schmid, two leaders, two previous Young Experts who today live as independent adults and one current Young Expert shared their experiences and insights from the pioneer phase. The new participants showed great interest in Creating Futures and the planned services. These include:

- An annual Young Expert Exchange (YEE) with 24 participants from several previous and new Swiss and Hungarian youth homes and, in 2024, a visit from Austrian young experts, leaders and staff who may participate in the future. The 2024 YEE will take

- place from 12 to 16 August by Lake Balaton (Hungary). The participating Young Experts will further develop their dreams, ideas and concrete strategies, building up their self-confidence, their strengths and their confidence. Supported by experienced moderators and translators, they will largely organize their exchange themselves. The 12 accompanying professionals from the youth homes meanwhile will strengthen their expertise regarding the same topics in their own exchange. Both groups will decide which inspirations they will carry forward into their homes. A colourful leisure programme will enrich the intercultural encounters and enables new friendships.
- An online “participation forum” (four to six times a year) where leaders, staff and Young Experts share and discuss concrete participation experiences in their youth homes which they regard as successful.



28.02.2023 11:17



- The continued anchoring of the Creating Futures approach in the youth homes that have participated in the pioneer phase.
- The implementation of the whole Creating Futures quality development process in new youth homes.
- A public conference towards the end of 2024 where participants can share and discuss ideas and learnings from all these formats with the wider expert community.

Shortly before Christmas, a social foundation wishing to remain anonymous made a sizeable and very encouraging donation to FICE Switzerland to support the general scaling-up activities necessary for these services. At the same time, a donation drive for individual donors was started as well as preparations for grant applications for further foundations, since the resources the participating youth homes have available for the Young Expert Exchange 2024 need supplementation by additional funds.

Further activities

Further activities and achievements of FICE Switzerland in 2023 included:

Training of future professional staff

The 10th Seminar “Child and youth care services around the world” by Anna Schmid on behalf of FICE Switzerland in collaboration with Dr. Samuel Keller of ZHAW Zürich University of Applied Sciences took place in October 2023. The topic was “Children in care and their social networks. International learnings, critical questions and creative practices.” Martine Tobé (FICE The Netherlands and Co-President FICE Europe Network) joined as guest lecturer. The 12 BSc students of social work, social pedagogy and community development had the opportunity to interview expert Dr. Rawan Ibrahim (Jordan) as well as several experts “from own experience” and/or practice and/or research contacted through the FICE networks: Dr. Larry Brendtro (USA), Denis Ćulahović (Serbia), Dr. Kiran Modi (India) and Patrick Reason (Brazil; Secretary General of FICE International).

Additionally, Anna Schmid and Patrick Seigerschmidt taught some further classes to BSc students at ZHAW on Creating Futures / participation / user involvement and residential care and the daily practice in it respectively.

Solidarity with the children and youth of Ukraine

Thanks to the great work of FICE member Ukrainian Education Platform (UKREDU), FICE Switzerland was able to provide 1'000 food portions for children



and especially infants in Izyum in the Kharkiv region of Ukraine through a donation of CHF 1'000 at the beginning of 2023. In March, an initiative by Anna Schmid led to the biggest Swiss daily newspaper's publishing a full page article about the forcible transfer, deportation and adoption of Ukrainian children by Russia as well as a statement by FICE Switzerland.



Quality development and research

In addition to the Creating Futures Initiative, FICE Switzerland continued to promote the dissemination and application of the "Quality4Children standards for the alternative care of children and youth" in Switzerland. It has been doing so since heading the Swiss part of the original development of the standards from 2004 onwards. Many organisations as well as authorities in Switzerland used the standards with

regard to evaluation and development in residential care. In May, the working group on Q4C published an article on the implementation of the standards in daily practice in the handbook on participation mentioned above. FICE is in discussions with the working group on the further promotion of Q4C in Switzerland.

Collaboration with other organisations and networks

Once more, Roland Stübi of FICE Switzerland co-organised the international professional exchange programme with the Council for International Fellowship CIF Switzerland. From 22 March to 7 April, a group of professionals from child and youth care in several different countries in Africa, Asia and Europe acquainted themselves with the Swiss system and practices and exchanged experiences. On 31 March, the participants enriched the FICE General Assembly with their inputs and insights.

Leadership and collaboration in FICE International and FICE Europe Network

In 2023, Anna Schmid continued as president of FICE International. Her speech regarding the 75th anniversary of FICE International given at the Federal Council in Belgrade can be found here. Rolf



Widmer, former president and continuing member of FICE Switzerland announced that he would step down from his role as treasurer of FICE International in 2024. Patrick Seigerschmidt, president of FICE Switzerland, and Roland Stübi, former president and continuing member of FICE Switzerland, represented FICE Switzerland at the General Assembly and Federal Council of FICE International in Belgrade in September 2023. Patrick Seigerschmidt also acts as Swiss representative in the FICE Europe Network.

Members and board of FICE Switzerland

After 36 years of great engagement and many achievements in various roles, Roland Stübi stepped down as president of FICE Switzerland. The members elected Patrick Seigerschmidt as the new president. The minutes of the General Assembly of 31 March including the laudatio for Roland Stübi can be found here (in German). Anna Schmid (projects) and Christoph Hug (actuary) continue as members of the board of FICE Switzerland.

In 2023, FICE Switzerland counted with 62 institutional members – many of them residential or foster care organisations – and 25 individual members. A positive development is that not least through the increasing Creating Futures activities, several members have started to collaborate more actively in their FICE. It is both a hope and a necessity that further members become more active in order to further develop FICE Switzerland's work for children, youth and good quality in alternative care, but also in order to support the organisation and running of FICE as an association.





FICE USA IN 2023

Dennis W. Felty - President

The ACYCP - FICE USA Council is under the great leadership of founder, Dennis Felty and Chair, Charles Hooker, both formerly from Keystone Human Services in Harrisburg, PA. The ACYCP - FICE USA Council members include Rachel Murphy, Michael Griffith, Marita Van Aswegen, Madeleine DeHart, Janet Wakefield, Brandon Wilson, Jerianne Chandler-Ochoa and Ruth E. Siegfried.

2023 Focus on the Crisis at the USA Border.

The Consortium:

The Consortium came into existence as the Association of Child and Youth Care Practice (ACYCP)-Federation of Childhood Educators (FICE) USA Council sent out a call to action to begin a discussion about how to address the border crisis in the United States. Members from various organizations throughout the world answered the call and began working together to pool knowledge resources to provide support and comprehensive solutions to this crisis. Out of this workgroup, with found partners in Guatemala, a committee was formed to develop this proposed program in Guatemala:

Zeni Thumbadoo, PhD, Deputy Director, National Association of Child Care Workers, South Africa; FICE South Africa

Merle Allsopp, Author; National Association of Child Care Workers, South Africa; FICE SouthAfrica

Frank Eckles, Executive Director; Academy for Competent Youth Work and Board Member, Child and Youth Care Certification Board (CYCCB), Texas, USA

Lilly Grossmann Montenegro, National Director, Children's Emergency Relief International (CERI-Guatemala), Guatemala City, Guatemala

Jerriann Chandler-Ochoa, Board Member; Association of Child and Youth Professionals (ACYCP), California, USA

Janet Wakefield, Board member of ACYCP/FICE USA

Charles Hooker, Board member of ACYCP/FICE USA and Consultant to Keystone Human Services

Genevieve Fitzgibbon, President and CEO of Keystone Human Services International

Larry Brendtro, consultant, and co-author of "Reclaiming Youth at Risk-Futures of Promise"



This Consortium has been meeting monthly for the last 12 months to discuss the issues that led to the development of the concept proposal we are submitting.

Approach:

The Circles of Courage (COC) will be adapted to and implemented in Guatemala. Based on ongoing development meetings with the Consortium and informed by CERI and Ciprodini, the group proposes the COC work to be done in various neighborhoods, villages, and indigenous communities yet to be determined.

Changes in Guatemala's national leadership has caused delays in moving forward. In addition, the Consortium continues to develop connections with USAID staff for possible financial support or to secure another funder who would help start this project.



UKRAINIAN EDUCATIONAL PLATFORM IN 2023

Mariana Kashchak - President

Charity organization "Ukrainian Education Platform" is the only member of FICE International from Ukraine. 5 employees are involved in the activities carried out by the "Ukrainian Education Platform" within the framework of FICE.

FICE International and Ukrainian Education Platform, with the other 35 countries, have launched a Joint statement on the forcible transfer, deportation, and adoption of children from Ukraine by Russia.

FICE Netherlands has created the Lifebook for Youth and shares it with the Ukrainian Education Platform. UEP shared it among Ukrainian children who were forced to leave their homes because of war and its consequences. Lifebook for Youth should give them a new and expanded view of their past, from which they can draw strength and confidence for their future. Also, the Ukrainian children relocated to Poland, and Italy can work with the book.

Ukrainian Education Platform, with the support of FICE International, created an Informational campaign for the Children's Day "Country of Responsible Adults."

The information campaign was conducted in Warsaw and Lviv. In it, we considered the role of adults in children's lives.

Round table meetings *

Round tables are a series of meetings organized by FICE International's "Hand in Hand" working group. These events aim to foster the development of best practices and research how they can be implemented in Ukrainian educational settings. We strive to acquire knowledge and ideas from these discussions and transfer them to the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine. With this knowledge, we aim to implement qualitative changes and improvements in the Ukrainian education system.

During each meeting, there will be two or three speakers, one or two of whom will represent different countries, while the other speaker will represent Ukraine's current state of affairs. The main objective of the participants is to develop the best practices and discuss practical ways of implementing changes in the Ukrainian education system. We intend to continue this practice for 2024 and extend it to other areas.

2024 and extend it to other areas.

We thank Rolf Widmer and the FICE board for their generous donation, which enabled us to provide translation services for all English-to-Ukrainian training activities and helped us welcome Ukrainian and international participants to our meetings.

*During those meetings, ad hoc groups were established to develop recommended areas of activity in Welfare and child protection and Education, such as

- Training specialists, professionals, and volunteers to work with children who have experienced trauma.
- Enhancing educational and psychosocial activities for youth and teenagers.
- Improving crisis response skills for educators.
- Working with parents and specialists who support families, such as social workers and educators.
- Spreading information about the status of Ukrainian children, including the tragic events of forced deportation
- Facilitating cross-border communication between children through regular interaction (peer-to-peer communication) to foster closer connections between children worldwide.

- Supporting families in safeguarding their children's well-being.
- Enhancing security measures and promoting stronger connections for children in the future.

- Providing training for specialists who work directly with children.
- Raising awareness about the situation of children in Ukraine, including the issue of deportation.
- Establishing a child monitoring system in Ukraine similar to the one in Israel.
- Improving the educational system in Ukraine.
- Addressing the status of Ukrainian children who have immigrated to other countries due to war and its consequences.

Teens Supporting Initiative

To address the critical issue of young people's mental health, a unique program were designed to work directly with teens, providing psychosocial and educational activities that promote their well-being. Additionally, we have plans to enhance the proficiency of educators in handling critical situations so that they can better support young people in need. Our ultimate goal is to create a compassionate, supportive environment that helps young people thrive and lead fulfilling lives.

A visit to Israel

In 2023, "Hand in Hand" collaborated with RGU to organize a visit to Israel for 53 Ukrainian educators and principals. The purpose of the visit was to provide Ukrainian educators with the opportunity to exchange ideas with their Israeli counterparts on effective strategies for working with children who have experienced trauma and displacement due to war and conflict.

Lifebook initiative

FICE Netherlands has developed the Lifebook for Youth and shared it with the Ukrainian Education Platform (UEP). UEP distributed it among Ukrainian children who were forced to leave their homes due to the war and its aftermath. The Lifebook for Youth is designed to help them gain a new and broader perspective on their past experiences, which can provide them with the resilience and confidence to face the future. Additionally, Ukrainian children resettled in Poland and Italy can use this book.

Professional development

Mulberry Bush has conducted four meetings with up to 40 people about the Attachment-informed Practice. Thus, we have considered the following questions:

- Understanding the theoretical origins of attachment theory and briefly introducing the four main attachment styles.
- Considering the relevance of attachment theory on children's learning, behavior, and relationships.
- Thinking about a relational framework and our role within that.
- Thoughts, Feelings, and Behaviour.
- How many ways can we offer and hear communication? Anticipating triggers.
- What happens if you reframe behavior? Physical brain growth.
- Experiences tune the developing brain's sensitive periods of development.
- Stress response system.
- Adverse childhood experiences.

Dr. Alex Schneider provided training for 40 Ukrainian educators working with children in grades 1-4 in August. The training focused on social-emotional learning, including multiple intelligences, emotional literacy, open discussion, and motivating learners.

FICE Serbia Jubilee Conference

In September 2023, Marianna Bilyk, program director of the UEP, and her assistant, Yelyzaveta Moroz, attended the FICE Serbia Jubilee Conference. This Jubilee Conference

was an excellent opportunity to make new connections and expand our activities to implement changes in Ukraine's social sphere.

The ongoing task force goals for 2023 were:

- Providing psychosocial support guidance and counseling to educators and caregivers who work with children and families who have experienced trauma, violence, and displacement.
- Guidance for organizing recreational and educational activities for children and teens under stress using emotional literacy tools.
- Training and mentoring social workers, educators, and volunteers who work with children and families in need.
- Advocating for the rights and needs of children and teens in Ukraine, especially those unaccompanied, separated, or evacuated from institutions.
- Coordinating and collaborating with other humanitarian organizations, local authorities, and communities to ensure effective and efficient delivery of services and assistance.

As for 2024 - The Task Group will continue with its ongoing task as of 2023.

It will concentrate on trying, in collaboration with FICE Switzerland, to conduct an international seminar that will empower specialist staff with the necessary skills to effectively promote and support children in care and foster children affected by the war in Ukraine who had to leave their homes in Ukraine temporarily for their protection.

The out-of-home education sector plays a vital role in providing these children and young people with quality education and care, helping them cope with the impacts of the crisis and prepare for their future. However, the sector also faces many challenges and needs, such as a need for more resources, coordination, standards, and guidance.

This seminar aims to address these challenges and needs and facilitate the exchange of best practices and lessons learned among the participants and professionals working with Ukrainian youth in Ukraine and other countries. The seminar will also identify potential partnerships and resources to support the out-of-home education sector in Ukraine and create a platform for a strong support network for educators and caregivers. It will focus on the future possibilities of Ukrainian foster and institutionalized children currently residing abroad in a foster or home family, with the ultimate goal of improving the lives of these vulnerable children.

Published by:
FICE International



FICE office c/o :

Orense Street 25, 2D(Left). P.C 28020 Madrid

Contact person: Cristina González

E-mail address: fice.inter@gmail.com

FICE place of registration:

Hasengasse 60/14, 1100 Vienna, Austria

 <https://www.ficeinter.net/>

 fice.inter@gmail.com

 <https://www.facebook.com/groups/FICE.International>

 <https://www.instagram.com/fice.inter/>