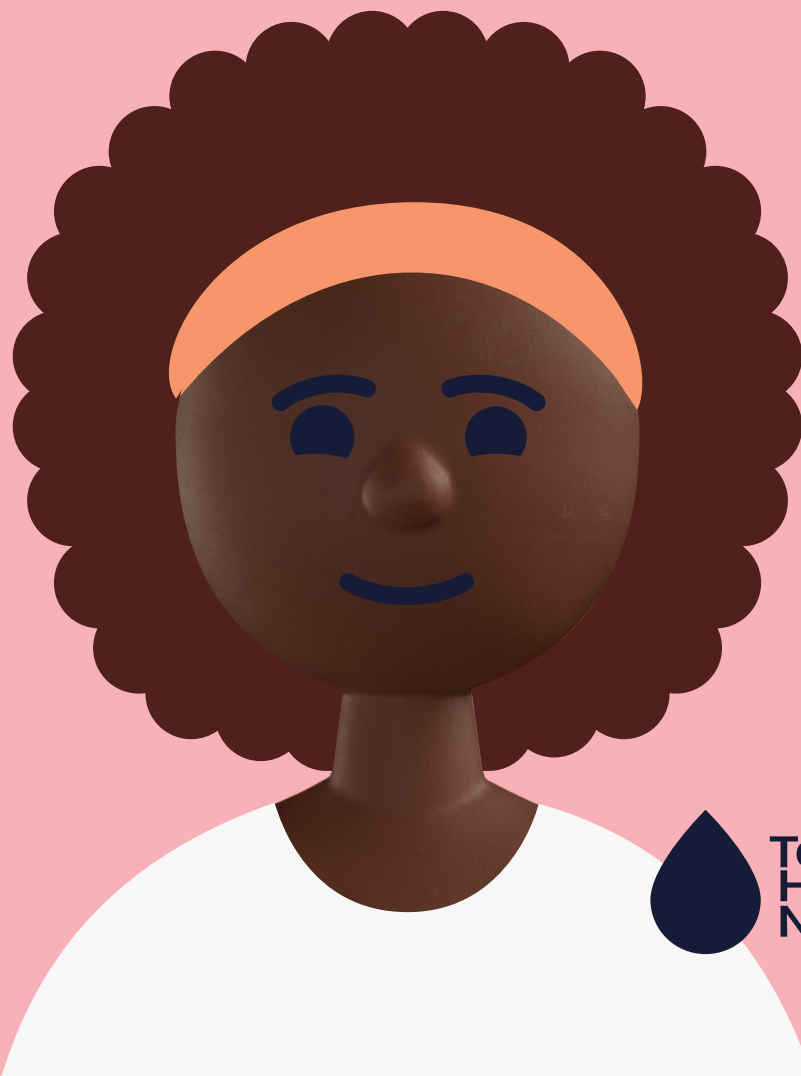


LISTEN UP!

Terre des Hommes Netherlands Strategy Summary 2023 - 2030

Lifting up children's voices in an evidence-informed
approach to stopping child exploitation through systemic
change



CONTENTS

Acronyms and abbreviations	3
Who are we?	4
What do we seek?	5
Why is what we do important?	7
What are the priorities of children?	9
What guides us?	10
How will we realise change?	12
Goal 1: accountable partnerships	13
Goal 2: valuing our people	13
Goal 3: child participation	14
Goal 4: insight	14
Goal 5: influential expertise	14
Goal 6: action	15
Goal 7: advocacy	15
Goal 8: resource mobilisation	16
How will we move forward?	17
Bibliography	18

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

INGO

International non-governmental organisation

SDGs

Sustainable Development Goals

TDHIF

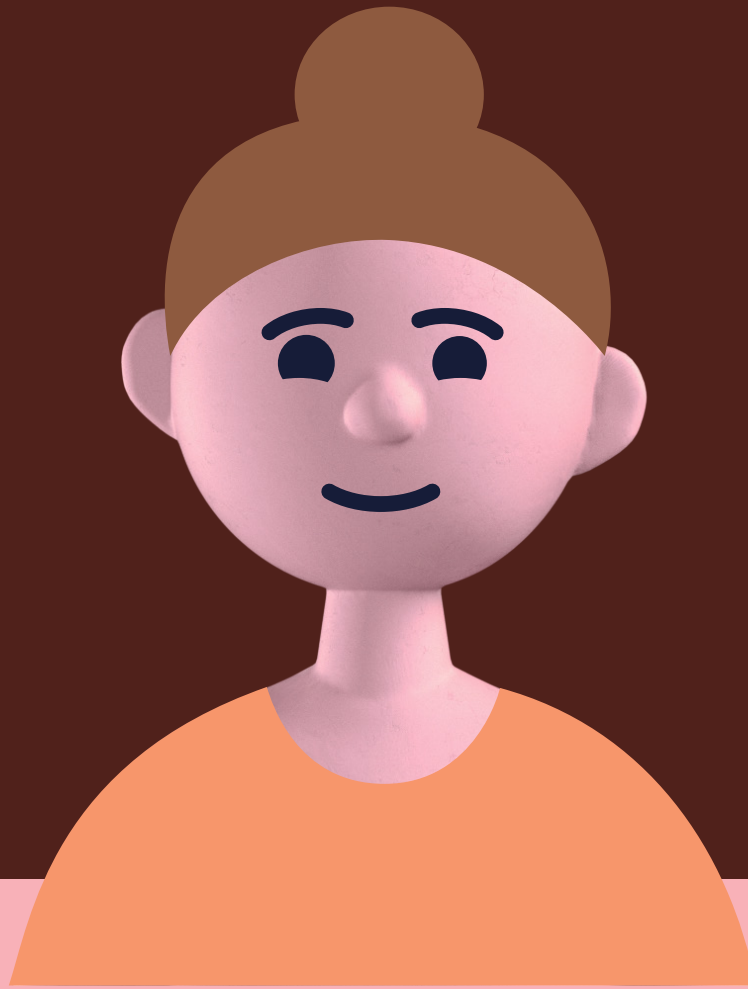
Terre des Hommes International Federation

TdH NL

Terre des Hommes Netherlands

UNCRC

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child



WHO ARE WE?

Terre des Hommes Netherlands (TdH NL) is an international non-governmental organisation (INGO) committed to stopping child exploitation.

Since 1965, TdH NL has protected children around the world from violence, harmful labour, trafficking, sexual exploitation, malnutrition and health issues. Over the years we have built up a strong and committed network of partners globally, and have received support from a loyal and committed donor base that trusts us to deliver in both development contexts and in humanitarian crises.

TdH NL is a member of the Terre des Hommes

International Federation (TDHIF), a network of nine organisations working for the rights of children and to promote equitable development. TDHIF holds a consultative status with the United Nations, International Labour Organization and the Council of Europe. TDHIF is a member of the Joining Forces Alliance, through which the six largest child-focused INGOs in the world aim to use their collective power to accelerate change, secure children their rights and end violence against them.

WHAT DO WE SEEK?

Vision

Children can flourish in a world free of all forms of exploitation.

Mission

**Protect children by preventing and stopping child exploitation.
And by empowering children to make their voices count.**

In executing our mission we seek to address the root causes of exploitation by creating scalable, evidence-based solutions and influencing systemic change rather than providing one-off remedies. We work towards the achievement of four outcomes:

1

“I feel safe and my voice is heard”

Children are empowered, have access to and utilise spaces where they feel safe and their voices are heard.

2

“My environment values and protects me”

Communities address sociocultural norms and other factors leading to child exploitation, and put in place structures that support children to be heard and protected from exploitation.

3

“My country takes action to stop child exploitation”

Duty bearers actively create spaces where children can be heard and contribute to coordinated action that prevents and responds to exploitation of children.

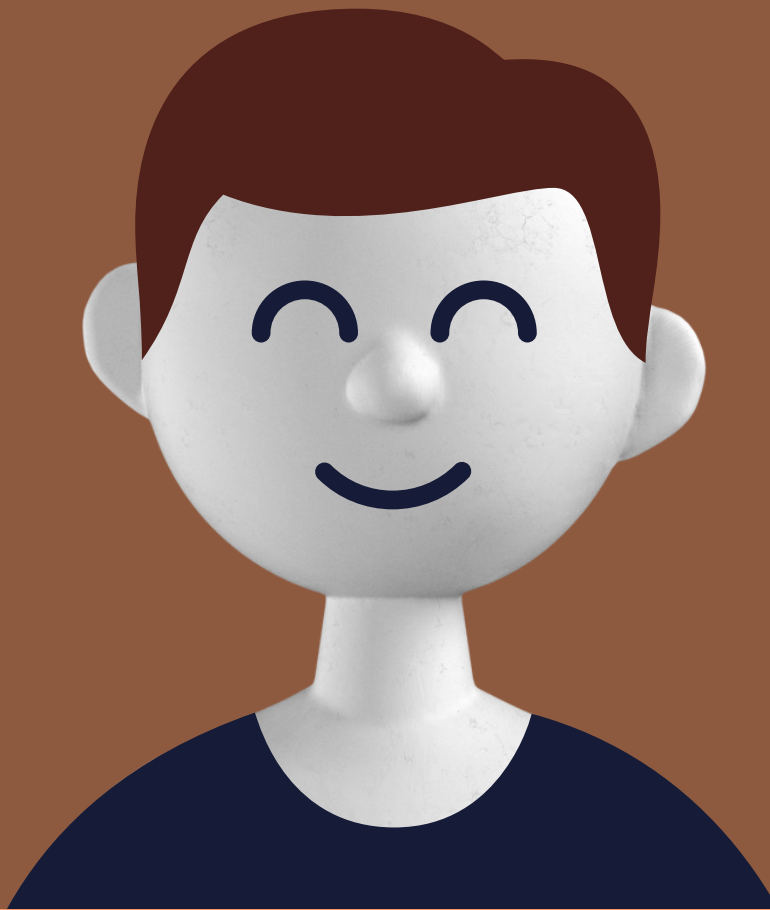
4

“My rights are taken seriously”

Professional bodies, intergovernmental organisations and human rights accountability mechanisms ensure that duty bearers effectively fulfil their commitments and obligations to protect children from exploitation and take their voices into account in all matters affecting them.

बच्चों के अंदर आत्मवश्वास बढ़ाना और
अन्याय के खिलाफ अपनी आवाज उठाना
**‘[Putting children at the centre means] to
raise children’s self-confidence so they
can raise their voices against injustice’**

Pre-teenage boy, India, Your Views on the Future
Survey 2022



WHY IS WHAT WE DO IMPORTANT?

Child exploitation in the world

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is the legal framework for the protection of children's rights worldwide, including their protection from exploitation. Despite the fact that 196 states have ratified the UNCRC, child exploitation remains a widespread issue. According to 2020 estimates, 160 million children worldwide - roughly 63 million girls and 97 million boys - are being exploited for labour (ILO & UNICEF, 2021). Out of these, over 79 million are involved in hazardous work, an increasing number of whom are young children aged 5 - 11 years (UNICEF, 2021b). Meanwhile, one in five girls and one in 13 boys have been

victims of sexual exploitation or abuse before reaching the age of 18 (UNICEF, 2021a).

Every year, events such as armed conflicts, droughts, floods and earthquakes trigger humanitarian crises in different parts of the world, exposing thousands of children to all forms of exploitation. Currently, 302 million people worldwide need humanitarian assistance, half of whom are children (OCHA, 2022).

Aside from the harsh reality of the numbers of victims of child exploitation, challenges arise for children who are raising their voices and

'There are adults that talk to teenage girls...they bother them. They tell them they have 'work' for them if they want work. [These are some of the] different things I have seen online'

Teenage girl, Bolivia, 2022 (Meurens, 2022)

taking action to address critical global concerns, including exploitation. Young people frequently encounter resistance from persons in power because their involvement is viewed as immature. They are also threatened by a troubling global trend of dwindling civic space and decreasing access to safe public spaces, which further limits children's civic rights and freedoms (Plan International, 2021).

Current action towards protecting children from exploitation

The United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has prioritised the strong commitment of states to secure a bright future for the world's children. The SDGs include ending violence, exploitation and abuse of children, achieving gender equality, addressing childhood poverty, and providing an education for all (UN, 2015).

However, progress on achieving the 2030 agenda is lagging behind. The COVID-19 pandemic has wreaked havoc on children's well-being and has set progress back by years, possibly decades. To illustrate, in 2021 - the International Year for the Elimination of Child Labour - instances of child labour rose for the first time in two decades (UN, 2021). Additionally, the prevalence of online sexual exploitation of children exploded in 2021, with unprecedented increases in reported cases of grooming, child sexual abuse materials, sextortion and other abuse and exploitation (Meurens, Notté, 2022).

In such a context, it is all the more important that

'In the society of my country, only children from the nobility can be heard. We need to be heard too.'

Teenage girl, Cambodia, Your Views on the Future Survey 2022

those with the power to take action that protects children from exploitation come together to do so. With the Listen Up! strategy, TdH NL seeks to accelerate progress on ending child exploitation by building coalitions, expanding knowledge and influencing systemic change.

What is child exploitation?

Although there are many references to the term 'child exploitation' by the UN and the INGO community, there is no specific definition of the term in any international or regional standards. In the absence of an internationally agreed definition of the term 'child exploitation', different organisations have developed their own definitions.

TdH NL defines child exploitation as:

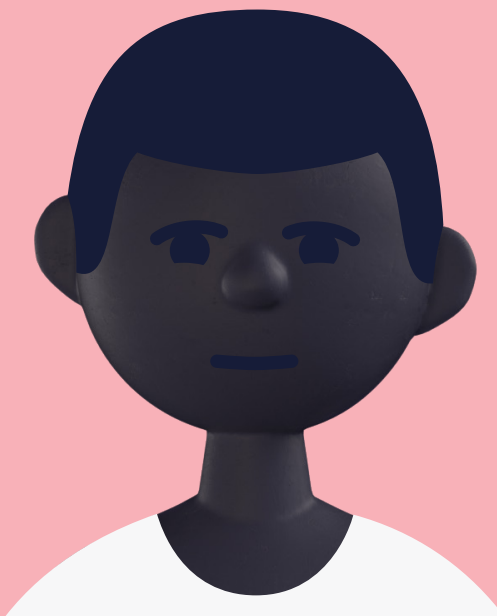
'an individual, group or organisation taking advantage of an imbalance of power to get a child to engage in activities that are detrimental to the child's wellbeing and development, and from which the alleged perpetrator(s) and/or third party(ies) gain some advantage.'

'Now I even have to work much harder since COVID-19 has worsened our situation financially...I am able to earn around 2500 shillings [~1 EUR] if I work hard for a whole day with my parents or by myself at people's coffee farms'

Pre-teen boy, Uganda, 2021 (Ochen, 2021)

Child exploitation includes sexual exploitation, the recruitment and involvement of children in armed conflict, the use of children for criminal activities, the involvement of children in harmful or hazardous work, child marriage, child organ harvesting, sale of children and using children for radicalisation purposes.

Child exploitation is a form of gender-based violence, as gender norms shape the manifestation of the violence and the risks of victimisation (Bott, 2020). Beyond gender, children constitute a diverse group, and therefore, all potential intersecting factors of vulnerability need to be accounted for as they compound the risk of child exploitation. Intersecting factors include age, sexuality, (dis)ability and religious beliefs in addition to gender.



WHAT ARE THE PRIORITIES OF CHILDREN?

In the development of the Listen Up! strategy, we sought the views, priorities and advice of children through the Your Views on The Future Survey 2022.

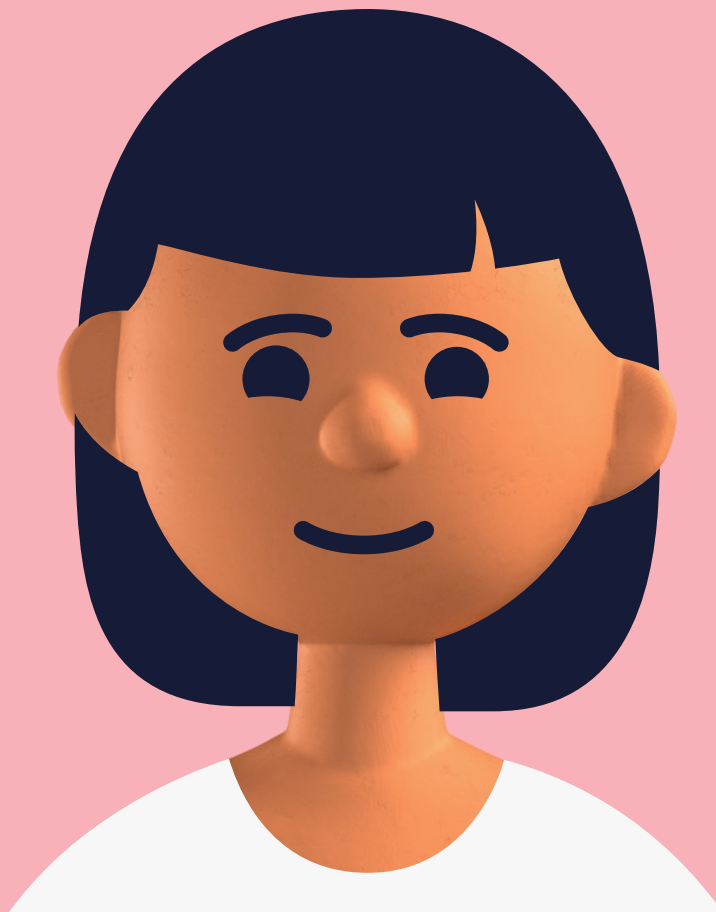
When asked to rank a series of characteristics, **two out of every three children surveyed said that 'listening to children' is the most important quality of a children's organisation.**

In the words of a teenage girl from Ethiopia, *'the way we listen to children affects their lives'*. Some suggestions for ways that children's voices can be heard by adults included activities such as *'giving children a platform to speak up'*, *'through play, children's courts and counselling'*, songs and *'children's events'*. Children also advised that seeking and *'valuing their opinions'* would help people who work with children to *'learn what is good for children'*. Some mentioned *'reaching out to children'* through parents/families, education or social media.

In accordance with children's views, this strategy prioritises 'putting children at the centre' through child empowerment and child participation. Additional opinions and advice from children as captured in the Your Views on The Future Survey 2022 have been incorporated in the development and formulation of TdH NL's strategic goals. These include a strong focus on integrity and influencing meaningful change.

What children think is important





WHAT GUIDES US?

Our values reflect our identity as an organisation, how we want to behave towards each other and others, and how we want others to see us. These values are:

Human-centred

Connect with people through the heart. Value and respect every voice. Collaborate and co-create. Embrace the joy of contributing together with real passion.

Bold

Push boundaries to achieve the mission. Dare to step up. Be enterprising. Learn from mistakes and celebrate successes.

Responsible

Don't look away. Contribute pro-actively because there's much to be done. Be transparent. Use your talents to make the necessary changes happen.

Playful

In difficult circumstances, play and humour can bring hope and joy. Use your playfulness and creativity to find solutions.

CORE PRINCIPLES

In 2022, TdH NL identified five core principles that are at the foundation of our organisation. They are equally important and interdependent. For more information, see the document Core Principles of Terre des Hommes Netherlands.

Children at the centre

Children have the right to be heard in all matters affecting them and are important change agents in the fight against exploitation. We uphold the principles of child participation and engage with children across the spectrum of our work and in the entire organisation, whilst also ensuring their well-being is prioritised. We particularly seek to reach those children who, through their intersectional characteristics, are most vulnerable. Child safeguarding is the responsibility of everyone in our organisation. The best interests of children are at the heart of every decision we make.

Child safeguarding is the responsibility of everyone in our organisation. The best interests of children are at the heart of every decision we make.

Safety & wellbeing

We take a trauma-informed approach to our work, recognising that many of those we work with may have experienced trauma that continues to impact their lives. Similarly, our own staff may have experienced trauma, or may be subject to secondary trauma through their work. In order to best serve the children we work for, the safety and wellbeing of our staff as well as the people we work with and for is important.

'The impact we make on children and society should last for many years to make a sustainable difference'

Teenage girl, Kenya, Your Views on the Future Survey 2022

What is intersectionality?

Intersectionality is a theoretical framework that helps us think about overlapping or intersecting factors that can be empowering or oppressive. Over the past three decades the concept of intersectionality has broadened from considering the compounded oppression of gender and race to a limitless set of factors, including socioeconomic class, age, sexual orientation and disability.

TdH NL attaches great importance to integrity. We follow our values and behavioural codes, and have functioning integrity systems in case concerns arise from either children, staff, partners or members of the public.

Intersectionality & power awareness

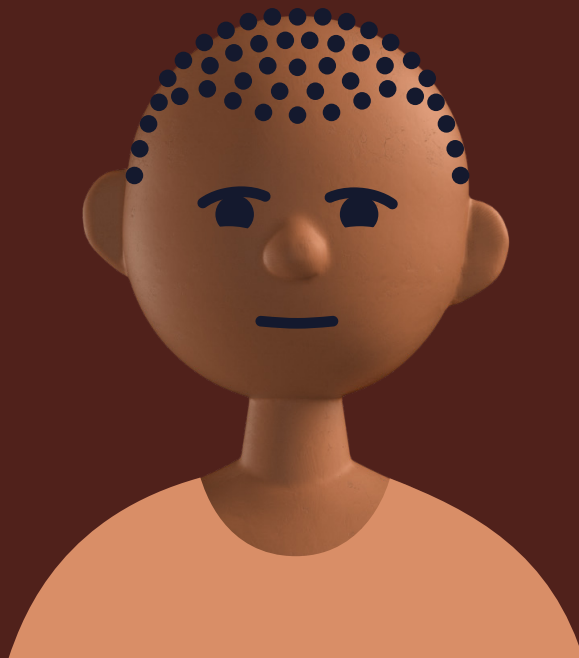
In a world of structural injustice and inequality, we proactively and continually assess and analyse how our organisational processes and structures contribute to power imbalances. As part of this principle, we pay special attention to the compounding disempowerment of children because of their gender, disability and/or placement in alternative care.

Meaningful and strategic partnerships

We recognise that realising our vision is not something we can achieve on our own. TdH NL takes a broad view on partnerships, remaining open to opportunities to engage with any actor that can add value to our work and goals while sharing our core principles. We emphasise 'meaningful' partnerships because we want to engage in partnerships where each partner brings their own unique value, and where that value is recognised by all.

Sustainability

We strive to be an organisation that promotes and achieves sustainability - socially, environmentally and financially. Our work contributes to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Goals 5 (Gender Equality), 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) and 17 (Partnerships for the Goals).



HOW WILL WE REALISE CHANGE?

Economic development, shifting power dynamics and the agenda for localisation of development and humanitarian work requires INGOs to reassess how best they can add value in a rapidly changing world.

There is a growing consensus on the need for INGOs to move away from delivering direct services towards a focus on collaboration and solidarity with the local actors that exist all around the world. INGOs can have an important role in addressing the universal systemic issues of inequality through gathering and supporting the transfer of knowledge, building connections, creating advocacy space, and using their influence to push for change.

It is our strategic ambition that by 2030, **Terre des Hommes Netherlands is a catalyst for systemic change to stop child exploitation.**

We do this by empowering children and their communities, connecting them with those who have power to enact change, and utilising our knowledge and expertise to co-create sustainable, evidence-based solutions.

In the coming seven years we will develop and position our organisation to sustainably address the root causes of child exploitation. Only by changing the systems that enable and drive child exploitation can we realise our vision: that children can flourish in a world free of all forms of exploitation.

STRATEGIC GOALS

The eight strategic goals of TdH NL guide us towards realising our strategic ambition. They will give direction to the way our organisation will work and the organisational priorities we will set leading up to 2030. By achieving these goals, we aim to become more efficient and impactful in our mission.

Goal 1

Accountable partnerships

TdH NL engages in meaningful partnerships that always remain accountable to children and communities

Trust, collaboration and accountability are key pillars of our work. We and our partners are accountable to every child and community that our work reaches. In all our partnerships we hold ourselves and our partners accountable for the impact of what we do.

We are committed to sustainable interventions that recognise our responsibility in being present

in a community (ourselves or through partners), to keep the best interest of the child in mind and to do no harm. We also consider children and those close to them as essential partners in finding durable solutions to stopping child exploitation.

We stand by our partnership principles based on mutual respect for the contribution that each party brings to achieve the common purpose. We promote co-creation, capacity-building and learning with partners and other stakeholders.

Goal 2

Valuing our people

TdH NL is an inclusive place where passionate people love to contribute

TdH NL is an organisation in which we are honest with each other, open and reliable, compliment each other, learn from each other, discuss matters, consciously weigh risks and make choices. We value everyone who contributes to our organisation - staff, volunteers and all others.

Our organisation has an inclusive work environment where people of all identities and backgrounds feel safe and happy to work. It is

an environment where people feel enabled and valued, and where they are supported to learn and grow. We ensure a culture of integrity in our organisation and foster a space where people feel safe to speak up.

We uphold our core principles, including ensuring both the mental and physical safety and wellbeing of our staff. We create a safe and supportive working environment for exploitation survivors specifically. Our policies, systems and ways of working are equitable across our global organisation.

Goal 3

Child participation

Children are empowered to participate in building and sharing knowledge on child exploitation

We recognise children as experts in their own experiences and we empower them to participate in research, advocacy and learning on child exploitation issues. To generate quality research, evaluation and knowledge products we need to capture the diverse voices of children

experiencing different intersectional realities, including children with disabilities, girls, survivors of exploitation and children without parental care.

We recognise that knowledge-building contributes to empowerment and the prevention of child exploitation. We engage children in a trauma-informed manner and in accordance with their evolving capacities.

Goal 4

Insight

TdH NL uses an intersectional approach to generate new insight into what works to prevent or stop child exploitation

In each context where we work, intersecting factors combine to put some children at heightened risk of exploitation. These diverse groups of children require us to understand their specific vulnerabilities and apply that insight to drive more effective and responsive interventions. We want to better meet the

specific needs of groups of children who have been victimised, but also more accurately target prevention efforts.

Many of the social norms that undermine children's rights also hinder open discussion about gender and intersectionality. Therefore, in using an intersectional approach we will generate and share methods that are respectful yet effective.

Goal 5

Influential expertise

TdH NL is an influential expert organisation that expands knowledge on child exploitation, how to prevent it and how to respond to it

We achieve this by conducting research and facilitating learning on child exploitation. Much of this research and learning will be gained through our collaborative partnerships. Children, communities and local civil societies hold the knowledge on what affects them and have a crucial role in enabling our learning.

The knowledge and expertise TdH NL will gather and share covers:

- The nature, scale and shifting trends of child exploitation issues that children face;
- Understanding the root causes, risks and protective factors of child exploitation;

- Children's experiences of exploitation and empowerment;
- Co-creation of research, programmes and advocacy with children;
- The interventions that are effective in preventing child exploitation (implementation science); and
- Effective policies and practices for responding to child exploitation and victim support.

In order to share our knowledge, we contribute to a public platform that enables learning on child exploitation, and we actively work to build and exchange capacities with our staff, partners, children and their communities, and other stakeholders, on child exploitation and how to sustainably prevent it.

Goal 6

Action

TdH NL supports the implementation of evidence-based, scalable and sustainable programmes to stop child exploitation in a systemic way

In collaboration with children, communities and our partners, we ensure that our programmes are founded on human rights and child rights frameworks and are (co-)designed based on existing knowledge as well as new insight generated through research and learning from what works.

We establish programme models that work to address the systems that enable child exploitation and that are based on solid evidence from research, testing and evaluation. We take action to scale these models by sharing our findings with other actors and supporting them to implement our programme models.

In all our programmes, we seek to define best practices and to document and disseminate learnings from both successes and failures. To succeed in this we have strong monitoring, evaluation and learning systems to capture and manage knowledge. This knowledge of what works to stop child exploitation informs our advocacy work.

We ensure the sustainability of our work by designing programmes with a sustainability strategy (sometimes known as 'exit plan') in place. This prevents TdH NL from unintentionally doing harm or creating dependencies by making sure the children and communities we work with and for are not reliant on our presence indefinitely.

Goal 7

Advocacy

TdH NL engages in evidence-based advocacy with and for children at local, national, regional and international levels to prevent and stop child exploitation

We do this by strategically bringing the voices of children, families and communities together with our own knowledge into spaces where duty bearers and decision-makers are present. Where there are no existing spaces for engaging with decision-makers, we seek to create them.

We see our role as one that provides knowledge, advocacy, networks and access to platforms to enable meaningful change to happen through joint effort with others. When needed, we are there to push stakeholders to take action, and

we can at times be a critical friend to those who are reluctant to act. We will also advocate with institutional donors to prioritise child exploitation issues and adopt funding practices that enable organisations to work on systemic change.

We advocate, lobby and, if needed, utilise legal mechanisms to prevent and stop child exploitation by working with and for children at local, national, regional and international levels to influence change in the systems that facilitate and perpetuate child exploitation. We do so using quality evidence, strategic partnerships, networking, children and community views and our knowledge and expertise. This work is driven by global programmes and coherent country, regional and global advocacy agendas.

Goal 8

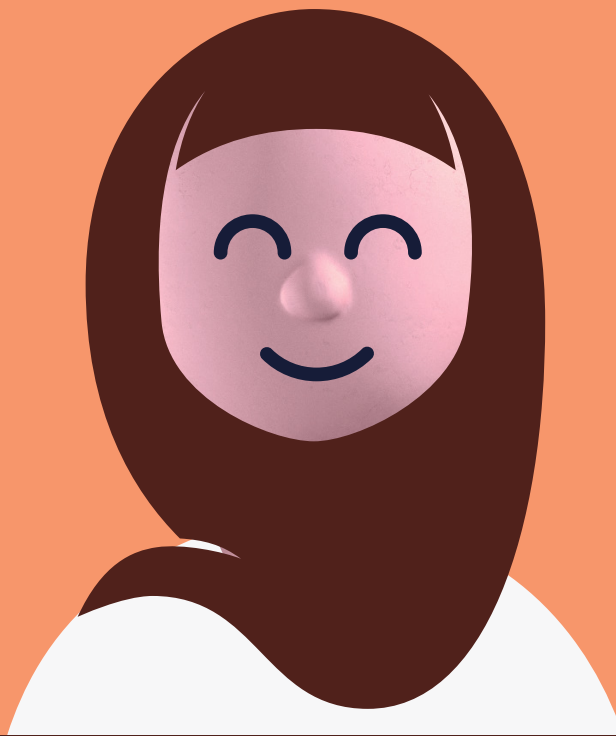
Resource mobilisation

Terre des Hommes Netherlands has sustainable financing and is able to deliver our work in line with strategic ambitions through a healthy and diversified funding portfolio

We achieve this by making strategic choices on where to focus our efforts, by being clear on the value we deliver, and by setting up efficient and service-oriented fundraising and grant management systems. We work towards a position where we are able to drive our own strategy and ambition by showing our added value and impact and in doing so, influencing the donor community agenda.

We seek long-term partners to join us in our cause, including institutional donors, trusts and foundations, private individuals, corporates and our network of shops and volunteers. Within these segments we position ourselves clearly, and develop propositions and proposals aiming at building sustainable relationships and collaborations. Where possible we support our donors and volunteers to become ambassadors that help us in further increasing our support base, network and impact.





HOW WILL WE MOVE FORWARD?

The priorities set in this document will guide our choices and direction for the coming seven years. However, we must also remain agile and adaptable, while at the same time not swaying with every new wind.

Contexts, global priorities, and the environments in which we work are ever changing. In the face of such uncertainty, we must be guided by our mission and our strategic ambition. To ensure we stay the course while adapting where needed, we will monitor and evaluate our strategy at set intervals.

Our ability to realise systemic change, to learn and dare to follow the evidence, to communicate, mobilise resources, and engage in meaningful partnerships, are the ingredients that together enable us to achieve our mission. At the heart

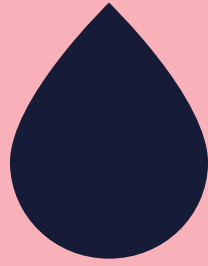
of it all are the people in our organisation, and that we work with and for. Together, we create change so that children can flourish in a world free of all forms of exploitation.

'It is important for me to have a hold in the future to provide change not only to the current generation but also to the next'

Teenage girl, Philippines, Your Views on the Future Survey 2022

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