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The UNFOLDING Conference

How can we nurture a culture where each and every child can unfold their unique potential and engage in society?

We need to explore a new image of children that moves far beyond our old image of children as objects of care, as consumers, as future workforce, as “blank pages”. A new way of viewing and treating children as competent partners, with whom we construct the world.

We need to understand learning and living as integral processes encompassing physical, emotional and mental aspects, as well as a spiritual dimension. This will allow us to move from a disease-and deficit-centred education and healthcare to promoting health and well-being.

Shifting this paradigm will improve the quality of children’s relationships with themselves and their natural and human environments - foundational elements for the quality of their childhoods.

• With this conference we aim to explore how we can implement a different perspective moving from standardised to child-centred approaches and from sectoral to systemic solutions in policy and society.

Developing core capacities

At the heart of the conference is our intention to encourage the unfolding of each child’s unique potential: the specific gifts, innate qualities and expression of life purpose that seem to be present from the very beginning of life.

As every parent knows, fundamental differences in how children interact with their environments can be noticed in infancy, and continue throughout life. Too often differences in ways of communicating and learning are causes of exclusion and are viewed as problems to be resolved rather than as natural patterns of expression to be supported. When children and adults are allowed to function in their own natural ways of being, participation in all activities becomes more engaging, meaningful and inclusive.

• Throughout the conference, we will explore ways of observing, listening, and inquiring that allow individual processes to emerge and flourish, and create environments that support the unique ways of functioning of every person. These processes for exploring uniqueness are some of the core capacities for those working with children.

Core capacities are fundamental skills and behaviours that are implicitly required for learning to learn and other complex competences such as creativity, problem-solving, emotional self-regulation, and critical thinking. Recognizing that these core capacities are vital for the full expression of our humanity and our individual unique potential, we are committed to make their development an explicit priority in all our learning environments.



The UNFOLDING Conference

“It always seems impossible until it’s done.”

- Nelson Mandela

Hosted by the Higher Institute for Family Sciences, the Alliance for Childhood and the Learning for Well-being Consortium with participation of Eurochild, Universal Education Foundation, IASWECE, ELIANT, CEJI and EPTO. This conference has the generous support of the Evens Foundation.

With this event we create the opportunity for stakeholders from all over Europe, but in particular in Flanders to have a meaningful and deep dialogue about their policies for children and childhood and to lay the foundation for a fruitful and constructive cooperation.

Trans-disciplinarity

Actors from all sectors of society are invited to collaborate beyond their silos: a trans-disciplinary approach, bridging perspectives from practice and research, on how children relate to themselves, to others and to their environments.

The conference is designed with interactive sessions, artistic experiences and participative methods that will stimulate an innovative process of mutual learning. Learning opportunities that will engage different ways of learning and communicating.

We are working in cooperation with children and youth.

Inspiring initiatives and projects will be presented during a marketplace.

Participants will explore seeing children as competent partners and meet different ways of how such perspective is brought into reality, working at the intersection of sectors and disciplines.

We are inviting participants to engage in a collective experience that serves the children we work and live with, that serves each of us individually and that serves our communities and societies.

Through this event we are creating together a space where we can:

- be **stimulated** by the enthusiasm of speakers, workshop facilitators and other participants
- meet one another in **an inspiring community** of professionals working with and for children
- ask questions, **learn from each other**, sharing our experiences and knowledge on all levels
- create new pathways **thinking beyond sectors and silos**, be inspired by the experience of an interdisciplinary perspective
- explore **new ways of looking at situations**, others, ourselves - find different ways of approaching daily challenges
- make **new contacts** with whom partnerships can be formed to solve problems at local, regional or national levels

One event in three parts

You can choose how to take part in the conference in a way that is tailored to your preferences. This conference has been designed as a WHOLE experience, so we hope that many of you will be able to join us for the full duration. However, you can combine the elements of this event in three parts in the way that best fits your needs.

Reflecting together

WED, OCTOBER 23

Welcome reception, panel discussion and round table dinner conversations

International experts will reflect on the image of the child and its implications for children and for our societies during a panel discussion.

The panelists are: Sir Al Aynsley-Green (former Children's Commissioner England), Maria Herczog (President Eurochild), Luc Stevens (NIVOZ, Netherlands), Bruno Vanobbergen (Flemish Child Rights Commissioner). This is followed by a Learning for Well-being Dinner with round table conversations, facilitated by inspiring professionals from different fields of work.

What are the benefits for you:

- The great opportunity to enlarge your network, meet people from different sectors and different countries and cultures, working with children and young people whom you may not usually have the opportunity to meet for exchange of views and experiences
- Share your questions and insights with experienced practitioners and researchers
- Get engaged in informal though rich discussions and enjoy a wonderful evening!

Insights and dynamic learning

THU, OCTOBER 24

A whole day of key note speeches and interactive workshops

This day will address some of the core issues our societies are facing in education, parenting support, counseling, health care, children's participation and child rights.

We are delighted to bring together a broad range of international professionals in a conference focused on mutual learning. How can we move beyond the rhetoric of children's rights and well-being? How can we implement innovative ideas by partnering with children?

What are the benefits for you:

- This unique mix of national and international experiences is the ideal melting pot to inspire, but also to challenge each other and to think "out of the box"
- Keynote presentations will set the scene followed by interactive workshops that will enable participants to engage in deeper reflection around specific areas
- You will explore together with professionals from different sectors how diverse ways of learning and communicating can be applied in a practical way

Getting involved: Open Space

FRI & SAT, OCTOBER 25-26

One day and a half in an Open Space Technology Session

ALL participants are invited to bring in their knowledge and insights to discuss and plan action on the topic of the conference.

We will share questions, best practice examples, ideas, projects - and move forward to concrete actions - that MAKE A DIFFERENCE to our children's well-being.

The Open Space is designed to allow all who are present to create the agenda of the work together - **click to read more.**

What are the benefits for you:

- These sessions will bring together a community of concerned citizens and professionals to address the challenges, issues and concerns that our children face
- Experience the power of collective intelligence by working collegially in a setting with no hierarchy
- Participate in developing shared actions that support a significant shift in how children are viewed and treated

Practical Information

Programme

Click to see the full programme.

Venue

Hoger Instituut voor Gezinswetenschappen

Huart Hamoiriaan 136
B-1030 Brussel

Click to see the conference venue on a map.

Time

**Wednesday, October 23 5 pm
until Saturday, October 26 at 1.30 pm**

Fees

Fees include conference registration, conference pack and catering. Our caterer provides organic vegetarian food made with special care - since we want you to really enjoy all aspects of this event.

	Early Bird (until Sept. 23)	Regular (until Oct. 18)	Late and on-site (from Oct. 19)
Full conference (Wednesday - Saturday)	250€	300 €	350 €
Panel and Dinner Wednesday (Oct. 23)	45 €	55 €	65 €
Keynotes and workshops Thursday (Oct. 24)	110 €	130 €	155 €
Open Space Friday & Saturday	130 €	145 €	165 €
Students	100 €	100 €	100 €
Children and young people (-18)	Free	Free	Free

CLICK TO REGISTER!

Contact details:

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www.unfolding2013.org