



FÉDÉRATION
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INTERNATIONAL
FEDERATION
OF EDUCATIVE
COMMUNITIES

FICE International

Annual Report

| 2025



Promoting Quality Child and
Youth Care across borders
| Since 1948

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01

| FICE International



FICE

Foreword

Dear Readers, Members, and Friends,

Welcome to our Annual Report for 2025. I warmly invite you to delve into this rich account of the diverse activities and achievements of our federation from more than 30 countries at international, regional, and national levels.

A major international highlight is our FICE International Statement: Promoting Appropriate and Quality Alternative Care Options for Children and Youth. Grounded in member expertise, insights from Care Experienced Experts, research, and UN guidelines, it recognizes that no single care model fits all children worldwide, advocating quality in both family-based and group-care settings. Highlighting 11 quality principles, its core message is that quality – not the setting— is decisive: decades of research confirm poor care harms in any environment, while high-quality care protects and promotes well-being. FICE offers this Statement as an adaptable living tool to encourage practitioners, support advocacy before policymakers, and guide reform and training. Crucially, members will use the Statement to orient their work across extended national networks, as well as in regional and international collaboration and advocacy, for years to come.

A central part of our vision is that international exchange among professionals – practitioners, care experienced experts, researchers, and policymakers – drives child-centred, rights-based, and impactful care systems.

Beyond the Statement, this report showcases many examples of such collaboration. Reviewing member reports reveals shared topics across countries, where diverse national contexts yield varied solutions. This exchange helps members look beyond their daily routine, feel inspired, and find support for new perspectives and innovation, as exemplified by our voluntary strategic working groups.

In a world that too often seems defined more by an "against" than a "together", the model of collaboration that is FICE since 1948 is remarkable. I am grateful to all our predecessors, and express my heartfelt thanks to all members, care experienced experts, and contributors who made FICE what it is in 2025 and enabled the contributions detailed in this report to the lives of children and youth.

Should you not yet be a member or partner, I warmly invite you to reach out and join us.

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- International is an international network founded in 1948 in Trogen – Switzerland under the patronage of UNESCO. FICE unites organizations and professionals, working in the field of Child and Youth Care (CYC), from a number of countries around the world.

Our Vision

The world we strive for

A **world where all children grow up in safe, supportive, and empowering environments**, where their **rights** are respected, their **voices** are heard, and their **potential** is realized.

FICE focusses especially on Children and Youth:

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

The Changes we want to contribute to

FICE International seeks to contribute to the following changes internationally:

- A variety of **care and education services** are available that meet children's individual needs and cultural contexts.
- Care and education services consistently uphold **high-quality standards**, improving the well-being and life outcomes of children and youth.
- **Children's rights**, as outlined in the UNCRC, are fully respected, protected, and embedded in policies and practices worldwide.
- Children affected by **crises** have timely access to safe, appropriate, and supportive care that safeguards their rights and well-being.
- International **exchange and collaboration** among organizations and professionals across all parts of the field (e.g., practitioners, researchers, policy makers) — including children, youth, and other care-experienced experts — inform change and development in systems and services, **leading to more child-centered, rights-based, sustainable, and impactful care systems**.

About FICE International



Our Mission

FICE supports all endeavours which further the global realization and implementation of the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child**.

FICE promotes the rights of **young people and their families**, particularly in the context of child and youth care. It promotes the development of different forms of care and education and contributes to their quality development.

FICE creates **international networks** and promotes exchange and collaboration among practitioners, researchers, policy makers, care experienced experts and further actors in the field. It promotes the **participation of children and youth**, the exchange of knowledge and good practice, and cooperation with other international organisations with similar goals and objectives.



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. At national level, FICE International works through its legally independent **national sections** and several **organizational and individual members** in more than **30 countries on five continents**, at regional level through the likewise independent **FICE Africa, FICE Europe and Triple A Networks**, and at international level through the collaboration of all members in assemblies, live forums, working groups and other activities.

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. International congresses have been part of FICE's history since its **foundation in 1948**. Over the decades, these gatherings have reflected emerging priorities in the field and strengthened cooperation across the FICE network. This long-standing tradition continues today, with the 35th FICE International World Congress held in Split, Croatia, in 2024.

Under its **member-led organizational model**, members lead **Strategic Working Groups**, the **Scientific Review Committee** 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**.

In 2025, FICE International continued to develop as a network shaped not only by its structures, but by the **relationships, knowledge and commitment of its members**. Across countries and regions, professionals and organisations brought different realities into a shared international space — using FICE to exchange experience, respond to emerging challenges and identify where collective action could add value. This ability to connect diverse perspectives remained one of the organisation's greatest strengths throughout the year.

At the same time, 2025 marked an important moment of transition. Conversations that had been developing across meetings, Working Groups and Regional Networks began to converge around a clearer sense of direction for the years ahead. The gathering in Vienna became particularly important in this process, giving members the opportunity to work together in person, strengthen professional connections and translate broad ambitions into more concrete areas of collaboration. The development of the **2026–2028 Strategy** gave this momentum a longer-term framework, while allowing space for **member-led initiatives** to continue evolving.

The year also showed how FICE's international network can **move from dialogue to action**. Professional exchange led to shared positions, new collaborations and public advocacy; thematic work generated knowledge and practical resources; and concerns raised by members could reach a wider international audience. Taken together, these developments reflected a FICE International that was becoming more connected, more participatory and more intentional about how its global network can contribute to better care, stronger professional practice and the rights and well-being of children and young people.



| FICE International Governance and Coordination

For FICE International, governance is not only about formal decision-making. It is what allows a diverse, largely voluntary international network to remain connected, accountable and able to move in a shared direction. In 2025, this meant creating continuity between the decisions taken collectively by members, the work carried forward between meetings, and the professional and strategic conversations taking place across countries and regions. **Governance therefore became a space not only for oversight, but also for participation, exchange and collective responsibility.**

Throughout the year, this approach became increasingly visible as FICE strengthened the links between its member-led structures and its longer-term development. Ideas were tested collectively, priorities were refined through dialogue, and responsibilities were gradually translated into more structured areas of work. By the end of 2025, FICE had not simply completed another cycle of meetings and decisions; it had strengthened the foundations for a more connected, participatory and strategically focused network entering the 2026–2028 period.

General Assembly Meeting & Federal Council in Vienna, Austria

Each year, FICE International members come together in person for the General Assembly and Federal Council—the two central moments of the network’s annual gathering. In 2025, **FICE Austria welcomed the FICE community to Vienna from 15 to 17 September**, for three days combining governance, strategic work, professional exchange and, importantly, the opportunity to strengthen relationships across the network.

General Assembly Meeting

The General Assembly opened the Vienna gathering by taking stock of the previous year while setting the institutional foundations for what comes next. Members approved the 2024 Annual and Financial Reports, discharged the Coordinating Body for 2024 and, looking ahead, approved the 2026 budget.

The meeting also reflected a network continuing to evolve. **The Mulberry Bush (UK)** and **SOS Children's Villages International** were welcomed as new Organization Members, bringing further expertise and opportunities for international collaboration into FICE. **FICE Lesotho** and **NENESZ (Hungary)** were granted an additional year as Associate Members to continue their path towards full membership, while the Assembly was informed of the ongoing application of **CNCM Coordinamento Nazionale Comunità per Minori (Italy)**.

Leadership for the next term was also confirmed. Members elected Anna Schmid (Switzerland) as President, Peter van de Pol (The Netherlands) as Vice President, Bettina Terp (Austria) as Treasurer and Patrick Reason (Brazil) as Secretary General. Yoav Apelboim, Virgil Botezatu and Rolf Widmer were re-elected to the Audit Committee.

Beyond its formal decisions, the General Assembly provided an important moment of continuity and renewal: strengthening FICE's governance while welcoming new voices and expertise into an increasingly diverse international network.

Federal Council Meeting

With the formal work of the General Assembly concluded, the gathering shifted towards exchange, debate and joint planning. Over the following sessions, members explored not only **what FICE should work on**, but also how its international network can turn shared priorities into meaningful collaboration.

A major focus of the Federal Council was the **Vienna Statement on Promoting Appropriate and Quality Alternative Care Options for Children and Youth**. Shaped through the work of the Quality in Care Working Group and the contributions of members in Vienna, the statement reflects FICE's commitment to quality alternative care that responds to the individual needs, rights and circumstances of each child and young person. The discussions brought together perspectives from very different care systems and contexts, with particular attention to participation, meaningful relationships and continuity of care, and a well-supported social care workforce. The resulting statement provides FICE and its members with a shared reference for promoting thoughtful, child-centred approaches to alternative care across different national and cultural contexts.

The **Market Square** brought that spirit of exchange directly to the members themselves. By mapping what each member could contribute to the network – and what they hoped to learn from others – the session uncovered shared interests and concrete opportunities for cooperation. It resulted in **41 binational matches between members** for further exchange and collaboration, turning networking into tangible next steps.

This momentum fed directly into the **Strategy Lab**, where members worked on FICE International's direction for 2026–2028. The challenge was deliberately practical: how to increase member participation, identify the areas where FICE can make the strongest contribution, and translate ambition into achievable action without overburdening a largely voluntary network. The discussions generated recommendations and commitments that were carried forward by members, Working Groups and the Coordinating Body in the months that followed.

The programme also created space for the Regional Networks to meet and for participants to visit child and youth care services in Vienna, bringing the international discussions back into contact with practice.

Rather than producing a finished plan in three days, **Vienna created the shared ground from which the next phase of FICE International could be built** – connecting members, testing ideas and turning strategic priorities into areas for collective action. The work initiated there became a key foundation for the development of the **FICE International Strategy 2026–2028** later in the year.





Live Forums

Alongside the annual in-person gathering, FICE International's **Live Forums continued to connect the network across borders throughout 2025**. Three online meetings were held on **25 February, 24 June and 18 November**, creating regular opportunities for members to exchange experiences, respond to developments affecting child and youth care, and shape FICE's shared work between face-to-face meetings.

The **first Live Forum set the year in motion**. Members shared developments from their national contexts and worked within the Quality in Care, Leaving Care and Hand in Hand groups, while several organisational priorities for 2025 began to take shape. The meeting also became an important space for responding to emerging challenges. FICE Africa brought attention to the severe impact of sudden USAID funding cuts on child and family services across the region, opening a wider discussion within FICE on international solidarity, advocacy and the vulnerability created by dependence on major funding sources.

By June, attention had increasingly turned towards the General Assembly and Federal Council in Vienna. Rather than simply preparing the logistics of the meeting, members used the Live Forum to help shape its content – identifying strategic priorities, suggesting working methods and discussing where FICE could make a meaningful contribution in the coming years. Questions around quality and deinstitutionalisation, kinship care, youth participation, knowledge exchange and stronger member engagement all fed into the preparations for Vienna. The Quality in Care group was also developing the work that would later become the Vienna Statement, while the wider network began laying the foundations for a new multi-year strategy.

The **November Live Forum brought many of these threads together**. Following the intensive work in Vienna, members reflected on rapidly evolving international debates around care reform and considered how FICE could contribute its experience and evidence to policy discussions. The Vienna Statement had already begun to gain international attention and was being used by members in dialogue within their own countries, giving the network a shared reference point from which to advocate for diverse, high-quality and child-centred care options.

Most significantly, members agreed the strategic goals of the **FICE International Strategy 2026–2028**, bringing to completion a participatory process developed through member input, the Vienna Federal Council, Working Groups and the Coordinating Body. The new framework gives greater structure to FICE's work around international collaboration, youth participation, knowledge exchange, advocacy and emergency support, while strengthening the organisational foundations needed to sustain that work.

Across the three meetings, the Live Forums did more than keep members informed. They provided continuity between international gatherings, created space for emerging issues to reach the wider network, and allowed ideas to develop collectively over time – from early discussion, through joint work in Vienna, to concrete priorities for the years ahead.

FICE International Online Cafés

The **FICE International Online Cafés** continued in 2025 as a flexible space for learning, reflection and exchange across the network. With two sessions held during the year, the series moved between two very different – but equally relevant – areas of child and youth care: the protection of children affected by war and the development of strong family-based care alternatives.

The first Café, held in February within the framework of the **Hand in Hand Task Force**, focused on **the deportation of Ukrainian children during the war**. Bringing together experts from Ukraine and other European countries, the session explored the issue from legal, child-rights, psychosocial and missing-children perspectives. It also presented findings from the study *“(Un)Return of Children: Ukraine Faces the Biggest Challenge Since Independence”* and opened discussion on family reunification, reintegration and the need for stronger international cooperation. Simultaneous Ukrainian-English interpretation helped make the conversation accessible across the wider FICE network.

FICE International

| in 2025

In November, the Café turned to a practice-based example from Moldova. **Elena Matache of CONCORDIA Social Projects** presented the organisation's foster family model, showing how professional foster care can be supported through counselling, training, financial and medical assistance, and close cooperation with public authorities. **Since 2020, CONCORDIA has supported more than 670 children through this approach**, offering a concrete example of how family-based care can be strengthened as part of wider deinstitutionalisation efforts.

Together, the two Cafés reflected the breadth of FICE's international work: creating space both to respond to urgent challenges affecting children and to learn from practical models that are already improving care in different national contexts. Both sessions were moderated by **Patrick Reason, Secretary General of FICE International**.



FICE

FICE CAFÉ - NOVEMBER 2025



MODERATOR
PATRICK REASON,
SECRETARY GENERAL
FICE INTERNATIONAL



SPEAKER
ELENA MATACHE
INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR
CONCORDIA SOCIAL PROJECTS

**THE FOSTER FAMILY MODEL CONCORDIA:
TRANSFORMING CHILDREN'S LIVES IN MOLDOVA**

14:30 - 16:00 UTC
TUESDAY, 11 NOVEMBER 2025

REGISTER NOW!



FICE CAFÉ

**THE CHALLENGE OF DEPORTATION OF
UKRAINIAN CHILDREN DURING THE WAR**

MODERATOR
PATRICK REASON - SECRETARY GENERAL & FICE BRAZIL

SPEAKERS

- DR ALEX SCHNEIDER AND MARIANNA BILYK - HAND IN HAND FICE TASK FORCE
- KATERYNA RASHEVSKA - NGO REGIONAL CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
- NATALIYA SOSNOVENKO - VOICES OF CHILDREN CHARITABLE FOUNDATION
- ANASTASIA STEPULA - UKRAINIAN NETWORK FOR CHILDREN'S RIGHTS
- OLGICA CEKIC - INDEPENDENT CHILD RIGHTS CONSULTANT
- JULIA KUOKKANEN - CENTRAL UNION FOR CHILD WELFARE



14:30 UTC
TUESDAY
04 FEBRUARY 2025

Coordinating body

The **Coordinating Body (CB)** provides FICE International's executive leadership, ensuring that decisions made by members are carried forward and that the organisation remains connected, active and focused between its international gatherings. In 2025, the CB held **six formal meetings**, alongside continuous coordination throughout the year, with much of its work centred on strengthening member engagement, preparing the Vienna gathering and building a clearer strategic direction for the years ahead.

The year began with a deliberate look at where FICE should concentrate its energy. Early discussions identified priorities around **membership and participation, international advocacy, youth and care-experienced voices, thematic work and stronger organisational processes**. Rather than treating these as separate areas, the CB increasingly focused on how they could reinforce one another and lead to visible outcomes for the network.

Membership remained a recurring focus throughout the year. The CB reviewed how existing and prospective members could be better supported, followed new applications and helped prepare membership decisions for the General Assembly. This work contributed to the admission of **The Mulberry Bush and SOS Children's Villages International** in Vienna, while dialogue continued with other organisations and emerging national networks interested in joining FICE.

A significant part of the spring and summer was devoted to preparing FICE's annual gathering in **Vienna, hosted by FICE Austria**. Working closely with the hosts and Regional Network representatives, the CB shaped the General Assembly and Federal Council programme, coordinated elections and membership matters, and looked for ways to make the Federal Council more participatory and useful to members. After Vienna, the CB reviewed what had worked particularly well and used these lessons to inform future international meetings.

The CB also accompanied one of the year's most significant professional outputs: the development of the **Vienna Statement on Promoting Appropriate and Quality Alternative Care Options for Children and Youth**. Discussions that had begun around quality and residential care earlier in the year were taken forward through the Quality in Care group, developed collectively in Vienna and subsequently prepared for wider dissemination and use by FICE members.

FICE International

| in 2025

Following the September meetings, attention increasingly shifted towards the **FICE International Strategy 2026–2028**. The CB helped turn the ideas generated by members in Vienna into a structured process involving Working Groups, concrete goals and initial implementation plans. By the end of the year, this had developed into a shared strategy with a stronger emphasis on measurable outcomes and impact, providing a clearer framework for FICE’s work from 2026 onwards.

Regional perspectives remained embedded in the CB’s work. **Donald Nghonyama and Simon Peter** represented the FICE Africa Network, while **Martine Tobé and Elena Matache** represented FICE Europe. Later in the year, **James Anglin** joined CB meetings representing the developing Americas–Asia–Oceania (“Triple A”) regional network. Their participation helped bring regional developments, challenges and opportunities directly into international planning and decision-making.

The year also brought greater attention to the less visible foundations of a sustainable international organisation – from financial and membership procedures to documentation, archives, communication and planning. With the excellent support of the **Technical Assistant** throughout the year, the CB continued working towards clearer processes and more accessible organisational knowledge, while preparing a coordinated calendar and work programme for 2026.

By the end of 2025, the CB’s work had moved beyond coordinating individual activities towards creating **greater continuity between member decisions, Working Groups, regional priorities and FICE International’s longer-term direction** – laying the organisational groundwork for the new 2026–2028 strategic period.





FICE Strategic Plan 2026–2028

One of the most important organisational milestones of 2025 was the development of the **FICE International Strategy 2026–2028**. Rather than being drafted as a stand-alone document, the strategy grew out of conversations held throughout the year — within the Coordinating Body, the Live Forums and, most importantly, with members during the Federal Council in Vienna. There, the Strategy Lab invited participants to ask not only *what* FICE should focus on, but also how those ambitions could realistically be carried forward within a largely voluntary international network.

The Vienna discussions became the turning point in the process. Members explored how to strengthen participation, identify the areas where FICE can make the greatest contribution, and connect strategic ambition with the actual capacities of the network. Participants then volunteered to continue developing specific areas through small Working Groups, giving the strategy a practical link to member expertise and ownership. Some of these groups built on existing work — such as **Quality in Care** and **Hand in Hand** — while others emerged around priorities including membership and engagement, relational child and youth care competencies, good practices, congresses, etc. Not all of these groups developed at the same pace or ultimately became permanent structures, but they played an important role in turning the discussions in Vienna into more concrete goals and results.

FICE International

| in 2025

By November, this work had been brought together into a shared framework. At the **Live Forum on 18 November**, members agreed the strategic goals for 2026–2028, completing a process that combined input from the Federal Council, Working Groups and the Coordinating Body.

The Strategy sets out five interconnected areas of work: **International Networking & Collaboration; Youth Focus & Participation; Knowledge Exchange & Capacity Building; Strategic Leadership & Advocacy; and Emergency & Humanitarian Support**. Alongside these outward-facing priorities, it also recognises that FICE's impact depends on strengthening its own foundations — member engagement, communication, organisational sustainability, fundraising, governance and evaluation.

At its core, the Strategy signals a shift towards a **stronger and more sustainable network, more meaningful integration of youth and care-experienced expertise, and a clearer focus on outcomes and impact**. It provides FICE with a common direction for the next three years while leaving enough flexibility for members and Working Groups to respond to new developments, capacities and opportunities as they emerge.



Responding to the USAID Funding Suspension

In February 2025, FICE International's network was confronted with the immediate consequences of the sudden suspension of USAID-funded programmes. During the Live Forum on **25 February**, representatives from **20 National Sections across four continents** shared information from their countries, with particularly severe impacts being reported by members in South Africa and Kenya.

The scale of the disruption was substantial. In South Africa, **NACCW and FICE South Africa** reported that 15,817 children living with or affected by HIV/AIDS were suddenly left without essential services, while staff were laid off and organisational operations significantly reduced. In Kenya, **Make Me Smile and FICE Kenya** reported the interruption of services supporting 16,111 children, alongside programmes reaching 14,500 adolescent girls and young women. The suspension also resulted in the closure of 20 safe spaces providing health information, prevention services and economic empowerment opportunities.

Responding to the information brought forward by its members, FICE International issued a **public statement on 26 February calling for urgent action and the restoration of financial support**. A dedicated Press Kit brought together evidence from South Africa and Kenya alongside firsthand stories from the field, helping translate the consequences of an international funding decision into the realities faced by children, families and frontline organisations.

The response demonstrated an important role of the FICE network: enabling concerns emerging at national level to rapidly reach the international community and providing members with a collective platform for advocacy when developments directly threaten the well-being and rights of children and young people.



[Read the Statement and Press Kit here](#)

FICE International Statement on Quality Alternative Care

Another major achievement of 2025 was the completion of the **FICE International Statement on Promoting Appropriate and Quality Alternative Care for Children and Youth**. The Statement builds on FICE's long-standing engagement with quality in alternative care – from the Malmö Declaration and the Quality4Children Standards to the more recent work of the Quality in Care Working Group. A discussion paper first presented at the FICE35 Congress in Split in 2024 evolved through further research, debate and member input, with the Federal Council in Vienna providing the decisive space to refine and strengthen the final text.

At the heart of the Statement is a clear principle: **there is no single model of care that can respond to the needs and circumstances of every child**. FICE calls for a diverse range of high-quality options – including kinship care, foster care, supported independent living, residential and small-group care, and specialised therapeutic placements – selected according to the individual child's rights, needs, development, identity and best interests. Crucially, the Statement emphasises that **the quality of care, rather than the type of setting alone, is the decisive factor**.

Its eleven principles place children and young people's participation, stable and meaningful relationships, family strengthening and reintegration, careful gatekeeping, continuity of care, preparation for adulthood and a skilled and well-supported social care workforce at the centre of quality alternative care. Together, they offer a shared reference point that is broad enough to be meaningful across very different national and cultural contexts, while remaining firmly grounded in children's rights.

The Statement was conceived not simply as a publication, but as a **practical tool for advocacy, policy dialogue, training and care reform**. FICE encourages National Sections and partners to translate, adapt and use it in their own contexts, and by November members were already reporting its use in discussions with governments and other stakeholders.

Published in the *International Journal of Child, Youth and Family Studies* in 2025, the Statement gives FICE and its members a common voice in an increasingly important international debate on the future of alternative care.



[Read the full Vienna Statement here](#)

| Strategic Working Groups and Thematic Collaboration

The way FICE members collaborate around professional and strategic topics expanded considerably during 2025. At the beginning of the year, thematic work was still largely organised around a small number of established groups. The development of the **FICE International Strategy 2026–2028**, and particularly the Federal Council in Vienna, opened a new phase: members identified areas where they wanted to contribute their expertise, formed new collaborations and began translating shared interests into concrete goals and working plans.

This did not result in a fixed structure overnight. Some groups already had a strong track record and produced significant results during the year; others were newly formed and only beginning to define their direction. Together, however, they reflected an important shift towards a more member-driven way of turning FICE's international network into collaborative action.

Quality in Care

The Quality in Care Working Group remained one of FICE's most active professional strands in 2025. Building on discussions that had begun around the 35th FICE International World Congress in Split, Croatia (2024), the group brought together research, professional experience and perspectives from different care systems to examine what quality alternative care should mean in practice.

Its most significant achievement was the development of the **FICE International Statement on Promoting Appropriate and Quality Alternative Care for Children and Youth**. Members played an important role in shaping the Statement during the Federal Council in Vienna, where perspectives from very different national contexts helped strengthen its emphasis on individual needs, meaningful relationships, participation, a supported care workforce and a diverse range of appropriate care options. By the end of the year, the Statement was already moving beyond FICE's internal discussions and being used by members as a reference in dialogue with governments and other stakeholders.

FICE Special Task Force “Hand in Hand”

The Hand in Hand Task Force continued to bring together expertise from Ukraine, Israel and the wider FICE network in response to the consequences of war for children, families and the professionals supporting them. Despite challenges that limited the full implementation of its planned programme, the group maintained an active programme of international roundtables, expert exchanges and thematic events throughout the year.

The February FICE Café, **“The Challenge of the Deportation of Ukrainian Children During the War,”** brought Ukrainian research and expertise to an international audience, drawing attention to the scale and complexity of deportation, return, family reunification and reintegration. The **5th Hand in Hand Roundtable**, *“How to Communicate with Children Whose Parents are in Military Service”*, focused on practical recommendations for teachers and social workers supporting children whose parents are serving in the military. A **6th Roundtable**, *“The Therapeutic Effect of Music in Working with Children,”* connected experts from Ukraine and Israel to explore music as a resource for emotional regulation and psychosocial support in wartime conditions.

The group also carried out a **needs assessment involving 113 teachers, psychologists and social work professionals**. Their responses highlighted a strong demand for practical child-focused methodologies—including art therapy, play therapy and storytelling—as well as greater support for working with trauma, loss and families in crisis. Participants also expressed a clear preference for **“real-life case studies rather than theoretical input,”** giving the Task Force valuable direction for future capacity-building activities.

Another milestone was the publication, in collaboration with FICE Canada, of an article documenting the work of the Hand in Hand Task Force during **2022–2024**, helping preserve and share the experience accumulated since the initiative began in response to the war in Ukraine.



[Read the Hand in Hand Task Force Article here](#)

Scientific Review Committee (SRC)

The **Scientific Review Committee** continued to connect FICE's international activities with research, publication and evidence-informed professional dialogue. A major achievement was the publication of the **fourth FICE Special Issue of the International Journal of Child, Youth and Family Studies** in October 2025. The double issue brought together **15 peer-reviewed articles by authors from 12 countries**, alongside FICE International's new Statement on Quality Alternative Care and a tribute to the late Prof. Emmanuel Grupper. The publication carried knowledge generated around the 2024 FICE35 Congress beyond the event itself and made it freely accessible to an international audience.



[Access the Fourth FICE Special Issue here](#)

The Committee also began looking ahead: how to broaden the geographical and professional diversity of its membership, involve care-experienced experts more meaningfully, strengthen dissemination of FICE publications and better understand their reach and influence. These discussions reflected a wider ambition for the SRC—not simply to publish, but to help bridge research, professional practice and international advocacy.

New collaborations emerging from Vienna

Several new Working Groups took shape in the final months of 2025 as members began translating the Strategy 2026–2028 into areas of practical collaboration.

The **Relational Child & Youth Care Competencies Working Group** emerged from discussions in Vienna around a major gap in the international care field: while care reform increasingly calls for a stronger social care workforce, there is little global agreement about the competencies required for high-quality relational child and youth care. Before the end of the year, the group had developed an initial concept and strategic plan for a **Global Relational Child & Youth Care Practice Competency Framework**, centred on the skills, knowledge, values and attitudes needed to build safe, consistent and developmentally supportive relationships with children, young people and families. The proposed initiative was designed from the outset as an international and participatory process, involving practitioners as well as children, young people and families.

The **Good Practices Working Group** also moved quickly from the conversations in Vienna into practical work. Members deliberately chose the language of *good practices* rather than *best practices*, reflecting an approach based on learning and exchange rather than competition between different national contexts. The group began defining how FICE could identify, document and share practices that have demonstrated value for children, young people and services. Drawing in particular on experience from Bulgaria, members explored common criteria including **impact, applicability, sustainability, efficiency and innovation**, and began developing a shared methodology for collecting examples from across the network.

Other areas were at an earlier stage of development. A **Membership & Engagement Working Group** began exploring how FICE could strengthen relationships with existing members, support National Sections and make participation in the international network more meaningful. Initial discussions included the Membership Handbook, ways of attracting and welcoming new members, and the need for clearer organisational policies. A **Congress Working Group** was also established as a space to consider how future FICE Congresses could benefit from greater continuity and shared organisational learning.

Further themes – including youth and care-experienced participation, fundraising, communication and strategy and evaluation – were also identified through the strategic process, although they remained at different stages of development as 2025 came to a close.

The expansion of thematic collaboration during 2025 was therefore not simply about creating more Working Groups. It was about **giving members more ways to turn their expertise, interests and international connections into shared work**. Some collaborations produced major outcomes within the year; others laid foundations for longer-term initiatives. Together, they brought FICE closer to a model in which its international network is not only a place for exchange, but also a platform for developing knowledge, tools and collective responses to challenges affecting children and young people.

02

| Regional Networks



FICE



| General Overview

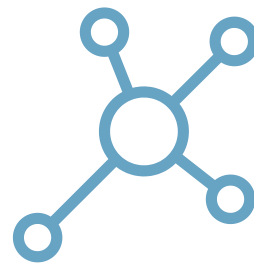
Over the past year, FICE Europe continued to follow its established course, with a strong focus on its two core projects.

The first project explored **the image of the ideal care professional from the perspective of young people living in residential youth care.**

The second project collected **interviews with professionals who chose, later in life, to enter the field of youth care** after completing another education or pursuing a different career path.

During the Federal Council meeting in Vienna, FICE Europe organised a meeting for members where the regional network welcomed CNCM (Italy) as candidate member. The meeting provided an opportunity to exchange ideas and develop new project concepts. Members also continued their active engagement with the topic of **kinship care**. Throughout the year, several board meetings were organised and held, and the FICE Europe website was regularly updated to improve communication and visibility.





| Governance & Network Development

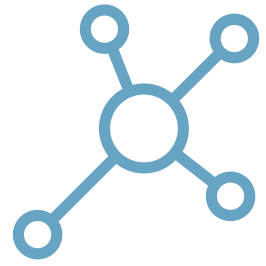
In 2025, FICE Europe continued to **strengthen its governance structures**. Several board meetings were organised and held to discuss ongoing activities, strategic developments, and future priorities of the organisation. FICE Europe continues to welcome **new board members** who are willing to contribute their experience, knowledge, and commitment to the further development of the network.

CNCM - Coordinamento Nazionale delle Comunità di tipo familiare per i Minorenni (Italy) joined FICE Europe as a candidate member, representing a positive step towards further expanding the European network and strengthening cooperation between members across Europe.

| Key Activities & Meetings

FICE Europe organised a meeting with its members during the **Federal Council meeting in Vienna**. This provided an important opportunity for members to exchange experiences, discuss current developments, and identify new ideas for future projects and cooperation.

The regional network also continued to **actively contribute** to the meetings, discussions, and working groups of FICE International, strengthening collaboration within the wider FICE network. An important focus was the dissemination and promotion of the **FICE International Quality Statement**, supporting awareness and encouraging members to reflect on quality standards and good practices within youth care.



| Projects, Initiatives and Thematic Work

FICE Europe continued its work on two core projects that aim to bring new perspectives and insights into the field of youth care.

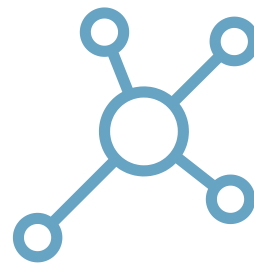
The first project focuses on **the image of the ideal care professional from the perspective of young people** who are living or have lived in residential youth care. By listening directly to young people's experiences, expectations, and needs, the project aims to better understand what qualities, attitudes, and behaviours they consider important in a care professional. The results can contribute to **improving the recruitment, education, and professional development of youth care workers**, while ensuring that the **voices of young people remain central** in discussions about the future of care.

The second project explores the **experiences of professionals who decided, later in life, to enter the youth care profession** after completing another education or building a career in a different field. Through interviews with these professionals, FICE Europe aims to gain insight into their motivations, challenges, and the added value of diverse backgrounds within youth care. **Understanding these career transitions can provide valuable knowledge about attracting new professionals to the sector** and addressing the ongoing need for qualified and committed youth care workers.

Both projects reflect the commitment of FICE Europe to strengthening the quality of youth care by connecting research, professional experiences, and the perspectives of young people.

 Link





| Challenges & Context

One of the key challenges for FICE Europe remains the availability of time and resources within the network. As it is a network based on the active contribution and commitment of its members, many activities depend on the **voluntary engagement of individuals** who combine their responsibilities within FICE Europe with their professional roles and other commitments.

Ensuring **sufficient capacity** to further develop projects, strengthen communication, and create new opportunities for cooperation remains an important point of attention. At the same time, the **strong commitment and expertise** within the network continue to be a valuable foundation for the ongoing development of FICE Europe.

| Impact, Outcomes & Learning

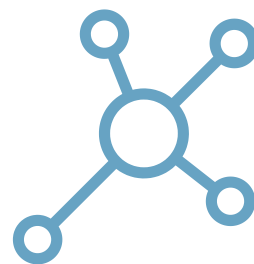
One of the important areas where FICE Europe has contributed to raising awareness is the topic of **kinship care**. Following the **FICE Europe statement on kinship care** published several years ago, this topic has gained increasing attention and has become more prominent on the agenda of various European and international networks and organisations.

This demonstrates the value of the network approach of FICE Europe: by sharing knowledge, developing statements, and bringing important themes into discussion, FICE Europe helps to initiate a process of change. The impact of its work often grows through a snowball effect by setting ideas in motion, encouraging dialogue, and supporting others to further develop and promote these topics within their own networks and contexts.



[More info on Kinship Care here](#)

FICE Europe



| Looking Ahead

Key goals for the coming years include **expanding and strengthening the membership network**, attracting new board members and active contributors, and creating more opportunities for members to exchange knowledge and develop joint initiatives. FICE Europe will continue to focus on **topics that are important for the future of youth care**, ensuring that **the voices of young people** and **the experiences of professionals** remain central.

Further development of **communication**, including the regular sharing of activities, outcomes, and good practices, will support greater visibility and impact of the network. FICE Europe also aims to strengthen cooperation with FICE International and other European and international partners to increase the reach and influence of its work.

FICE EUROPE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF EDUCATIVE COMMUNITIES
NETWORK OF EUROPEAN MEMBERS OF FICE INTERNATIONAL

BEFORE
HR ADMINISTRATOR

 **CORNELIA | 42**
BEING A FOSTER PARENT IS AN IMPORTANT JOB AND A SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE WHOLE COMMUNITY

NOW
FOSTER PARENT



 Link

FICE EUROPE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF EDUCATIVE COMMUNITIES
NETWORK OF EUROPEAN MEMBERS OF FICE INTERNATIONAL



 **CATALINA | 35**
IT'S A DIFFERENT PATH BUT EQUALLY DEDICATED TO HEALING – ONLY NOW, I HEAL THE DESIRE TO HOPE, TO KEEP GOING AND TO BELIEVE IN THE POSSIBILITY OF A BETTER LIFE.

BEFORE
PHARMACIST

NOW
SOCIAL WORKER

 Link



Donald Nghonyama (FICE South Africa)
Simon Peter Otieno (FICE Kenya)
FICE Africa Representatives

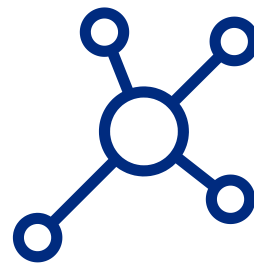
| General Overview

FICE Africa provides an important platform for strengthening Child and Youth Care practice, professional collaboration, and the protection and wellbeing of children and young people across the African continent. It forms part of the broader FICE International network and provides opportunities for African countries to share knowledge, practice experience, research and approaches to the care and development of children and youth.

The **African Child and Youth Care sector**, represented internationally through FICE South Africa, FICE Kenya, FICE Zambia, FICE Lesotho and FICE West Africa, contributes to this continental network by bringing African experiences and perspectives on child protection, community-based care, professionalisation, youth participation and alternative care. The need for such collaboration is particularly important given the **common challenges faced by children across African countries**, including poverty, inequality, violence, family vulnerability, limited access to services and the need for appropriately trained professionals.

FICE Africa therefore provides a platform through which African practitioners and organisations can strengthen the profession, learn from one another, collectively respond to emerging challenges and develop approaches that are responsive to African contexts while remaining connected to international standards and developments in Child and Youth Care.





| Main Objectives

The main objective of FICE Africa is to **strengthen the quality of care and services provided to children and young people** through professional collaboration, knowledge exchange and advocacy. This includes promoting approaches that uphold children's rights, dignity, participation and development.

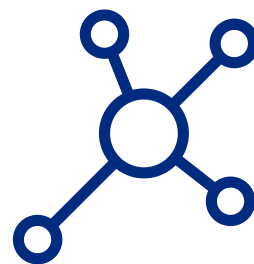
A key objective is to strengthen **Child and Youth Care as a profession in Africa**, including appropriate education and training, professional standards, ethical practice, supervision, registration and continuing professional development. FICE Africa also provides a platform for sharing innovative practices and strengthening the professional identity of practitioners working with children and youth.

Another important objective is to **promote child-centred and rights-based approaches**, ensuring that children and young people are not merely recipients of services but active participants in decisions affecting their lives. This includes strengthening mechanisms for children and young people's voices and participation.

FICE Africa also seeks to strengthen **cooperation between African countries** on alternative care, child protection, family strengthening and community-based services. Through collaboration, countries can share practical responses to common challenges and identify approaches that can be adapted to different cultural and social contexts.

During the year, members agreed to maintain a focused set of collective priorities: identifying cross-border funding opportunities and developing joint applications; sharing effective models between countries; and strengthening FICE Africa's institutional capacity, including reviewing its registration as a body able to mobilise resources and supporting the progression of FICE Africa members towards full membership of FICE International.

FICE Africa

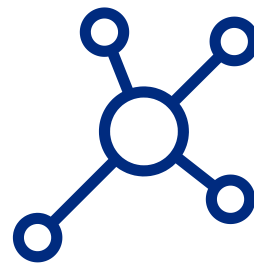


| Key Activities & Meetings

FICE Africa meetings provided an important mechanism for members to share experiences, monitor developments in different countries and identify collective responses. Members also participated in FICE International structures, including the Coordinating Body and FICE Live Forum. African members were encouraged to increase their participation in these platforms to ensure that African perspectives and experiences are adequately represented in international discussions.

A particularly significant issue during 2025 was the **USAID/PEPFAR funding suspension and subsequent reductions**. In **Kenya**, programmes were significantly disrupted. Although some funding was subsequently reinstated, programmes faced substantial reductions and uncertainty regarding continuation. Services to children and young people, including access to contraceptives, vocational education and other adolescent-focused services, were affected, while some partner organisations were removed from programmes. FICE Kenya responded by intensifying resource mobilisation and secured support from Sweden for skills development initiatives targeting girls. In **South Africa**, NACCW, representing FICE South Africa, was similarly affected. The programme resumed with a limited number of participants, with 38 CYCWs returning to implementation. Pressure to meet programme targets contributed to staff resignations, while implementation was expected to cease at the end of July, with the broader programme anticipated to conclude in September. Other FICE South Africa programmes, particularly the deployment of CYCWs in schools, continued and received positive recognition from the Department of Education. In **West Africa**, the funding crisis resulted in significant staff losses, including more than 24 staff reported to have been laid off in Benin. Programmes supporting adolescent girls and boys, including education and skills development, were affected. Sierra Leone was exploring alternative approaches to sustain its programmes. **Lesotho** also experienced disruption to anticipated funding opportunities and began exploring alternative sources. An important opportunity identified was an EU funding call focused on youth participation, which provided potential for cross-country collaboration involving eligible FICE Africa members.

This demonstrated the value of FICE Africa as a platform for identifying **funding opportunities** that could benefit several member countries.



| Key Activities & Meetings

An important achievement during the year was the beginning of **cross-country sharing of Child and Youth Care models**. FICE West Africa presented a developing **foster care model for children with disabilities**. The model generated strong interest from FICE Lesotho and FICE Kenya, with the intention of facilitating further bilateral discussions and possible exchange once the model is finalised. West Africa also identified a networking model for future presentation. This approach to sharing and adapting successful models represents an important practical contribution of FICE Africa.

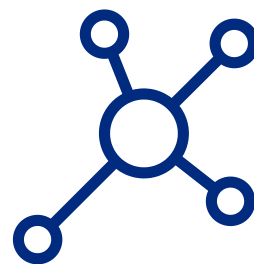
FICE South Africa also reported professional development activities, including **nationwide workshops for CYCWs** on Child Safeguarding Policy, with further training on the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA) planned. These activities demonstrate the importance of strengthening professional standards, safeguarding and ethical practice across the profession.

The continued **Child and Youth Care training programmes** reported by Zambia and South Africa demonstrated the growing recognition of the profession and the need for a skilled child and youth care workforce across Africa. At the same time, limited financial and human resources remain a major impediment across member countries, restricting programme reach and sustainability.

FICE Africa also began considering its **longer-term institutional development**. Members discussed the need to review the registration of FICE Africa so that it can operate more effectively as a continental body and mobilise resources. Lesotho undertook to investigate registration models used by international organisations operating in the country to inform this process. Members also recognised that collaborative activities could, where appropriate, be supported through Memoranda of Understanding between participating countries.

The meetings further strengthened the importance of maintaining a small number of measurable collective objectives. Members expressed support for this focused approach, enabling FICE Africa to concentrate its limited resources on achievable priorities rather than spreading its efforts too widely.

FICE Africa



| Looking Ahead

FICE Africa continues to provide an important platform for African Child and Youth Care practitioners and organisations to share knowledge, respond collectively to common challenges and strengthen the profession. The 2025 period demonstrated both the vulnerability and resilience of Child and Youth Care services across the continent, particularly in response to the USAID/PEPFAR funding crisis.

The experience also reinforced the **value of continental cooperation**. Members identified opportunities for cross-border fundraising, shared models of practice, professional development and stronger institutionalisation of FICE Africa. The interest generated by the foster care model for children with disabilities and the identification of further models for exchange demonstrate the practical value of collaboration.

Going forward, FICE Africa should continue to prioritise resource mobilisation, professionalisation, sharing of effective African models, stronger participation in FICE International, and the development of a sustainable continental structure. These priorities will strengthen the capacity of African members to advocate for and provide quality, contextually appropriate services that uphold the rights, participation and wellbeing of children and young people.



Triple A Region



Triple A Region (Asia, Australia, Americas)
James Anglin (FICE Canada)
Triple A Representative

| General Overview

2025 marked the **launch of the Triple A Region**, creating a new space for connection among FICE members from **Australia, Japan, India, Brazil, the USA and Canada**. The network emerged from the need to strengthen collaboration among members not previously affiliated with FICE Africa or FICE Europe and to ensure their perspectives were represented within FICE International's governance.

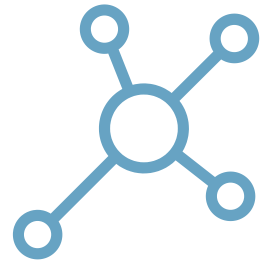
The first exchanges demonstrated a clear interest in learning more about developments across countries, sharing professional perspectives and exploring areas for future collaboration. Although still at an early stage, the establishment of the network created a **new regional connection across a geographically diverse part of FICE International**.

| Governance & Network Development

In August 2025, FICE International invited members from non-regionalised countries to nominate a representative to the Coordinating Body. **James Anglin, President of FICE Canada, was selected** to take on this role, and the appointment was subsequently confirmed as the new regional group took shape around the Federal Council in Vienna.

By October, James was formally participating in Coordinating Body meetings as the Triple A regional representative, bringing the perspectives and developments of the emerging network into FICE International's governance alongside representatives from FICE Africa and FICE Europe.

Triple A Region



| Key Activities & Meetings

The network's **first substantive exchange** took place during the Federal Council in Vienna in September 2025. Representatives from several Triple A countries used the opportunity to get to know one another, exchange perspectives and begin discussing how the group could work together. Following these meetings, the network was considered formally launched.

The discussions touched on issues raised through the FICE International Statement on Appropriate and Quality Alternative Care, developments in different national and regional contexts, and the value of making **FICE's historical and professional documents more accessible to members**. Participants particularly valued the opportunity to learn more about what was happening elsewhere in the network.

| Network Development and Emerging Priorities

As the group began to define its role, several priorities emerged. These included **strengthening engagement** among existing members, reaching out to others across the wider Triple A region, and creating regular opportunities for exchange despite the geographical distance between participants.

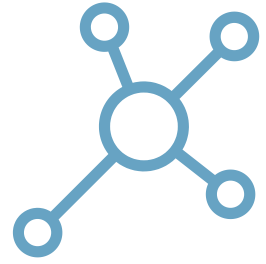
The possibility of further developing FICE's presence in **Australia**, including potentially progressing towards a National Section, was also raised during the year. More broadly, the network expressed interest in maintaining dialogue across countries and identifying areas where collaboration could add value to the work already taking place nationally.

| Challenges & Context

The network's greatest practical challenge is also one of its defining characteristics: its very wide geographical spread. **Coordinating virtual meetings across multiple time zones** was identified from the outset as a difficulty and will require flexible approaches to communication and participation.

As a newly established network, another priority is to **build sustained engagement** and identify forms of collaboration that are useful to members without creating unnecessary additional workload.

Triple A Region



| Impact, Outcomes & Learning

The most significant outcome of 2025 was the creation of the regional network itself and its integration into FICE International's wider structure. Triple A members gained a dedicated space to exchange perspectives, while the appointment of a regional representative provided a more direct connection between these members and the Coordinating Body.

| Looking Ahead

The network intends to continue developing its connections through virtual meetings during 2026. A first in-person Triple A gathering is also being considered in connection with the **International Child and Youth Care conference in St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada**, with preparatory online meetings planned beforehand.



03

| FICE Members



FICE



Full member

Bettina Terp, Christian Posch - Co-presidents

| Membership Overview, Meetings and Governance

FICE Austria counted 48 members in 2025, including 35 organisations and 13 individual members. The General Assembly was held online, where the Board of Directors and the Presidents were successfully confirmed. Throughout the year, the national section also held four Board meetings and one consultation meeting, supporting ongoing coordination and governance.

| Key Achievements

FICE Austria consistently works to further develop quality in child and youth welfare.

One of the year's key achievements was the **publication of the HANDlungsBUCH**, a book developed through a broad collaborative process. More than 70 colleagues took part, primarily from child and youth care organisations, universities of applied sciences, universities and research institutes, as well as the Ombudsman's Office. Their involvement spanned project management, the editorial team, and the sounding board and feedback process, bringing together a wide range of professional perspectives.



| Activities Overview

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 2030”. These virtual networking meetings were successfully continued at regular intervals in 2025 (7 meetings in 2025) and will continue to take place.

Inspiration days

FICE Austria successfully held its annual **Impulse Day (“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.

In autumn, the national section organised the third **Inspiration Day** in Vienna. There Fice Austria's latest book was presented to the specialist audience:

“HANDlungsBUCH – Theoretische und rechtliche Grundlagen + Praxisorientiertes Fallverstehen und sozialpädagogische Prozessgestaltung”



Partnership with the DÖJ (Dachverband österreichischer Kinder- und Jugendhilfeeinrichtungen - Austrian Association of Child and Youth Welfare Organizations)

Since 2024, there has been a regular exchange (approximately once a month via Zoom) between the Executive Director (Dr. Hubert Löffler of the Umbrella Organization of Austrian Child and Youth Welfare Institutions - DÖJ) and the President of FICE Austria. Several joint statements have been issued regarding current child and youth welfare issues. In 2025, seven expert discussions on current child and youth welfare topics were held with the main parties in the Austrian parliament.

| Success Stories and Impact

Virtuelles Forschungsforum Kinder- und Jugendhilfe (VFKJ)

The VFKJ (Virtual Research Forum on Child and Youth Welfare) meets twice a year (in the spring and fall) via Zoom to discuss matters of child and youth care and developing strategies. Approximately 16 universities, institutes and departments have participated.

Quivive “Journal for Reflective Practice in Child and Youth Services”

Quivive aims to establish a dynamic, digital professional platform for the Austrian child and youth welfare sector that both - practitioners and decision-makers - will find useful for staying informed about new developments in the field and seeing “what others are doing.” We invite practitioners and researchers in the field of child and youth welfare (national and international) to provide readers with insights into their work by submitting – even if brief – articles on topics and experiences that are important to them. Quivive is published twice a year, in April/May and October/November.

AG Unerhörte Kinder (AGUK) Unheard Children

Launched in the fall of 2025, the project examines “case studies of challenging care trajectories and the development of delinquency among young people in residential youth care facilities.”

| Additional Information

As host of the 2025 FICE International General Assembly and Federal Council, FICE Austria welcomed nearly forty participants to Vienna from 15 to 17 September. Members from Europe, Canada, the Middle East, Kenya and South Africa came together for three days of discussion, group work, shared learning and informal exchange. The combination of working together, exploring the city and spending time as an international community helped strengthen connections across the network and made the Vienna gathering a memorable experience.



Full member since 2018

Dayse Cesar Franco Bernardi - President

Patrick Reason - Vice-President

| Membership Overview, Meetings and Governance

FICE Brazil had 45 member organisations in 2025. The National Section held its General Assembly in Belo Horizonte in June, followed by three online Extraordinary General Assemblies during the second half of the year, with between 30 and 50 participants attendees. These meetings included the presentation of the annual report covering events, seminars and publications, as well as the approval of the **new Brazilian National Alternative Care Plan**. A new Coordinating Body was also appointed for the 2026–2027 term.

Looking ahead, FICE Brazil reported that nine new institutional members joined in 2026.

| Key Achievements

FICE Brazil most significant achievement in 2025 was contributing to the publication of **Brazil's new National Plan for Family and Community Living**, launched in December. The Plan is structured around six key pillars: prevention, quality in alternative care, family reintegration, family-based care models including joint protective care, adoption in the best interests of the child, and support for care leavers.

The national section also strengthened national mobilisation through the **Força dos Laços** event in Belo Horizonte, which gathered around 500 participants and included an international speaker from Spain. At the end of the year, FICE Brazil supported the **second Brazilian National Care Leavers Conference**, also in Belo Horizonte.



| Activities Overview

In 2025, FICE Brazil main activities focused on national advocacy, knowledge exchange and mobilisation around the right of children and adolescents to family and community living. A central activity was its participation in the process leading to the approval and publication of Brazil's new National Plan for Family and Community Living, approved in December 2025. This was a historic milestone for the field, strengthening national policy around prevention, quality in alternative care, family reintegration, family-based care models, adoption in the best interests of the child, and support for care leavers.

The national section also organised and contributed to the national seminar “A Força dos Laços 2” in Belo Horizonte, which brought together around 500 participants from different regions of Brazil. The seminar promoted dialogue between civil society, public authorities, professionals and researchers, with exchanges on the new National Plan, social work with families, the quality of alternative care, and international perspectives, including the participation of a speaker from Spain.

Throughout the year, FICE Brazil promoted dissemination and training activities linked to the National Plan, including the sharing of approved materials with participants and the mobilisation of professionals and organisations around its implementation. It also partnered in the **IX National Seminar on the Quality of Institutional and Family-Based Care Services for Children and Adolescents**, with many members of the Movement participating in different panels.

At the end of the year, the national section supported the second Brazilian National Care Leavers Conference, also held in Belo Horizonte. This event gave visibility to the voices and experiences of young people leaving care, shared research and good practices, and strengthened the national agenda on transitions from care to adult life.

Together, these activities helped consolidate a national movement for family and community living, strengthen technical capacity, amplify the participation of people with lived experience, and advance public policy implementation across Brazil.

| Success Stories and Impact

As a national network, FICE Brazil impact is usually not expressed through individual case stories, but through collective change, methodologies and the strengthening of public agendas. In 2025, one of the clearest examples was the growing visibility and participation of young people with care experience, especially through the **Movimento Nacional Além do Acolhimento**.

In their **Open Letter to the National Novos Caminhos Programme**, the young people described Novos Caminhos as “a historic milestone” and “the response of the State to thousands of young people who, for so long, were invisible.” Their words show the impact of being recognised not as statistics or “cases”, but as people with histories, hopes and the right to a future.

This visibility also contributed to an important policy achievement: care leavers now have their own pillar, Eixo 6, within Brazil’s new National Plan for Family and Community Living. Through national events, advocacy spaces and the second Brazilian National Care Leavers Conference, care-experienced young people increasingly became recognised as political and technical actors.

Their participation has helped shift the conversation from care leaving as an individual challenge to care leaving as a public responsibility. It has positively influenced the quality of care by reinforcing that preparation for autonomy, emotional support, community belonging, education, work opportunities and long-term follow-up must be central parts of the care system.



| Additional Information

A key priority is to continue supporting the expansion and strengthening of family-based care models, including foster care, joint protective care, and kinship care by extended family or close persons. This does not mean demonising residential care, which continues to have an important role when it is necessary, well-regulated, temporary and of high quality. Rather, the aim is to ensure that each child, adolescent or family receives the most appropriate form of care, based on their needs, rights and best interests.

At the same time, the challenges of kinship care must be recognised. In Brazil, many grandparents, siblings, relatives and close community members already care for children, but often without adequate visibility, legal clarity, financial support, professional guidance or access to public policies designed for their specific needs. Strengthening kinship care therefore means valuing existing family and community bonds while ensuring these caregivers are not left alone.

Expanding and supporting these care options helps diversify the care system, reduce unnecessary institutionalisation, and promote more individualised, relational and community-connected responses.



FICE Bulgaria



Full member since 2001

Dashenka Kraleva – President

Simona Vutova – Training and Event Organizer

| Membership Overview, Meetings and Governance

FICE Bulgaria is a membership-based NGO and it has 16 members – 14 individuals and 2 organizations. In 2025, 2 new individual members were admitted. In 2025, the organization held its General Assembly in accordance with its Statute with 100% member representation (8 in person, 8 by proxy). The Assembly reviewed the state of membership, accepted the activity and financial reports for 2022–2024, and adopted changes in the composition of the Board of Management. Governance is guided by the General Assembly, the Board of Management and the Control Council. The organization is headed by its President, Dr. Dashenka Kraleva, and continues to bring together experts, practitioners and partners united by the mission to improve the lives of children, young people and families.

| Key Achievements

In 2025, FICE Bulgaria reached a record **1,533 trainees and followers** – remarkable growth from 300 in 2022 and 1,497 in 2024. As of today, the organization has developed **32 specialized training topics** for professionals working in social services for children, young people and adults across Bulgaria.

Supervision services continued to grow – having delivered over 100 sessions in 2023, 250 in 2024, and nearly double that in 2025 – providing essential support to teams in preventing burnout and improving care quality. The Centre for Professional Education launched new qualification courses for Social Work Assistants. Internationally, FICE-Bulgaria participated in the FICE-International General Assembly in Vienna and successfully proposed a new "Good Practices" working group.



[Read the full Annual Report of FICE Bulgaria here](#)

| Activities Overview

In 2025, FICE Bulgaria carried out an extensive programme of training, supervision, professional education and international cooperation.

Training remained the core activity, with specialized trainings delivered to professionals from residential and community-based social services, day care centres, municipalities and NGOs across Bulgaria. Trainings combined interactive methods, case discussions, role plays and practical tools applicable in daily work. Key topics included rights of social service users and protection from violence, positive educational methods for children and youth, work with parents and families, assessing parental alienation syndrome, intervision as a method for case discussion, adoption and training of trainers for candidate adoptive parents, the Life Book biographical method, support for young people leaving the care system, and others. Alongside in-person trainings held in the office of the organization in Sofia and on-site across the country, FICE Bulgaria offered online training topics, ensuring accessibility for professionals from all regions.

Supervision continued to grow as an essential mechanism for quality improvement and burnout prevention. Individual, group and team supervision sessions were delivered both online and on-site, addressing real cases, ethical dilemmas, team dynamics and the emotional impact of working with vulnerable populations.

The Centre for Professional Education launched new remote qualification courses for the profession of Social Work Assistant in two specializations: Social Work with Children and Families at Risk, and Social Work with Children and Adults with Disabilities and Chronic Diseases.

Internationally, FICE Bulgaria participated in the FICE-International General Assembly and Federal Council in Vienna (September 2025), representing Bulgaria among delegates from over 20 countries. The organization proposed a new "Good Practices" working group. In July FICE-Bulgaria hosted a visit from the Co-President of FICE-Europe Elena Matache, opening new avenues for collaboration.

FICE Bulgaria



| Success Stories and Impact

A team rediscovering its strength: A residential care team serving children with complex needs approached FICE Bulgaria exhausted and struggling with communication breakdowns and difficult behaviour from the young people in their care. Through a series of team supervision sessions, professionals were supported in reflecting on their own reactions, understanding the trauma behind challenging behaviour, and rebuilding trust within the team. Months later, the team reported a noticeably calmer environment, improved relationships with the children and greater confidence in handling crisis situations.

A child finding her story: During a Life Book training, a social worker began applying the biographical method with a teenage girl who had experienced multiple placements and felt disconnected from her own history. Through guided conversations, photographs and creative activities, the young person was supported in building a coherent narrative of her life. Her worker described a visible shift – the girl became more open, more engaged and began speaking about her future with cautious hope for the first time.

Professionals becoming multipliers: Following the Training of Trainers for Candidate Adoptive Parents, several participants returned to their regions and independently delivered preparation programmes for prospective adoptive families – extending FICE Bulgaria's reach far beyond the training room and strengthening adoption support at local level.

FICE Bulgaria

| Additional Information

2025 marked a year of consolidation and growth for FICE Bulgaria. FICE Bulgaria enters 2026 with confidence, gratitude and readiness for new challenges. The growing interest in trainings, supervision and professional consultation confirms the need for continued support for social service professionals and teams.

In the coming year, the organization will continue to develop its training programmes, expand supervision opportunities, strengthen partnerships, participate in international exchange and promote good practices in social work. FICE Bulgaria remains committed to its mission: to support the professionals who support children, young people, families and vulnerable adults – contributing to the development of high-quality, ethical and humane social services in Bulgaria.





Full member since 2022
James Anglin - President

| Membership Overview, Meetings and Governance

FICE Canada has 23 member organizations, representing over 3,000 individuals. 3 new member organizations were welcomed in 2025. The Canadian National Section holds an AGM each year in March or April, and convenes a Board meeting quarterly; all of this are virtual, given the large geographical size of Canada. Fourteen of the fifteen board members, including a new candidate elected at the meeting, attended the March, 2026 AGM. The President gave an update on FICE International activities over the year, including the approval of the statement “Promoting Appropriate and Quality Alternative Care for Children and Youth” (aka the Vienna Statement). The plans for the Canadian Child and Youth Care Summit initially proposed at the 2025 AGM were confirmed. It will take place on June 22, 2026 in conjunction with the National CYC Conference in St. John’s. Newfoundland.

| Key Achievements

FICE Canada held a successful webinar on February 25, 2025 - **Student-Instructor Relational Practice in Higher Education** that was well attended. Webinar videos were posted on the FICE Canada website along with notices of upcoming events across FICE International and its member sections.

The main achievement over the year was assisting with the planning of the **2026 National/World CYC Conference**, and especially the **Canadian CYC Summit** to discuss:

- a) the current state of CYC across the country and sectors (i.e., post-secondary education, service agencies and professional associations),
- and b) to develop a process for advancing identified goals over the coming 2-years with a report on progress to be given at the 2028 CYC Conference.

| Activities Overview

FICE Canada key goal is strengthen relationships and connections across Canada from different sectors in child and youth care, and across a provinces and territories. At the 2025 AGM, the Board Members discussed sponsoring a Canadian CYC Summit in conjunction with the 2026 St. John's National and World Conference in June, 2026. Over 2025, planning was underway, including designing the day and identifying key leaders for invitation-only meetings. It was agreed that international conference attendees would be welcome to attend as observers, with opportunities to provide feedback to the Canadian representatives. FICE Canada was well represented by Heather Modlin and Shemine Gulamhusein at the Vienna Federal Council meetings.

Membership Committee (Pennie Sibbald)

The Membership Committee continued working to strengthen FICE Canada's visibility and membership network. A new trifold brochure was prepared for the June 2026 conference, with the aim of supporting outreach and creating new networking opportunities. The Committee also highlighted the importance of word-of-mouth communication in promoting FICE Canada's work and attracting potential new members.

Communications Committee (Larisa Hanssen)

FICE Canada strengthened its online presence in 2025, with LinkedIn growing to more than 160 followers. Its Instagram account also became active during the year, although engagement developed more gradually.

FICE Canada also hosted a webinar with Michelle Holbrock of Rebound in Ontario, which attracted the highest participation of any webinar organised by the National Section to date. The webinar programme continued to provide a platform for sharing members' professional work, research and practice.

International Summit Committee (Jenny McGrath)

Planning for the International Summit on 22 June 2026 progressed during the year, with 30 participants already confirmed and representation expected from eight countries outside Canada. The strong international interest led the Committee to reconsider aspects of the programme in order to accommodate a broader range of perspectives. Efforts were also underway to increase the participation of government representatives.

FICE Canada

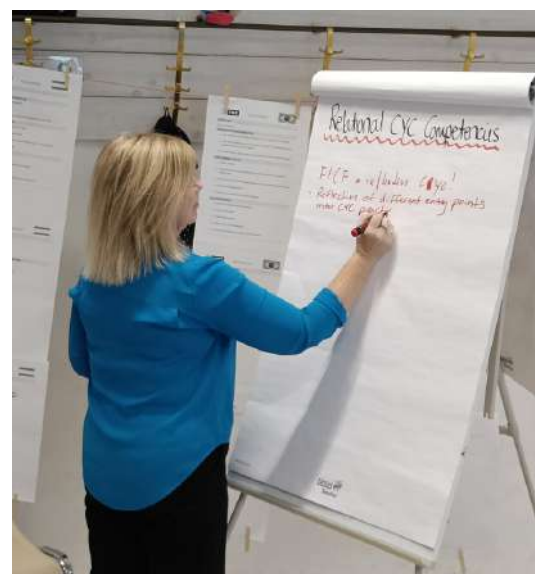
| Success Stories and Impact

Perhaps FICE Canada major achievement was assisting the Quality in Care Working Group to draft the Vienna Statement on the **Statement on Appropriate and Quality Alternative Care for Children and Youth**. James Anglin assisted in the development of the draft paper, and Heather Modlin and Shemine Gulamhusein actively participated in the discussions in Vienna at the Federal Council meetings where the statement was finalized and approved. James has been communicating with national sections and supporting them to utilize the statement in their own national and regional contexts.



| Additional Information

FICE Canada is still in its developmental phase. The National Section has added several new organizational members over 2025, and retained all but one of their original Board members, and they are now moving forward with implementing the key goals in their **Strategic Plan** that was finalized in 2023/24. The Canadian CYC Summit to be held in June, 2026 will be a major step along this journey.





Full member since 2017

Petra Hrvoj – President

Tena Bosak - Executive Director

| Membership Overview, Meetings and Governance

FICE Croatia currently has 30 members, of which 5 are organization members, and 25 are individuals. In 2025, 2 new members joined, 2 individual members.

At the end of the year, the annual general meeting was held. The assembly was held online and 10 members were present. The meeting discussed the past activities during 2025, as well as presented the financial report for 2025. Likewise, the implementation plan for activities in 2025 was presented, which included a presentation of approved projects that will be implemented, planned application of projects and other activities that are planned to be realized. The financial plan for 2025 was also presented and everything was put to a vote and unanimously approved. Decisions were made regarding the development of the association in an international direction and opening opportunities for educational activities for experts.

| Key Achievements

What FICE Croatia highlights as a success for 2025 is certainly the **large number of projects** that were implemented and had approved in 2025 and whose implementation extends to 2026 and 2027. Of these, the National Section would particularly highlight the Erasmus+ KA2 Small-scale project on improving the competencies of experts and youth workers from the alternative care and prison systems.

| Activities Overview

National activities:

1. Online education for experts TRAIN YOUR AI ASSISTANT: EDUCATION FOR EXPERTS WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH
2. Safe Space, 2025-2027. Ministry of Science, Education and Youth
3. Partnership on the project Foster Care in the Center 3.0, implemented by the Forum for Quality Foster Care of Children-Foster Parents for Children, 2025-2026., City of Zagreb
4. Ready to Leave Care-Phase 3, 2025. City of Zagreb
5. Voice of Youth-Phase 2, 2025-2026. City of Zagreb
6. Partnership on the project Youth Forum 2.0, implemented by the Forum for Quality Foster Care of Children-Foster Parents for Children, 2025-2026., City of Zagreb
7. Partnership on the project J.A.K.O., implemented by Suncokret-OLJIN, 2025-2027., Ministry of Science, Education and Youth

International Activities:

1. Erasmus + KA2 Opening gate for a second chance, 2025-2026, AMPEU
2. Erasmus+ Partnership - Rural makers 2.0, 2025 Valdeoras Vive
3. FICE International General assembly and Federal Council, 2025, Vienna. Austria
4. Erasmus+ Partnership Let's get Intercultural, 2025, MC Dravinjske doline
5. Erasmus+ Partnership - The July Training, 2025, Radi Vidi Pats

Other activities:

1. Erasmus + TCA training "Developing Quality Collaborative Partnerships", AMPEU (Zagreb, February)
2. Erasmus + training for youth professionals "Networking and Advocating", Awero (Lithuania, February)
3. DJHT Deutscher Kinder- und Jugendhilfetag - German Congress for Child and Youth Welfare). (Germany, May)
4. Chairperson of the Board of Directors of FICE Croatia Lucija Vejmek elected as a member of the Management Board of the international organization Eurochild (Belgium, May)
5. Erasmus+ seminar Participation in the practice of #ErasmusPlus / #ESS projects", AMPEU (Tuhelj, September)
6. Erasmus+ Digital Youth Work SNAC – Project Lab 2025 (Portugal, October)
7. Education, conferences, round tables of partner organizations, decision makers and international organizations

| Activities Overview

The outcomes of these projects are specific with respect to the topic of each project, but in general the common outcome is the **impact on improving the conditions of alternative care for children and youth**, through direct work with them and with experts, and providing opportunities for improving social skills and preventing dangers such as addiction of youth at risk, with an emphasis on youth in alternative care. Also, the emphasis was on educating and training employees and members to improve their competencies and share experience at the local, national and international levels.

| Success Stories and Impact

FICE Croatia hopes that its work has had a positive influence on many children and young people in alternative care, as well as on the professionals who support them.

One story from 2025 was a particular source of pride. It concerns a young woman who spent her childhood and youth in foster care and began participating in FICE Croatia activities in 2020. Over time, she became involved in educational and interactive workshops, advocacy activities, camps, Erasmus+ projects and other initiatives. Her engagement with FICE Croatia inspired her to pursue social work, and in 2024 she enrolled at the Study Centre for Social Work in Zagreb. In 2025, she felt ready to take a more active role and began volunteering in FICE Croatia activities with children and young people in alternative care, contributing to several projects. Her journey represents a meaningful example of how sustained participation and support can encourage young people to become actively involved in shaping and improving care for others.

| Additional Information

2025 was a particularly busy and challenging year for FICE Croatia due to the large number of new project applications. In 2024, much of the organisation's capacity had been dedicated to preparing and delivering the FICE International Congress in Split. Following the Congress, FICE Croatia focused on submitting as many suitable project applications as possible in order to secure the financial sustainability needed to continue its planned activities.

A sufficient number of relevant funding opportunities became available, and many of the submitted projects received financial support. This enabled FICE Croatia to address the challenge successfully and continue implementing its planned work.

FICE Czech Republic



Federation of Children's Homes of the Czech Republic – FICE Czech Republic
Full member
Jana Koubová - President

| Membership Overview, Meetings and Governance

FICE Czech Republic maintained a stable membership base consisting of 41 institutional members, including residential childcare facilities, educational organisations, and partner NNO involved in child and youth support.

More than 1,000 professionals remain connected to the activities and initiatives of the organisation, including educators, social workers, psychologists, care professionals, and other specialists working with children and young people. Regular meetings and consultations were held throughout the year, creating space for professional exchange, cooperation, and discussion of current challenges within residential childcare in the Czech Republic. FICE Czech Republic continued its efforts to gradually expand its membership network and strengthen cooperation with additional organisations and professional partners.

| Key Achievements

One of the most significant achievements of FICE Czech Republic in 2025 was the **professional study visit to Finland**, where representatives of the organisation visited Finnish residential childcare institutions and engaged in discussions with local professionals and experts. The visit provided valuable insight into inclusive approaches, child participation, mental health support, and interdisciplinary cooperation within the Finnish care system. The experience became an important source of inspiration for future development in the Czech context and strengthened international cooperation and professional reflection among members of FICE Czech Republic.

FICE Czech Republic

| Activities Overview

In 2025, FICE Czech Republic organised and supported a wide range of activities focused on children and young people growing up in residential childcare institutions. Several important events were prepared for the organisation's broad membership base, bringing together children, educators, social workers, and partner organisations from different regions of the Czech Republic and abroad.

One of the key activities of the year was the organisation of the **International Sports Games** supported by the International Visegrad Fund. The event created a space for intercultural exchange, participation, teamwork, and relationship building among children and professionals from different countries. The activities combined sport, informal education, and community building, while also strengthening international cooperation in the field of residential childcare.

FICE Czech Republic also actively participated in the organisation and support of the traditional **"The Dearest Concert"** initiative, which continues to hold an important place within the Czech residential childcare community. The event provided children and young people with opportunities for artistic expression, participation, and positive social experience in a supportive environment.

The organisation intensified cooperation with a large number of NNO and professional partners. These collaborations supported educational activities, preventive programmes, community projects, and awareness raising initiatives connected to inclusion, mental health, and the public image of residential childcare in the Czech Republic.

An important part of the organisation's activities also involved strengthening cooperation with universities and experts from the fields of education, special pedagogy, and social work. FICE Czech Republic contributed to discussions concerning the future development of residential childcare and the promotion of more inclusive and child centred approaches.

FICE Czech Republic

| Success Stories and Impact

One meaningful example of the impact of FICE Czech Republic's work comes from a children's home located in a border region of the Czech Republic, where young people often have fewer educational, cultural, and social opportunities than children growing up in larger cities.

Despite these limitations, one former resident successfully completed university studies and gradually built an independent life. She currently travels across Europe, continues her personal and professional development, and remains closely connected to the values of residential childcare support and inclusion.

In 2025, she submitted an application to become involved in the activities of FICE Czech Republic and expressed her intention to help organise a future Children's Forum focused on the voices and experiences of young people growing up in care.

Her story represents an important example of resilience, motivation, and the long term importance of supportive relationships and educational opportunities within residential childcare. FICE Czech Republic warmly congratulates her on these achievements and values her willingness to support younger generations of children growing up in care.

| Additional Information

One of the main challenges for FICE Czech Republic in 2025 remained the legislative environment surrounding residential childcare and related social and educational policies.

The organisation continued to actively advocate for improvements in laws, professional standards, and systemic conditions in order to support more inclusive, respectful, and effective care for children and young people growing up in residential institutions.

FICE Finland



Central Union for Child Welfare in Finland (CUCW) - FICE Finland
Full member
Ulla Siimes - CEO

| Membership Overview, Meetings and Governance

FICE Finland (CUCW) had 99 members in 2025, consisting mainly of organisations and wellbeing services counties, and welcomed new members during the year.

During the winter of 2025, CUCW developed a new strategy, which was approved at the annual meeting of the board and members in spring. The vision set out in the strategy reflects human rights, a good childhood, and a vibrant civil society. At its core is work that brings people together and combines strengths to promote children's rights, develop child protection and other services for children and families, and advance advocacy efforts in child and family policy.

In the autumn annual meeting a new Chairperson was elected for CUCW.

| Key Achievements

CUCW's reports, publications, and campaigns received significant visibility in 2025. Its role as an expert organization within its field of operation is strong. **CUCW's the Voice for Children campaign** during the regional and municipal elections was successful. The international dimension of its work was also strengthened through, among other things, international study visits and the new EU-funded **Meidän LOS project**.

In 2025, the **National Child Welfare Days®** were held at the Jyväskylä Paviljonki conference centre under the theme "With Heart and Determination." The event brought together 850 professionals working with children and young people, as well as students preparing to enter the field and exhibitors.

| Activities Overview

Through **Child Rights Connect**, the CUCW participated in joint appeals, for example in support of the development of the Fourth Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and for UN funding, as sessions of the Committee on the Rights of the Child that form part of the reporting process have been cancelled due to the UN liquidity crisis.

In 2025-2026, CUCW coordinates the EU-funded *Our CRC* (Meidän LOS) project, which aims to strengthen children's participation in monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the **Convention on the Rights of the Child**. At the end of 2025, the organization published a youth-friendly version of the recommendations issued to Finland by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in 2023, along with an explanatory video describing the stages of the reporting process. The youth-friendliness of the publication and the video's script was tested in six workshops for 13- to 15-year-olds. The workshops also provided young people with an opportunity to share their views on how the implementation of children's rights could be strengthened.

CUCW carried out the **Voice for Children** campaign during the regional and municipal elections. The campaign involved 44 civil society organizations, and succeeded in engaging 640 regional election candidates and 1,153 municipal election candidates. *Voice for Children* candidates represented all parliamentary parties.

During 2025, CUCW was highly active in producing publications and reports. Among its key outputs was the study **“Don’t Shout, Don’t Shake: Finnish Parenting Attitudes and the Use of Corporal Punishment 2025”**, published in August. The study received extensive media coverage and sparked significant public discussion. Its findings highlighted the pressures of parenthood, feelings of inadequacy and helplessness, the need to address corporal punishment, and challenges associated with seeking support.

CUCW continued active **media and advocacy communications** work to improve the public perception of child welfare/protection services. Through both social media and traditional media, it highlighted issues that reflect the broader picture of child protection work and brought attention to the sector's achievements, challenges, and societal significance.

FICE Germany



Internationale Gesellschaft für erzieherische Hilfen e.V. (IGfH) - FICE Germany

Full member since 1962

Nicole Knuth (1st chairwoman), Melanie Overbeck (2nd chairwoman)

Stefan Wedermann (CEO)

| Membership Overview, Meetings and Governance

The IGfH has three membership categories:

- Institutions / Services / Training Providers
- Individual Members / Students
- Municipal Agencies / Youth Welfare Offices / State Youth Welfare Offices

Total number of members in 2025 was 1,359, with 51 new members joining.

Every three years, members are invited to the General Assembly, where delegates are elected. Each membership category elects five delegates and three co-opted members. The delegates then elect the members of the board, who are also part of the Delegates' Assembly.

The Delegates' Assembly meets twice a year in person, in spring and autumn. Any member may attend these meetings, although without voting rights. Attendance is usually around 30–35 participants per assembly. The General Assembly is typically attended by approximately 150–200 members.

| Impact, Topics and Activities

Strengthening Self-Advocacy in Inclusive Child and Youth Welfare Services

In recent years, self-advocacy in German child and youth welfare has grown significantly, particularly among care-experienced young people and young people with disabilities. Since 2021, German child and youth welfare law (SGB VIII – Book VIII of the German Social Code) has formally recognised and promoted self-organised advocacy groups. However, implementation remains weak in practice. In July 2024, IGfH supported a national workshop at the German Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, bringing together more than 20 young people, self-advocacy organisations, municipalities, professional associations and policymakers. Together, they discussed how self-advocacy can become a “third pillar” of child and youth welfare alongside public and non-governmental providers, and developed concrete demands for stronger participation, inclusion and structural support.

| Impact, Topics and Activities

Trafficking and Exploitation of Young People in the Context of Residential Child and Youth Care

Recently, IGfH – particularly through its specialist groups – has increasingly received individual reports about residential child and youth care settings that indicate institutional risks for young people which may be associated with trafficking and exploitation. In particular, emerging parallel structures to youth welfare services involving low-threshold and open support offers suggest that young people in these settings may be exposed to the risk of trafficking or are not adequately protected within the respective institutions. Furthermore, numerous historical and institutional review studies have revealed structures and practices within residential care that enabled and facilitated the trafficking and exploitation of young people.

For an initial exploration of the issue, IGfH, in cooperation with the Universities of Siegen and Hildesheim, organised an expert discussion in June 2025 to examine current developments in residential child and youth care from the perspective of trafficking and exploitation of young people. Experts on trafficking in human beings and experts from child and youth welfare services, particularly residential care, were invited in order to connect expertise from both fields.

The Documentation of the expert discussion is publicly available and can be downloaded. It includes introductory expert contributions by participants on the exploitation of young people, provides insightful perspectives from research studies conducted in the United Kingdom and the Netherlands, and traces the intensive discussions, key findings and emerging needs for action identified during the exchange.

Initial findings from the discussion were presented at the end of September during an expert hearing of the National Council on the further development of referral mechanisms and structures concerning trafficking of minors.



[Download and more info here](#)

| Impact, Topics and Activities

Shaping Inclusive Child and Youth Welfare Services - Support and commentary on the legislative reform

A key element of the reform is the planned merging of responsibilities for integration assistance services for young people with disabilities under SGB VIII (Book VIII of the German Social Code, which regulates child and youth welfare services), scheduled to begin in 2028. In the future, family support services including alternative care, youth work, childrens day care services and services for young people with disabilities are planned to be combined under one social code.

Due to the resignation of the former federal government, the legislative project initially failed at the turn of the year 2024/2025. However, through a comprehensive joint statement by the residential child and youth care associations, including IGfH, and strong demands from the professional community, it was possible to encourage the new federal government to signal its intention to continue advancing the reform. In March 2026, a government draft for a comprehensive legislative reform was published, which IGfH commented on extensively and criticised in detail.



[Download and more info here](#)

| Impact, Topics and Activities

Inquiries into Sexualised Violence (Including Within the Context of IGfH and other Youth Care Networks)

In recent years, various reports have examined the handling and historical review of cases of sexualised violence against children and young people committed by educational professionals in the context of the child and youth care system in Germany. These reports point to institutions, actors, networks and structural connections through which paedosexual positions and (sexualised) violence were organised and legitimised in the 1970s/80s until late 90s. Different contexts (including the interim and final reports on the role of Helmut Kentler in Berlin child and youth welfare services, as well as the 2025 final report “Werner Helmut Kamenzin and the Stuttgart Youth Welfare Office”).

Following a resolution of the Delegates’ Assembly, IGfH is also examining whether individuals organised within IGfH legitimised sexualised violence. As the search for a leading independent expert for the review process proved extremely difficult, the Executive Board and the Delegates’ Assembly adopted a three-stage procedure in March 2025:

1. Phase: Archiving and cataloguing of materials (already completed)
2. Phase: Initial academic analysis of the archived documents and materials by external recognised experts in preparation for a broader review process
3. Phase: A broader review and reappraisal process following the academic analysis, potentially in cooperation with other organisations, to be conducted by an independent and recognised external institute or expert

Current status: Numerous recognised and independent experts have been approached to conduct the academic analysis of the archived documents and materials. Further discussions are currently ongoing.

| Impact, Topics and Activities

Situation of (Unaccompanied) Young Refugees

Both the report published by the German federal government in July 2025 on the situation of unaccompanied young refugees and the results of the BuMF online survey on the current situation of young refugees in Germany show, among other things, that the lowering of standards is becoming increasingly entrenched. A growing number of young people are living in precarious settings or outside child and youth welfare institutions, while access to education and medical – particularly psychological – care is becoming even more difficult.

In practice, a widening gap can be observed between legal entitlements (the primacy of child and youth welfare services) and the actual living conditions of (unaccompanied) young refugees.

IGfH current projects

- **ElSe** – Parents' Self-Organisations: Residential Child and Youth Care – Not Without Us! (12/2025–12/2026) (<https://igfh.de/projekte/eltern-selbstorganisationen>)
- **ProBE** – Professionalisation During Career Entry in Residential Child and Youth Care (10/2025–09/2027) (<https://igfh.de/projekte/probe-professionalisierung-im-berufseinstieg-den-stationaeren-erziehungshilfen>)
- **Advisory Forum JUGEND STÄRKEN:** Bridges to Independence (01/2023–12/2027) (<https://igfh.de/projekte/beratungsforum-jugend-staerken-bruecken-eigenstaendigkeit>)
- **CLS** – Social Participation Across the Life Course of Young Adults and Care Leavers: A Longitudinal Study on (05/2021–12/2030) (www.cls-studie.de)



Full member since 1960s
Yoav Appelboim - President
Anat Zeira - Responsible for External Relations

| Membership Overview, Meetings and Governance

In 2025, FICE Israel recruited additional teams from five therapeutic youth villages operating under the supervision of the Ministry of Education.

| Key Achievements

In 2025, FICE Israel continued to take part in the development and operation of the **academic training programme for caregivers**.

It also participated in the admission of new students and the opening of an additional training track in the south of the country. Together with other partners, FICE Israel continued working with decision-makers on issues concerning caregivers' working conditions and salaries.



| Activities Overview

FICE Israel held **two national study days** in 2025. The first was a study day and appreciation event for the staff of the children's villages of the Organization for the Education of Israeli Children. The second was a study day for young social workers focusing on trauma, complex trauma and post-traumatic stress.

FICE Israel also continued its **F.I.C.E Café** activities. Two series of workshops were held, with four sessions in each series. Topics included addictions, home visits, supporting children with additional needs, foster care for young children, and relationships between adolescents and significantly older adults. Approximately 100 social workers participated in each workshop cycle.

In addition, FICE Israel continued its involvement in the development and operation of the academic training programme for caregivers, including the admission of new students and the opening of an additional training track in the south of the country.

FICE Israel also maintained a strong connection with Ukraine through its active involvement in the **FICE Special Task Force “Hand in Hand”**, supporting international cooperation around children, families and professionals affected by war.

| Success Stories and Impact

The F.I.C.E Café workshops continued to provide professional learning opportunities for social workers on issues directly related to their work with children, young people and families. Two workshop cycles were held during the year, with approximately 100 social workers participating in each cycle.

FICE Israel also contributed to expanding professional training opportunities for caregivers through its continued involvement in the academic training programme and the opening of an additional training track in the south of the country.



Full member since 2014

Simon Peter - President

Willis Okatch - CEO

| Membership Overview, Meetings and Governance

FICE Kenya had a total of 39 member organisations in 2025, welcoming two new members during the year. Its Annual General Meeting was held in November 2025, with 17 member organisations participating both in person and virtually.

The meeting provided an opportunity to review FICE Kenya's current status and activities, consider the Treasurer's Report, admission of new members, and elect new officials for the organisation.

| Key Achievements

FICE Kenya supported 215 **Community Health** Volunteers, expanded school health and feeding programs benefiting over 900 pupils, and conducted dental outreaches reaching 2,800 learners and teachers.

FICE Kenya enrolled 161 youth in **vocational training** and graduated 137 with **NITA-accredited skills**.

Over 540 households benefited from **climate-smart agriculture** initiatives and tree planting activities.

Launch of a one year extension of the **rain worker program** funded by The Rain Workers Organization (TRW) with 24 certified rain workers.

The national section also advanced child protection, gender equality, STEM mentorship, menstrual hygiene support, and partnerships with government, NGOs, and international stakeholders to improve the lives of vulnerable children and families.

| Activities Overview

Renewable energy capacity was enhanced through solar training, NITA examinations, and student exchange programs, while 161 youth enrolled in vocational courses including tailoring, ICT, beauty, solar installation, and embroidery. A total of 137 youth graduated from **vocational programs**, supported by NITA accreditation for in-house certification and expanded employment pathways through entrepreneurship and skills development initiatives.

Health interventions included supporting 215 Community Health Volunteers with raincoats to improve service delivery, refresher and advanced SRHR and family planning training for Rain Workers and the launching of the one year program extension, expanded school health programs that equipped teachers and staff to manage common health conditions. Additionally, 96 safe deliveries were made at Make Me Smile Angola health Centre, a facilitated run both by Make Me Smile and the Government where services are absolutely free.

School feeding programs benefited over 900 pupils, improving nutrition and attendance, while **dental outreach services** reached more than 2,800 pupils and teachers across Kisumu and Vihiga counties. **Menstrual hygiene products** were distributed to over 500 girls to promote dignity and health education.

Environmental sustainability efforts focused on permaculture training, indigenous farming, climate-resilient agriculture, and reforestation initiatives, supporting over 540 households through demonstration farms and climate-smart practices. Large-scale tree planting activities and participation in climate action forums further strengthened community environmental awareness.

FICE Kenya also launched a **community library** to promote literacy and safe learning spaces, facilitated STEM mentorship and digital skills training for hundreds of youth, and strengthened child protection through Safe Park initiatives, children's clubs, and sports activities.

Gender equality and justice programs included GBV sensitization campaigns, legal aid clinics, advocacy forums, and participation in key events such as International Women's Day, World AIDS Day, and the 16 Days of Activism.

Collaboration with government agencies, NGOs, private sector actors, and international partners enhanced technical capacity, learning exchange, and continuity of services for vulnerable children and families.

| Success Stories and Impact

Sixteen-year-old Grade 10 student living with her grandmother, went into labor late at night. She first sought help at a nearby mission health facility but was turned away due to lack of Social Health Authority (SHA) registration, as she did not have a national ID and her caregiver was also not registered. In severe pain, she proceeded to a private facility but was again denied care for the same reason. Shortly after leaving the second facility, she gave birth outside the gate without assistance. A passing motorbike rider noticed her distress and quickly transported her to Make Me Smile Angola Health Centre at 4:30 a.m., where she arrived still in the third stage of labor with the placenta not yet delivered.

The maternity team immediately provided emergency care, safely managed the delivery process, ensured the placenta was expelled, controlled bleeding, and stabilized both mother and newborn baby boy. Within the first hour, the nurses supported early breastfeeding to promote bonding, warmth, and nutrition for the newborn. Both mother and child recovered well and were discharged in stable condition.

This case underscores **the life-threatening barriers vulnerable mothers face in accessing maternal health services**, particularly registration requirements that delay urgent care. It also highlights the critical role of **Make Me Smile Health Centre** in providing timely, dignified, and inclusive maternity care, ensuring that no mother or newborn is denied life-saving services regardless of their social or economic status.

| Additional Information

A key challenge in 2025 was the abrupt stop-work order that led to the **termination of USAID funding**, on which most member organizations heavily depended. This unforeseen disruption significantly affected ongoing programs, staffing, and service delivery across FICE Kenya member organizations. In response, efforts have focused on diversifying funding sources, strengthening local resource mobilization, and expanding partnerships with government, private sector actors, and other development partners to sustain critical activities and reduce overreliance on a single donor.

FICE Luxemburg



ances Luxemburg
Full member since 1978
Geert Van Beusekom - President

| Membership Overview, Meetings and Governance

Ances has 441 members: including both organizations and individuals. In 2025, the organization welcomed four new members.

The General Assembly was held on May 5, 2025, with 12 participants. The administration part covered the review of 2024, the Treasurer's Report, presentation of the amended Statutes, approval of the annual Statutes and Annual Reports, discharge of the Board of Directors, and election of the Board.

The educational part focused on Internal and external meetings, public engagement, events, Social Lab Activities, conferences, continuing education, meetings and governance, and the edition of 45 Years of ances.

Key decisions were the arc edition 2025: 50 years of the Educator Profession.

| Key Achievements

Publication of arc 50 years of Educator Profession: The magazine highlights the historical development of educator training over the past 50 years, as well as the social changes and the evolution of educational and social institutions. It contains numerous practice-oriented insights, both from the perspective of three educator training schools and from daily professional experiences of educators. It also provides an insight into the employer's perspective.

Social Lab: "Recueil de l'opinion » Project: The aim of this project is to introduce a process of self-evaluation of the perceptions of children, young people and families in the form of a satisfaction survey conducted within the framework of each support measure.

"Autorité parentale" Project: In the context of the paradigm shift initiated by Draft Law 7994, the AEF-Social Lab was mandated to organize consultations with professionals in the field of child and youth welfare to identify concerns, needs and inspiring practices from the sector.

| Activities Overview

Internal and external meetings: 16

Invitation from the Ministry of Family Affairs within the framework of the National Action Plan for Prevention and the Fight against poverty. The topic presented was **“Combating poverty with a particular focus on child poverty”**.

Invitation from the LSAP (Luxemburger Sozialistische Arbeiterpartei) Parliamentary Group on the topics of **Poverty Reduction, Educational Equity and Equal Opportunities**. The discussion focused on the shortage of qualified professionals and the lack of opportunities in the field of social work.

Social Lab: see above (Key achievements) and publication of arc: 50 years of Educator Profession.

Social Lab: COMAC (Comité d’accompagnement): 4 meetings. COPIL (Comité de pilotage): 6 meetings. “ParticipAction”: The AEF Social Lab is a member of the ParticipAction platform, an Initiative of the Service des droits de l’enfant of MENJE, represented by Magali De Rocco. Magali participated as well in the 18th German Child and Youth Welfare Congress in Leipzig (Germany).

Social Routes: 2 social routes were organized by OKAJU. One for researchers from the University of Lausanne and one for the ENOC network. (ENOC is a network which includes Children’s Commissioners and Children’s Ombudspersons)
FICE International: online participation in the General Assembly on 15.09.2025
ances is a member of the UNESCO Committee, represented by the President and in his absence, by Magali de Rocco. 1 meeting attended at the Ministry of Culture.

Ances is a member of the organizations: FICE, DGSA (German Association for Social Work), FEL (Fleegeltern Lëtzebuerg) and AIFRIS (Association Internationale pour la Formation, la Recherche et l’intervention Sociale)

Website, social media and administrative work: all editions of the arc professional magazine are available on ances website, where they can be read and downloaded.

The newsletter is published more regularly, to showcase the activities of ances in a timely manner and to provide subscribers and members with a better service.

| Success Stories and Impact

In 2025, ances strengthened its role as a key voice for social work and child welfare in Luxembourg. Through its involvement in the **AEF Social Lab**, the association contributed to projects promoting the participation of children, young people and families, while also bringing the perspectives of professionals into national policy discussions.

The organization actively contributed to consultations on child poverty, educational equity and workforce challenges in the social sector, helping to inform policy development and future action plans. At the same time, it fostered professional exchange through national and international networks and highlighted the profession through the publication of the arc magazine “50 Years of Educator Profession”

Impact: ances successfully connected practice, research and policy, ensuring that the experiences of professionals, children and families were reflected in ongoing developments within **Luxembourg’s social sector**.

| Additional Information

A key challenge in 2025 was ensuring that the perspectives of social work professionals were represented in discussions on child poverty, educational equity and workforce shortages. Through active participation in consultations and policy dialogues, **ances successfully brought practitioners’ voices into national debates**.

Another highlight was the publication of arc, celebrating the profession’s development and raising awareness of its societal importance.

Despite limited resources, ances continued to strengthen cooperation between practitioners, researchers, institutions and policymakers, reinforcing its role as a trusted professional voice in Luxembourg’s social sector.

FICE Netherlands



Full member since 1978
Elianne Zijlstra - Chair

| Membership Overview, Meetings and Governance

The Board of FICE Netherlands reflects a balanced mix of professional practice, academic expertise, and lived experience. It consists of the following members: Marjolein Groen, Stephanie Koenderink, Willem Loupatty, Peter van der Pol, Ymke Riemersma, Bas Rodijk, Martine Tobe, and Elianne Zijlstra.

The organisation currently has about 20 members and organises activities both for members and for professionals who are not members. An Annual General Meeting is held each year for the membership. The Board is currently exploring a new organisational model.

Over the past year, FICE Netherlands have strengthened its contribution to the field by expanding their programme of professional development activities, including the organisation of masterclasses.

| Key Achievements

During 2025, FICE Netherlands organised a series of quarterly **International Masterclasses**. These unique online events bring together leading experts from around the world to share knowledge and inspire professionals working in the field of child and youth care.

Each 90-minute masterclass combines a 45-minute keynote presentation with interactive breakout sessions and a plenary reflection, creating opportunities for participants to exchange experiences, discuss practical applications, and learn from one another. While the masterclasses are primarily aimed at professionals in the Netherlands, they are also open to members of FICE International.

One of the most rewarding aspects of this initiative is its truly international character. Participants from across the globe join these sessions, creating a rich and diverse learning environment that reflects the international network and values of FICE. The national section is proud to have developed and delivered this initiative and is encouraged by the growing participation and positive engagement it has generated.

FICE Netherlands

| Activities Overview

International Masterclasses (see above): planning, coordination, and delivery of the quarterly masterclasses. The primary outcome of this initiative is the exchange and dissemination of knowledge that contributes to improving the quality of life of children and young people living outside their parental homes.

Board meetings: regular strategic meetings focused on strengthening the direction, priorities, and impact of FICE Netherlands and further developing its programme of activities.

International collaboration: active participation in meetings of FICE International and FICE Europe, contributing to international cooperation, knowledge exchange, and the continued development of the FICE network.



**FICE Nederland**

FICE MASTERCLASS
INSPIRE, LEARN & CREATE

FICE promotes international **cooperation** and knowledge exchange within **youth care**. FICE specifically focuses on **improving** care for children and young people in **vulnerable situations, worldwide**. FICE does this by organizing webinars, conferences and workshops, where experts and professionals from different countries come together to **share knowledge and experiences** and thus jointly find **solutions** to challenges in youth care.

FICE Netherlands invites you to a series of unique, international **Online Masterclasses**. In collaboration with top speakers from around the globe, we host interactive masterclasses lasting 1.5 hours. Be inspired by a 30-minute presentation, engage in small breakout rooms and share your insights during a group reflection.

Each session offers the perfect balance of **inspiration, learning** and **collaborative creation**. Whether you're seeking fresh ideas or looking to work on practical solutions, these masterclasses provide an excellent opportunity for personal growth. Participation is **free**, but spots are limited (to 50 attendees per masterclass—so don't wait too long to register. Are you working at a FICE member organization? Then you can participate in the FICE Masterclass for **free**.

Sign up using the **QR code** and receive all insights, additional literature and a summary of the session afterwards. This is your chance to grow, learn and create alongside professionals from around the world!



September 4th, 2025 | 11:00 (GMT +2)
Patrick Reason | Brazil
Young mothers in protective shelters



Subscribe

Patrick Reason takes us on a compelling journey into the lives of young mothers in protected shelter facilities in Brazil. A unique perspective on vulnerability, care, and hope.

www.fice.nl

**FICE Nederland**

FICE MASTERCLASS
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November 25th, 2025 | 14:00 (GMT +1)
Ymke Riemersma
(Assistant Professor University of Groningen) | The Netherlands
Creating a Home-like Environment in Youth Care



Subscribe

How can professionals make residential youth care feel more like home? Ymke Riemersma (Assistant Professor University of Groningen) will take us inside the daily reality of residential youth care — exploring how warmth, stability, and connection can grow even within structured settings. Join this interactive session to exchange ideas, share experiences, and co-create new ways to strengthen the sense of belonging for young people in care.

www.fice.nl

FICE Romania



Full member since 1990
Toma Mares- President

| Membership Overview, Meetings and Governance

FICE Romania has 18 county branches and has over 7000 members and supporters, individuals (educators, teachers, psychologists, sociologists, doctors, lawyers, journalists, etc.) and institutions (colleges and universities support / social pedagogy, institutions and specialized services to public and private social protection, NGO s).

Every year the national section organizes the General Assembly, attended by members of the national board, branch presidents, other guests, generally between 50-100 members.

In 2025, 65 members participated in the General Assembly. At the General Assembly, the activity reports for the previous year, the auditors' report, the financial-accounting report are presented and the activity program for the current year is approved.

| Key Achievements

In 2025, FICE Romania reaffirmed its role as a cornerstone in child rights protection, implementing strategies that combined humanitarian assistance with non-formal education and prevention. Activities focused on three strategic directions, generating a profound impact within vulnerable communities.

1. Social Solidarity - The aid campaigns was a direct response to the economic challenges of 2025. Beyond the distribution of material goods and financial support for families at risk of exclusion, its major impact lay in community cohesion. By mobilizing volunteers and private partners, FICE Romania provided a sense of belonging and security for hundreds of children, reducing the risk of marginalization and offering a model of civic responsibility.

| Key Achievements

2. Prevention and Safety - The 21st edition of the "19 Days of Activism for the Prevention of Abuse against Children and Youth" reached a historical milestone in participation. The educational impact was twofold: it increased awareness among students regarding modern forms of abuse and provided teachers with practical intervention tools. The campaign transformed schools into safer spaces, promoting "Zero tolerance" for violence.

3. Intellectual Development - The "Joy of Reading" National Children's Book Festival proved that reading remains an essential vehicle for inclusion. In a digital age, the festival successfully reconnected thousands of students with the world of books through creative activities and competitions. The long-term impact is reflected in improved literacy skills and the stimulation of critical thinking—essential elements for the future social and professional integration of young people.

4. Strategic Partnerships with Local Authorities - A testament to FICE Romania's relevance and expertise in 2025 was the consistent demand for support from local public authorities. Municipalities across numerous counties sought out the national section to develop and implement integrated projects aimed at reducing school dropout rates and absenteeism. These partnerships allowed for solutions to be tailored to the realities of each community, turning public policies into concrete actions with a direct impact on keeping children within the education system.

A key milestone this year was the development of a strategic partnership with the Association of Communes of Romania (ACoR). This collaboration expanded intervention capacity in rural areas, where the risk of educational exclusion is highest. They successfully built a support network that connects local authorities with child protection specialists, demonstrating that only through a united and coordinated effort every child can have the chance for an uninterrupted educational journey, regardless of their geographical or social context.

5. International Collaboration and Editorial Activity - Throughout 2025, FICE Romania maintained a consistent and active presence within the dialogue platforms coordinated by FICE International. In terms of editorial activity, 2025 marked the continuity of the "Child Social Protection" Magazine, a flagship publication now reaching its 86th issue, the magazine remains an essential tool for professionals in education and social protection, offering expert analysis and methodological resources.

| Activities Overview

FICE Romania continued defending the rights of children, especially those in difficulty, supporting the continuous training of professionals in education and social protection, involvement in the analysis at the societal level, of specialists and the elaboration at the state level of specific regulations, developing international relations in the field.

The **"Youth Unity Campaign"** through which communities, branches, members and supporters tried to contribute through collections and donations to support some children and families in order to prevent school dropout and the recovery of children in difficulty. The current edition of the Campaign – an expression, in fact, of a continuity – was addressed, through the communities and branches of FICE Romania, primarily to students. The call is to direct a thought, a gesture from the heart, a gift, a support according to one's own possibility towards other children.

"The Joy of Reading" Festival, reached its 21st edition. 2100 students from 45 schools/high schools/communities from 25 counties nationwide and the Municipality of Bucharest participated indirectly. At the level of each registered institution, exhibitions were organized with drawings, paintings, magazines and books made by children, as well as with images, audio-video sequences of the events held within the National Festival. 41 prizes were awarded, by age/class categories: literary creations, plastic creations, essays, literary productions.

"19 Days for Prevention of Violence & Abuse against Children" - the 13th edition, launched globally by the Women's World Summit Foundation (WWSF) and promoted nationally by FICE Romania, enjoyed the support of the county school inspectorates, which stimulated teachers from all over the country. The project runs from October to April of each school year, preferably until 2030, the year declared worldwide for Zero tolerance against abuse and violence of children.

During the period 1-19 November 2025, the following activities were carried out:

- 482 workshops, round tables, debates, participation in television broadcasts;
- Over 4000 direct activities carried out with and by children from participating kindergartens and schools;
- Over 700 activities carried out with the children's parents or grandparents and relatives (in situations where the parents are working abroad);
- Over 1500 meetings with specialists (police officers, doctors, psychologists, priests);
- Over 132 Circles of Compassion.

| Activities Overview

On October 9, 2025, at the Palace of the Romanian Parliament, took place the national debate **"Children's rights - their right to dignity, family and inclusion at all levels of social life, so that every child has the chance for a better life"**, attended by dignitaries, specialists in education and child protection, psychologists, educators, police officers, doctors, children and young people.

A landmark moment in this year's scientific and educational agenda was the conference titled **"Well-being – a Potential Solution Against Violence"**. The event brought together specialists, educators, and parents, highlighting a crucial paradigm: aggression and violence against children are not isolated incidents but must remain a constant and priority concern on the public agenda. FICE Romania's central message during this event was that "well-being" is not a pedagogical luxury, but a fundamental protective barrier. Promoting emotional balance within educational institutions represents the most effective method of long-term prevention, transforming schools from spaces of rigid performance into safe environments where psychological safety becomes the foundation of human development.

| Success Stories and Impact

FICE Romania Collective Story: Our success as a standard of intervention

For FICE Romania, the year 2025 was not about a single remarkable case, but about the refusal to accept failure in any of their interventions. Its working philosophy is based on the premise that every child is an absolute priority, and every opened case represents a promise to restore dignity and hope.

The positive impact on the lives of young people did not manifest through singular events, but through a continuous process of **"social repair"**. In every community where the national section intervened, success meant transforming vulnerability into stability. When it speaks about improving the quality of care, it refers to the hundreds of hours of counseling and support through which this national section managed to turn critical risk situations into safe environments for development.

| Success Stories and Impact

Every young person who participated in FICE Romania's campaigns and learned to recognize their self-worth or identify abuse represents a complete victory. Success is not an exception, but the result of the rigorous application of care and protection standards. The national section viewed every case as an opportunity to correct a social injustice, ensuring that no educational or emotional barrier remained unaddressed.

This systemic approach has raised the quality of care to a new level: one where assistance is not merely reactive, but preventive and transformative. Therefore, the "success story" of 2025 is, in fact, the sum of all its interventions, where the collective effort of FICE specialists succeeded in rewriting destinies that, without this involvement, would have remained trapped in the cycle of marginalization.

| Additional Information

Two of the greatest challenges emerged directly from the sphere of educational policies: the increase in teaching workloads and the restructuring of the school scholarship system. While these measures were governmentally justified by the need for immediate economic efficiency, their social impact was immediate and felt directly by the children. The **increase in teaching workloads** diminished the time teachers could dedicate to individual interaction with students, affecting the quality of the mentor-disciple relationship. The **reduction in scholarship numbers** created a sense of inequity and placed additional pressure on families already at the subsistence level, risking an increase in school dropout rates.

FICE Romania addressed these challenges by intensifying **mediation and alternative support**. It compensated for the lack of financial resources through its "social solidarity" campaign, ensuring that children's basic needs were met.

In the face of teacher burnout and overload, it provided support **workshops and simplified tools** designed to maintain the quality of care and education. the national section assumed the role of a "buffer" between societal tensions and the fragile world of the child, promoting **constant dialogue** as the only method to navigate a disrupted society. It transformed economic challenges into an opportunity to recalibrate priorities, emphasizing human resources and the power of the community to support itself when centralized systems show cracks.



FICE SERBIA - Association of Professionals for Children and Family Support
Full member since 2003
Zeljka Burgund - President

| Membership Overview, Meetings and Governance

FICE Serbia has 28 members, including organizations and institutions in the field of child and youth care in Serbia. These entities employ over 1,000 professionals who are directly or indirectly involved in the care of children and young people. It also has several individual members – retired professionals – and several honorary members. The latest member joined the organization in 2024.

Since its founding in 2003, it has held an annual General Assembly and at least one thematic conference or seminar every year. In accordance with its Statute, the Assembly is attended by 30 to 40 participants representing member organizations. Its conferences are even larger, as partner organizations are also invited. The main theme of its gatherings is how to advance CYC profession, identify key challenges in the field, and provide solutions and proposals to enhance professional competencies and the quality of life for the children in its care.

| Key Achievements

During 2025, Serbia experienced a complex political situation, which led this national section to limit activities. The section is proud that it is continuing with standard activities despite of limiting factors. In 2025, it managed to retain all its members, which can be challenging during times of crisis.

FICE Serbia key achievement was holding the FICE Serbia Annual Assembly, which this year included the election of new leadership. The Roundtable discussion demonstrated the maturity of the members; representatives from the three main sectors—residential care, foster care, and community-based services—clearly outlined the needs of its target groups, as well as the needs of the professionals working with them. FICE Serbia has submitted the report on the outcomes of this roundtable to the relevant ministries. It also fulfilled a portion of its plan regarding the acquisition of best practice knowledge. Its partner organization from the Netherlands, Kinderperspectief, enabled FICE Serbia to attend training for developing visual communication skills in work with children and youth. In 2026 it plans to implement that model of practice in Serbia.

| Activities Overview

In May 2025, FICE Serbia held the Association's Assembly and a thematic Round Table titled **“The Needs of Children and Youth in the Social Welfare System at the Current Moment”**.

The Assembly was elective, and focused on motivating younger professionals to get involved in the organization's management, as a main board members. It was a big challenge in that moment, because of the fact that less and less young professionals stay in the field of child and youth care. The President of the Association also announced her retirement by the end of her term and invited interested parties to consider candidates for the next President of FICE Serbia, whether through recommendations or personal engagement. Members agreed about the importance of finding an appropriate candidate for new President of Association.

The Round Table was highly effective; by listing the needs of children and youth within the system, FICE Serbia gained insight into the actual needs and limitations of the system itself.

This system is burdened by the politicization of social welfare institution management, an congested intake process for all forms of urgent or long-term care, and limited finances, which in turn restrict opportunities for foster care campaigns and specialized professional training for professionals, or advocating the mission and goals of FICE Serbia in media.

Additionally, FICE Serbia conducted **training on new practices** in the Netherlands in October 2025. It is innovative practice and opportunity for youth workers to be trained for familiar, but different way of communication with its target group.

Behind of these crucial activities FICE Serbia had a lot of administrative work related to fulfilling different forms for Agency for Business Registers, which verifies the status of FICE Serbia as a legal entity. At the end of 2025, **a three-year project led by FICE Serbia with the support of UNICEF was completed**. The project focused on developing a chat counseling service for youth as a significant resource for supporting youth mental health in Serbia. Unfortunately, the state has not yet taken over the further funding of this service, but it has promised to do so. FICE Serbia also participated at the many of events related to Children and Youth welfare. Especially significant one is **Children and Climate Changes**, leaded by its national partner NGO MODS. FICE Serbia also participated at FICE Europe and FICE International online activities.

| Success Stories and Impact

There are several examples of young adults who share their successes, as well as difficult moments in certain situations, with the members of FICE Serbia, who were once their caregivers, facility directors, or support systems for their future steps in life...

A 32-year-old former beneficiary, who is fully independent, employed, and relatively well-integrated into the community, reached out to FICE Serbia with the news that his brother had passed away. The brother had been in long-term residential care for people with severe disabilities. He shared his concern that he had never been involved in funeral arrangements before and had very little time to reach the distant city where the funeral was planned. FICE Serbia members got into the car with him and drove him to the funeral. With the support of local colleagues, everything was handled on time. They also delivered a brief eulogy in memory of his brother, who had lived a life full of challenges. During the drive there and back, they talked extensively about the challenge of facing loss. They said their goodbyes upon return, confident in his ability to navigate the grieving process.

A former beneficiary reached out to FICE Serbia publicly through a media outlet and thanked it for the support he received during a part of his upbringing while he was in a residential home for children and youth.

FICE Serbia learned many lessons from just these two examples. Its current and former beneficiaries need its members in moments of new challenges – moments that seem to take them back to the beginning, when the people caring for them were earning their trust and providing support. It is crucial that they can reach the national section at such times. **The relationship FICE Serbia has established with them is truly a lifelong bond.** The children and young people its members work with never forget the support they received from them, which helps them develop empathy and kindness themselves.

| Additional Information

2025 brought many challenges. Looking ahead, FICE Serbia hopes that the new year will bring more positive developments both in the professional lives of those working in the field and in the lives of the children, young people and families they support.

FICE South Africa



Full member
Fiona Balgobind - President

| Membership Overview, Meetings and Governance

FICE South Africa is a membership-owned professional organisation with individual members, non-profit and organisational members. The organisation has a national footprint through nine provincial membership structures, corresponding to South Africa's nine provinces. Each province has a Provincial Executive Committee (PEC), elected by the provincial membership. At national level, the National Executive Committee (NEC) provides governance and leadership. The NEC is constituted through the provincial leadership structures and is accountable to the membership. Membership provides CYCWs with opportunities to participate in meetings, vote in organisational structures, assume leadership responsibilities, participate in professional development activities and access to professional support and knowledge-sharing platforms. The membership structure is particularly important because FICE South Africa is a professional association owned by its members and responsible for representing the interests and professional development needs of Child and Youth Care Workers. In 2025, provincial membership structures remained important channels for professional engagement, knowledge sharing, leadership and participation. They also supported the implementation of Youth Forums and other activities.

FICE South Africa's governance during 2025 continued to operate through its established membership-based structures. Meetings and organisational engagement during the year were conducted through a combination of provincial membership structures, PEC engagements, national executive structures and virtual engagements. The use of virtual platforms enabled FICE South Africa to maintain communication and professional engagement across geographically dispersed provinces.

FICE South Africa's broader professional engagement was also supported through webinars and online learning activities. During the year, webinars were conducted with practitioners and academics from South Africa and internationally, generally attracting approximately 100 participants. Topics included self-development, supervision, excellence in Child and Youth Care practice, professional registration and professional development.

Governance is therefore linked to both organisational accountability and professional participation.

FICE South Africa

| Areas of Strategic Focus

The principal areas of strategic focus in 2025 were:

Professionalisation of Child and Youth Care Work. FICE South Africa continued to strengthen Child and Youth Care Work as a recognised social service profession through education and training, professional development, registration advocacy, policy engagement and the development of professional standards.

Skills development and training. FICE South Africa continued implementation of the NQF Level 5 Occupational Certificate in Child and Youth Care Work.

Development and replication of models of care. FICE South Africa continued to demonstrate the value of professional Child and Youth Care through school-based, community and health-related models. The organisation seeks to develop models that are replicable, scalable and adaptable to different contexts.

Child protection and wellbeing. FICE South Africa continued to support children affected by abuse, neglect, family violence, substance use, poverty and other vulnerabilities, while strengthening referral, case management and psychosocial support.

Youth participation and development. Youth Forums provided young people with opportunities to participate in decision-making, develop leadership and advocacy skills, and undertake community action.

Child participation and children's voices. Children's Cognitive Story Mapping was used as an innovative participatory methodology through which children could communicate their experiences, identify safe and unsafe spaces and contribute to the development of responses.

FICE South Africa

| Areas of Strategic Focus

Knowledge development and dissemination. FICE South Africa continued to generate and share Child and Youth Care knowledge through research, webinars, publications, conferences, social media and engagement with academic institutions.

Advocacy and policy engagement. FICE South Africa continued to advocate for children's rights and for the appropriate recognition, remuneration and positioning of CYCWs within the social service workforce.

Membership development and professional support. FICE South Africa maintained its national membership infrastructure and continued to provide opportunities for members to participate in professional learning, governance, leadership and advocacy.

International liaison. Through FICE South Africa, the organisation continued to contribute to international Child and Youth Care dialogue and to connect South African practice and knowledge with international developments.

The poster is for a conference titled "CELEBRATING Global Belonging IN CHILD AND YOUTH CARE" which is part of the "INTERNATIONAL CHILD AND YOUTH CARE WEEK | 5 - 11 May 2025". It specifically details "DAY 1: TUESDAY 6 MAY 2025 | 11H30 - 13H30". The agenda includes: "Welcome & Introductions" by Mr Elwin Gallant (NACCW Chairperson); "Opening Address: Global Belonging in CYC" by Dr Kelly Shaw (School of Health and Human Services, Nova Scotia, Canada); "Tracking the development of the CYCW Profession in SA - A 50 Year Anniversary to Celebrate" by Mr Donald Nghonyama (NACCW); "Discussion"; "Closing Address" by Prof Mbedzi (President, SACSSP) and Mr Peter Netshipale (Director General, NDSO); and "Vote of Thanks & Closure" by Mr Elwin Gallant (NACCW Chairperson). The poster also features portraits of the presenters: Dr Kelly Shaw, Mr Donald Nghonyama, Prof Mbedzi, and Mr Peter Netshipale. At the bottom, it says "Celebrating 50 Years of Child & Youth Care Work in South Africa" and includes the NACCW logo and website.



FICE South Africa

| Key Achievements

Strengthening the Child and Youth Care Profession - One of FICE South Africa's most significant achievements during 2025 was its continued contribution to the professionalisation of Child and Youth Care Work in South Africa. The organisation continued to strengthen education, training, professional recognition, registration and professional development for CYCWs.

A key focus was the **NQF Level 5 Occupational Certificate in Child and Youth Care Work**. FICE South Africa supported learners through structured training and Gap Training, enabling Auxiliary CYCWs to progress from NQF Level 4 to Level 5. The organisation worked with HWSETA and QCTO on assessment, certification and quality assurance.

An important challenge identified during the year was the high failure rate in the External Integrated Summative Assessment (EISA). FICE South Africa raised this concern with the relevant stakeholders and engaged HWSETA and QCTO to better understand the causes and identify solutions.

FICE South Africa also continued engagement with SACSSP regarding registration and professional recognition and advocated for improved higher education pathways, including engagement with UNISA.

Reaching More Than 71,000 Children and Young People - FICE South Africa implemented 10 programmes across four provinces, reaching more than 71,000 children and young people through 142 trained CYCWs.

The largest component was the **Isibindi Ezikoleni school-based model**, implemented in 77 schools across Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, Northern Cape and Western Cape.

More than 3,000 high-risk learners were enrolled. Almost 190 survivors of abuse and neglect received support, approximately 600 referrals were made, and 74 learners were supported to return to school. More than 260 pregnant learners received support.

The most significant educational outcome was the 92.6% matric pass rate among beneficiaries in 2025.

FICE South Africa

| Key Achievements

Strengthening HIV Care and Treatment - The May'Khethele OVC programme, implemented with CINDI in eThekweni, reached more than 15,000 children and more than 1,300 children and young people living with HIV.

When May'Khethele concluded in October 2025, the work continued through the ACHIEVE programme, which reached 2,378 beneficiaries in its first quarter.

Giving Young People a Voice - During the year, 85 Youth Forums were held, involving 1,646 young people.

Youth addressed GBV, mental health, climate change, disability, cybersecurity, child protection and leadership.

Other initiatives demonstrated youth-led actions through food gardens, volunteering and recycling projects.

Strengthening Child Participation - Children's Cognitive Story Mapping remained a key innovation, enabling children to express experiences and identify risks and solutions.

The work received international recognition through the Barbara Petchenik Children's World Map Competition and presentation at the International Cartographic Conference in Vancouver.

Knowledge and International Engagement - FICE South Africa contributed to knowledge development through 46 research studies, webinars, publications and international collaboration.

| Additional Information

FICE South Africa continued to operate in a challenging funding environment while maintaining strong partnerships with national and international stakeholders.

Key partners included Adoptionscentrum Sweden, CINDI, DG Murray Trust, HWSETA, IDC, Lead HR Consulting, Lombardi Family Charitable Trust, Infinity Power South Africa, Matthew Goniwe School of Leadership and Governance, Mfundo Development Foundation, Molteno Brothers Trust, Northern Cape Department of Social Development and The Samuel Family Foundation.



Full member since 2010
Mónica Concepción - President

| Membership Overview, Meetings and Governance

FICE Spain currently has 8 members, all of them independent organisations working in the field of child protection, alternative care, social inclusion and support for vulnerable children, young people and families.

During 2025, FICE Spain did not welcome any new members. However, the organisation focused on consolidating the commitment and active participation of its existing members, particularly in a year of transition after the closure of a major project.

Three General Assemblies were held during 2025, with the participation of all member organisations. These meetings were essential to ensure internal coordination, democratic governance and strategic decision-making.

The main topics discussed included the closure of the AFE Networks project, the organisation and future projection of FICE Spain after the completion of this project, and the approval and planning of new initiatives, including the CASA and EN TU CASA projects, as well as a project funded through the Personal Income Tax call. The Assemblies also addressed the approval of annual accounts and budgets, the organisation's financial sustainability, future work priorities and the strengthening of FICE Spain's role within the national and international child protection sector.

| Key Achievements

In 2025, one of FICE Spain's most significant achievements was securing funding for the **CASA and EN TU CASA projects**, two initiatives focused on strengthening family-based care, preventing unnecessary institutionalisation and supporting vulnerable children and families. Another key milestone was accessing, for the first time, a project funded through the Personal Income Tax call, after having worked towards this goal since 2022.

These achievements represent an important step in consolidating FICE Spain's **operational capacity**, increasing its impact and creating a stronger basis for future work in child protection and alternative care.

| Activities Overview

In 2025, FICE Spain focused mainly on the closure and consolidation of the **AFE Networks project**, one of the most relevant initiatives promoted by the organisation in the field of **specialised foster care**. The end of this project was not understood only as an administrative closure, but as an opportunity to organise, systematise and project the knowledge generated during its implementation.

During the year, the organisation worked on reviewing the lessons learned, identifying transferable practices and strengthening the visibility of the results achieved. The experience of AFE Networks has helped FICE Spain to reinforce its technical position in the field of alternative care, family-based responses and support for children with complex needs.

At the same time, FICE Spain implemented the project “**Empowerment and Well-being: Sexual and Emotional Health for Girls and Adolescents in the Child Protection System**”, developed together with Fundación Sorapán de Rieros, Inserta Andalucía, Te Acompañamos and Fundación Resilis. The project focused on strengthening professionals’ capacity to provide sexual and emotional education to girls and adolescents in the protection system, promoting healthy relationships, positive self-esteem and the prevention of gender-based and sexual violence. It also produced three practical guides for professionals on sexual health, emotional education and affective relationships.

Although 2025 was a year with limited direct activity and resources, the commitment of the members of FICE Spain made it possible to maintain the organisation’s work, participate in international exchange spaces and continue preparing future lines of action. This internal contribution was essential to keep the organisation active and strategically oriented.

A major part of the year was also devoted to preparing the organisation for a stronger 2026. In this regard, FICE Spain worked on the design and planning of new initiatives, especially the projects funded through the Personal Income Tax call and the CASA and EN TU CASA projects. These projects will allow the organisation to move from a year of transition and consolidation to a new stage of implementation, growth and increased social impact.

| Success Stories and Impact

The **AFE Networks project** had a significant impact on children and adolescents who had experienced abandonment, abuse or long periods in residential care. One relevant case was that of a teenage girl who had moved through different residential centres for years and presented serious emotional and behavioural difficulties. Her distrust of adults made coexistence difficult, and she had lost school and social stability.

Through specialised foster care, she was placed with a **family trained in trauma-informed care and child protection**, with support from the programme. Gradually, she began to feel safe, recovered routines and started to express emotions previously hidden through aggressive behaviour. After several months, she returned to regular school, improved her relationships with peers and began to build stable emotional bonds.

The project also strengthened foster families. Through training and continuous monitoring, families were better prepared to care for children with complex needs. This support helped prevent placement breakdowns and created safer and more restorative family environments.

Beyond individual cases, **AFE Networks contributed to improving the quality of the child protection system in several Spanish autonomous communities**. It promoted a more humane, personalised and family-based model of care, showing that, with the right support, children with traumatic experiences can grow up in families, develop secure relationships and recover opportunities for the future.



[Visit the AFE Networks project website](#)

FICE Switzerland



Full member since 1948

Patrick Seigerschmidt - President

| Membership Overview, Meetings and Governance

FICE Switzerland counted 60 organizational members and 33 individual members in 2025. Members include residential child and youth care institutions, foster care organizations, professionals, researchers, educators and individuals with care experience.

The General Assembly was held on 9 May 2025. Members approved the 2024 Annual Report, reviewed the 2024 financial statements and adopted the 2025 work programme. Main discussion topics included child and youth care quality, participation of young people, international cooperation, Creating Futures, and board development.

FICE Switzerland continued its active participation in FICE International governance through the General Assembly, Federal Council and strategic working groups. Anna Schmid continued to serve as President of FICE International in addition to her role as board member of FICE Switzerland.

| Key Achievements

Key achievements included the successful delivery of the **10th international seminar “Child and Youth Care Services Around the World”** in cooperation with ZHAW, ongoing leadership contributions to FICE International, active involvement in developing the “FICE International Statement on Promoting Appropriate and Quality Alternative Care for Children and Youth”, and further advancement of the **Creating Futures initiative**.



[Visit Creating Futures website](#)

FICE Switzerland also strengthened international cooperation concerning children affected by displacement, promoted professional exchange across Europe, and expanded participation-focused approaches that empower young people as partners in service and quality development.

FICE Switzerland

| Activities Overview

FICE Switzerland continued its mission of promoting quality in alternative care for children and young people, supporting childrens rights and strengthening services for children in vulnerable situations, including those with refugee experience.

A major activity was the international seminar “Child and Youth Care Services Around the World”, organised with ZHAW. Seventeen social work students explored the theme **“How to be/become a very good child and youth care professional”** through international exchange with experts from Jordan, Canada, South Africa, the Netherlands and Sri Lanka.

FICE Switzerland actively contributed to FICE International through the Federal Council, strategic working groups and development of the new international statement on quality alternative care. The organization continued supporting **international cooperation concerning Ukrainian children and planning future initiatives with Ukrainian partners.**

A significant focus remained on scaling the Creating Futures initiative, which promotes participation, empowerment and quality development in residential care.

FICE Switzerland also maintained stewardship of the **Quality4Children Standards** and contributed to European and international partnerships.



FICE Switzerland

| Success Stories and Impact

One particularly encouraging example came from the Creating Futures workshop **“Participation Im-Pulse”**. Young people, care staff and managers jointly reflected on participation and collaboration in everyday residential care. Among many creative ideas, several young people proposed a practical digital solution for communication challenges caused by differing school, apprenticeship and leisure schedules, and explained it directly to senior management.

The experience showed that young people are experts through experience whose ideas contribute to better services and stronger communities. Feedback confirmed increased motivation, practical improvements and stronger collaboration between young people and professionals.

| Additional Information

A major challenge in 2025 was **securing sustainable funding for the long-term scaling of the Creating Futures** initiative. Following the withdrawal of an expected major funding opportunity, FICE Switzerland adapted its strategy, prioritizing directly accessible services for care institutions while developing new partnerships and funding approaches.





National Association of Child and Youth Care Professionals - FICE USA Council
Full member since 2006

Jerriann Chandler-Ochoa – Co-Chair

Janet Wakefield – Co-Chair

| **Membership Overview, Meetings and Governance**

FICE USA has approximately 10 members. NACYCP (National Association for Child & Youth Care Professionals) merged with FICE USA in 2012, and in 2025 FICE USA joined the Triple A Regional Network.

FICE USA Members are:

- Charles J. Hooker – Past President, retired
- Dennis W. Felty – Past President, retired
- Marita Van Aswegen – Resigned
- Rachel Murphy
- Michael Griffith
- Andrew Schneider Munoz – Past President, NACYCP
- Ruth Fiegfriend - Resigned
- Jerriann Chandler-Ochoa – Co-Chair, FICE USA Council
- Janet Wakefield – Co-Chair, FICE USA Council
- Jody Rhodes – NACYCP President
- Frank Eckles – CYCCB Executive Director, retired

FICE USA is supported by four Sponsoring Partners:

- Keystone Human Services
- Pennsylvania Association of Resources for Intellectual Disabilities and Autism
- ANCOR – American Network of Community Options and Resources
- InVision Human Services

| Key Achievements

FICE USA's achievements build on a long history of international engagement. Its Charter was approved at the **FICE World Congress in Sarajevo** on 7 September 2006, establishing FICE USA as part of the international network. Over the years, FICE USA has worked with its Sponsoring Partners to support **FICE South Africa and NACCW**, including the Isibindi model supporting children and young people, while also maintaining participation in FICE International meetings and collaboration with like-minded organisations.

A further organisational milestone came when FICE USA became a **Council of the National Association of Child and Youth Care Professionals (NACYCP)**. In 2025, this international engagement continued with FICE USA joining the developing **Triple A Region**, opening a new space for regional cooperation and exchange.

| Activities Overview

FICE USA is currently in a rebuilding phase following the retirement of several long-standing leaders.

During 2025, the Council continued its international engagement and joined the developing Triple A Regional Network (Americas, Australia and Asia), working alongside Australia, FICE Japan, FICE Brazil and FICE Canada to strengthen cooperation across these regions.

FICE USA also continued its broader commitment to connecting the mission of FICE International with like-minded organisations and supporting **international collaboration in child and youth care**. Its ongoing activities include support for NACCW (National Association of Child Care Workers) in South Africa through FICE South Africa, as well as participation in FICE International meetings and initiatives.

FICE West Africa



International Social Service – West Africa (ISS-WA) - FICE West Africa
Full member
PDjibril Fall - Director

| Membership Overview, Meetings and Governance

ISS-WA (FICE West Africa) continued strengthening collaboration with its national members and partners across West Africa. Throughout 2025, governance meetings were held to review strategic priorities, child protection interventions, regional cooperation and sustainability.

Discussions focused on cross-border child protection, localization, capacity building, resource mobilization and partnerships with governments, ECOWAS, GRPE, IOM and civil society.

| Key Achievements

FICE West Africa strengthened **cross-border child protection** through the WAN network, with particular attention to **children on the move**.

Its work supported family tracing, reunification and sustainable reintegration, while also expanding cooperation with regional institutions.

At the same time, the network invested in strengthening the capacities of child protection practitioners and contributed to regional policy dialogue on children in migration across West Africa.

FICE West Africa

| Activities Overview

Throughout 2025 ISS-WA coordinated regional child protection initiatives across West Africa.

Major activities included **cross-border case management through WAN**, capacity-building workshops for community actors, social workers, and government authorities; support for children on the move through identification, family tracing, reunification and reintegration; technical support to governments on child protection systems; collaboration with **ECOWAS, IOM, GRPE and NGOs**; advocacy for children's rights; and promotion of durable solutions through community-based reintegration initiatives including the **Réussite Incubator model**.

These activities strengthened regional cooperation, improved continuity of care across borders and reinforced national child protection systems.

| Success Stories and Impact

A teenager identified outside his country of origin after months in a vulnerable migration situation was referred through the WAN network. With the mechanism, social workers in the two countries coordinated assessments, family tracing and case conferencing before organizing a safe voluntary return. Following reintegration, the child was enrolled in vocational training and received community-based follow-up.

The **coordinated regional approach** restored family links, reduced protection risks and enabled the young person to resume a positive life trajectory

| Additional Information

Despite funding constraints and evolving migration dynamics, ISS-WA continued delivering quality child protection services by strengthening partnerships, promoting community based actions and investing in regional cooperation and capacity development.



Zambia Association for Child and Youth Care Workers (ZACCW) - FICE Zambia
Full member

Judith Mukakwa Mwape - Executive Director

| Membership Overview, Meetings and Governance

ZACCW (FICE Zambia) currently comprises 2,275 individual members and 6 affiliated organizations.

In 2025 alone, the association welcomed 97 new members, reflecting continued growth and interest in its mission. Unfortunately, due to financial constraints, the Association was unable to convene its Annual Conference in 2025.

| Key Achievements

Strategic Planning and Governance: ZACCW successfully developed and launched its **2025–2028 Strategic Plan**, providing a clear framework to guide programs and activities. Regular board meetings and participation in FICE Africa gatherings strengthened governance and international collaboration. The organization now operates with improved efficiency and stronger oversight.

Community Engagement Against Child Marriage: ZACCW Southern Chapter spearheaded a landmark dialogue in Musokotwane Village, engaging over 250 parents and students to address early child marriage. This led to the establishment of a formal community structure to report and prevent child marriages. A **united community framework now safeguards girls' education and futures**, reducing risks of early marriage and fostering a protective environment.

Training and Capacity Building:

- **Parenting Without Violence:** Trained 44 parents, 83 adolescents, and 50 children, equipping families with nonviolent communication and discipline strategies.
- **BQCC Training:** 119 CYCWs completed the Basic Qualification in Child Care, blending online and physical sessions. Follow-up visits confirmed effective application of skills in communities.

Families reported improved relationships and healthier child-rearing practices, while CYCWs returned to their communities with advanced competencies, strengthening frontline child protection services.

| Activities Overview

Strategic Management: ZACCW strengthened its internal management through regular board meetings (one physical and two virtual) focused on planning and welfare. Participation in FICE Africa and FICE International meetings enhanced international collaboration and knowledge exchange. Additionally, the development of the 2025–2028 Strategic Plan provided a robust framework to guide programs, improving efficiency and organizational capacity.

Outcome: Improved governance structures, stronger international partnerships, and a clear roadmap for future activities.

Provincial Chapters acted as coordinating entities, holding four professional meetings across Copperbelt, Eastern, and Southern provinces. These sessions allowed Child and Youth Care Workers (CYCWs) to share experiences and monitor BQCC training compliance. ZACCW also distributed five newsletters and expanded visibility through Facebook, while WhatsApp groups enhanced real-time member engagement. Safe Parks in Lusaka provided HIV counseling, testing, referrals, and education support to 250 children living positive.

Outcome: Strengthened member coordination, increased organizational visibility, and direct support to vulnerable children.

Networking and Collaboration with stakeholders through the National Child Protection Committee and other high-level meetings, gaining recognition nationally and provincially. Media engagements on TV, radio, and partnerships with ZCCP-Kwatu amplified awareness of children's rights. Youth empowerment initiatives in Ndola used sports to mentor boys on gender-based violence.

Outcome: Enhanced stakeholder recognition, expanded advocacy reach, and empowered youth through innovative engagement.

Community Engagement: CYCWs applied skills from prior training to launch impactful initiatives. In Musokotwane Village, the Southern Chapter convened over 250 parents and students to address early child marriage. The meeting led to the creation of a formal community structure to report and combat child marriage, fostering a united protective environment.

Outcome: Strengthened community structures, reduced risks of early marriage, and improved child safeguarding at grassroots level.

| Success Stories and Impact

In 2025, ZACCW conducted a **Positive Parenting and Parenting Without Violence** workshop in Mulala community, Livingstone. The training aimed to empower parents with effective, nonviolent parenting techniques while fostering nurturing environments for children. What unfolded was not just a workshop, but a turning point for families and the community at large.

The training was planned for 50 participants. Yet, by 10 a.m. on the first day, the team was met with an unexpected crowd: **44 parents, 83 adolescents, and over 50 children under 12**. The overwhelming turnout reflected the community's hunger for knowledge and change. Though the numbers stretched the team's resources, they quickly adapted dividing participants into three groups: adults in the insaka, adolescents in the center house, and children at the playground.

Food was another challenge. With a budget for 50, feeding nearly 180 participants seemed impossible. But the team engaged local women to prepare meals using community-sourced foods. Remarkably, everyone received a portion, reinforcing the spirit of collaboration and resilience.

The heart of the workshop lay in reshaping parenting practices. Parents shared deeply personal reflections during follow-up visits, revealing how the training had altered their homes:

- **Mrs. Oliness Siatwinda:** "I learnt that there is a difference between disciplining a child and abusing the child. I grew up with the 'spare the rod, spoil the child' mentality, and I carried it into motherhood. The training taught me patience. Now, I don't react immediately when my children misbehave. This has improved our relationship, and my children no longer act out as much."
- **Ms. Milimo Moonga:** "Growing up, respect for elders meant silence and fear. We couldn't talk about sexual or reproductive health with parents—it was taboo. After the workshop, I began having open conversations with my children about boundaries and their bodies. They now know they can come to me with questions. This has brought our family closer together."

These testimonies show how the training dismantled harmful traditions and replaced them with communication, respect, and trust.

| Success Stories and Impact

The most powerful evidence of change came from the children themselves;

- **Jane Sitali** shared: “Before the training, I resented my mother. She would hit me and make fun of my appearance. I used to annoy her on purpose. After the training, she stopped beating me and now talks to me kindly when I make mistakes. I understand she loves me. I no longer feel resentment I can proudly say I love my mother, and she loves me too.”

Jane’s words capture the emotional healing that positive parenting fosters. A toxic relationship transformed into one of love and mutual respect.

For facilitators like **Situmbecko Sitondo**, the workshop was equally rewarding: “What keeps me motivated is witnessing positive transformations in families. Parents now use non-violent techniques, and communication between parents and children has improved. This change is important because it breaks the cycle of violence and builds a generation that is emotionally resilient and empathetic. I am most proud of ZACCW’s success in creating a community oriented approach, where parents support one another to sustain positive practices.”

Beyond individual families, the training sparked collective awareness. Parents openly discussed common abuses in their community, many of which had previously been mistaken for discipline. The workshop revealed gaps in understanding and encouraged parents to challenge harmful norms.

The overwhelming participation demonstrated the community’s readiness to embrace change. By involving local leaders and community members, the training became a shared effort strengthening bonds and reinforcing the idea that parenting is not just a private matter but a communal responsibility.

| Additional Information

ZACCW has faced significant challenges following the loss of funding. This development has adversely affected its operations, resulting in staff layoffs and the suspension of several key activities. The most critical setback has been the inability to convene the Annual General Meeting, which serves as the platform for ushering in new Board members. Consequently, the current Board has remained in office beyond its intended term, raising concerns about governance continuity and organizational renewal.

The Mulberry Bush



The Mulberry Bush Organisation Ltd (United Kingdom).

Organization (Full) Member since 2025

John Turberville - CEO; Dave Roberts - Liaison to FICE International

| Membership Overview, Meetings and Governance

The Mulberry Bush is set up as one charity with a residential school, a day school, a training and professional development team as well as research and consulting services. Across the charity around 150 staff members are employed. It holds an annual AGM which includes members and its board of trustees. As a charity, The Mulberry Bush impacts the lives of around 16,000 individuals each year.

| Key Achievements

The Mulberry Bush continues to demonstrate the power of **relational, therapeutic approaches** to bring lasting change and help people live their best lives. The organization expanded its reach nationally and internationally, developed new partnerships in education, care, youth custody, prisons, and probation, and invested in its people and infrastructure to secure a sustainable future for the charity. Every achievement reflects the dedication of its staff, trustees, and supporters who share its belief in a more compassionate and connected society.

Up to August 2025 its **specialist school** cared for 26 children across both 38 week and 52 week provisions, supporting 15 local authorities and working alongside families and support staff across the country. Referrals were higher than the prior year with 11 new children. This year was the first full year with two 52 week houses open.

The Mulberry Bush worked with 129 organisations across the country, and internationally, across education, social care, justice and youth justice. It trained and supported 878 professionals, impacting an estimated 16,000 children and young people. This included face-to-face, online and residential **training and learning opportunities**.

Through its **Consultancy support**, the organization reached over 300 leaders, and its teams joined 27 sector events, contributing to national conversations, sharing knowledge, shaping practice and raising standards.

The Mulberry Bush

| Key Achievements

Over 150 schools are now using The Mulberry Bush **Social and Emotional Curriculum**, with its first online training videos helping to support learning and understanding for 4,500 children. It introduced its first Level 4 online course in Therapeutic Childcare and delivered its first Teach for Growth online sessions in India, reaching 10 schools and up to 1,500 pupils.

The Mulberry Bush was also recognised as an **official Engagement Partner for DfE's 'Inclusion in practice' initiative**, helping schools create spaces where every child feels seen, supported and able to belong.

It launched a new **'Innovation Fund'**, raising £321,000 and, to date, funding 7 projects, including 3 staff-nominated innovations. Challenge event participation grew by 76% and together, £592,948 was raised to support children and families. Including £84,195 from the 'Great Outdoors' appeal funding new play equipment and outdoor adventures.

The organization continues to learn from **people with lived experience**. Past pupils helped shape the future, sharing their voices at conferences and through keynote speeches - with 12 former pupils joining the advisory board.

| Activities Overview

During 2025, the Mulberry Bush has progressed the growth of the charity, focusing on three key areas from its 10-year ambition plan:

- **Practice** – increasing access to specialist therapeutic services through its School
- **Support** – building a knowledgeable, skilled, resilient workforce through its Outreach and Consultancy services
- **Influence** – influencing for change through learning and research through The Mulberry Bush Research

The **Mulberry Bush School Standlake**, an accredited therapeutic community, offers specialist therapeutic residential step-down school provision for up to 30 children, in its 38 week 'term time' households or its 52 week 'year round' households. The school also has a team of practitioners working with the families and therapists who provide therapy to children and advise staff on the therapeutic approach through the treatment team process.

The Mulberry Bush

| Activities Overview

Up to 31 August 2025 the school cared for 26 children across both 38 week and 52 week provisions, supporting 15 different local authorities and working alongside families and support staff across the country. Referrals were higher than the prior year with 11 new children placed up to 31 August 2025. This year was the first full year with two 52 week houses open, **Bramble House** was opened in the summer term 2024, both houses were at capacity by the end of the academic year.

Throughout the year, children spent time learning and growing in a **highly integrated therapeutic environment** where the organization provides education, care, and support. Enabling children to learn to manage their emotions and behaviours through the development of safe and trusting relationships within a group setting. Children have spent time in and out of school on trips, residentials, and camping as well as precious time with family and practitioners supporting them every step of the way in their journey. Staff are amongst the highest trained in the sector, enrolled on a UWE (University of Western England) Level 5 Foundation Degree in Therapeutic Work with Children and Young People.

The **multi-disciplinary Therapies & Networks Team**, headed by the school's Clinical Lead, is fully integrated into the overall work of the school through children's treatment teams. Throughout this year the number of home visits has been increased, and this has been a really important piece of work to engage and increase the support to the families and carers of the children. The team has also hosted two students during the year from Terapia, a leading Child & Adolescent Psychotherapy and Counselling training organisation.

The Mulberry Bush most recent **Ofsted report for Education** was in September 2024 and rated the school as 'outstanding' in quality of education, behaviour & attitudes, personal development and leadership & management.

Within **Outreach** the teams have supported twice as many students on its Foundation Degree (FdA) in 2025 to prior year. The FdA course provides a level 5 foundation degree in Therapeutic Work with Children and Young People and all our therapeutic care staff is trained to this level when they join the charity. The course won the prestigious Princess Anne National Training Award for a second time.

The support for international organisations has continued. The organization launched a **Teach 4 Growth Programme with Parikrma Humanity Foundation in India** supporting teaching from across their 5 schools for children from slum communities.

The Mulberry Bush

| Activities Overview

The organization's Level 4 training was promoted in the **Youth Justice Board** publication this year and it has also joined the **Alliance for Youth Justice**, working more closely with young people in this area.

The **Mulberry Bush Consulting team** began working with **HMPPS (HM Prison and Probation Service)** demonstrating clear application of its services within the prison sector. Feedback to date has been incredibly positive. In addition, the Consulting team has continued working alongside schools and health leadership teams and has completed its work with a provider in Latvia alongside Mulberry Bush Outreach, developing the first therapeutic care provision for children and young people in the country.

The **Mulberry Bush Research team** aims to develop and shape a research culture to influence practice in its own and other schools, agencies and other providers of care to vulnerable and traumatised children and their families. They collaborate with researchers and practitioners to build action research cultures and improve outcomes through evidence-based practice. During this year the **collaboration with the University of Sussex** has continued, looking at and understanding how to assess children's social and emotional development, to enable practitioners to understand and help a child in practical ways. Mulberry Bush Research also works to provide research expertise to the project work that Mulberry Bush Outreach engages in. These projects lead to important dissemination events, and this year it held an event at Oxford Brookes University sharing the findings of a 2-year study on inclusion in Coventry schools, attended by 100 teachers and professionals.

In addition, this year the organization has been working on a pilot study funded through the Open University looking at pupil outcomes which should lead to a longitudinal study. This work has included employing 2 ex-pupils as part of the advisory group. Its case study on '**Enhancing the emotional security of pupils in the classroom: a case study of a therapeutic residential special school**' was published online in January 2025.

Its **SEA Scale (Social and Emotional Adjustment Scale)** PhD student is reaching completion of data collection for the SEA Scale, adding a large data set to further validate the scale. The Mulberry Bush in conjunction with the University of Sussex, developed the SEA Scale which is a 25 item strengths-based questionnaire. It can be used by anyone working with children between the ages of 5 and 13, where the work includes supporting a child's social and emotional development. The second book to be published in recent years has been completed and is with the publisher. Its title is: **Supporting Children and Young 200+ People with Complex Needs.**

The Mulberry Bush

| Activities Overview

Its **people** is the Mulberry Bush biggest asset, and its culture and values are at the heart of everything they do. At the 31st August 2025 the charity employed 150. Staff within the residential school represented 78%. During the year the charity completed its annual staff survey asking staff to help gauge how staff were feeling and where areas could be improved:

- 77% of the staff responded overall
- 99% of the staff that responded said they were proud to work for The Mulberry Bush
- 98% would recommend The Mulberry Bush to a friend as a great place to work
- 97% rated their overall job satisfaction as very satisfied or satisfied

| Success Stories and Impact

One of the charity areas of work is to support children to remain in school and not be excluded. One of the most successful models of work has been to work with the Local Authority to identify schools and pupils where the risk of exclusion is highest. An example of this work comes from a primary school in South Oxfordshire (UK) and involved Mulberry Bush Outreach between January and June. They introduced a model of observing children and adult interactions and feeding this back via a reflective forum, allowing staff to recognise not only the behaviours but the emotions that arose from the work with multiple children. During this period of time the school reported having “had NO exclusions or NO suspensions” whereas in the previous term/year the school had many! The SENCO (Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator) for the school said “**that the work helped create a whole school vision and shared ownership of relational practice**”.

| Additional Information

The financial picture in the UK continued to place huge demands on the Mulberry Bush, forcing the organization to make use of its charitable reserves to support the growth of services within the charity. This was supported by fund-raised money.

These demands are requiring the charity leadership group to make clear and robust decisions about the investment in impact and income generating aspects of the work to ensure the continued success of the charity.



Nevelőközösségek Nemzetközi Szövetsége a Magyar Gyermekekért (Hungary)
Associate member since 2016
Szántó Edina Anna - President

| Membership Overview, Meetings and Governance

NENESZ had 29 individual members, including 4 supporting members, and welcomed 3 new members in 2025.

The organization held one General Assembly meeting. Members reviewed the professional and financial activities of the association and agreed to further develop the SOHA programme. In addition to school visits, a large-scale board game was created for festivals and public events, together with a standard-sized version suitable for classroom and home use. In 2025, NENESZ and its partners participated in nine large public events, reaching the programme's age-specific target groups.

| Key Achievements

One of NENESZ's greatest achievements in 2025 was the expansion of the **SOHA child-abuse prevention programme**. Fifty standard board games and two large-scale versions were produced for schools, child-protection institutions, families, festivals and public events. The **game** creates a safe space to recognise abuse, discuss its forms and learn how to seek help.

The **Mentor Programme** also grew significantly. With Ádám Szabados and other volunteer mentors, more disadvantaged and care-experienced young people discovered their talents, strengthened their confidence and joined a supportive community. Mentees achieved increasingly visible results, especially in freestyle football, while the programme fostered lasting relationships and belonging.

| Activities Overview

In 2025, NENESZ continued and expanded its long-term programmes supporting children and young people in alternative care and disadvantaged circumstances. The **Cultural Forget-me-not programme** enabled 785 participants to attend theatre performances and community cultural events free of charge or at reduced cost. Beyond recreation, these experiences supported emotional development, empathy, social skills and a sense of belonging.

Through the **Sport for Children programme**, 215 young people participated in activities promoting healthy lifestyles, perseverance, self-discipline, confidence and teamwork. The **Together, With Us, For Us programme** provided safe and meaningful leisure activities for 412 participants, while **The Future is in Our Hands!** reached 460 young people through career guidance, self-awareness and further-education activities. NENESZ also participated with its partners in nine major public events, including education, youth and career-orientation festivals, where the programmes directly reached their age-specific target groups.

The **SOHA child-abuse prevention programme** became NENESZ's widest-reaching professional activity, involving 2,650 children, young people, educators, foster carers and other professionals. Free, age-appropriate interactive sessions helped participants recognise physical, emotional, verbal and online abuse, understand personal boundaries and learn where and how to seek help. The programme was further developed through the production of **50 standard-sized board games** for schools, child-protection institutions, small groups and families, as well as two large-scale versions designed for festivals and public events. The games create a safe and engaging framework for discussing difficult experiences without stigmatisation.

The **Mentor Programme** also continued to grow in the fields of culture, literature, creative self-expression and freestyle football. Volunteer mentors helped young people recognise their abilities, develop confidence and experience reliable, supportive relationships. Former mentees increasingly began supporting younger participants themselves, strengthening the programme as a genuine community.

NENESZ also delivered more than ten **minibus-loads of donations** to child-protection and social institutions, foster-care networks and disadvantaged families. Extensive volunteer work supported collection, packing, transport, programme organisation and mentoring. Altogether, NENESZ's activities reached 4,522 children, young people and adults in 2025.

| Success Stories and Impact

At festivals and public events, NENESZ met hundreds of children through the SOHA programme. What surprised the most was how openly they spoke about bullying. Almost everyone had a personal story. During the game, some children realised for the first time that what they were experiencing was not “just a joke”, but abuse. In a few deeply difficult moments, participants also recognised that they themselves had crossed someone else’s boundaries. These conversations were never easy, but they were important: naming what had happened was often the first step towards asking for help, changing behaviour and no longer feeling alone.

The Freestyle Football Mentor Programme offered another powerful example of long-term impact. The community continued to grow, and young people developed not only skills and confidence, but also responsibility for one another. The most moving sign of progress was seeing former mentees and competitors begin mentoring younger participants themselves. What once started as support received is now becoming support passed on. This shows that the culture of attention, trust and solidarity is taking root and being carried forward by the young people themselves.

| Additional Information

One of the main challenges in 2025 was meeting the growing demand for NENESZ programmes with limited civil-sector resources. The organization addressed this through strong partnerships, donor support and extensive volunteer work. These collaborations enabled to expand the SOHA and Mentor Programmes, deliver more than ten minibus-loads of donations, and reach significantly more children, young people and professionals than in the previous year.

SOS Children's Villages International



SOS Children's Villages International (SOS CVI)

Organization (Full) Member since 2025

Jessica Claire Harmer - CEO; Coenraad de Beer - Liaison to FICE International

| Membership Overview, Meetings and Governance

SOS CVI is a federation of national organizations. In June 2025, 110 members were eligible to vote. Benin, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Côte d'Ivoire entered a one-year process towards full membership; Liechtenstein applied, and Poland was formally recognized among the promoting and supporting associations.

General Assemblies were held in March, June and November. At the June Assembly, 95 voters registered for quorum. Members completed governance and bylaw reforms, approved reports and audited accounts, amended statutes, elected statutory bodies, endorsed the updated **Theory of Change and Transitional Strategy**, and advanced youth participation. The November Assembly adopted a new membership-fee model and confirmed the statutory auditor.



[Check the latest SOS CVI annual report](#)

| Key Achievements

In 2025, SOS Children's Villages and partners reached more than **7.9 million children, young people and adults**, including 2.6 million through prevention and 70,300 through alternative care. **Humanitarian action** reached an estimated 3.8 million people across 42 countries, while education support reached about 1.3 million.

SOS CVI also advanced care reform: 24 member associations and 33 governments engaged around the **Global Charter on Children's Care Reform**, and the **Kigali Declaration** was endorsed in December. Children and young people contributed to policy spaces, including through 89 national and 420 local youth councils, strengthening their influence on programmes and governance.

SOS Children's Villages International

| Activities Overview

SOS CVI 2025 work combined direct services, practice development, advocacy and systems change. **Family and community strengthening** offered parenting support, livelihood assistance, access to education, health and social services, case management, and community-based protection to prevent unnecessary separation.

A range of **alternative care options**, including family-like, foster, kinship and small-group care and supported independent living, prioritised stable relationships, individualised planning and family reintegration where appropriate.

The **Leaving Care - Never Walk Alone! initiative in Asia** trained 583 child and youth care practitioners and supported 2,260 care leavers through stronger peer and support networks.

Humanitarian action protected children and families affected by crises in 42 countries.

At **policy level**, SOS CVI and its members promoted prevention, family-based and community-integrated care through the **Global Charter on Children's Care Reform**, the **Kigali Declaration**, **BICON**, engagement with the **UN** and **EU**, and a joint submission by 17 member associations to the **Human Rights Council on children and armed conflict**.

The **November UN Resolution on the Rights of the Child** included stronger language on children without parental care.

Participation remained central: children and young people contributed through national and local **youth councils**, the **EU Child Participation Platform**, the **Inclusive Child Participation Networks** project and global advocacy events.

Digital practice support also expanded through tools such as the **Rafiki virtual assistant**, while safeguarding was increasingly embedded in programme design, operations and prevention.

SOS Children's Villages International

| Success Stories and Impact

In Guinea, one family living in extreme poverty received **integrated support** rather than a single intervention. Livelihood assistance and financial inclusion were combined with parenting education, access to essential services and ongoing coaching. Over time, the household moved out of extreme poverty, improved access to food, health care and education, and strengthened parenting practices and children's well-being.

The story illustrates a core lesson from SOS CVI 2025 work: **sustainable change grows from economic opportunity, behaviour change and consistent relational support working together. It also shows why prevention matters.** By strengthening caregivers' capacity and the relationships around children, programmes can reduce the risk of separation and help children remain safely connected to family and community. Across the federation, this approach was reinforced through community protection networks, savings groups, tailored case management and meaningful participation by children and young people.

| Additional Information

Amid conflict, climate shocks and funding pressure and significant organizational change, SOS CVI worked with locally led member associations and partners to sustain services, strengthening prevention, a range of quality alternative care services, safeguarding, and youth participation.

2025 figures combine direct and estimated indirect reach and may include people benefiting from more than one service. Humanitarian indirect reach was reported for selected projects, so comparisons require care.

Udayan Care



Udayan Care (India)

Organization (Full) Member since 2019

Kiran Modi – Founder and Managing Trustee

| Key Achievements

This year, Udayan Care advanced dialogue on aftercare, trauma-informed care, youth participation, mental health, and care reform through 4 international conferences, 15 national consultations, and 4 regional webinars.

The organization conducted **India's first study on married care leavers** with 55 participants across states, presented in Germany by Kiran Modi. It trained 9,482 stakeholders on family-based care and **co-organised BICON 2025** with 300+ delegates across Asia. Udayan Care also published two new issues of **The ICB Journal – Institutionalised Children Explorations & Beyond**.

Read September 2025 (Special issue on Family Strengthening) below.



[Special issue on Family Strengthening](#)

| Activities Overview

Across 2025, Udayan Care undertook **five key research studies and assessments** on residential care quality, family strengthening, technology readiness, emotional resilience, and the lived experiences of married care leavers across India, strengthening evidence on child protection, aftercare, and family strengthening.

The organisation also contributed significantly to **knowledge dissemination** through 2 book chapters, 3 research papers, and 4 published articles.



Udayan Care

| Activities Overview

“Social Support of Young People in and after Residential Care: Is Someone There for You? An International Perspective”, published by Routledge. Link: <https://www.routledge.com/Social-Support-of-Young-People-in-and-after-Residential-Care-Is-Someone-There-for-You-An-International-Perspective/Magalhaes-Attar-Schwartz/p/book/9781032543529>

“Leaving Care Around the World: Policy, Practice, Research, and Youth Participation” published by Oxford University Press. Link: <https://academic.oup.com/book/61732>

“Compassion for the Caregivers: An Indian Perspective on the Burnout of Caregivers in Child Care Institutions” – Research paper examining trauma-informed support systems and caregiver wellbeing in institutional care settings. Link: <https://pure.strath.ac.uk/ws/portalfiles/portal/283929566/Arora-et-al-SJRCC-2025-Compassion-for-the-caregivers-an-Indian-perspective-on-the-burnout.pdf>

“Rethinking Contours of Family Through Diverse Lenses: Beyond the Conventional Context” – Research paper reflecting on resilience, caregiving, systemic support, and child-family separation. Link: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/23493003251364952>

“Enabling Children with Vulnerabilities to Pursue Their Educational Aspirations: Prospects and Challenges” – Research paper exploring mentoring, trauma-informed support, and educational pathways for vulnerable children and youth. Link: <https://journals.uvic.ca/index.php/ijcyfs/article/view/22519>

Some of the key highlights from the year:

At the **World Health Summit Regional Meeting**, Kiran Modi highlighted Udayan Care’s Family-Based Care and family strengthening initiatives, emphasizing the importance of preventive and community-based support systems for vulnerable children and families. This engagement was complemented by a nationwide Family Strengthening Regional Webinar Series conducted across North, South, East & Northeast, and West & Central India, bringing together practitioners, researchers, and grassroots organizations to discuss locally rooted approaches to strengthening families and reducing child vulnerability.

Udayan Care

| Activities Overview

Udayan Care played a key role in strengthening aftercare systems for young people transitioning out of institutional care. In Sikkim, the organisation supported the **state's first-ever Aftercare Consultation** and facilitated the formation of the Care Leavers Association of Sikkim, creating a collective platform for youth voices. At Uttar Pradesh State Consultation on Aftercare, mentoring-based approaches addressing stigma, educational exclusion, and independent living were shared with state stakeholders. Through “**Fireside Chat 2.0**”, more than 160 care leavers participated in discussions on emotional wellbeing, relationships, and career transitions. Organization's leadership and youth from the mentoring initiatives of the organisation also shared their lived experiences of independent living at the Mentoring Summit in Bangalore.

Internationally, Udayan Care contributed to global discussions on alternative care reform and youth transitions. At the **World Conference on Women Studies** in Bangkok, the organization presented the Udayan Shalini Fellowship as a model for empowering vulnerable girls through higher education and mentorship. In Kuala Lumpur, **Udayan Care co-organized BICON 2025**, where six Indian care leavers amplified youth perspectives on mental health and care reform across Asia. In Germany, the organization presented India's first study on married care leavers and highlighted rights-based aftercare models supporting long-term social inclusion and resilience.



Udayan Care

| Success Stories and Impact

Creating Space to Belong: Journey to Leadership - When Mohit entered institutional care at the age of nine, survival became her primary reality. Separated from her family along with her sibling, she grew up in a Child Care Institution that ensured safety and education but offered little space to understand or express her identity. As a transgender woman, Mohit spent much of her childhood and adolescence carrying fear, stigma, and emotional isolation, often remaining silent to avoid rejection.

The transition out of care at 18 brought new uncertainties. With limited confidence, few support systems, and little opportunity to share her lived experiences, Mohit struggled to imagine a future where she could fully belong. Although she aspired to study and grow independently, she found it difficult to view her identity as a source of strength.

Her journey began to transform when she joined Udayan Care's LiFT Fellowship, a leadership and mentoring initiative for care-experienced youth. Through mentorship, leadership development, financial support, and peer networks, the fellowship created a safe and affirming environment where Mohit rebuilt her confidence and discovered her voice.

With this support, Mohit designed and led sensitisation sessions on intersexuality and gender diversity within child care systems, reaching more than 130 young people and professionals across states. Today, she is a confident advocate for care leavers and LGBTQIA+ rights, using her lived experience to inspire inclusion, dignity, and systemic change.



Udayan Care

| Additional Information

Udayan Care's continued commitment to education, employability, youth empowerment, and volunteer engagement across its programmes:

- Till March 2026, the **Udayan Shalini Fellowship** programme had supported 8,400+ underserved girls through higher education and mentoring, backed by 4,400+ volunteers and an alumnae network of over 10,000 young women nationwide
- Through the **Skilling and Livelihood Program** for youth this year we enrolled 2,532 through Jan Shikshan Centers, strengthening pathways to employability and independence. Facilitated 1,857 job placements and conducted 509 workshops across 25 skilling centers on career readiness, communication, and personal development.
- Engaged 135 new volunteers during 2025–26, strengthening program through mentorship, expertise, and community support.

The image shows a promotional graphic for a research paper. At the top left are the logos for Udayan Care and A.R.T. (Advocacy, Research and Training). The main title of the paper is 'Enabling children with vulnerabilities to pursue their educational aspirations: Prospects and challenges', authored by Dr Kiran Modi & Dr Gurneet Kalra, Udayan Care. It is published in the 'International Journal of Child, Youth and Family Studies', Vol 16, No 2-3 (2025). On the left, a summary states that the paper explores barriers and enablers of quality education through Udayan Ghar and Udayan Shalini Fellowship models, and highlights that mentorship and trauma-informed care can transform learning into lifelong empowerment. A QR code is provided for downloading, reading, or sharing the paper. On the right, a preview of the paper's abstract is shown, detailing the challenges faced by vulnerable children in India and the role of Udayan Care in addressing them.

UDAYAN Care | **A.R.T.**
Advocacy, Research and Training

Enabling children with vulnerabilities to pursue their educational aspirations: Prospects and challenges

~Dr Kiran Modi & Dr Gurneet Kalra, Udayan Care

Published in the 'International Journal of Child, Youth and Family Studies'
Vol 16, No 2-3 (2025)

This paper

- explores the barriers and enablers of accessing quality education through the **Udayan Ghar** and **Udayan Shalini Fellowship** models
- highlights that mentorship and trauma-informed care can transform learning into lifelong empowerment

ENABLING CHILDREN WITH VULNERABILITIES TO PURSUE THEIR EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS: PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES

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Udayan Care
Kiran Modi
Udayan Care

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1891/1542-1004.16.2.004>

Keywords: children, education, gender, practitioners, youth, India, vulnerable children

Abstract

In India, millions of vulnerable children, particularly those without parental care and living in alternative care settings, and girls from vulnerable sections of society, face significant barriers to accessing quality education. This compromises their fundamental right to education and often leaves their potential unfulfilled. There are also many cross-sectional barriers, such as poverty, gender, caste, and social norms, that reduce opportunities for education. Despite strong legislative and policy mandates in India that emphasize the government's obligation to protect children's rights and ensure access to education, gaps persist. Inadequate education hampers children's overall well-being and development, leaving them unprepared for independent living. This paper highlights the efforts of Udayan Care, a practitioner organization, in regard to improving educational access and

Published
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How to Cite
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Issue
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Section
Section 01 - Innovative Approaches to Addressing Young People's Needs

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Ukrainian Education Platform



Ukrainian Education Platform (Ukraine)
Organization (Full) Member since 2019
Mariana Kashchak - CEO CO

| Membership Overview, Meetings and Governance

Ukrainian Education Platform (UEP) the organization has six members of the Board. The General Assembly meets regularly to address key strategic issues and make decisions.

In total, around 60 staff members work in the organization's offices, while approximately another 60 work in the field, providing services.

| Key Achievements

An important event of the year was the visit of the Secretary General of FICE International, Patrick Reason, to Ukraine. During the visit, meetings were held with partner organizations, communities, and educational spaces, providing an opportunity to present to the international community the Ukrainian experience in reforms in the child protection system.

In 2025, UEP celebrated its **25th anniversary**. The organization collected 25 stories of children whose lives were affected by the war and who received support in its child-friendly spaces located in hospitals, churches, and local communities. These stories were transformed into **the art book “Growing Through Storms”**, symbolizing the importance of supporting Ukrainian children during such a difficult time.



[Check UEP 2025 annual report](#)

Ukrainian Education Platform

| Activities Overview

Throughout 2025, UEP continued its work to support children, families, and people affected by the war. For its 25th anniversary, we launched the awareness campaign “Growing Through Storms” to draw attention to the **needs of Ukrainian children today**.

The organization continued to support its **hospital-based child-friendly spaces** in Kamianske and Zaporizhzhia, and also opened a new hospital space in Kropyvnytskyi. Based in churches, UEP currently operates two child-friendly spaces (“**Care Spaces**”) as well as three family support spaces (“**Trust Spaces**”) that provide psychosocial support services. UEP also continued the activities of the “**Motanka**” spaces and other psychosocial support spaces operating in frontline communities.

The “Dobryi Susid” (“**Good Neighbor**”) hubs continued their work in five communities, supporting families in difficult life circumstances with the aim of preserving the child’s biological family.

Together with IRC, the organization launched the “**Obiimy**” project, aimed at developing alternative forms of family-based care. The project operates in frontline regions and contributes to the development of new family care models, as well as the strengthening and support of those already in place.

On December 9, **the Forum of Resilience 2025** also took place, bringing together representatives of the Ministry of Social Policy, Family and Unity of Ukraine, the Social Protection Fund for Persons with Disabilities, the National Social Service of Ukraine, local authorities, and specialists from Resilience Centers across the country. During the event, participants reviewed the results of two years of work and discussed key challenges, achievements, and the development of the network, which has become a place of support for hundreds of thousands of people. The Forum served as a platform for open dialogue on growth, lessons learned, and the readiness of teams to continue working despite ongoing challenges. The forum was held in cooperation with the **NGO “Volonter”** and with the support of **UNICEF**.

Ukrainian Education Platform

| Success Stories and Impact

In 2025, UEP created a **sensory room** for visits by 10 children from the closest circle of Yarema (the “main character” of the Jaremy Space project).

“**Jaremy Space**” is a project aimed at creating a safe environment for the development and socialization of **children with special educational needs (SEN)**. The name of the space comes from Yarema Kovalenko, a boy with ASD. His mother, Oksana Kovalenko, completed specialized training and initiated support groups for parents of children with disabilities.

Many women experienced meaningful and positive changes in their lives after attending the groups. As the group became stronger and meetings started to take place in a café, for many mothers this was one of their first “outings into public life” since becoming caregivers. One mother spoke openly about her child’s diagnosis for the first time during a group session — an important step in acceptance. Another participant saw an opportunity for personal development beyond caregiving and enrolled in the program “Medical, Psychological and Social Support for Vulnerable Groups,” inspired by the group facilitator. The mothers also supported one of the participants through the process of divorce and stood by her at every stage.

In addition, awareness-raising activities were conducted, including a panel discussion titled “**ASD: Challenges and Opportunities**”, with the participation of a psychiatrist, an early intervention specialist, and Oksana Kovalenko as a mother of a child with ASD. Informational brochures were distributed among educators on ASD markers, appropriate communication, and interaction with people with ASD.

| Additional Information

In 2025, the **official recommendations for the operation of Resilience Centers** were published. UEP played a key role in their development, contributing its expertise and practical experience to the process. Link:

[https://www.msp.gov.ua/api/uploads/Methodological Guidelines for Resilience Centers_894679e3e6.pdf](https://www.msp.gov.ua/api/uploads/Methodological_Guidelines_for_Resilience_Centers_894679e3e6.pdf)

In 2025, UEP continued to support small local organizations and parish communities working to assist children with disabilities, families in crisis, children living in institutional care, and other vulnerable groups. Overall, **more than 100 organizations across Ukraine received support** throughout the year through the organization’s subgranting and mini-grant programs.

FICE legal seat:

c/o Tipiti Gesamtschule Turmlihaus

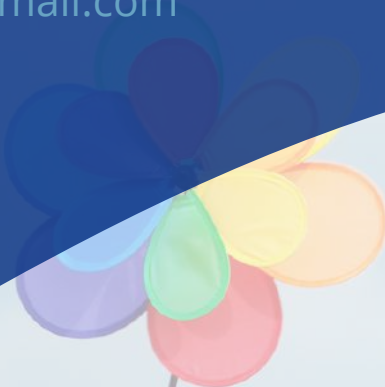
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