

FICE International Annual Report 2024



FICE

CONTENTS

01 FICE INTERNATIONAL

- 4 Foreword
- 6 About FICE International
- 8 FICE International in 2024

02 FICE REGIONAL NETWORKS

- 26 FICE Europe in 2024
- 29 FICE Africa in 2024

03 FICE MEMBERS

- 32 FICE Austria
- 35 FICE Brazil
- 38 FICE Bulgaria
- 42 FICE Canada
- 44 FICE Croatia
- 47 FICE Czech Republic
- 50 FICE Finland
- 53 FICE Germany
- 56 Udayan Care (India)
- 59 FICE Israel
- 61 FICE Japan
- 64 FICE Kenya
- 68 FICE Lesotho
- 72 FICE Luxembourg
- 74 FICE Netherlands
- 77 FICE Romania
- 80 FICE Serbia
- 84 FICE South Africa
- 88 FICE Spain
- 92 FICE Switzerland
- 96 Ukrainian Educational Platform
- 101 FICE West Africa

01

| FICE INTERNATIONAL

Foreword

Dear Readers, Members, and Friends,

Welcome to our Annual Report for 2024.

This report highlights the key challenges faced, creative solutions developed, and successes achieved by our members at national, regional, and international levels. We hope you read it with pleasure—finding not only food for thought, but also encouragement and insight throughout these accounts.

While an annual report is, by nature, a look back at the past year, we also hope it sparks new ideas and motivation for your own engagement. In 2024, FICE International included 22 national sections, 3 organization members, and 5 individual members across 30 countries on five continents. Perhaps within these pages, you will find like-minded individuals among our diverse membership—people who share your interests and with whom you might connect.

If you are not yet a member, we hope this report gives you both a reason and the motivation to join us—whether through one of our national sections or organization members, or directly as an individual.

Our work is guided by two important orienting principles.

First, the well-being, experiences, and perspectives of children and youth are central to everything we do. We firmly uphold the Rights of the Child and condemn all acts of violence against children and youth—regardless of where they occur or who the perpetrators are. We recognize children and youth currently in alternative care, as well as adults with lived experience of such care, as experts of their own lives and care contexts. Across many FICE activities—within national sections, and at regional and international levels—we see it as our responsibility to listen, learn from their experiences, and create more opportunities for meaningful, respectful engagement and, where appropriate, consultation.



Second, open dialogue is a defining feature of our work. We maintain strict political and religious neutrality and reject all forms of discrimination. We welcome into our membership all ideological, religious, and cultural orientations, provided they align with the objectives set forth in our statutes. We believe that every context has its own unique needs and strengths, and that through open dialogue and shared reflection, we can inspire one another, learn together, and collectively enhance the quality of care for children and youth.

The strength of our work—and the impact we are able to make on the lives of children and young people, as well as on the quality of alternative care—stems from the dedication of our members, many of whom contribute their time voluntarily, and from the children and youth who continue to inspire us. We are pleased to share that by the end of 2024, and following our vibrant and enriching 35th FICE International World Congress held in September in Split, Croatia, one national network, two organizations (one national and one international), and two individual experts have applied for FICE membership. In addition, expert groups in three African countries are actively working toward readiness to apply, while we continue to foster collaboration with care-experienced experts—both at national levels and through the Global Care Leavers’ Community.

We warmly welcome all new members who share our mission and who are eager to contribute to—and benefit from—the experience, friendships, knowledge, and expertise that grow from international exchange and collaboration.

On behalf of the Coordinating Body of FICE, I warmly thank every member, collaborator, and supporter for your commitment: to better lives for children and young people, to encouraging and strengthening the work of those who support them every day, to improving services for care leavers, and to driving positive change in laws and social policies through advocacy and engagement.

With kind regards and very best wishes,



Dr. Anna Katharina Schmid

President FICE International



About FICE International

Who are we?

The International Federation of Educative Communities - FICE- 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 (CYC), from a number of countries around the world.

Our mission and vision

In accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, FICE supports all endeavours which further the global realization and the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child as defined by the United Nations. FICE focuses on such living conditions of young people and their families which prevent or are detrimental to the positive development of young people:

- Children, who cannot live with their families
- Children with special needs
- Children who live in out-of-home care
- Children at risk

FICE promotes the rights of young people and their families particularly in the context of child and youth care. FICE promotes the development of different shapes of stationary and ambulant care and education and contributes to their quality development. FICE also focuses on those who are not in care, and who live at home and are at risk, and on young people with special needs.



About FICE International

How Does FICE Work?

FICE International operates as an international platform for collaboration, knowledge exchange and advocacy in the field of child and youth care. Its work is structured across three interconnected levels: national, regional and international. FICE International works at national level through its legally independent national sections and several organizational and individual members in 30 countries on five continents, at regional level through the likewise independent FICE Africa and FICE Europe Networks, and at international level where all its members come together.

FICE fosters continuous exchange among its members, enabling them to share practices, insights and innovations in child and youth care. These professional interactions take place through in-person meetings and virtual platforms such as Live Forums, FICE Online Cafés, and Strategic Working Groups.

FICE regularly convenes international gatherings—including congresses, conferences, federal councils and general assemblies—to encourage learning, dialogue, and shared advocacy. In 2024, the 35th FICE International World Congress in Split, Croatia, brought together a diverse international community around the theme: *“Shaping Tomorrow’s Care for Children and Youth: Quality and Innovation in Alternative Care.”*

Under its member-led organizational model, members lead Strategic Working Groups, the Editorial Board and other areas of strategic activity, ensuring that diverse voices contribute to FICE’s development and decision-making. The activities, achievements, and positive impacts at the international, regional and national levels are presented in that order in the chapters that follow.

FICE observes strict political and religious neutrality and rejects all forms of discrimination.

FICE International in 2024

ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS AT INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

At FICE's international level, 2024 was highlighted by a special occasion where delegates from national sections and member organizations gathered in person for the General Assembly and Federal Council meetings in Split, Croatia. These events coincided with the 35th FICE International World Congress, held from October 22–25, 2024. Organized by FICE Croatia and co-hosted by FICE International, the Congress convened a global community of professionals, academics, policymakers and care-experienced individuals around the theme: “Shaping Tomorrow’s Care for Children and Youth: Quality and Innovation in Alternative Care.”

Through a series of online Live Forums, the members fulfilled their two key roles: exchanging good practices, jointly generating knowledge, and collaborating on initiatives to strengthen alternative care and enhance the support provided to children and youth. These interactions continued across various platforms such as the Strategic Working Groups, FICE Online Cafés and the Editorial Board. Simultaneously, the Coordinating Body maintained its work through virtual meetings, ensuring effective governance and strategic decision-making for FICE International.

Throughout 2024, the benefits of the newly implemented organizational model (co-created by members and adopted in 2022) became increasingly visible. More members took active leadership roles and engaged in professional discussions, enriching FICE International's work with a dynamic mix of experience and fresh perspectives. The diverse backgrounds and collaborative spirit of the membership led to a vibrant, productive and inspiring year, creating a strong platform for the organization's continued growth and impact.



FICE International in 2024

1. International collaboration in three Strategic Working Groups

At the end of 2022, FICE International members had identified three strategic priority themes and established a dedicated Working Group (initially referred to as “thematic bundles”) for each of them. The three themes are:

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

The Strategic Working Groups are led by voluntary members of FICE International and are open to participation by other interested members, as well as additional voluntary experts, including young people with lived experience related to the topics addressed. Each group organises itself, defines its specific objectives within the broader goals of FICE International, and regularly involves the wider FICE community in its discussions and initiatives.

In 2024, the groups continued to play an active role in FICE’s international work. The Quality in Care group deepened its work on how quality is experienced and created in care settings, moving beyond standard-setting to promote a multi-perspective, process-oriented approach. The Leaving Care and Empowerment group advanced its strategic agenda, launched new initiatives including a proposed Care Leavers Participation Group, and facilitated knowledge exchange. The Hand-in-Hand Group expanded its psychosocial support work in Ukraine, developed new training formats, and strengthened international advocacy efforts. All three groups played a key role in the 35th FICE International World Congress in Split, contributing to round table discussions and participating in various panels and presentations to share their insights, practices, and thematic priorities with the broader international community.

Together, these Strategic Working Groups provide space for learning, co-creation and collaboration across national sections and members, helping FICE remain responsive to emerging needs while advancing long-term goals in the field of child and youth care.

FICE International in 2024

1.1. Quality in Care

The Quality in Care strategic working group is an initiative within FICE International aimed at enhancing the quality of alternative care for children and youth worldwide. It serves as a platform for shared reflection, exchange of practices, and collective learning, with participation from professionals across several national sections. The group is coordinated by Christian Posch and Bettina Terp, both from FICE Austria.

In 2024, the group continued to build on the foundations laid in previous years, in line with the direction set during the Federal Council meeting in Serbia in 2023. The Platform “Implementing Quality”, a core element of the group, held dedicated meetings over the year. A steering group – including James Anglin (FICE Canada), Christian Posch (FICE Austria), Julia Kuokkanen (FICE Finland), Simon Peter Otieno (FICE Kenya), Yoav Appelboim (FICE Israel), and Bettina Terp (FICE Austria) – was established to guide the work.

The group’s focus remained on bridging the gap between formal standards and everyday care experiences. Rather than proposing new definitions of quality, the emphasis was on how to create quality in practice. From early in the year, the group prepared for its contribution to the 35th FICE International Congress, including a dedicated roundtable and poster session. These activities invited dialogue around multi-perspective approaches to quality, incorporating the views of young people in care, direct care staff, and service leaders.

During the Live Forums, particularly in June and November, the group outlined its plans for 2025, identifying four thematic priorities:

- Implementation of the seven key principles of quality care;
- Promoting quality in challenging political and economic contexts;
- Child protection;
- Professional training and development.

Looking ahead, the group will continue to offer space for critical discussion, collaborative exploration, and practical support around the real-world implementation of quality care in diverse settings.

FICE International in 2024

1.2. Leaving Care and Empowerment

The Leaving Care and Empowerment strategic working group addresses the ongoing challenges faced by young people transitioning out of care. Building on its foundational principles, the group functions as a platform for sharing knowledge, best practices, research, and legislation, with the goal of empowering care-experienced youth and improving services across countries.

Early in the year, the group reviewed and confirmed its objectives for 2024. In this regard, the group proposed the creation of a Care Leavers Participation Group, envisioned as a safe, empowering space for young people to share experiences and actively contribute to FICE's work. The plan included collaborative structures to integrate youth voices.

It has also been noted that Care Leavers programmes in Africa have not developed to the level compared to most European and other developed countries. The structuring and support of the Care Leavers programme is hoped to be a platform for sharing and learning which could contribute to developing countries.

A leadership transition also took place, with Manuel Ramos (FICE Spain) assuming coordination of the group, together with Donald Nghonyama (FICE South Africa). In preparation for the Congress in Split, the group developed a series of posters and a roundtable contribution as well.

During the Federal Council in October, members also presented a strategic document which highlighted:

- Job coaching, social housing, and peer mentoring as key pillars of support for care leavers;
- Youth counselling and advocacy initiatives designed to amplify the voices of care-experienced individuals and connect them with decision-makers;
- National examples from FICE Spain, such as programs by Fundació Mercè Fontanilles and Fundación Natzaret, as models of comprehensive, youth-centred support.

The group concludes the year with a renewed sense of direction, aiming at continuing to strengthen collaboration among members, promote youth participation and support the exchange of effective strategies to improve care-leaving experiences across different national contexts.

FICE International in 2024

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

The FICE strategic working group “Hand in Hand” is a dedicated unit within FICE International that focuses on the well-being of children affected by crises, particularly in Ukraine. Its team comprises professionals from fields such as social work, psychology, education, and humanitarian response. Led by Marianna Bilyk from FICE member Ukraine Education Platform and Alex Schneider from FICE Israel, in 2024 the Task Force continued its collaboration with key partner organisations, including the Ukrainian Educational Platform (UEP), the Revived Gymnasiums of Ukraine Association (RGU), and various FICE national sections.

In 2024, Hand in Hand embarked on a transformative journey to bolster the resilience of children, families, and professionals supporting trauma-affected youth. Highlights of the year included:

- Facilitating impactful training sessions to empower educators and social workers with strategies to connect with and support vulnerable youth.
- Strengthening international partnerships, particularly with FICE Switzerland, FICE Netherlands, FICE Israel, and other national sections, to build a global support network.
- Expanding Resilience Centers in Ukraine, which provide essential psychosocial support to children and families facing trauma.
- Championing the rights of displaced Ukrainian children, participating in international conferences and issuing statements to raise awareness about their needs and resilience.

In 2024, the Task Force implemented several initiatives in the areas of child protection, education, and mental health support:

- Specialised training by the Global Disability Forum (March 19): Ukrainian medical students received training on working with children with disabilities, enhancing their skills and sensitivity to these children’s needs.
- “Supporting Ourselves, Colleagues, and Those We Care About” (April–June): A series of webinars reached 80 professionals, focusing on stress management and reflective practice to support mental health and resilience.
- Training on Emotional Literacy (May 26): 90 teachers participated in sessions aimed at integrating socio-emotional literacy into education, promoting more compassionate and responsive classrooms. All training sessions were fully translated into Ukrainian to ensure inclusive participation of local educators and social workers.

FICE International in 2024

- The network of Resilience Centers in the Lviv and Dnipro regions (four centers in total) continued providing mental health support, training, and services for families affected by the war.
- International advocacy was also a core element of the Task Force's work. Representatives took part in the 35th FICE International Congress in Split, and contributed to a joint statement on the forced deportation of Ukrainian children, issued in collaboration with FICE International and UEP.

Throughout the year, the Task Force maintained an active rhythm of governance and coordination:

- Weekly coordination sessions were held among co-chairs and key partners.
- Four strategic meetings brought together FICE members and external stakeholders to deepen collaboration and impact.
- The group also participated actively in FICE International events, ensuring alignment with FICE's broader mission.

A key milestone in 2024 was the training on emotional literacy already mentioned, which empowered over 90 teachers with essential skills and created a positive ripple effect benefiting hundreds of children who are now better equipped to understand and manage their emotions. Furthermore, the round table discussions served as an invaluable forum for educators to exchange innovative best practices and collaborative solutions, addressing the diverse challenges faced in the education sector during crises. These gatherings fostered a rich dialogue, allowing participants to share their experiences and strategies in a supportive environment, ultimately strengthening the educational community.

Looking ahead, Hand in Hand remains committed to:

- Broadening the horizons of resilience-building initiatives, ensuring communities emerge more assertive in adversity.
- Fortifying partnerships with international and local organisations, creating a tapestry of collaboration, and amplifying our impact.
- Crafting and implementing innovative training programs that elevate child welfare services, empowering caregivers and professionals to support every child's needs effectively.

As the group looks ahead to 2025, its members are filled with hope and determination. Their mission remains clear: to guarantee that every child, irrespective of their circumstances, is enveloped in a nurturing environment where they can thrive safely, embrace educational opportunities, and cultivate their emotional well-being.

FICE International in 2024

2. Continued education, knowledge development and networking

2.1. FICE International Online Cafés

The FICE International Online Cafés, launched in 2020 by Martine Tobé (FICE Europe Co-President and member of the board of FICE Netherlands), continued to provide a dynamic space for dialogue and learning throughout 2024. These informal yet enriching sessions have become a valued part of FICE's international community, offering opportunities for members and invited guests to explore key topics in child and youth care, exchange practices, and build connections across borders.

Each Café in 2024 featured a guest speaker from a different country and background, presenting on timely and often challenging topics—from research critiques on residential care, to youth empowerment through advocacy, and from psychosocial support in schools to the emotional needs of children in residential settings. As in previous years, the format remained consistent: a brief presentation followed by open discussion, allowing participants to share perspectives and explore practical implications in their own contexts.

The Cafés continue to reflect the diversity and expertise within the FICE network and beyond, providing a safe and stimulating environment where professionals, researchers, and care-experienced individuals can inspire one another and contribute to shared learning. The sustained interest and engagement clearly demonstrate the ongoing relevance and value of this initiative.

Moderated by Patrick Reason, Secretary General of FICE International, the 2024 series maintained its welcoming tone and commitment to inclusion, reflection, and professional growth. The topics and speakers of the 2024 Cafés are listed in the table below.

FICE International in 2024

DATE	TOPIC	SPEAKERS
February	Research Challenges the Conventional Wisdom about Residential Care	Bruce B. Henderson Professor Emeritus Department of Psychology, Western Carolina University, USA
April	Empowering Youth Through Advocacy: The Potential of Care-Experienced Individuals and Available Resources	Surja Chauhan Care Leavers Engagement Coordinator at Udayan Care & Advocate for Care-Experienced Youth, India
June	LIFE IS BEAUTIFUL! – How to Convince Children in Residential Care of This ?	Schmuel Stokvis Schloss Regensberg Foundation, Switzerland
December	Experiences of Learning Barriers in Education: Reflections of Learners in Gauteng Schools	Donald Nghonyama Deputy Director National Association of Child Care Workers (NACCW), South Africa






MODERATOR
PATRICK REASON,
SECRETARY GENERAL
& FICE BRAZIL

SPEAKER
BRUCE B. HENDERSON
PROFESSOR EMERITUS
DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY
WESTERN CAROLINA UNIVERSITY

"RESEARCH CHALLENGES THE CONVENTIONAL WISDOM ABOUT RESIDENTIAL CARE"

14:30 - 16:00 UTC
TUESDAY, 06 FEBRUARY






MODERATOR
PATRICK REASON,
SECRETARY GENERAL
& FICE BRAZIL

SPEAKER
SURJA CHAUHAN
CARE LEAVERS ENGAGEMENT
COORDINATOR AT UDAYAN CARE

"EMPOWERING YOUTH THROUGH ADVOCACY: THE POTENTIAL OF CARE-EXPERIENCED INDIVIDUALS AND AVAILABLE RESOURCES"

14:30 - 16:00 UTC
TUESDAY, 16 APRIL



FICE Café
JUNE 2024




MODERATOR
ANNA SCHMID,
PRESIDENT
& FICE SWITZERLAND

SPEAKER
SCHMUEL STOKVIS,
SCHLOSS REGENSBURG
FOUNDATION

**"LIFE IS BEAUTIFUL !
HOW TO CONVINCE CHILDREN IN RESIDENTIAL CARE OF THIS ?"**

14:30 - 16:00 UTC
TUESDAY, 11 JUNE

FICE CAFÉ - DECEMBER 2024




MODERATOR
PATRICK REASON,
SECRETARY GENERAL
& FICE BRAZIL

SPEAKER
DONALD NGHONYAMA,
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
CHILD CARE WORKERS (NACCW)

**EXPERIENCES OF LEARNING BARRIERS IN EDUCATION -
REFLECTION OF LEARNERS IN GAUTENG PROVINCE'S SCHOOLS**

14:30 - 16:00 UTC
TUESDAY, 03 DECEMBER

FICE International in 2024

2.2. Live Forums

Throughout 2024, FICE International hosted three Live Forums — on 9 April, 25 June, and 26 November — which continued to serve as key platforms for coordination, exchange, and collective leadership among members. These two-hour online gatherings brought together representatives from across the FICE network, including national sections, regional networks, organisational and individual members.

A total of 60 participants engaged in the Live Forums across the year, representing 19 countries spanning five continents: Austria, Brazil, Canada, Croatia, Finland, Germany, India, Israel, Japan, Kenya, Lesotho, the Netherlands, Romania, Serbia, South Africa, Spain, Switzerland, Ukraine and the United States.

Each forum combined strategic coordination with professional dialogue. Participants exchanged updates on national and regional developments, contributed to discussions on FICE International's direction, and collaborated in the strategic working groups Leaving Care and Empowerment, Quality in Care, and Special Task Force Ukraine / Hand-in-Hand group.

Among the key topics discussed were the development of concrete outputs for each strategic area, the coordination of FICE's presence at the 35th International Congress, and planning for 2024 activities. Thematic working time allowed members to review joint documents, design proposals for new initiatives, and build international collaborations — ranging from the development of a platform for implementing quality standards, to the strengthening of youth participation structures and the continuation of advocacy efforts for children affected by war and displacement.

The Live Forums were instrumental in shaping the contributions of each group to the 35th FICE International World Congress in Split, Croatia. Discussions also addressed upcoming priorities for 2025 and revisions to FICE's statutes.

The participation and rich dialogue throughout the year confirmed the importance of the Live Forums as a space where the FICE community not only shares knowledge and coordinates actions, but also sustains a spirit of global solidarity and shared responsibility.

FICE International in 2024

2.4. 35th FICE International World Congress

Organized by FICE Croatia and co-hosted by FICE International, the 35th FICE International World Congress brought together a global community of professionals, academics, policymakers, and care-experienced individuals under the theme “Shaping Tomorrow’s Care for Children and Youth: Quality and Innovation in Alternative Care.”

Held in Split, Croatia, this three-day event featured more than 120 contributions, including presentations, workshops, poster sessions, and panel discussions addressing key challenges and innovations in child and youth care. Participants from over 60 countries across five continents collaborated on sharing insights, best practices, and strategies to improve alternative care systems and enhance support for vulnerable children.

A defining feature of the Congress was its focus on giving visibility to youth voices, particularly through the involvement of care-experienced individuals. The Care-Experienced Expert Group offered critical perspectives on systemic issues, while dedicated youth-led panels, testimonies, and creative contributions reinforced the importance of their active role in shaping effective policies and practices.

Keynote lectures emphasized research-based approaches. Prof. Branka Sladović-Franz highlighted the necessity of trauma-informed care to improve transitions and outcomes for children, while Dr. Kiaras Gharabaghi challenged traditional care paradigms, advocating for inclusive, community-driven solutions that better address the complexities of care. Other keynotes explored global care trends, rights-based frameworks, and the importance of relational approaches in professional practice.

The Congress also explored innovations in residential and foster care, tackling challenges such as digital safety for children and support for teenagers in care. Examples of systemic reform and service innovation were presented from diverse national contexts, showcasing transferable models that reflect cultural, legal, and economic diversity. Initiatives like FICE’s Hand-in-Hand Working Group demonstrated successful models for addressing the needs of displaced children, including those affected by war.

FICE International in 2024

Mental health and well-being were central themes throughout the discussions. Research presented at the event underscored the importance of emotional regulation for caregivers and children in fostering resilience and creating supportive environments. Sessions on compassion fatigue and caregiver support offered actionable strategies to enhance the quality of care. Special attention was also given to the psychosocial needs of children in conflict zones and in transitional care situations.

The Congress underscored the value of global collaboration in addressing shared challenges and highlighted programs such as the Aftercare Outreach Program as models for fostering independence and improving outcomes for care leavers. Thematic clusters within the program emphasized participation, equity, and quality standards, while policy discussions—including an examination of the European Child Guarantee—emphasized the need to expand access to education, housing, and social inclusion for vulnerable children. The presence of academics, practitioners, and care-experienced youth working side by side created a uniquely collaborative atmosphere, reflecting FICE's commitment to intergenerational, cross-sector dialogue.

Link to the book of abstracts [here](#). 



FICE International in 2024

2.5. Editorial Board

The year 2024 marked a profound transition for the FICE International Editorial Board, following the deeply felt passing of Emmanuel Grupper, Vice President of FICE International and long-time Chair of the Editorial Board. Emmanuel's dedication to the dissemination of knowledge and his leadership in editorial work left a lasting legacy within FICE and beyond.

In response, James P. Anglin (FICE Canada) and Alex Schneider (FICE Israel) jointly stepped forward to serve as co-chairs of the Editorial Board, providing continuity and renewed leadership. Their collaboration was essential in sustaining the editorial momentum, particularly in preparation for the 35th FICE International World Congress in Split.

During the year, a Call for Members was launched in August 2024, inviting professionals from fields such as social work, education, psychology, youth care, and care-experienced individuals to join the editorial initiative. The 35th FICE International World Congress provided an ideal opportunity for the newly joined members to meet in person, exchange ideas and engage in shaping the Editorial Board's direction, which was key to expand and revitalise the Board.

The Board's primary focus in 2024 was managing the Call for Papers for two special issues connected to the Congress. The call welcomed submissions in three formats—academic papers, practice-based contributions, and position pieces—to be considered for publication in CYC-Net Online and the International Journal of Child, Youth and Family Studies (IJCYS). A group of over 10 reviewers was formed, and the Editorial Board now includes 17 members, two of whom serve as liaisons with the two publication platforms.

In parallel, the co-chairs are planning to lead a structured reflection on the Editorial Board's mission, priorities and operations. Topics include workflow improvements, role distribution and the incorporation of diverse and care-experienced voices in editorial processes.

FICE International in 2024

3. FICE International Organisation and Coordination

FICE International is an association and a member-led global network. With the exception of a part-time Technical Assistant, all governance, coordination and strategic work at the international level is carried out on a voluntary and unpaid basis by dedicated members. This principle also applies to the Regional Networks and most National Sections, where collaboration is driven by shared values and mutual commitment.

In 2024, FICE continued to operate under the organisational model co-created by its members in 2022, which promotes inclusive leadership, shared responsibility and regional representation. The model has fostered growing engagement in decision-making, planning, and operational activities. These took shape through the Extraordinary General Assembly and Federal Council meetings, and three Live Forums, which served as spaces for discussion, coordination, and professional exchange.

3.1. Extraordinary General Assembly Meeting

The Extraordinary General Assembly (EGA) Meeting of FICE International was held on 22 October 2024, in Split, Croatia, in a hybrid format combining in-person and online participation. Representatives from 19 National Sections, organisational members and several individual members attended the meeting.

The Assembly opened with a tribute to Prof. Emmanuel Grupper (Vice President FICE International, Chairman Editorial Board; FICE Israel) and Dr. Itumeleng Kimane (Founding Member FICE Africa Network; President FICE Lesotho), honouring their long-standing contributions to FICE and the international child and youth care community. Family members representing both were present, and their legacies were acknowledged with deep respect and gratitude.

Led by President Anna Schmid, the General Assembly addressed the annual statutory responsibilities of the organisation. Members:

- Approved the minutes of the previous General Assembly,
- Approved the 2023 Annual and Financial Reports,
- Approved the discharge of the Coordinating Body for 2023.

FICE International in 2024

During the General Assembly, updates on membership were shared, reflecting the growing engagement within the FICE network. The organisation currently comprises 19 full National Sections, along with 2 associated national sections, as well as organisational and individual members representing diverse regions and professional backgrounds.

A major development in 2024 was the approval of updated statutes, aligning FICE's framework with current legal standards and reflecting the structural evolution adopted in recent years. Notably, the new statutes formally recognise Regional Networks as integral components of FICE International.

The General Assembly also welcomed new leadership appointments. Peter van de Pol (FICE The Netherlands) was elected Vice President and Bettina Terp (FICE Austria) Treasurer. In recognition of their exceptional service to the leadership of FICE International, Honorary Memberships were granted to Prof. Emmanuel Grupper (posthumously) and Rolf Widmer (former treasurer).

The 2024 General Assembly reaffirmed FICE's commitment to transparent governance, inclusive participation and ongoing development of its internal processes, in service of its mission to promote quality care and support for children and youth worldwide.



FICE International in 2024

3.2. Federal Council Meeting and Live Forums

In 2024, FICE International maintained its commitment to inclusive governance and collaborative leadership through its Federal Council meeting and three online Live Forums, serving as key platforms for strategic planning, professional exchange, and collective decision-making.

The Federal Council took place in Split, Croatia, on 22 October 2024, following the Extraordinary General Assembly meeting. Representatives from national sections, organisational members, and the Coordinating Body met to advance strategic priorities and strengthen thematic cooperation across the network.

A central part of the Federal Council's work focused on the activity of the three Strategic Working Groups, which convened in parallel sessions to develop concrete action plans for 2025:

- The Leaving Care and Empowerment group prioritised care leaver participation, emphasising job coaching, mentoring, and access to social housing as key pillars of support for youth leaving care. It also committed to creating a participation group for care-experienced youth and mapping legislative best practices related to aftercare.
- The Hand in Hand Task Force, which focuses on supporting children affected by war and displacement—particularly in Ukraine—shared key achievements and outlined next steps, including the expansion of resilience-based programs, trauma-informed training, and international collaboration.
- The Quality in Care group presented the results of an internal FICE survey on existing national standards, proposing instead of new global standards a set of shared core principles—the “fundamental standard of care.” The group launched a steering committee and agreed on a series of focused dialogues for 2025 around quality implementation and professional reflection.

The online Live Forums, held in April, June, and November 2024, complemented the Federal Council by providing additional space for coordination and member exchange. As mentioned in section 2.2., these sessions included updates from the Coordinating Body and the Regional Networks, collaborative planning for the FICE 35 Congress and ongoing dialogue around internal governance matters, including the revision of statutes.

FICE International in 2024

3.3. Coordinating Body

The Coordinating Body (CB) is the executive board of FICE International and is responsible for guiding the organisation's strategic direction and ensuring its effective governance throughout the year. In 2024, the CB focused on strengthening FICE's internal structures, supporting global collaboration, and ensuring a successful presence at the 35th FICE International World Congress.

Throughout the year, the CB worked closely with FICE Croatia, the local organiser of the Congress, to coordinate FICE International's role in the event. This included supporting the Call for Papers, contributing to program planning, and helping ensure that the Congress reflected the organisation's values and strategic focus. The CB also validated key preparations for the Congress and oversaw the alignment of thematic content with FICE's global priorities.

In parallel, the CB defined strategic objectives, expected outcomes, and outputs for 2024, ensuring that FICE's work remained focused, measurable, and impact-driven. A significant achievement was the successful revision and approval of FICE's statutes, aligning the organisation's legal framework with current Swiss regulations and formalising recent structural changes—such as the recognition of Regional Networks.

During the Extraordinary General Assembly in October 2024, the CB oversaw the preparation and implementation of elections, in which Peter van de Pol (The Netherlands) and Bettina Terp (Austria) were elected as Vice President and Treasurer, respectively. They joined President Anna Schmid (Switzerland) and Secretary General Patrick Reason (Brazil) to form the CB team.

In the regular CB meetings and beyond, Region Africa Network was represented by Donald Nghonyama (South Africa) and Simon Peter (Kenya), while Region Europe Network was represented by Martine Tobé (The Netherlands) and Elena Matache (Romania). Together, these representatives ensured that regional voices and priorities were actively integrated into FICE's global agenda.

FICE International in 2024

The Coordinating Body held six formal meetings during the year, complemented by continuous and close collaboration between meetings, reflecting the board's strong commitment to agile and responsive leadership.

The CB also coordinated the preparation of major FICE events, including the member meetings at the General Assembly, the Federal Councils, and the Live Forums. These meetings served as key platforms for dialogue, planning, and the exchange of professional knowledge across the network.

FICE International has continued to benefit from part-time technical support. In August 2024, Rosa Núñez took over the role of Technical Assistant (TA), replacing Cristina González Villanueva, who had supported the CB since 2022. The TA has provided key support in communication, coordination and documentation.

In addition, the CB initiated a process to review and improve internal procedures, aiming to increase transparency and consistency in the organisation's operations. Work continued on key strategic documents, such as the Rules of Procedure and the Membership Guide, which are intended to serve as practical tools for current and future members of the FICE community.



02

| REGIONAL NETWORKS

FICE Europe in 2024

2024 has been a pivotal year for FICE Europe, marking a period of significant investment in building a solid foundation for the future of our organization. This year, we focused on strengthening our internal processes, ensuring that administrative tasks were completed and the necessary groundwork laid. With these tasks now behind us, the board is poised to begin 2025 with a clean slate, ready to tackle the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

Statutes and Governance

A key achievement in 2024 was the ongoing update of our statutes. FICE Europe has worked diligently on transforming its governance model to one that includes co-presidents, aiming to create a more collaborative leadership structure. We are hopeful that the updated statutes will be finalized and adopted in 2025, enabling us to strengthen our governance framework and ensure that it reflects the evolving needs of our organization.

Projects Launched in 2024

We are excited to share the progress of two important initiatives that were launched in 2024:

"The Perfect Child and Youth Care Worker: Insights from Children and Youth with Care Experience"

Launch of a new thematic page dedicated to this project. Launched in the fall of 2024, the initiative aims to gather and showcase the perspectives of young people in care on what they believe makes an ideal child and youth care worker. Through creative sessions with children and youth across Europe, we are collecting valuable insights into the qualities and characteristics they think are essential for those working with vulnerable young people. These insights will be compiled into a flipbook and published online in 2025. [[More info](#)]



FICE Europe in 2024

"Shortage of staff"

FICE Europe is on a mission to spotlight the appeal of the child and youth care profession, particularly in light of the ongoing shortage of qualified staff in the sector. To address this, we aimed to interview individuals from across Europe who have transitioned into this field from other careers or educational backgrounds. By sharing their stories and experiences, we hope to inspire others to join the profession, highlight the fulfilling nature of this work, and promote the field in a positive light. Through these profiles, we aim to uncover what drives passion and change in child and youth care, encouraging a new generation of professionals to contribute to this vital sector. [[More info](#)]



FICE Europe in 2024

Kinship Care Theme Page

Following the signing of our official statement on "**The Importance of Kinship Care and its Equal Support**" on 19 September 2023, FICE Europe launched a dedicated Kinship Care theme page on our website in 2024. This page serves as a resource hub for professionals, caregivers, and policymakers, offering the latest updates, international insights, and downloadable materials on kinship care. Among the resources available are whitepapers from UNICEF and the Kinship Care Guide by Family for Every Child. [[More info](#)]



Board and Member Activities

In addition to the completion of essential administrative tasks, FICE Europe held five board meetings throughout the year, and one members' meeting during the international conference in Split in October 2024. These events have been crucial in fostering collaboration and ensuring that the voices of our members are heard as we continue to work towards improving child and youth care across Europe.

Looking Ahead

As we reflect on the progress made in 2024, FICE Europe is excited about the opportunities that lie ahead in 2025. With a solid foundation in place and two key projects underway, we are confident that the coming year will be marked by further growth and meaningful impact in the field of child and youth care. We remain committed to advocating for the well-being of children and youth across Europe, and we look forward to the continued collaboration of our members and partners as we move forward in our mission.

FICE Africa in 2024

National Sections participating in FICE Africa

The national sections of full members participating in the FICE Africa continental network include South Africa, Zambia, West Africa, and Kenya.

In 2024, FICE International contemplated the admission of Lesotho as a member; however, following the passing of the founder and President of FICE Lesotho Dr Itumeleng Kimane, the leadership required additional time to achieve stability. FICE South Africa was once again asked to continue offering mentorship and support to prepare FICE Lesotho for full membership admission. In the interim, Lesotho will maintain its status as an associate member.

Ghana, Namibia, and eSwatini are still in the process of establishing their national chapters.

Overview on 2024 activities and meetings

The events that occurred throughout 2024 included:

FICE Africa conducted **two virtual meetings** in 2024. Both meetings saw strong attendance, with representation from all member countries. The third meeting was postponed due to the unfortunate passing of Dr. Kimane from Lesotho.

The **continental network meetings of FICE Africa** have offered members a platform to present, discuss, and share innovative strategies to address the national challenges faced by children and youth in need of care and support.

FICE Africa observed a decline in attendance at the FICE Live Forum meetings. Members were urged to participate in these gatherings, as the exchange of knowledge and networking opportunities were highlighted as essential benefits.

Due to limited resources, only FICE Kenya and FICE West Africa were able to attend the FICE 35 Congress in Split. The FICE Africa Network prepared a presentation which Simon Peter (Kenya) delivered on its behalf. Donald Nghonyama participated in the congress virtually.

FICE Africa made a resolution to raise funds to facilitate a face-to-face meeting for its members. Despite efforts to secure funding through a memorandum of understanding signed between FICE South Africa and REPSSI, these attempts were unfortunately unsuccessful.

FICE Africa in 2024

In response to a resolution by FICE Africa regarding the rising issue of **gender-based violence** prevalent in many African countries, it was agreed that each country would submit a report detailing their approach to this challenge, fostering mutual learning. This initiative continued in two meetings held in 2024, where models aimed at educating young women and men about gender-based violence were shared.

The **monthly webinars** hosted by FICE South Africa continue to draw participation from both member and non-member countries across Africa and beyond. These webinars address a variety of topics related to child and youth care work, including legislation, models, strategies, research, and the sharing of expertise by renowned child and youth care workers.

Bereavement

FICE Africa has suffered a significant loss with the passing of Dr. Itumeleng Kimane. Dr. Kimane was the founder of FICE Lesotho and a pioneer in child care and protection within the nation. She served the FICE Africa network with great pride and commitment.

FICE Africa finds solace in knowing that her legacy and all her diligent efforts in her work, including the networks she established and her influence on government, international organizations, and local entities, continue to be advanced in the same spirit.

Partnerships

FICE South Africa has successfully signed a **memorandum of understanding with Regional Psychosocial Support Initiatives (REPSSI)**, which operates in 13 countries across East and Southern Africa. Any resource development resulting from this agreement will enhance the development of child and youth care work and foster the growth of FICE Africa on the continent.



03

| FICE MEMBERS

FICE Austria in 2024

Full member

Bettina Terp and Christian Posch - Co-presidents

Membership Overview

FICE Austria currently counts 46 members in total, comprising 33 organizational members and 13 individual members. This represents an increase compared to 2023, with three new organizations and one additional individual joining the network.

Key Achievements in 2024

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**" and the "**Dual practice-oriented further training for professionals in alternative child and youth care**" curriculum in 2023, another important step towards realising state-of-the-art quality in the care of children and young people throughout Austria was represented in Salzburg on 3rd December 2024.

Fice Austria's latest book was presented to the specialist audience: "Qualitätsstandards für mobile Angebote im Rahmen der Unterstützung der Erziehung" ("**Quality standards for mobile services in the context of educational support**")



Meetings and Governance

An Extraordinary General Assembly took place online in October 2024, and the Board of Directors and the Presidents were confirmed successfully.

FICE Austria in 2024

Success Stories and Impact

Series of exchanges on the topic of child and youth welfare

In 2022, FICE Austria had already started a series of networking meetings on the topic of child and youth welfare in 2030. These virtual networking meetings were successfully continued at regular intervals in 2024 (8 meetings in 2024) and will continue to take place.

DEMANDS on politics to strengthen child and youth welfare

These demands were sent to the relevant representatives of the Austrian political parties, as well as to the provincial councillors for social affairs and the top officials of the child and youth welfare organisations of all 9 federal states.

1- All children in Austria have the same rights and opportunities if they are supported by child and youth welfare services. All children are worth the same!

- Equal opportunities for every child - regardless of which federal state they live in - as a question of justice
- Ensure Austria-wide quality through mandatory cooperation structures between the federal states and the federal government
- Establishing effective cooperation across sector boundaries
- Establish crisis management as a central youth welfare strategy
- Expand participation as a standard in youth welfare

2- We are calling for an annual 30 million euro fund for innovation, prevention and for the current and future challenges of child and youth welfare.

- Act early and flexibly
- Strengthening networks and cooperation
- Using family as a resource
- Establish the right to support for young adults from child and youth services (care leavers)
- Take measures against juvenile delinquency

3- We are calling for a social pedagogical, tertiary education programme for child and youth welfare in which students also work in the field of child and youth welfare.

- Own practice-orientated, in-service training for the child and youth welfare
- Current research as the basis for modern education

4- We demand a funding pot for research in child and youth welfare of 10 million euros annually, as well as a well-founded evaluation of the data from Statistics Austria for the further development and planning of child and youth welfare.

- Research as a management tool for effective youth welfare
- Focus on all areas of youth welfare
- Using statistics as a basis for planning

FICE Austria in 2024

Impulse days

FICE Austria successfully held its bi-annual Impulse Days (“Impulstage”) to discuss/exchange the further development of the entire child and youth welfare in Austria and to critically question the framework conditions of social work with children and work out possible proposals for improvement. The first Impulse Day took place in Linz (Upper Austria) in May 2024.

In autumn, Fice Austria organised the second Impulse Day in Salzburg, where Fice Austria's latest book *“Quality standards for mobile services in the context of educational support”* was presented to the specialist audience.



Handlungsbuch - "handbook" for alternative child care volume 1

FICE Austria is still working on the “Handlungsbuch”. 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.

Two volumes are planned, interested readers will be able to access part of the complete work at September 2025. On the other hand, the division into two volumes facilitates access, as the complete work will comprise around 1000 pages. The Volume 2 will be finished September 2026.

FICE Brazil in 2024

Full member

Isa Guar - President

Seminars and Events

FICE Brazil partnered with the Brazilian National Movement for the Rights of Children and Adolescents to Live in Family and Community to host the National Seminar "My life after leaving care" This event took place at The Pontifical Catholic University of Minas Gerais in Belo Horizonte in March 2024.

The seminar featured panels addressing key topics such as the difficulties in the transition from care to autonomous living, challenges faced after leaving care, Advocacy and Policy for Careleavers, and the building of support groups and a Brazilian Careleaver Community called Youth in Movement. These panels were subsequently compiled and to be published in 2025 as an academic publication by the University Editorial Body. Additionally there was the presentation of a National Declaration for Careleavers.



In July 2024, the National Movement promoted a Seminar in Bahia together with its partner organisations on prevention work called "Stick with Us". The two day seminar worked on promoting youth protagonism in vulnerable communities to prevent family separation.

In November 2025, FICE Brazil and the National Movement celebrated 20 years of the National Movement with an event in Braslia which included a presentation of our work at the Brazilian National Council for the Rights of Children and Adolescents and a celebration of the Book "The Rights of Children to Live in Family and Community"

FICE Brazil in 2024

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 Brazil 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.



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 2024. 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. As we enter the sixth anniversary of this process, a national open call for contributions was launched at the end of 2024. The legitimacy of this democratic process is crucial, ensuring that care policy remains in the national spotlight.

FICE Brazil in 2024

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. FICE Brazil, as 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 administered a total of 45 projects and courses across 9 different Brazilian States.

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 Bulgaria in 2024

Full member

Dashenka Krалеva - President

Membership overview

FICE Bulgaria (The Association for Pedagogical and Social Assistance for Children) is a non-governmental organization established in 2001 to advance child and youth care in Bulgaria. Based in Sofia, it brings together professionals from public and private sectors—psychologists, educators, social workers and experts—to improve the lives of children and families.

FICE Bulgaria operates as a membership-based organization governed by a General Assembly that sets strategic priorities, approves annual reports and elects the Board of Management. The Board, comprising President Dr. Dashenka Krалеva, Dr. Rossitsa Simeonova and Mag. Vessela Alexieva, oversees the organization's operational activities. FICE-Bulgaria also maintains an educational center, providing continuous professional development opportunities.

At FICE-Bulgaria, we believe that every individual, regardless of age or background, deserves support, respect, and the opportunity to lead a fulfilling life. Our mission is to create better living conditions for children and adults in Bulgaria by prioritizing social care and safeguarding the rights of the most vulnerable members of society. We achieve this by:

- Developing innovative methodologies tailored to emerging social challenges, ensuring that our approaches remain relevant and impactful.
- Organizing comprehensive trainings, supervisions, and consultations for professionals in the social sector, enhancing their skills and competencies to provide high-quality services.
- Building partnerships among organizations and specialists committed to the well-being of children, families, and vulnerable groups, fostering a community of care and support.

Key Achievements in 2024

In 2024, FICE Bulgaria proudly participated in the "Inspired Beginning" project, organized by the Lachezar Tsotsorkov Foundation. This transformative initiative aimed to enhance the knowledge and skills of teachers from seven schools across the country, focusing on fostering social-emotional values in children. Our dedicated team, led by Dr. Dashenka Krалеva and psychologist Miroslava Burova, played an instrumental role in training teachers from Bansko and Razlog. Through interactive workshops and practical demonstrations, participants gained valuable insights into nurturing emotional intelligence and resilience among students.

FICE Bulgaria in 2024



FICE Bulgaria has long been devoted to promoting emotional intelligence, recognizing it as a fundamental aspect of personal and social development. By empowering educators to cultivate these skills in the classroom, we contribute to building a more empathetic and supportive educational environment. The success of the "Inspired Beginning" project highlights our commitment to equipping professionals with the tools they need to make a lasting impact on children's lives.

In 2024, FICE-Bulgaria successfully conducted a wide range of training sessions, both online and in-person, aimed at enhancing the professional capacity of specialists working with children and youth. The training topics addressed crucial areas of child and youth care, including trauma pedagogy, socio-emotional skills, and residential care models. Special attention was given to modern methods for working with children on the autism spectrum, as well as safeguarding children from violence and discrimination.



One of its most successful training programs is the individualized case management for children and youth, which has been continuously developed and refined over the years. Recognized as one of the organization's flagship initiatives, this training equips professionals with advanced skills in creating individual needs assessments and support plans for children from diverse and vulnerable backgrounds, including those placed in residential care, recipients of community-based and mobile services, children with behavioral challenges and youth involved with the justice system.

FICE Bulgaria in 2024

The program places a strong emphasis on the active involvement of children and families, fostering a collaborative approach among all stakeholders. Its proven effectiveness has established it as a fundamental component of FICE-Bulgaria's training portfolio, continuously attracting professionals committed to improving child and youth care.

Another significant initiative was the training of trainers of candidate-adoptive parents, held in two modules at the Sofia office. The program was designed to foster positive relationships between adoptive parents, foster families, biological parents (when possible), and social services. The training covered key topics related to adoption, attachment, and the long-term commitment of adoptive parenting. Participants engaged in practical exercises and received certificates upon successful completion of the modules.

Furthermore, in response to the challenges posed by deinstitutionalization, FICE Bulgaria organized a specialized training on addressing challenging behavior in children and individuals with disabilities. The course offered strategies for decoding behavioral responses rooted in trauma, communication difficulties, and social isolation. This training aimed at equipping social workers and caregivers with practical tools to manage crisis situations effectively and foster a supportive environment.



The organization also hosted a training dedicated to psychological counseling within social services. The focus was on developing active listening, hypothesis building, and selecting appropriate therapeutic approaches. The training empowered psychologists and social service staff with knowledge and skills to address the complex needs of children and families in their care.

Thanks to enhanced social media presence, FICE Bulgaria saw a record number of 1,497 trainees and followers in 2024.

FICE Bulgaria in 2024

Strengthening Social Services and Supervision

FICE Bulgaria offers professional supervision services, both online and on-site, to support staff working in social services. The supervision process aims to enhance service quality, promote professional development, provide emotional support, and prevent burnout. Additionally, it fosters organizational growth and strengthens team dynamics.

Advancing Professional Education

The Centre for Professional Education continued its mission to upskill social service professionals. In 2024, over 70 participants successfully completed three-month remote courses in Social Work with At-Risk Children and Families and Social Work with Children and Adults with Disabilities. Despite the online format, the courses culminated in face-to-face exams at the Sofia office, ensuring rigorous assessment and certification.

Looking Ahead

FICE Bulgaria remains steadfast in its dedication to empowering professionals and transforming the lives of children and families. Through continuous innovation and collaboration, the organization envisions a future where every child receives the care, support, and opportunities they deserve.



FICE Canada in 2024

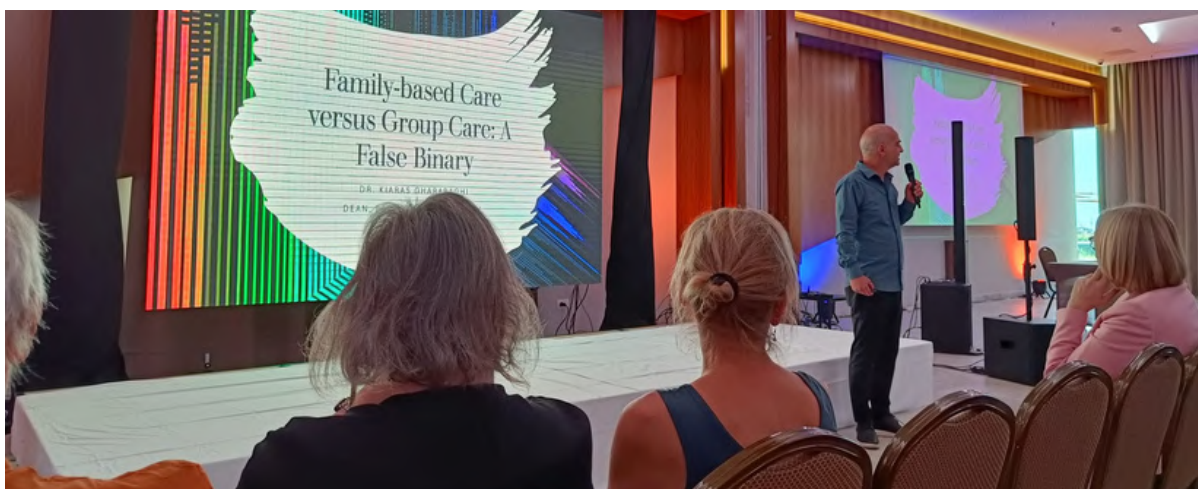
Full member

James Anglin - President

Membership overview

FICE-Canada has 22 Member Organizations across the country including child- and family-serving agencies, Provincial Child and Youth Care Organizations and Post-Secondary college and university programs. Members include:

- Amal Youth and Family Centre Inc [\[Link\]](#)
- Bachelor of Child and Youth Care Program, MacEwan University [\[Link\]](#)
- Canadian Accreditation Council of Human Services [\[Link\]](#)
- Child and Youth Care Program, Douglas College [\[Link\]](#)
- Department of Child Studies & Social Work, Mount Royal University [\[Link\]](#)
- Graduate Diploma in Youth Work, Concordia University [\[Link\]](#)
- HomeBridge Youth Society [\[Link\]](#)
- Nanaimo Child Development Centre [\[Link\]](#)
- Nova Scotia Community College [\[Link\]](#)
- New Path Youth and Family Services [\[Link\]](#)
- Oak Hill Foundation [\[Link\]](#)
- Ranch Ehrlo Society [\[Link\]](#)
- Sarnia-Lambton Rebound [\[Link\]](#)
- South Island Community Services [\[Link\]](#)
- The Child and Youth Care Association of Alberta [\[Link\]](#)
- The Child and Youth Care Association of BC [\[Link\]](#)
- The Child and Youth Care Workers Association of Manitoba [\[Link\]](#)
- The George Hull Centre for Children and Families [\[Link\]](#)
- Trellis Society for Community Impact [\[Link\]](#)
- University of Fraser Valley [\[Link\]](#)
- Vancouver Island University Child and Youth Care Program [\[Link\]](#)
- Waypoints [\[Link\]](#)



FICE Canada in 2024

Key Achievements and Activities Overview

FICE Canada attended its first FICE-International Congress as a full national section member.

Seven of our Member Organizations (one-third of members) were represented at FICE35 in Split, Croatia, and Canada had strong and active representation at the congress.

Involvements included two workshops (Michelle Briegel & Pennie Sibbald; Heather Modlin & Kelly Shaw), co-moderating the opening and closing sessions and a panel presentation (James Anglin) and the Opening Keynote (Kiaras Gharabaghi).

We have sponsored a number of webinars, including a general member discussion, a focus on CYC in war zones, recruiting, orienting and training new staff, and relational practice between students and instructors in post-secondary education.

Through the President, FICE Canada has been engaged with several organizations and journals, including the European Scientific Association on Research on Residential and Family Care (EUSARF), the International Work Group on Therapeutic Residential Care, the Scottish Journal of Residential Child Care, to name a few, especially on issues relating to the future of residential care for children and youth.

Meetings and Governance

FICE-Canada holds monthly Executive meetings and quarterly Board meetings, with an Annual AGM in the Spring.

Key topics included: strengthening CYC nationally and internationally; developing partnerships with relevant organizations; enhancing communication, internally and externally; and planning for engagement with Indigenous organizations.

Success Stories

A series of webinars have been held on: member information sharing; working with children and families in conflict zones; recruiting, orienting and training new staff, and relational practice between students and instructors in post-secondary education programs

FICE Croatia in 2024

Full member

Petra Hrvoj - President

Membership Overview

FICE Croatia currently has 28 members, of which 5 are organization members, and 23 are individuals. In 2024, 5 new members joined, 1 organization member and 4 individual members, and we have 3 membership renewals, 2 organization members and 1 individual member.

Key Achievements in 2024

The biggest success in 2024 for FICE Croatia was the organization of the 35th FICE International World Congress together with FICE International. The Congress took place from 22-25 October 2024 in Split at the Amphora Hotel and the Zagreb Hotel. The theme of the congress was “SHAPING TOMORROW’S CARE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH: Quality and innovation in alternative care.

The co-organizers of the congress, along with FICE Croatia and FICE International, were the Center for Missing and Abused Children, the Center for a Safer Internet, the Faculty of Law in Zagreb, the Foundation “Croatia for Children”, the Faculty of Philosophy in Split and with special support of the Office of the Ombudsman for Children, Helence Pirnat Dragičević.

The congress collaborators were the Teaching Institute of Public Health of the County of Zagreb, Maestral Split, the Croatian Institute for Social Work, Regional Office Split, the MoST association, GODJI production and Kinderperspectief.

There were 3 congress days and a pre-congress day which included FICE International activities and the official opening of the congress.

It included numerous plenary lectures, parallel sessions (lectures, online lectures, workshops, round tables, poster presentations), field visits, a youth program, a social services fair. The congress was attended by around 300 participants from all over the world, including representatives of FICE International members.

This congress was of great importance for FICE Croatia and FICE International, but also for the entire system of alternative care for children and young people in Croatia and internationally, as it provided an opportunity to exchange new ideas in this area, share experiences and examples of good practices, network experts, scientists and representatives of childcare institutions, and provided young people with the opportunity to present their needs and perceived challenges they face.

FICE Croatia in 2024

Activities

National activities:

1. "Spremni za izlazak iz skrbi (Ready to leave care) - phase 2", 2023-2024. City of Zagreb.
2. Partnership on the project "Uključi se" (Get Involved), implemented by Suncokret-OLJIN, 2024-2025. City of Zagreb.
3. Partnership on the project "Foster care in the center 2.0", implemented by the Forum for quality foster care of children - foster parents for children, 2024., City of Zagreb.
4. Other national activities (Pop-up panel Digital well-being of children in care, Online education for experts Train your AI assistant: Education for experts working with children and youth, ...).

International activities:

1. 35th FICE International World Congress
2. Partnership in the Erasmus+ project "My Voice My Choice", applicant: Radi Vidi Pats, 2024
3. Partnership in the Erasmus+ project "Let's get mental", applicant: Youth Center of the Dravinjska dolina, 2024, Erasmus+
4. Other international activities (participation in FICE International, FICE Europe and Eurochild activities...)

Meetings and Governance

In 2024, FICE Croatia had two assemblies. On December 8 extraordinary and election assembly was held in person in Zagreb. 8 members of the assembly participated, Petra Hrvoj was re-elected as the president of the association and Tena Bosak as the executive director of the association, and the members agreed on adding new activities to the statutes in order to expand the area of activities.

Second one, the annual general assembly was on December 19 in an online format. 11 members participated. At the assembly, the annual report on the activities carried out with FICE Croatia in 2024 and the financial report for 2024 were presented. Also, the work plan and program for 2025 as well as the financial plan for 2024 were presented. Additionally, the report of implementing 35th FICE International Congress in Split in October 2024 was also presented to all members.

FICE Croatia in 2024

Success Stories and Impact

This time FICE Croatia would like to share the story of how the FICE35 congress had a positive impact on children and young people in care. After working hard on the youth program during the congress and presenting their work at the congress, we spoke with the young people who participated. The young people were touched that they had the opportunity to be heard and that they were given the opportunity and space to express their needs and desires, and the opportunity to sit and discuss with adults on an equal footing. This motivated us to continue creating new activities and events for young people and gave us confirmation of the meaning of what we do.

We would just like to point out that we are honored that FICE International gave us the opportunity to organize the FICE35 Congress and we are proud of our cooperation and organization of such a large and significant event in the field of alternative care for children and youth. Together, we have provided an opportunity for children, youth and professionals from the child care system to improve the quality of services and raise awareness of the importance of this area and the organization of similar events, both in Croatia and around the world.



FICE Czech Republic in 2024

Full member

Jana Koubova - Chairman

Membership Overview

In 2024, FICE ČR maintained a robust and steadily growing membership base. The organization currently includes 41 institutional members, including residential care facilities and educational institutions, as well as two registered non-governmental organizations actively engaged in child and youth welfare.

In total, over 1,000 individuals are actively involved in the work and initiatives of FICE ČR. This extensive network includes educators, social workers, psychologists, care professionals, and administrative staff, who together form a vibrant community committed to improving the quality of alternative care and promoting inclusive education.

The diverse composition of the membership allows for interdisciplinary collaboration, sharing of best practices, and the development of innovative approaches to supporting children and young people in residential and institutional care.

Key Achievements in 2024

One of FICE Czech Republic's most significant achievements in 2024 was its active engagement in national legislative processes aimed at improving the conditions for children and youth in institutional care. Through structured dialogue with policymakers, our organization contributed expert input to proposed reforms, emphasizing the rights, needs, and long-term well-being of children in residential settings. This collaboration represents a critical step towards systemic change and aligns with international child protection and care standards.

FICER ČR also actively participated in the national transformation process of institutional care, ensuring that the voices of practitioners and children were represented. Our contributions focused on promoting community-based alternatives, enhancing educational and psychosocial support, and building sustainable models of care.

In 2024, we successfully established a strategic partnership with AMBIS University, which resulted in the implementation of several research projects of national significance. These included a study on the impact of parental incarceration on children living in children's homes, which shed light on often-overlooked psychosocial consequences and informed recommendations for care providers.

FICE Czech Republic in 2024

We are currently undertaking a groundbreaking research project examining the experiences of LGBT+ youth within institutional environments. This initiative represents a pioneering effort in the Czech context and aims to contribute to academic knowledge and policy development regarding inclusive and identity-sensitive care.

Through these initiatives, FICE ČR has solidified its role as a key stakeholder in shaping the future of child and youth care in the Czech Republic, combining advocacy, research, and systemic innovation.

Activities

In 2024, FICE Czech Republic continued to implement a wide range of activities aimed at professional development, advocacy, and systemic improvement in child and youth care.

A central element of our work was organizing two national educational seminars, which are held regularly each year. These events brought together approximately 100 active participants, including residential institutions, NGOs, academia, and public administration professionals. The seminars served as platforms for disseminating current research findings, exchanging good practices, and discussing innovative pedagogical and therapeutic approaches.

In addition to educational events, FICE ČR remained highly engaged in advocacy and policy-oriented initiatives, particularly those related to the ongoing transformation of institutional care. Members actively participated in consultations, working groups, and expert forums to promote inclusive and child-centred reforms.

Our activities also included international collaboration, dissemination of research outputs, and support for local initiatives to improve the quality of life for children in alternative care settings.

Meetings and Governance

FICE Czech Republic maintained an active and transparent governance structure throughout 2024. The organization convened two national educational seminars (which also function as opportunities for informal governance consultation) and held regular FICE ČR Executive Committee meetings, which are responsible for strategic direction and decision-making.

These meetings, attended by elected representatives and regional stakeholders, were held in person and online to ensure broad participation. The average involvement per event was approximately 100 professionals in the broader seminars and a more targeted group of decision-makers at internal committee meetings.

FICE Czech Republic in 2024

Key topics discussed included:

- The legislative and policy developments affecting children in institutional care
- Strategic priorities for the organization in the context of system transformation
- Development of new research initiatives in collaboration with academic institutions
- Strengthening of international ties within the FICE network

These governance activities ensured continuity, accountability and responsiveness to the evolving needs of our member institutions and the children they serve.

Success Stories and Impact

A compelling moment in 2024 occurred during one of our national educational seminars, where a former resident of a children's home shared her journey. Having successfully transitioned from institutional care into independent adulthood, she offered a moving testimony of resilience, personal growth, and the importance of consistent professional support throughout her development.

Her decision to formally join FICE Czech Republic and actively participate in our future activities made this contribution incredibly impactful. Her interest in engaging with the organization represents a significant milestone in our efforts to amplify the voices of young people with lived experience in alternative care.

Her participation inspired professionals and peers alike and exemplified the principles of empowerment, inclusion and youth participation that FICE ČR consistently promotes. We believe that her future involvement in advocacy and peer-support work will contribute to a more responsive and empathetic care system.

Looking ahead, FICE Czech Republic is preparing for more intensive involvement within the broader FICE International network. Strengthening our international cooperation is a strategic priority, with a particular emphasis on the exchange of best practices and joint learning in inclusive care and education.

In 2025, we plan to organize a study visit to Scandinavia to deepen our understanding of inclusive education systems and progressive models of care. The visit will focus on the practical implementation of inclusive approaches, deinstitutionalization strategies, and the role of interdisciplinary cooperation in supporting children with diverse needs.

This initiative will enrich the professional competencies of our members and contribute to the development of context-sensitive innovations within the Czech care system. Through this and other planned international engagements, FICE ČR seeks to reinforce further its mission of promoting quality, equity, and inclusion for all children in alternative care.

FICE Finland in 2024

Central Union for Child Welfare Finland - Full member
Ulla Siimes - President

Membership Overview

As of 2024, FICE Finland has 99 members, consisting mainly of organisations and wellbeing services counties.

Key Achievements in 2024

Active advocacy work

In the spring of 2024, both the presidential and European Parliament elections were held. In both elections, the Central Union for Child Welfare (CUCW) aimed to bring the perspectives of children and families into the public debate. For the municipal and wellbeing services county elections to be held in spring 2025, we prepared by producing an election program focused on the services that municipalities and wellbeing services counties provide to children, young people, and families.

- CUCW's 'Give a Voice to the Child' campaign included 45 participating organizations.
- During the presidential election, a 'Give a Voice to the Child' video was recorded with each candidate, in which children asked the candidates questions. The videos were shared on the Central Union for Child Welfare's social media channels.
- In connection with the EU elections, CUCW published a blog series on the topics of child poverty, immigration, climate change, child protection, and children's online safety.

FICE Finland in 2024

Activities

The year of advocacy work was marked by public debate about the role and significance of civil society organizations in our society. CUCW brought the perspective of child and family organizations into this discussion.

We also contributed to the public discourse through our anti-hate speech campaign Don't Look Away. The campaign's website provides information and guidance on how to respond to hate speech, aimed at children, young people, and teachers.

In the autumn, we received joyful news when our funding application in the EU's CERV-CHILD-2024 call was successful. We were informed that, starting in early 2025, we will be able to implement a project to produce child-friendly versions of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child's concluding observations, recommendations, and reporting process.

CUCW gave a total of 40 statements, most of which were about legislative proposals to the ministries.

The theme of Children's Rights Week coordinated by the Children's Rights Communication Network, was the right to learn. Once again, the theme week was prominently visible in the media and on social media, as well as in schools, early childhood education, various events, and public spaces.

- There were 2,870 participants, including 880 schools, 1,653 early childhood education units, and 337 leisure activity organizations.
- During the week, the Children's Rights Communication Network also published a statement.
- A TikTok account for children's rights was launched, and content was produced for it regularly.

The central federation conducted a survey for children and young people about children's rights and the situation of children in Finland. Nearly 15,000 children and young people aged 10–17 responded to the survey, and the report received wide media coverage.

In child and family-specific child protection, development work continued based on the reports 'The Current State and Future of Child Protection', 'Perspectives on Substitute Care', and 'Child Protection Through the Eyes of Clients', in collaboration with professionals and clients. These reports have been utilized over the past year in advocacy and communication efforts.

FICE Finland in 2024

Meetings and Governance

At the beginning of 2024, a new advisory council term began. Alongside the traditional Child Welfare Advisory Board and the Advisory Board on Child and Family Policy, a Youth Advisory Council was launched. It includes 21 young people, approximately 15–21 years old, nominated through member organizations. The Youth Advisory Council quickly gained momentum in its activities.

CUCW's annual conference, The National Child Welfare Days once again brought together an impressive number of participants, around 1200 professionals and decision makers.

Success Stories and Impact

The year 2024 was a year of adaptation for the CUCW. Particular adjustment was required in carrying out expert and advocacy work within the current societal and political climate. Whereas children's rights and services for children and families were once at least acknowledged in ceremonial speeches, in 2024, they were no longer considered important even in those.

Despite this—and precisely because of it—we continued our strong advocacy work to make sure that children's rights are not dismissed from political decision making.

FICE Germany in 2024

Full member

Nicole Knuth (1st chairwoman), Stefan Wedermann (managing director).

Overview

FICE Germany refers to the Internationale Gesellschaft für erzieherische Hilfen (IGfH), the German section of FICE. IGfH serves as a lobby and service platform advocating for the welfare, rights, and participation of young people in foster care, residential care, and other child and youth welfare services. The organization collaborates closely with self-advocacy groups of young people with care experience to ensure their perspectives shape practice, policy, and research. IGfH organizes conferences and professional training, publishes books, newsletters, the journal Forum Erziehungshilfen, and various position papers. It also supports research projects, including the long-term panel study on social participation and support networks of care leavers (CLS) and the advisory forum “Empowering Young Adults: Bridges to Independence”, which focuses on support structures for vulnerable young people. Across all its activities, IGfH promotes an inclusive approach to child and youth welfare, addressing the needs of young people with disabilities, migration or refugee backgrounds, experiences of discrimination, and those transitioning from care to adulthood.

Changes in the Management Team and Board

2024 saw significant personnel changes in the management, Executive Board, and Assembly of Delegates. After more than 20 years of dedicated service since 2003, Josef Koch stepped down as Managing Director on October 30, 2024, and retired. His successor, Stefan Wedermann, assumed the role of Managing Director on November 1, 2024. Nicole Knuth was elected as the new First Chair of IGfH, supported by Melanie Overbeck and Hans-Ullrich Krause as deputy chairs.

Annual Conference 2024

The annual conference, held in cooperation with Potsdam University of Applied Sciences, was the highlight of the association's 2024 calendar, attracting over 300 participants. The conference focused on developing high-quality, rights-based support services and alternative care options that allow young people to discover their abilities, exercise their rights, and actively participate in social life — all fostered through professional practice and the creation of meaningful relationships. The success of these approaches relies heavily on both material resources and qualified professionals.

FICE Germany in 2024

Supporting the Development of an Inclusive Child and Youth Welfare System in Germany

A key focus of IGfH's work in 2024 was supporting a process of participation and self-representation in the further development of inclusive child and youth welfare. An important milestone was the publication of the government draft of the Inclusive Child and Youth Welfare Act (IKJHG) by the Federal Cabinet on November 27, 2024. The law has not yet been passed, and IGfH will continue to advocate for it as a central objective in 2025. Together with other organizations, IGfH has urged the new federal government to sustainably secure infrastructures, resources, and self-representation in child and youth welfare, emphasizing that a strong democracy depends on active, engaged citizens – including young people in vulnerable situations.

Advocating for the Future of Child and Youth Welfare in Germany

In winter 2024, the governing coalition in Germany collapsed. In view of the upcoming federal elections in 2025, IGfH outlined five central priorities for the new government: continue shaping the legal framework for an inclusive child and youth welfare system; strengthen democratic structures in child and youth care by securing self-representation and advocacy; address youth homelessness; establish a legal status for care leavers; and introduce parental allowances for foster parents.

Other Relevant Legislative Projects in Germany

On March 21, 2025, the Federal Council approved the Act to Strengthen Structures against Sexual Violence against Children and Adolescents (UBSKM Act). This law permanently establishes the office of the Independent Commissioner for Child Sexual Abuse Issues, creates the Council of Concerned Persons as a political advisory body, and introduces binding quality standards for protection concepts across all child and youth welfare services, not only inpatient care. The law also strengthens care receivers and leavers' rights to access their case files.

FICE Germany in 2024

Long-term panel study “CLS – Care Leaver Statistics” (2021–2030)

The transition of young adults from residential groups, assisted living, or foster families has been little researched in Germany. The CLS study fills this gap by examining how care leavers transition to independent life over the long term, identifying structures and conditions that either support or hinder participation. The study follows participants from ages 14 to 19 through seven survey waves until they reach 26, covering living, learning, working, and everyday life.

www.cls-studie.de

Advisory Forum “Empowering Youth: Bridges to Independence” (2023–2027)

The JUGEND STÄRKEN (Empowering Youth) advisory forum focuses on supporting care leavers in their transition out of youth welfare, developing local service and contact points to provide help from a single source. This includes innovative youth housing concepts that ensure stable living and care situations. In 2024, the forum supported several pilot projects addressing homelessness and precarious living conditions, emphasizing collaboration with specialists from other social systems such as health, livelihood security, and employment promotion. Results from these projects feed directly into policy work and inform recommendations to decision-makers.

<https://beratungsforum-jugend.de>

Membership Development, Social Media, and Communication

IGfH has expanded its social media presence, maintaining active profiles on Instagram (igfh_ev) and LinkedIn. The newsletter (<https://tinyurl.com/foreonlinearchive>) provides regular updates on current developments, while the new podcast “Anders gesagt | Jugendhilfe-Themen in Kunst, Kino, Literatur und Musik” (<https://igfh.de/podcast-anders-gesagt-jugendhilfe-themen-kunst-kino-literatur-musik>) offers an innovative approach to youth welfare and care leaver topics through literature, culture, and pop music.

Udayan Care (India) in 2024

Organizational member

Kiran Modi – President

Global Care Leavers Community presented and participated at the FICE 35th World Congress, in Split

Care leavers from India, Sri Lanka, Africa, Germany, Latin America, and Netherlands, delivered a powerful presentation on the importance of preserving childhood, the emergence of Care Leavers Networks in Latin America, role in advocating for care leavers' rights and fostering support and inclusion, importance of community support for care leavers and highlighted employment status of Indian care leavers and the challenges they face in the job market.

Showcasing India's Aftercare Framework

On September 23, 2024, at the INTRAC (International Research Network on Transitions to Adulthood from Care) Steering Group Committee Meeting in Buenos Aires, Dr. Kiran Modi, an elected INTRAC member from India, presented India's Aftercare framework and progress. She highlighted Udayan Care's pivotal role in shaping policy and practice through research and publications. Dr. Modi also proposed two research initiatives focusing on the diverse and intersecting experiences of care-experienced youth. The meeting convened practitioners and academicians from multiple countries, fostering a global exchange of expertise.

Highlighting Udayan Ghar's Trauma-Informed Care Model

Udayan Ghar's Trauma-Informed Care (TIC) model, based on a biopsychosocial framework, was showcased at the Lumivero Virtual Conference on September 25, 2024. Duke University interns participated in an international panel, presenting research findings from the studies *Investigating the Use of Coping Strategies and Mental Health of Transitioning Orphaned & Separated Children (OSCs)* and *Longitudinal Mental Health Outcomes for Transitioning OSCYAs in Udayan Care*. These studies provided critical insights into the mental health outcomes of children under Udayan Ghar's care. The conference attracted more than 2,700 attendees, featuring over 100 presentations and 20 product workshops.

Udayan Care (India) in 2024

Advocating for Care Leavers on the Global Stage

From October 23–25, 2024, Udayan Care made a significant impact at the 35th FICE (Fédération Internationale des Communautés Educatives) Congress in Split, Croatia. This global platform, representing over 45 countries in child and youth care, featured Dr. Kiran Modi emphasizing the necessity of aftercare support and shifting societal narratives around alternative care. Additionally, Surja, a Care Leaver and current Udayan Care employee, delivered a powerful presentation on the employment challenges and status of Care Leavers, advocating for their inclusion as experts in discussions that shape their futures.

International Virtual Conference on Child Welfare

From October 7-10, 2024, Udayan Care participated in the International Virtual Conference on Child Welfare, presenting insights on *Family Strengthening in India: Preventive and Reintegrative Aspects of Family Separation*. The discussion focused on reintegration strategies, deinstitutionalization, and alignment with global policy frameworks such as the UN Guidelines on Alternative Care and the Kigali Declaration on Child Protection Reforms. This reinforced Udayan Care's commitment to evidence-based solutions that prioritize family-based care over institutional settings.

2024 BICON Roundtable

Udayan Care co-organised the 2024 BICON Roundtable, where Dr. Kiran Modi delivered a keynote address reflecting on the “Declaration from the Heart of BICON 2023,” emphasizing three key pillars: inclusion and well-being, innovation, and accountability. As a co-organizer, Dr. Gurneet and Ms. Ranjana presented advancements in child welfare policies across Asia, particularly in community-based support systems and state-led initiatives in Odisha, Tamil Nadu, and Rajasthan. The session also addressed ongoing challenges such as resource gaps, institutional care dependency, and the need for data-driven advocacy.

CAFT-India Expert Consultation Group

In 2024, Udayan Care joined the Expert Consultation Group (ECG) of the Children and Families Together – India (CAFT-India) program. This consortium-driven initiative focuses on strengthening local capacity for care reform, particularly for children with disabilities and those in adverse circumstances. The ECG brings together experts from the care reform and disability rights sectors, including individuals with lived experience, to provide strategic guidance on national-level operational and programmatic interventions.

Udayan Care (India) in 2024

Mentoring Summit India 2024

On November 13-14, 2024, Udayan Care highlighted its pioneering mentorship models, including *Mentor Parents*, *Mentor Didi*, *Peer Mentors*, and *Big Friend, Small Friend*. The summit reinforced the transformative power of mentorship in building trust, resilience, and opportunities for children without parental care.

- **Research on Family Strengthening:** The paper *Family Strengthening Approach Towards Ensuring Reintegration of Children Restored from Institutional Care Settings in India*, authored by Dr. Kiran Modi and Dr. Gurneet Kalra, was published in the *Scottish Journal of Residential Child Care* (Spring 2024). [>Read more.](#)
- **Institutionalised Children Explorations and Beyond (ICB):** The latest edition (Vol. 11, No. 2, September 2024) of this international, double-anonymized, peer-reviewed journal features a special focus on *Kinship Care*. It explores the cultural, legal, and social aspects of kinship care worldwide. The issue includes an editorial by Dr. Monisha Nayar-Akhtar, psychoanalyst and Editor in Chief, ICB Journal; an interview with Louise Cox, Martin James Foundation, and diverse research articles on kinship care practices across different contexts. [>Access the issue.](#)

Participation in FICE monthly Cafe and Workshop

- April Month Cafe, 2024- Surja, a care experienced youth from Udayan Care and core team member of the Global Care Leavers Community, participated and presented on 'Empowering Youth Through Advocacy: The Potential of Care-Experienced Individuals and Available Resources'

Strengthening the Global Care Leavers Community

- 28 April 2024, by Ruth Wacuka on celebrating the inclusion of care leavers and the role of cultural events in their transition to independent living
- 26 May 2024, by Lourdes on building relationships and creating a supportive community through informal connections
- 30 June 2024, by Haritha and the GNGN team on empowering care leavers through cultural enrichment, emphasizing how cultural festivals and events help care leavers build self-sufficiency and integrate into society

FICE Israel in 2024

Full Member

Yoav Apelboim - President

Overview

The year 2024 was marked by significant challenges for FICE Israel, challenges we overcame thanks to the strength and resilience of our organization.

The first crisis we faced was the untimely passing of Emmanuel Grupper, may his memory be a blessing.

The second ongoing crisis for child and youth care is the war affecting and involving Israel.

The loss of Emmanuel, who served as a leading figure both in Israel and in FICE International, left us with a profound legacy of action and commitment.

In response to this crisis, we addressed national-level challenges by providing protection and security to our participants across the country, from north to south. At the same time, we supported children and teenagers who, living with their families near the border, were displaced from their homes for an extended period.

Following Emmanuel's passing, the FICE Israel management committee acted swiftly to ensure continuity: Yoav Apelboim was elected president, and members of the management committee, most of whom are long-standing members, including Ilana Tischler and Alex Schneider, were appointed.

Activities

The organization decided to focus on two main areas:

Continued connection with FICE International

In October 2024, a delegation of representatives attended the FICE 35 World Congress in Croatia. Alongside the memorial ceremonies for Emmanuel—which were marked by deep empathy and support for the Israeli team—some of our members gave lectures and participated in workshops and round tables. Throughout the year, Alex Schneider continued his important work by co-leading the *Hand in Hand* task force in collaboration with Marianna Bilyk, from the Ukrainian Educational Platform.

FICE Israel in 2024

Deepen the organization's activities in Israel

The management committee decided to deepen the organization's activities in Israel: The first activity was the involvement of organizational representatives in the academicization project for residential educators, who are known to be one of the main bodies in Israel dealing with at-risk children and youth, and with out-of-home placements. The organization now serves as a member in the academicization committee, supported the opening of a unique academic track for residential educators, and also provided scholarships for every participant in the organization.

Additionally, the organization engaged in lobbying for at-risk children and the teams working with them.

The members of the management committee invested significant efforts in planning activities for the year 2025. This planning bore fruit and has matured into projects for 2025, which will be presented in the next annual report.

FICE Japan in 2024

Full member

Shigeyuki Mori - Chief Director

Overview

FICE Japan is an organization based on the Japan Society of Social Pedagogy, dedicated to enhancing research and practice in out-of-home care. It consists of 80 practitioners and researchers involved in social care. The mission of FICE Japan is to support the healthy growth and development of children and young people who need special assistance due to separation from their families or exposure to danger. It also aims to support caregivers and supporters of these children through the concepts of social pedagogy.

As of 2024, approximately 42,000 children in Japan are receiving out-of-home care. Among them, 14% are placed in foster care, including adoption, and nearly 85% are in residential care. In 2023, the Japanese government established the Children and Families Agency, a specialized government body focused on child-related policies. Previously, child support was divided among multiple ministries, including education, healthcare, and social welfare. With the creation of this new agency, child-centered policy integration has been progressed. However, as indicated by the agency's name, "Children and Families" Agency, the value of child-rearing within a family framework remains deeply rooted in Japan's cultural and ethnic perspectives. FICE Japan works to support children and caregivers in out-of-home care, who are often unconsciously marginalized due to this prevailing family-centered perspective.

Biggest Achievement in 2024

Our most significant achievement in 2024 was the intensive workshop on social pedagogy, conducted with a guest lecturer from Scotland. The workshop took place on October 3-4, 2024, with Ian Milligan as the instructor. Milligan is the Deputy Director of the Scottish Institute for Residential Child Care (SIRCC) and has been engaged in social pedagogy training for many years.

Following the Scottish social pedagogy training model, the workshop was held in a small-group setting with approximately 15 participants. Participants included residential care staff and several researchers. Key social pedagogy concepts such as the "3Ps," "The Common Third," and "The Learning Zone Model" were introduced. Based on these concepts, Participants engaged in reflective practice by reviewing and discussing their own experiences. This training is expected to promote and deepen social pedagogy practices in Japan in the future.

FICE Japan in 2024

Additionally, two conferences were held in 2024. The 11th Conference, held online on January 28, 2024, focused on the theme "What We Want to Convey Through Eating and What Is Actually Conveyed." A total of 32 participants attended. Eating is essential to our life. While food provides crucial nourishment, its absence can create extreme anxiety, whereas access to food brings profound reassurance. Children in social care often experience a lack of a sense of security in their daily lives, which is also reflected in their eating behaviors. Given that feeling secure while eating is closely linked to feeling secure in daily life, the conference explored the role of eating in modern child-rearing from various perspectives.

The first half of the conference featured a lecture by child psychiatrist Dr. Takahiro Hoshino, who discussed the physical and psychological care aspects of eating. In the second half, practitioners engaged in a discussion on practices and challenges related to care through eating in residential facilities and communities.



一般社団法人
日本ソーシャルペダゴジー学会
Japanese Society of Social Pedagogy

第11回
学術集会

**大会テーマ「食を通じて伝えたいこと
伝えること」**

■午前の部■ 10時～12時 「食を通じて伝えたいこと伝えること」 座談会Ⅰ 食を通じたケア 座長：星野崇啓 食べることと身体感覚 「おいしい」と感じる要素 食とケアを受け入れること	■会期■ 2024年1月28日（日） 10時～17時 (受付：9時30分～) ■開催・参加方法■ オンライン 会員の場合：参加費は無料です。参加登録後視聴用IDをお送りいたします 非会員の場合：参加登録をしていただき、参加費のお振込確認後、視聴用IDをお送りいたします。 団体参加もごいます。詳しくは学会HPをご覧ください。
 イラスト提供 ふわふわ。り	■午後の部■ 13時30分～17時 「食を通じて伝えたいこと伝えること」 座談会Ⅱ 食と文化 座長：森 茂起 食す空間づくりの工夫 食をめぐる家族の文化・ 施設の文化・地域の文化 季節・行事と食 食を通じた社会との関わり

The flyer of the FICE Japan 11th conference with translation of the key parts
 Keynote speech: "Care through Eating" by Takahiro Hoshino
 Round-table talk: "Eating and Culture" organized by Shigeyuki Mori

FICE Japan in 2024

The 12th Conference, held in person at Osaka Metropolitan University on October 5, 2024, had 43 participants. The event featured a lecture by Ian Milligan, who was in Japan for the previously mentioned workshop. The theme of his lecture was "Giving Language to Child Welfare Practices in Japan: Social Pedagogy as an Explanatory Concept."

In Part 1, Milligan introduced key concepts of social pedagogy and shared his experiences implementing it in Scotland. He highlighted that social pedagogy operates on both an individual and a social level. He emphasized that for children and young people, everyday experiences are all part of the learning process. A crucial point in his lecture was the importance of recognizing that caregivers and children should have equal rights and dignity in task execution and activities. Furthermore, he explained how social pedagogy was introduced to Scotland from Germany and Denmark and elaborated on the differences between social work and social pedagogy. His lecture provided valuable insights for embedding social pedagogy in training and practice in Japan.

In Part 2, a panel discussion was held under the theme "Strategies for Embedding Social Pedagogy in Japanese Child Welfare." Moderated by FICE Japan's Representative Director, Shigeyuki Mori, the discussion featured practitioners and researchers, including Shinya Narahara, Ryuji Takeshima, Ryo Futatsuyama, and Kayoko Ito. They shared their experiences in learning social pedagogy, provided practical tips, and discussed challenges in implementation.



一般社団法人
日本ソーシャルペダゴジー学会
Japanese Society of Social Pedagogy

第**12**回
学術集会

大会テーマ「日本の児童養護実践に言葉を与える
—説明概念としてのソーシャルペダゴジー—」

■イアン・ミリガン氏の講演
「ソーシャルペダゴジーのキー・コンセプト」
10:15～12:00
「ソーシャルペダゴジーの導入経験から」
13:00～14:20

■会期■
2024年10月5日（土）
10時～17時
(受付：9時30分～)
※午前は、同時に、大阪公立大学の公開講座として開催

■会場■
大阪公立大学中百舌鳥（なかもず）キャンパス東大講義室

■シンポジウム 14時30分～17時
「日本の児童養護にソーシャルペダゴジーを根付かせるための戦略」
シンポジスト：

- 二ツ山亮（小松島子どもの家）：ソーシャルペダゴジーを日本の施設実践に生かす—生活と対話のガイド
- 伊藤嘉余子（大阪公立大学）：「根拠」と「自信」の獲得—日本の施設職員研修におけるソーシャルペダゴジーからのギフト
- 竹島隆二（飛鳥学院）：スコットランドにおけるソーシャルペダゴジー研修から
- 檜原真也（子供の家）：ソーシャルペダゴジーから考える施設養育の新たな挑戦

 座長：森 茂紀
 コメンテーター：イアン・ミリガン氏



イラスト提供 ふわふわ、り



中百舌鳥キャンパス

The flyer for the 12th FICE Japan conference with translation of the key parts
 Keynote speech: 'Key Concepts of Social Pedagogy' by Ian Milligan
 Symposium: 'Strategies for Embedding Social Pedagogy in Japan'

FICE Kenya in 2024

Full member

Simon Peter Otieno - President

Membership and Activities Overview

FICE Kenya's mission is to create networks in Kenya to support the wellbeing of children and young people. The organization visions a country where children and young people enjoy all the rights due to them as a result of pooling together efforts by all organizations working with children and young people.

There is established a FICE Kenya board headed by the FICE Kenya President, democratically elected every three years by all member organizations at a general meeting. The board consists of seven members. There is also the office of the secretariat headed by the chief executive officer who is an ex-officio member of the board.

2024 membership was formed by 38 members (both individuals and organizations), with the new member organization Greenzone Kenya. FICE Kenya had one annual meeting where key progress and governance issues were discussed. The meeting was attended by 28 Members. It currently has membership drawn from five Counties namely: Kisumu, Homa Bay, Kakamega, Nairobi City and Siaya,

Functions of the Board:

- Approach and invite child and youth care organizations with the same concept
- Develop promotional materials
- Identify funding partners and develop fundraising strategies
- Clarify official channels of communication in all member organizations



FICE Kenya in 2024

FICE Kenya participation during National and international days:

We 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, The Girl Summit 2024, world menstrual hygiene day, World Environment Day, International Day of Families, Mazingira Day, World Aids Day, and the respective safe space open day activities. The project also participated in the Kisumu County Adolescent Summit, The children service month, Kisumu Law Court Open Day, 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.

FICE Kenya was honoured to host several partners and dignitaries for bench marking and learning exchange visits from among others Commundo, AMPATH, Ministry of Health, Kenya, Moi University, USAID, USAID 4TheChild, Kenya Medical Suppliers Agency, Ujima Foundation, Elimu Organization, students from Universitat Kassel, Germany, MX4 Foundation, Nairobi, USAID Tumikia Mtoto Project, among others.



FICE Kenya in 2024

Key Achievements

- 44 Adolescent Girls successfully graduated in dress making and they were given business start-up kits for their establishments.
- With the support of URBIS Foundation MMS launched "Mwanga Mpya" project, bringing solar energy and training to empower communities. The goal is to equip young women and men with solar technology skills for maintenance ensuring 24/7 access to medical services and vocational training at the health centre and Mayenya training centre.
- A total of 93,054 people were reached with information and messages on reproductive health and gender equality in 2024 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.
- Continued reforestation efforts with the planting of 1000 trees in May on the adopted 2 hectares of land at Kakamega Forest in partnership with Kenya Forest Service.
- In partnership with Tes Network, participated in a permaculture workshop in Kajiado, Kenya culminating in planting of 1000 tree seedlings.
- In collaboration with USAID Western Kenya Sanitation Project, conducted a training on menstrual hygiene Management (MHM) as part of its shared mission to empower communities.



FICE Kenya in 2024

- More than 700 pupils from Waluka Primary School continue to received free school feeding program thanks to Danube International School, Vienna, Austria.
- MMS craft centre conducted it's 5th graduation ceremony where 72 adolescents and young people graduating with skills in clothing and textile, hairdressing and beauty, and computer.
- Smiles Hub opened a branch in Kisumu City Centre to reach customers tight in the busy streets of Kisumu.
- Training of USAID 4TheChild OVC and DREAMS program staff concluded a training on child safeguarding and LIVES CC LIVES CC is an acronym that provides a first-line support for children and adolescents at risk of experiencing violence.
- MMS Kenya conducted a 3 day GBV and safeguarding resensitization training for USAID 4TheChild DREAMS project staff. The training included paralegals, ward coordinators, Gender Based Violence and Prep ambassadors and Adolescent Girls and Young Women (AGYW) Advisory team.
- Another 3 day facilitators training conducted by MMS on HIV and teenage pregnancy prevention. They were trained to facilitate Healthy Choices for a Better Future (ages 10-14), and My Health My Choice (ages 15-17). Caregivers also joined as part of the Families Matters Program to improve parent - child communication.
- In partnership with IRUWA TAITA, 15 adolescent men and women were empowered with renewable energy experiences through a one year training which included 3 months industrial internship and NITA examinations.
- 8 Sistema biogas system installed at MMS permaculture farm in Kajulu and solar heating system installed at MMS Angola Health Centre in Kolwa East.
- A further solar system installed at MMS Angola Health Centre with solar energy the primary source of Power at the facility.
- A new ICT Centre opened in Nyalenda slums safe space as an extension of the Future Hub in Mayenya, Kolwa East
- A school support worth KES 10,607, 702 handed over to USAID 4TheChild DREAMS and OVC program beneficiaries.
- Over 90 young men reached in a full day workshop focused on equal and healthy relationships, consent and toxic masculinity.
- Received 26 students from various institutions in Kenya for their industrial attachment at MMS Kenya. They were drawn from Maseno, Jaramogi Oginga Odinga, Kisii, Embu and Thika Universities and colleges.
- Make Me Smile gender equality Children safe-park was able to conduct 4 community awareness on gender equality, 12 children's club sessions and one sport tournament in 2024.

FICE Lesotho in 2024

Associated member

Mpepuoa Mohale - President

Overview

Bahlabini Initiative (BI) 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 reporting process to the UNCRC Committee, as well as increased efforts in parenting seminars to improve the standards of care for the children in Lesotho. Through relations and partnerships formed this year, FICE Lesotho has strived to advocate for the recognition of children as a treasure in need of investment through nurturing and care towards our vision, that is a Lesotho fit for children.

FICE Lesotho has striven to maintain relationships with the Parliament (Social Cluster Portfolio Committee), UNICEF, NACCW, Adoptionscetrum, Seriti, Forever Families (Sweden), Lesotho National Broadcasting Service (LNBS), SOS Children's Village, UNFPA, WHO, GIZ, FICE International and FICE Africa

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.

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.

FICE Lesotho in 2024

Organization's Strategic Areas of operation

- 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 overview

The organization realizes that to achieve on its broad mandate, there is need for three key things: a strong good governance for children system, robust advocacy on children's rights, a strengthened passionate and professionalized child and youth care workforce and sustainable partnerships. This realization has enabled BI to gather a lot of knowledge and experience as well as to implement numerous projects and activities as shown as follows.

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



FICE Lesotho in 2024

Lesotho Association of CYC Workers: 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.

Training of ECD Practitioners: BI in collaboration with Seriti aRe Bapaleng ECD practitioners were capacitated Practitioners from Bloemfontein, Johannesburg as well as Durban. The premise of the trainings focused on the policy framework of Early Childhood Education and Development and the need for policy reform and advocacy to capacitate Practiotiners, parents and Care givers.

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 continued. 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. As well as the adoption of operating guidelines of Daycare Center by the Host Ministry for implementation.

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.

FICE Africa Meetings: successfully attended the quarterly meetings.

FICE Lesotho in 2024

Key achievements

BI leads an advocacy campaign for positive parenting in collaboration with Seriti,aRe Bapaleng. BI trained a number of ECD Practitioners in Bloemfontein, Johannesburg as well as Durban. The premise of the trainings focused on the policy framework of Early Childhood Education and Development and the need for policy reform and advocacy to capacitate Practiotiners, parents and Care givers.

Following the development of the 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. Which lead to the Ministry of Education and Training being recognized as the Host Ministry for the Daycare Centers that service the 0-3 years cohort.



FICE Luxembourg in 2024

Full member

Geert van Beusekom - President

Membership Overview

As of 2024, ANCES counts several active members, both individual professionals and partner organizations engaged in child and youth care, education, and social work across Luxembourg. Their structure includes staff collaborators as well as long-standing institutional affiliations.

Key Achievements

One of ANCES's most significant achievements in 2024 was the publication of a special edition of *arc – Fachmagasinn fir Pädagogik a Sozial Aarbecht* (No. 03), dedicated to "**45 Years of ANCES**". This publication, released on 30 September 2024 and funded by the Œuvre Nationale de la Grande-Duchesse Charlotte, provides an in-depth reflection on ANCES's legacy and contributions in the field of social pedagogy. It is freely accessible to the public and professionals via ANCES website [[Link](#)].

Activities Overview

ANCES was actively involved in a wide range of activities throughout 2024:

Internal and External Meetings: ANCES took part in 2 Board/BEX meetings, 4 preparatory meetings for LTPES, 6 LTPES events, 9 meetings under the AEF Social Lab and related bodies, 6 staff/editorial meetings, 2 UNESCO Committee meetings, and 6 other expert consultations (including with Uni.lu, OEJQS and Assises Jeunesses).

Public Engagement: ANCES produced and distributed 6 newsletters to their network and contributed to national media discussions (e.g., WORT, Radio 100.7, Luxemburger Land), addressing key issues such as child poverty and educational inequality in Luxembourg.

Events: In 2024, the organization co-organized or participated in:

- Academic session – 50 Years of LTPES (20.02)
- Informal social meetings called "Soziale Stamminee": "Plomm", "Luxembourg", and "Mersch" (May–July)
- Book reading on homelessness with Matthias Drilling and Claude Frisoni (Chambre des salariés) (10.12)
- Final celebration of 50 Years of LTPES and 45 Years of ANCES (10.12)

Each December event attracted approximately 100 participants

Educational Programs: ANCES coordinated two social routes: one for the University of Luxembourg (22.01) and another for HTW Saar students (18.06).

FICE Luxembourg in 2024

AEF Social Lab: As a consortium member, ANCES contributed to:

- The “TWIG” project on child participation
- The publication of a trilingual comic on protection and participation
- The “On Tour” project, presenting the comic in 9 facilities to 85 children
- Launch of the “Receuil de l’opinion” survey initiative
- Participation in FEDAS’s “Formation” platform AEF and the OKAJU Summer School

Conferences: ANCES attended the ALICES-DAG (16.10), Summer school OKAJU and the international FICE Congress (October 2024), contributing to international exchange on alternative care and youth empowerment.

Continuing Education: Although a joint program with FEDAS on “key situations” in social work was planned, it had to be cancelled due to low registration. However, ANCES participated in an online New Year’s Apéro.

Meetings and Governance

ANCES participated in several strategic meetings:

- 2 Board/BEX meetings
- Internal staff and editorial meetings (6 total)
- Participation in the UNESCO Committee.

Success Stories and Impact

Through the “On Tour” project of the AEF Social Lab, ANCES brought a trilingual comic book on child protection and participation to 85 children across 9 different care settings.

Additional Information

- ANCES continued to make its *arc-fachmagasinn* archive available online, increasing accessibility to past issues for the wider community.
- The newsletter now follows a more regular publishing rhythm, enhancing their visibility and connection with members and partners.
- In terms of staffing, Magali De Rocco and Thomas Hintermayer continued their role, joined in March 2025 by Simone Klees. Ms. Wahl ended her employment at her own request as of December 31, 2024.
- Internationally, ANCES remains active in FICE, AIFRIS (Association Internationale pour la Formation, la recherche et l’Intervention Sociale), DGSA (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Soziale Arbeit e.V.), FEL (Fleegeelteren Letzebuerg), and the “Key Situations” initiative, and participated in a UNESCO event in Colmar-Berg with Grand Duchess Maria Teresa. (represented by Magali de Rocco).

FICE Netherlands in 2024

Full member

Willem Loupattij – Chair

Membership Overview

FICE Netherlands currently consists of 26 member organisations, all of which are NGOs and organizations working in the field of child and youth care. There were no new members joining in 2024. In 2024, the Board of FICE NL consisted of:

- Willem Loupattij – Chair
- Peter van de Pol – Secretary
- Martine Tobé – Treasurer
- Stephanie Koenderink – Member
- Elianne Zijlstra – Member

The Board was strengthened throughout the year with the valuable support of Bas Rodijk, Romena van Dooren, Katrien Spanbroek, and Fleur van der Heyden.

Key Achievements

Youth Participation at the Split Conference

One of the highlights of 2024 was the active involvement of young people with lived experience in care. FICE Netherlands member organization Kinderperspectief played a leading role in coordinating a parallel program for these youth during the FICE International Congress in Split.

Young participants from Zimbabwe, Sri Lanka, Brazil, India, Germany, Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the Netherlands took part in several breakout sessions, where they shared their insights and experiences. The program concluded with a moving musical performance that powerfully reflected the collective voice and vision of the participating youth.

Activities Overview

Professional Development – Masterclass Series

In November 2024, FICE Netherlands hosted its very first masterclass, kicking off what will become a recurring series in 2025. The session was led by **James Freeman** (USA), a seasoned youth work and trauma expert and founder of *Training Grounds*.

FICE Netherlands in 2024

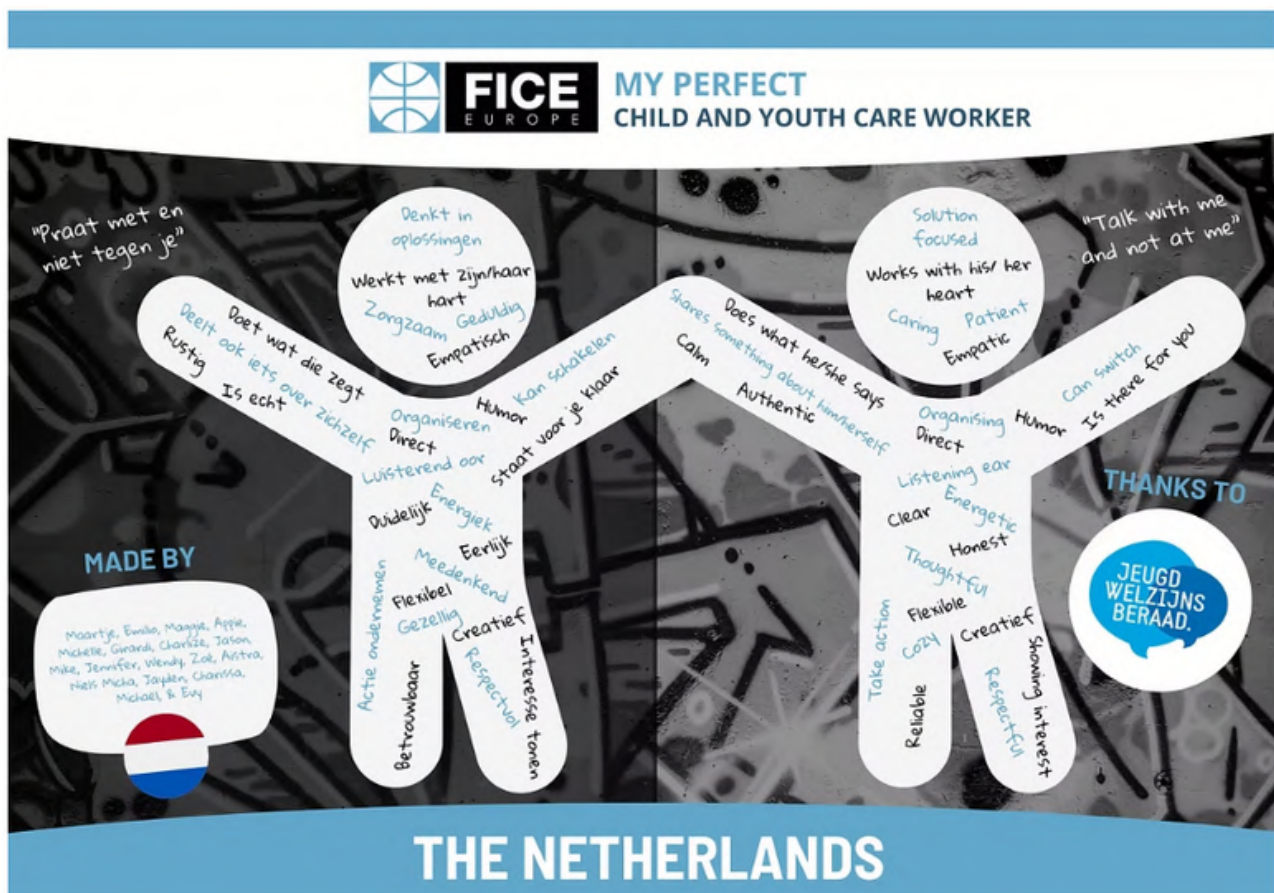
Masterclass Topic:

Making Moments Meaningful: Making the Most of Everyday Interactions

James Freeman brought over 30 years of experience in working with youth in trauma-informed environments. In his masterclass, participants explored how small, everyday moments—both spontaneous and intentional—can be turned into powerful opportunities for connection, growth, and healing in work with young people and families.

Youth Voice in Practice – European Poster Project

In collaboration with Stichting JeugdWelzijnsBeraad (Platform for Youth Advisory Councils in Care), FICE Netherlands contributed to a FICE Europe initiative that invited young people across the continent to describe their "ideal youth worker." Dutch youth currently engaged in the care system shared their views, which were used to create a poster highlighting key qualities and values of an ideal professional. The final result was published on the FICE Europe website, showcasing youth-driven insight into meaningful support.



FICE Netherlands in 2024

Meetings and Governance

FICE Netherlands held its Annual General Assembly online in 2024, with the participation of nine member organisations. During the meeting, members reviewed and approved the Annual Report, the Financial Report for 2024, and the budget for 2025. The assembly also offered an opportunity to reflect on ongoing activities and future directions.

In addition, to strengthen internal collaboration and strategic focus, FICE Netherlands organised a full-day retreat (“heidag”) for the Board and its supporting members. This in-person gathering was used to evaluate organisational processes, clarify roles and responsibilities, and plan forward-looking initiatives to further develop the network’s impact.

International Engagement

FICE Netherlands remained actively engaged in international activities through both FICE International and FICE Europe. A notable milestone in 2024 was the candidacy of Secretary Peter van de Pol for the role of Vice President of FICE International. In October, during the conference in Split, Croatia, he was successfully elected to this position, marking an important achievement for Dutch representation within the international network.

FICE Romania in 2024

Full member

Toma Mares - President

Overview

Since its foundation in 1990, FICE Romania has consistently worked in the fields of education and social protection, advocating for children's rights, supporting professional training, engaging in policy development, and promoting international cooperation. In 2024, it continued these priorities through national programs, campaigns, conferences, and participation in FICE International activities.

Key National Programs and Campaigns

Collegial Solidarity Campaign

This long-running initiative mobilised FICE Romania branches and school communities to support children at risk of school dropout through donations and direct engagement. The campaign focused not only on material support but also on promoting empathy and civic responsibility among students. Activities were carried out in numerous regions, including Bucharest, Caraş-Severin, Argeş, Teleorman, Iaşi, Suceava, and Vaslui.

National Children's Book Festival – “The Joy of Reading”

Held for the 20th time in 2024, this Ministry of Education-approved initiative aimed to foster reading habits and creativity among children. A total of 336 schools participated, and 371 awards were distributed to children across multiple sections.

“19 Days of Activism” Campaign

In its 12th edition, this national adaptation of the WWSF initiative involved over 150,000 students and 30,000 teachers in more than 350 schools. Coordinated nationally by FICE Romania, the campaign addressed child abuse and youth violence through a vast array of activities:

- Awareness-raising events and workshops
- School-based anti-bullying initiatives
- Exhibitions, films, debates, compassion circles
- Involvement of parents, police, health workers, and NGOs

Key campaign partners included the Romanian Institute for Human Rights, ANPDCA, local authorities, the National Anti-Drug Agency, and educational institutions.

FICE Romania in 2024

Conferences and Events

National Conferences

FICE Romania co-organised major events on child protection and child abuse prevention, including:

- A national conference hosted by Kindergarten No. 268 in Bucharest (14 November), with presentations by education experts, psychologists, and local authorities.
- A high-level conference in the Romanian Senate (20 November), in partnership with government and civil society, addressing contemporary challenges such as violence, drug use, and neglect in educational settings.

These events brought together senators, ministry representatives, local government, NGOs, police, and education professionals.

Participation in FICE International

FICE Romania actively participated in FICE International activities throughout 2024:

- Regular engagement in FICE Online Cafés and Live Forums, with summary reports circulated nationally by Cleopatra Ravaru.
- A three-member delegation attended the 35th FICE International World Congress in Split, Croatia, contributing to discussions on alternative care, youth mental health, and transitions out of care.

FICE Romania was also present at the FICE General Assembly and Federal Council, supporting organisational decisions and honouring key contributors to the FICE movement.

Publishing and Knowledge Dissemination

The journal Child Social Protection continued its regular publication under FICE Romania's coordination, providing a platform for research and practice in social assistance and pedagogy. Additional conference papers were published in edited volumes.

FICE Romania in 2024

Partnerships and Collaborations

FICE Romania maintained and expanded its collaborations with:

- Government ministries (Education, Labour, Family, etc.)
- Local administrations, notably the Municipality of Cumpăna
- National authorities (ANPDCA, National Agency Against Trafficking in Human Beings)
- The National Anti-Drug Agency
- General Directorates for Social Assistance and Child Protection

In education, FICE Romania worked closely with pre-university and higher education institutions, school inspectorates, and daycare centres, supporting school achievement and well-being for children in vulnerable situations.

Conclusions

The FICE Romania National Committee Bureau has followed the quality of the actions and has periodically analyzed the activities in accordance with the FICE Romania Statute, based on the annual activity programs, with a wide participation of some sections/branches such as those from Vaslui, Neamț, Caraș-Severin, Constanța (Cumpăna), Iași, Argeș, Tulcea, Suceava, sector 5 Bucharest.

The Bureau of the National Committee of FICE Romania appreciates that the results and concerns of the year 2024 belong to all the members of FICE Romania, who have accumulated and capitalized on an experience that guarantees the qualitative continuation of the efforts and achievements made in the service of education and child protection in our country.

This is a summarised version of FICE Romania's full 2024 report. The complete report can be accessed at the following [\[Link\]](#)

FICE Serbia in 2024

Full member

Željka Burgund - President

Membership Overview

FICE Serbia has 28 members, consisting of organisations in the field of social protection, several individual members, and a number of honorary members.

In 2024, the network welcomed one new member: the Center for Social Work of the City of Prijepolje (West Serbia).

Key Achievements in 2024

Despite a challenging political and economic context and limited financial resources, FICE Serbia successfully implemented all its planned activities in 2024. A key achievement was the growth and retention of its membership, as well as the continued active engagement with FICE International and FICE Europe.

The organisation maintained strong collaboration with long-standing national partners, including UNICEF, the Children's Network of Serbia, the Association of Professional Workers in Social Protection, the Center for Children's Rights, and the Chamber of Social Protection of Serbia.

While communication with national ministries proved difficult—an issue shared by many civil society organisations—FICE Serbia remained committed to advocacy, providing updates and recommendations through formal correspondence.

Activities Overview

The annual Assembly of FICE Serbia was held on May 22, 2024, in Kraljevo, at the premises of the SOS Children's Village.

Two-day Vocational Conference (May 22-23, 2024) dedicated to professional exchange among members, presenting innovations in the practice of developing local services, and showcasing global experiences in the field of kinship care.

Organization of a Round Table under the symbolic title "How Much Is Up to Us?" aimed at addressing critical issues pressing the social protection system regarding child and youth care. The goal was to explore possibilities for making improvements in at least some areas that do not require systemic interventions.

10th Anniversary of the Program "Kinderperspectief Academy" educational program for FICE Serbia members, held on October 16, 2024, in Sremska Kamenica, hosted by the Center for Foster Care and Adoption from Novi Sad, while the Children's Village in Sremska Kamenica provided its space for the Conference, and three days training.

FICE Serbia in 2024



Meetings and Governance

FICE Serbia organized its Annual Assembly and Vocational Conference for its members on May 22nd, 2024, as well as a Round Table on May 23rd. In total, 61 participants attended (Assembly – one or two representatives per collective member: 31 + Main Board members, and 25 attendees at the Round Table).

The three most important topics were related to the current situation in the field of child and youth care. These were discussed at the Round Table, where we tried to answer the question of how the members of “FICE Serbia” themselves can contribute to:

- Facing the challenges brought by the lack of staff in the profession of caring for children, youth, and families;
- Addressing the challenges caused by the stigmatization of the social work profession in the last decade;
- Responding to the influence of the media and its impact on the child, youth, and family care sector, which is part of the social protection system to which FICE Serbia belongs.

We forwarded the results of our deliberations and the recommendations we developed—as a contribution to easing the complex situation in the social protection of children and young people—in writing to the relevant ministries (the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veterans and Social Affairs, and the Ministry of Family Care and Demography), but we did not receive any feedback. The recommendations can be viewed in the report from the expert meeting, accessible in Serbian via this [\[Link\]](#).

FICE Serbia in 2024



Success Stories and Impact

Since 2014, FICE Serbia has been implementing a program for professional exchange and education on new practices under the name Kinderperspectief ACADEMY. The goal of this program is to enhance the competencies of professionals in child, youth, and family care. It has been carried out in cooperation with our long-term partner, the organization "Kinderperspectief" – from FICE Netherlands. This organization not only leads the main activities by providing Dutch experts in alternative child and youth care but has also been financing their travel and week-long stay in Serbia for the past ten years.

In 2024, in addition to education and experience exchange, the program was expanded with a one-day conference marking ten years of successful collaboration on the "Academy" program, implemented jointly by "FICE Serbia" and "Kinderperspectief." Over 140 professionals from "FICE Serbia" and dozens of Dutch experts have participated in this program.

The anniversary was an opportunity to reflect on the work accomplished over the past ten years and to recognize key contributors. Special acknowledgments and commemorative paintings, created by Mr. Živko Popovski—a long-time friend and volunteer of FICE Serbia—were presented during the celebration.

The event also reaffirmed FICE Serbia's core mission: strengthening member competencies to improve support for children and families.

FICE Serbia in 2024



35th "FICE International" CONGRESS

It offered an opportunity to reflect on, exchange ideas about, and discuss with colleagues from around the world the future direction of the child and youth care system.

A particularly impactful segment of the congress was the session led by young people with lived experience in alternative care, in which Serbia also had a representative. These young individuals provided professionals with a series of recommendations, based on their own experiences and needs, offering valuable input for improving institutional care practices. Despite significant efforts toward deinstitutionalization, residential care facilities continue to exist, albeit in a reduced capacity.

Unfortunately, aside from the president of FICE Serbia, no other members attended, likely due to financial constraints or previously scheduled obligations.

The full Annual Report of FICE Serbia for 2024 is available in English and can be accessed via this [\[link\]](#).

FICE South Africa in 2024

Full member

Elwin Gallant - President

Membership Overview

FICE South Africa has a membership base of over 4,000 members, comprising both organisations and individual professionals in the child and youth care sector. Membership numbers fluctuate throughout the year, as renewals are required annually. New members are regularly welcomed at various points during the year.

Key achievements in 2024

FICE South Africa has implemented 11 programmes in the past year across 6 provinces, reaching over 116,000 children and youth through over 200 trained CYC workers. The programmes fall under the following models of care:

- a) Isibindi Ezikoleni school based CYC model, and
- b) the Isibindi Impilo/May'Khethele OVC programme model focused on health especially the HIV/AIDS.

Activities Overview

Skills development: NACCW's Training Department offers the NQF level 4 Further Education and Training Certificate and level 5 Occupational Certificate in Child and Youth Care Work and other non-accredited skills training in Child and Youth Care (CYC).

Professionalizing the field: NACCW continues to advocate for the professionalization of the CYCW sector in South Africa and continues to advocate for further professional development.

Membership: Since COVID 19 there has been a decline in paid up members for FICE South Africa. Efforts are being put into getting members to be active as this has benefits to them including discounts on training and others. FICE South Africa has individual and NGO members as well as corporate and private members involved in the provision of care for children.

2024 was a provincial Biennial General Meeting (BGM) year where provincial leadership was elected and preparations towards the national BGM begins.

Developing and replicating models: NACCW develops and implements models and programmes for children, youth, and their families, demonstrating the value of CYCWs in providing wholistic services to children and families. The NACCW implemented two models which are the Isibindi Ezikoleni (in IsiZulu meaning Courage in schools) and May'khethele programme (In IsiZulu meaning you choose) a health focussed programme for children.

FICE South Africa in 2024

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FICE South Africa in 2024

Success Stories and Impact

Nomsa, a dedicated alumna of the NACCW Youth Forum, grew up in a small informal settlement in Mpumalanga. Despite facing significant personal challenges, she demonstrated remarkable resilience and determination to create a brighter future for herself and others.

After her parents separated, Nomsa and her siblings lived with their grandmother. While under her grandmother's care, Nomsa was raped. When her mother found out she brought the children to live with her and her partner until she passed away in 2011. When her mother passed away in 2011, Nomsa and her siblings returned to live with their extended family. However, the situation was strained and Nomsa and her siblings were expected to do all the house chores. The situation affected her self-esteem and ability to engage with other people.

In 2011, Nomsa joined the NACCW Youth Forum, a decision that became a turning point in her life. The NACCW Youth Forum Coordinator provided Nomsa with educational support in the form of past exam papers, study groups and assistance to access tertiary education. With the support of the NACCW Youth Forum Coordinator, Nomsa completed her degree at the local Engineering College.

She actively participated in regional and provincial activities, which helped her rebuild her confidence and self-esteem. She was elected as the Regional Secretary and later as the Provincial Chairperson of the Youth Forum. These roles provided Nomsa with the opportunity to develop her leadership skills. Additionally, she took part in the NACCW Biennial Youth Conferences in held in Kimberley (2017) and Durban (2019), where she further improved her leadership skills.

The long stay with the Youth Forum and continued leadership development proved to have created a young leader who has influence to her community:

Inspired by her journey, Nomsa became a mentor within the Youth Forum, supporting new members from schools, colleges, and communities. She worked alongside CYCWs and the Provincial Youth Forum Chairperson to raise awareness on critical issues, empowering young people to make informed decisions to improve their well-being.

In 2024, Nomsa spoke at various events in communities advocating for the rights of children and youth including creating awareness on LGBTQI, youth voting in the national and local elections, sexual reproductive health (SRH), and climate change . Collaborating with Provincial and National Coordinators as well as officials in the department of education, she shared her personal journey, emphasising the positive impact the Youth Forum had on her life. One of her talks on climate change resulted in actions by the local secondary school initiating a programme to address climate change.

FICE South Africa in 2024

Continuing her commitment to youth empowerment, Nomsa remains a dedicated mentor, advocating for young people to access valuable resources, such as mobile data for international child participation workshops. Her journey is a testament to resilience, leadership, and the transformative power of community support.

Nomsa found a safe, inclusive and supportive environment within the NACCW Youth Forum, which became a turning point in her life. Coming from a background of hardship, she was able to rebuild her confidence through active participation in regional and provincial activities. The Forum not only provided her with emotional and social support but also helped her with educational support by offering study groups, past exam papers, and assistance in accessing tertiary education. These opportunities allowed her to develop essential leadership and interpersonal skills, enabling her to interact meaningfully with others.

As Nomsa progressed within the Youth Forum, she transitioned from a participant to a mentor, using her personal experiences to inspire and guide new members. She played a key role in supporting youth from schools, colleges, and communities, ensuring they had access to the same opportunities that helped her succeed. Her journey reflects the importance of establishment and support of a youth alumni in mentoring and uplifting the next generation. In her address to the department of education officials she said “Many children with similar backgrounds like hers gave up on life, turned into alcohol and drugs but she is an example of what could be possible if nurtured and supported”

Nomsa took an active role in addressing critical social and environmental issues affecting young people. She worked closely with CYCWs and the Provincial Youth Forum Chairperson to raise awareness on topics such as LGBTQI rights, voting, sexual and reproductive health, and climate change in her province. Through these initiatives, she helped empower young people to make informed decisions about their wellbeing while also engaging in efforts to combat violence against children and women. Her leadership in these discussions showcased how young people can come together to drive meaningful changes in their communities.

With the support of the NACCW Youth Forum, Nomsa was able to pursue and complete her Engineering degree at Gert Sibande TVET College. This academic achievement, combined with the leadership skills she developed as Regional Secretary and later as Provincial Chairperson, equipped her with the tools needed for economic independence. She continues to advocate for resources such as mobile data to enable youth participation in international child-focused workshops, ensuring that young people can access valuable opportunities for personal and professional growth. Her story exemplifies how community support and leadership development can pave the way for financial stability and self-sufficiency.

FICE Spain in 2024

Full member

Mónica Concepción - President

Membership Overview

FICE Spain is composed of 9 member associations and spans several regions of the country, including the Basque Country, Navarre, Galicia, Aragon, La Rioja, Catalonia, Andalusia, the Balearic Islands, Extremadura, and Castilla-La Mancha. These organizations implement a wide range of programs, including community prevention, socio-educational and psychosocial support, foster care, employment and training programs, among others.

Key Achievements in 2024

The most significant achievement in 2024 has been establishing our presence with the Ministry and public administrations in Madrid, Catalonia, Navarre, and the Basque Country, thanks to the activities carried out as part of the AFE project. The Specialized Foster Care (AFE) project is a pilot initiative aimed at implementing a specialized foster care model using an innovative and rigorous methodology. The program ran until December 2024, with the goal of continuing its implementation in the regions where it is currently active—Madrid, Catalonia, Navarre, and the Basque Country (Bizkaia and Araba)—and expanding to other autonomous communities.

The AFE project exemplifies and brings to life the core purpose of FICE Spain: to generate new frameworks for child care, advancing the realization of children's rights through quality and innovation.

Progress was also made in the digitalization process within FICE Spain, as well as in several member organizations that participated in the TIC Impulsa3 project. This resulted in the optimization and streamlining of service and management processes through the innovative SaaS program, ultimately aiming to enhance the quality of care provided to the individuals they support.



FICE Spain in 2024

Activities Overview

We carried out activities under three projects, each focused on specific areas but all sharing the goal of creating a positive impact in the communities where we are present. Below is a summary of the main actions implemented in each projects.

During 2024, FICE Spain continued developing the **Redes AFE pilot project** on specialized foster care, which began in 2022 and is funded by the Spanish government through the EU's Next Generation funds. The program targets children in the child protection system who have experienced traumatic events. Specialized foster care aims to provide these children with a “family-like” environment while working to repair complex relational trauma.

Specialized foster families are professionals with degrees in psychology, social education, social work, or related fields, and with at least two years of experience working with vulnerable children. They receive financial compensation for their role and apply advanced psychosocial intervention models, supported by highly qualified technical teams.

In 2024, 16 children were placed in specialized foster care. This was made possible through the assessment of several families who expressed interest via outreach campaigns. The program achieved significant reach, with over one million people engaged on social media, resulting in around 150 inquiries, of which 20 families were assessed and 16 selected for specialized foster care.

The program also included close collaboration with public administrations in Madrid, Catalonia, Navarre, and the Basque Country, with the aim of creating a common model for specialized foster care. More than 1,000 professionals from various public institutions and social actors received online training and consultancy through the project.

FICE Spain has also worked to expand the model to other autonomous communities in Spain, aiming to implement the program across all regional child protection authorities. This has involved intensive efforts with certain regions to support future adoption.

In November 2024, the “**1st International Congress on Specialized Foster Care**” was held, featuring experts in child protection from countries including Chile, the United States, England, and Spain. The event gathered approximately 700 participants and further consolidated the project's impact and relevance on an international scale.

FICE Spain in 2024

The **TIC project** involved four member organizations across Madrid, Girona, Guadalajara, Zaragoza, and the Canary Islands. The project registered 181 services, 764 active users, and 7,188 beneficiaries through the TI.3 digital platform. It enabled the digital transformation of participating organizations and the training of their staff, improving internal management and the quality of care for beneficiaries. It addressed needs such as document management, data processing, and process automation.

Recognizing the difficulties many beneficiaries face in accessing and managing online services, the project provided training to 57 professionals, who in turn trained the beneficiaries. This strengthened their digital skills and empowered them to use ICT tools effectively.

During 2024, the platform was updated to introduce new features such as multi-program interventions, event management, and group case logs. The active collaboration of partner organizations allowed for tailored solutions, continuous user training, and the creation of detailed manuals and tutorial videos, ensuring successful adoption of the new system.

Additionally, in collaboration with a member organization in Mallorca, FICE Spain hosted two international volunteers during the summer. They supported staff, promoted activities on social media and in the press, and raised awareness of the European Solidarity Corps program, co-funded by the European Commission. This initiative reflected FICE's commitment to cooperation and engagement with diverse stakeholders in achieving its mission.

Meetings and Governance

In 2024, FICE Spain held 4 General Assemblies with its member organizations. All meetings were held online except for one in-person assembly in November, which took place in Barcelona. In addition, nine extraordinary online board meetings were held, along with twelve online meetings for the AFE project, four for the TIC Impulsa3 project, and three for the European Solidarity Corps (ESC) project.

All nine member organizations participated in the General Assemblies and extraordinary board meetings. The project meetings had an average of 12 participants, corresponding to the lead professionals involved in each specific project.

Topics discussed included project monitoring and planning of activities for 2025, the strategic plan, financing strategy, budget forecasting, implementation of the transparency policy and code of conduct, the submission of the application for public utility status, approval of the annual accounts, and the organization of the International Congress on Specialized Foster Care.

FICE Spain in 2024

Success Stories and Impact

My name is María. I'm a psychologist and a specialized foster mother in the Redes AFE project.

I first learned about the program after watching the short film 24 Siete, which led me to attend a few talks and eventually welcome Ane into our home. Ane, who is 14 years old, has been living with us for one year under a specialized foster care arrangement. When she arrived, she was facing serious difficulties. She had a history of severe abuse and traumatic experiences that deeply affected her ability to socialize and learn. Her adaptation was not easy; she initially showed aggressive behavior, mistrust, and resistance to following rules or attending school, constantly putting us to the test.

We also faced misunderstanding from our own family, who couldn't understand why, as a psychologist and someone who had worked in a care center, I would bring a teenager with such complex needs into our home—especially when we already had two young children. However, over time, Ane has built a positive relationship with them, particularly with the youngest, whom she cares for with affection.

The key to our work has been earning her trust little by little, offering a safe space and showing her that she could rely on us. Our goal has been to help her feel that this is her home, her refuge, and from there, begin to work on her emotions and trauma in a structured and gradual way. Instead of diving immediately into emotional wounds, we first focused on creating an environment of safety and affection.

Her relationship with her biological mother remains complex, as her mother has ambivalent feelings about the foster care arrangement. This often leaves Ane feeling guilty when her mother challenges or discredits the placement. We support Ane in understanding that she is not to blame and provide her with unconditional love, helping her work through the loyalty conflict she experiences.

As Ane has gained more security at home, we have started working on her life story and past traumas. This has helped her begin to understand the reasons behind her placement. Although the process is slow, she has learned to verbalize her emotions and ask for help when needed, using activities like sports and music to cope with her pain.

Ane has become an essential member of our family. She is the older sister to our biological children and, in many ways, a role model—for them and for us. While her personal journey will take time, we are fully committed to her well-being and growth.

FICE Switzerland in 2024

Full member

Patrick Seigerschmidt - President

Membership Overview

As of 2024, FICE Switzerland has a total of 93 members, including 60 institutional members and 33 individual members. FICE Switzerland welcomed new members in 2024, further strengthening its national representation.

Key Achievements in 2024

Child and Youth Care Services around the World

From October 16 to 18, FICE Switzerland, in collaboration with the ZHAW Zurich University of Applied Sciences (Institute for Child, Youth and Family Studies), held the tenth international seminar "Child and Youth Care Services Around the World." It was organized by Anna Schmid (FICE Switzerland; President of FICE International) and Samuel Keller (ZHAW), together with guest lecturer Patrick Reason (FICE Brazil and Secretary General of FICE International).

The 17 participating social work students (social pedagogy, social work, and community development) addressed the topic "Creative practice in child and youth care under challenging conditions: international inspirations and learnings." Prof. Dr. Sahar Al - Makhamreh (Jordan) and the experts from FICE, both from practice and/or from personal experience, provided practical input, including Dr. Merle Allsopp (FICE South Africa). Elena Matache (Co-President FICE Europe Network), Dr. Kiran Modi (FICE member Udayan Care, India) and Lily Rijnberg (FICE Netherlands) reported to the students in interviews from their professional experience.

The seminar remains very popular with students, with some even calling it the "best course of my entire studies."

One student from the 2024 program writes: "I have to express how deeply impressed I was by all the people we interviewed. Each of them brought something unique to the table, and their passion and commitment were simply inspiring. After each interview, I felt like I wanted to go out and change the world myself—so powerful was the impact of their words and actions. These people truly excel in their work, and their enthusiasm and drive are contagious. What also impressed me was the diversity and depth of the conversations. I especially enjoyed hearing different perspectives, as they helped me think about issues in ways I hadn't considered before".



FICE Switzerland in 2024

Creating Futures Young Expert Exchange

From August 11 to 16, the Creating Futures Young Expert Exchange (YEE 2024) took place in Bükkszentlélek, northern Hungary. It was co-designed by Anna Schmid from FICE Switzerland and Ljiljana Ban from Croatia in cooperation with Edina Szántó and Emőke Balassy from NENESZ, the FICE International organization member in Hungary. Fourteen young people aged 12 to 19 and eight professionals from two youth homes in Switzerland and one child and youth home in Hungary participated.

Creating Futures is a participatory quality development initiative in youth homes aimed at better promoting young people's self-empowerment. It was developed with over 200 Young Experts and staff in both countries. The YEE is one of its key elements.

The exchange aimed to build young people's confidence, strengths, and future planning skills through individual and group work focused on dreams, resources, support networks and concrete strategies. Professionals exchanged ideas on how best to support youth autonomy and future planning. Intercultural exchange, discovering a new region, and forming friendships were also central.

As in all Creating Futures activities, the YEE followed four core principles: participation, collaboration, empowerment-focused learning, and quality development. Activities included workshops, reflection sessions, and creative, playful formats.

The Young Experts shared future hopes such as a loving our own family, travel, living abroad, helping others, completing school and training, health, happiness, and financial stability. They described themselves as patient, strong-willed, helpful, social, open, creative, and resilient, among many other qualities.

Inspired by North American "dream catchers," they created personal "dream nests," identifying key supporters and concrete next steps. (Prof. James Anglin provided feedback to ensure respectful reference to indigenous traditions.)

They valued being recognized as experts of their own lives, with dreams, knowledge, and determination shaped by past experiences. They emphasized youth ownership of the future and the importance of self-belief and experience.

The professionals reflected on ways to support youth self-empowerment, inspired by the Creating Futures initiative. They focused on integrating future-oriented conversations into daily life in residential settings and explored where they draw strength for their work.

FICE Switzerland in 2024

On the final day, Young Experts and professionals shared insights. The youth asked for more learning support, shared activities, protection, freedom, encouragement, and trust. They highlighted the need to build on personal strengths like creativity, motivation, and empathy, while overcoming challenges like passivity, aging out at 18, and slow progress. They stressed the importance of continued financial and practical support for independence in housing, careers, and savings.

The Young Experts and professionals developed recommendations to take back to their homes. For Swiss homes, they suggested encouraging awareness of “dreams” and “sparks of energy,” fostering a supportive climate for such discussions, and starting regular dialogues about future hopes. In the Hungarian home, they planned to explore individual and group contributions, learn languages via Duolingo, hold evening check-ins, ask “How was your day?”, and introduce weekly reflections to build shared understanding.

To close, all participants exchanged personal “sparks” of strength and energy—such as music, willpower, role models, naps, love, friends, family, faith, personal philosophy, and the successes of the young people themselves.

In their evaluation, the Young Experts and specialists gave the YEE a positive assessment. Several weeks later, a Young Expert from Switzerland shared that he had particularly noticed the differences between the Swiss and Hungarian systems during the YEE, which had given him a lot to think about. He particularly emphasized the opportunity to present to the other participants in English in Hungary. This experience had given him a great deal of confidence in speaking, which he continued to feel after his return. He recently gave a presentation in the career guidance class for which he received a grade of 5.5 (6 being the highest) – a success he attributed to his experiences during the YEE.



FICE Switzerland in 2024

Activities

In addition to the activities mentioned above, FICE Switzerland:

- Worked on a major initiative to scale up the Creating Futures initiative.
- Started an initiative to further promote and develop the Quality4Children Standards in Switzerland.
- As in past years, collaborated with the [Council for International Fellowship](#) on the organization and implementation of the International Professional Exchange Program (IPEP) 2024. From April 3 to 19, a group of child and youth welfare professionals from various countries gained insight into FICE Switzerland member institutions and the child and youth welfare system.
- Participated in the three strategic groups of FICE International and presented the innovative experiences of the organisation Stiftung Schloss Regensburg in one of the FICE Cafés.
- Was active in the Coordinating Body of FICE International and as members of both FICE International and FICE Europe Network.

Meetings and Governance

FICE Switzerland General Assembly was held in person on 7 June in Zürich:

- The annual activity and financial reports for 2023 as well as the annual plan and budget for 2024 were approved.
- Two new board members, Schmuël Stokvis and Christine Waldvogel, were elected, both with extensive leadership in child and youth care organisations. The previous board members, Patrick Seigerschmidt (president) and Anna Schmid, were re-elected.
- Roland Stübi, long-time vice president and delegate to FICE International and then president of FICE Switzerland until 2023 was made honorary member.
- Following the statutory part, board and members present held a lively discussion regarding success factors for scaling up the Creating Futures initiative.

The Board of FICE Switzerland met very regularly in 2024 with a focus on updating organisation and administration, promoting member involvement and for professional and project-related discussions and work in connection with Quality4Children and Creating Futures.

Success Stories and Impact

See report about Young Expert Exchange above.

Ukrainian Education Platform in 2024

Organization member
Mariana Kashchak - CEO

Membership Overview

The Ukrainian Education Platform (UEP) has 7 individual members and a total of 66 employees. No new members were added in 2024.

Key Achievements in 2024

UEP continued to work across four key focus areas:

- Supporting children and families, including the implementation of deinstitutionalization reform;
- Developing social ministry within local churches, with a special focus on women's leadership;
- Promoting active citizenship and civic education for children;
- Providing mental health support for children and families during wartime.

In 2024, UEP reached over 100,000 people across Ukraine through its humanitarian and psychosocial support initiatives, operating through a network of 11 partner centers located in 11 regions, many of them close to the front line. An important achievement was that UEP succeeded in bringing together diverse communities and sectors, which enabled even greater and deeper integration of child support within local communities.

The Special Task Force "Hand in Hand" continued its work in close cooperation with the NGO "Educatoria". The following activities were successfully implemented:

- Three round tables with 350 participants have been conducted
- An online program on professional development in social-emotional education for 150 school teachers by Dr. Alex Schneider in cooperation with the Office of Education Ombudsman and the Ministry of Education and Science
- Participation in the 35th International Congress

Last year, UEP launched new centers of support for families and children:

- 4 Resilience Centers in Dnipro, Lviv, and Chernihiv regions, established in cooperation with the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine;
- 5 Psychosocial Support Centers in Mykolaiv, Vilniansk, Izium, Kryvyi Rih, and Sumy, implemented in partnership with the Ukrainian Humanitarian Fund;
- In cooperation with AICS, two "Motanka" Centers opened in the Dnipro and Petrikivka communities to serve local residents;
- 3 "Good Neighbor" Project Centers began operating in the Lviv, Kropyvnytskyi, and Cherkasy regions, focusing on community-based support;

Ukrainian Education Platform in 2024

As part of the "Good Community" project, four communities received support in developing their local social service systems, and four social service centers were opened in the Pidhorodna, Marhanets, Oleksandrivka, and Subotiv communities. It was suspended in January 2025 due to the termination of funding from USAID.

In 2024, in cooperation with UNICEF, three hospital-based child-friendly spaces continued to operate in the children's hospitals of Dnipro, Kamianske, and Zaporizhzhia. These spaces have become vital hubs for supporting children and their families. They also serve as important entry points for the early identification of children and families in need of psychosocial and social support.

In 2024, we launched a social services hotline, the "Turbotyk" chatbot, and the "Social Services of Kharkiv Region" mobile application, which became effective tools for supporting residents of the region who are living under constant shelling. These platforms allowed people to request services for children and to learn more about alternative forms of family care.

In 2024, we launched the "Obiymy" (Hugs) support groups for alternative forms of family care. These groups provided counseling, group meetings, and workshops for both parents and children involved in alternative care arrangements.

"Come and see" program for christian youth: This spiritual-formation program is implemented by the UEP and the Patriarchal Commission on Youth Affairs of the UGCC. The program is a complex approach to transformational changes in youth lives via spiritual enrichment. It helps to deepen relationships with God and receive answers to disturbing questions.



Ukrainian Education Platform in 2024

Activities Overview

UEP also worked to strengthen the capacity of various professionals to support children in the context of war.

Trainings for social workers, speech therapists, parents and those who work with children or take care of them in cooperation with UNICEF: Training topics cover a wide variety, namely work with trauma and loss. The trainings are also aimed at children's rights protection: prevention of child abuse, gender-based violence, early intervention services, assistance for children with disabilities.

Trainings on mine awareness: This output is implemented in cooperation with CF «Peaceful Heaven of Kharkiv» for the financial support of UNICEF. The project aims to raise awareness, improve knowledge and develop specialists' and children's skills of safe and responsible behaviour next to explosive items.

Minimal package of integrated social services for families with children in the Chernihiv region: The project supports capacity strengthening for local authority bodies and social workers in order to enable provision of quality and sustainable social services in six hromadas in Chernihiv oblast. The project aims to strengthen the capacity of specialists working in child-friendly spaces, to expand the variety of services available for children and their families, according to the hromada's demand. Implemented in six hromadas in Chernihiv oblast: Bakhmach, Bobrovytsia, Men, Nizhyn, Kulykivka and Chernihiv.

We managed to implement three services: Resilience Centre in Bakhmach; Resilience department in Bobrovytsia; Child's assistant in Chernihiv.

The project managed to strengthen 20 social services, 385 specialists in the social sphere improved their expertise, 244 people, including children and families with children got access to social services. The project is being implemented in cooperation with the Ukrainian child rights network and UNICEF.



Ukrainian Education Platform in 2024

Success Stories and Impact

A Little Shy, But Honest and Open: Alina's Story

Alina, a 14-year-old schoolgirl from Kherson, is a little shy, but sincere and open. She has suffered deeply as a result of the actions of the aggressor country.

On Valentine's Day, February 14, 2024, Alina and her boyfriend were spending time on a playground, watching over Alina's five-year-old niece. When Alina heard the whistling of a mortar shell, she instinctively ran to shield the little girl — a reaction that saved her niece's life and her own. Her boyfriend remained on the swing. He was killed in the explosion.

Alina sustained severe and multiple injuries to her face, neck, chest, and legs. In addition to the scars from removed shrapnel, she was left with a traumatic tattoo on her face, which she struggles to accept. Every two months, she undergoes facial surgeries to extract even the smallest remaining fragments.

Beyond the physical pain and ongoing medical treatment, Alina has faced many other challenges. Due to her facial trauma, she became the target of cruel jokes from her peers. She sometimes had to wear a balaclava and constantly pulled up her hood to hide her face. She also carries an overwhelming sense of guilt: "If only he hadn't come to see me that day..."

Through the project "Providing protection, socio-psychological support, and multi-purpose cash assistance to children and their parents in the Kherson region", Alina began working with a psychologist.

During the sessions, she learned how to cope with life's difficulties. "It was really hard to learn how to protect myself from verbal attacks and insults about my appearance. But now I know how to respond in such situations. I hold my head high and don't hide my eyes. I understand my strength and resilience," Alina says.

Thanks to the psychologist's comprehensive approach, Alina developed healthy self-esteem, self-confidence, and trust in her loved ones and in society. She gained a more positive mindset and self-image, as well as emotional resilience, determination, boundaries, the ability to say "no," and the courage to ask for help.

Today, Alina is living a full life and believes in her future. She dreams of becoming a fashion designer — not just for people, but for horses and other animals. She sews everything by herself and already has her first orders.

Story 2

«Our son has an autistic disorder, thus we needed 4-th level of assistance. He was able to sit for part of a lesson, but later he couldn't stay in one place and distracted the rest of the class. Before we had been offered only individual studies, as a way out. But soon the service of Child's assistant was implemented, says Liudmyla Vykhov, 9-year-old Mykhailyk's mom. Now my son works at the lessons, socializes and develops. I can go to work now. For us, it is crucial, as I bring up two children alone».

Ukrainian Education Platform in 2024

Additional information

Steel Hearts campaign

«To make a child's dream come true, nothing is impossible!». With this message, on June 1st, International Children's Day, the Ukrainian Education Platform launched the «Steel Hearts» campaign. The initiative aimed to support Ukrainian children affected by burns. Our goal was to raise 1 million UAH to purchase medical equipment for the most advanced burn unit, Unbroken Kids, located at the St. Nicholas Hospital in Lviv.

The campaign was initially supported by schoolchildren from Lviv, who started the «Steel Heart Challenge» dance flashmob on social media, with a call to support the collection. Through joint efforts, in collaboration with businesses, influencers, and a cheerleading sports organization, we managed to raise over 559,000 UAH.

By partnering with the Ukrainian Charitable Marketplace (Dobro.ua), we were able to successfully complete the fundraising campaign. With these funds, we purchased an electrosurgical dermatome and accessories, which doctors are already using to perform complex surgeries on children with severe burn injuries.



FICE West Africa in 2024

Full member

Djibril Fall - President

Membership Overview

ISS-WA (www.ssiao.org) has a 15 member staff both in Senegal and Burkina Faso. The West Africa Network for the protection of children (www.resao.org) on the other hand, has more than 1000+ members with 17 coordinations.

The members are organizations (governmental, non-governmental, communal and associations) and, in 2024, they welcomed a new partner in Liberia and Nigeria.

Key Achievements in 2024

WAN plays a central role in facilitating coordination between the intervention countries; thus, by strengthening WAN, cross-border coordination and harmonisation of procedures for dealing with children on the move is promoted. Some of our biggest achievements include being able to provide training in several countries, on the following thematic:

- Capacity Building
- Case Management
- Community Support
- Institutional Development
- Psycho-social Support.

As part of the project *Un autre Future est possible*, “Another future is possible”, a capitalization workshop was organized bringing together participants from state actors, beneficiaries and partner organizations. The aim was to gather data to capitalize on the pilot experience of fostering children with disabilities.



FICE West Africa in 2024



The incubator that was set up in 2023 for the Sahel region specifically Burkina Faso has seen progress with the first cohort of members. Members are at the end of their training and would be passing out soon to be established.

National, transnational and regional systems including organisations were strengthened to provide better protection, education, integration and opportunities for children and young people on the move.

Activities Overview

An integrated approach to the support of Children and Young People on the Move has been designed to address the multiple challenges faced by the vulnerable groups during their migration journey.

In 2024 a number of services were deployed to identify and support these vulnerable children. These services include identification and active listening, emergency care, family tracing and assessment, support with personal development projects (life projects) and individualised follow-up.

However, a number of challenges still remain, particularly the need to care for the growing number of vulnerable children and the increased support required to ensure that young people are able to make a long-term commitment to their life projects. It is equally essential to mobilise more resources and improve coordination between the various stakeholders/actors for an effective response.

Concerning system strengthening, a virtual platform was developed to provide information on the Children and Young People on Migration Routes. It is also to serve as a platform for exchanges between practitioners in the field of child protection, discuss, promote consultation and coordination between protection stakeholders.

FICE West Africa in 2024

There is also the development of alternative care systems to diversify and adapt the range of protection services to the specific needs of mobile children and young people.

On capacity building, some activities implemented include:

- Definition and implementation of an ethical framework for Child Protection Organisations (CPOs).
- Institutional diagnostics to strengthen organisational efficiency of CPOs.
- Training on case management, WAN procedures and tools.
- Development of community support skills for a more efficient outreach approach.
- Improving knowledge of financial management to make the work of protection organisations more sustainable.

The Sahel, Atlantic and Gulf incubators are helping to reduce youth unemployment and dangerous migration by giving young people access to information on the job market, encouraging entrepreneurship and supporting them in setting up their own micro-businesses. The support activities for the cohort consisted of: A scoping meeting; Strengthening self-knowledge; Skills assessment; Basic technical knowledge about self-employment; The Business Plan; Financial analysis and Sharing experiences with resource persons.

Expanding and strengthening the WAN network is a response to a twofold challenge: to have more actors to meet the ever-increasing need to protect vulnerable children on the move, and to have more proactive actors committed to protecting these children.

The expansion activities involve identifying new stakeholders, training them in WAN and case management, and helping them to understand the care process as described in the ECOWAS Standards.

During 2024, a number of countries were impacted by the expansion, with some organisations being newly integrated into WAN.

This support has led to a better understanding of how the network works, as well as collaboration and coordination between the various organisations in relation to the referral of cases to improve the services provided to CoM.

Meetings and Governance

FICE West Africa implemented a WAN Steering Committee, an Annual Peer Review, as well as a Coordination Meeting in 2024. These events were attended by more than 50 participants.

FICE West Africa in 2024

The WAN Steering Committee and the annual peer review held during the year under review in Cotonou brought together diverse participants from different backgrounds - state, non-governmental, associations, international organisations, etc. The meeting provided an opportunity to review the results framework defined by members of the Steering Committee and discuss the application of ECOWAS tools and procedures in a context marked by the wide variety of different tools in the countries.

The meeting also provided a platform for exchanges through panel discussions on key issues relating to the protection of children and young people. These included:

- The role of foster families in child protection in WA
- Irregular migration between West Africa and other regions
- Internal mobility in the Sahel region
- The funding of WAN

These panels made possible to analyse the situation, draw lessons and formulate recommendations and perspectives.

In addition to this meeting, coordination meetings were held at different times to provide an opportunity to follow up action plans on emerging themes and reflect on the operationalisation of the Steering Committee's recommendations.



Success Stories and Impact

Rob, a Malian young man in his twenties, left his family in search of a better life. Faced with great difficulties, he was identified and supported through the WAN mechanism implemented by ISS-WA. He took a sewing course, which he successfully completed. Today, he runs his own workshop and supports his family financially.



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