



# Children out of View

A study into the home and living environments of undocumented children



## Authors

Mayke Kromhout

Ariëtte Reijersen van Buuren

Raymond van Kloppenburg

Lia van Doorn

with the co-operation of Carla van Os

May 2014

# Children out of view

*A study into the home and living environments of undocumented children*

This study was performed by the Hogeschool Utrecht, Defence for Children and the LOS foundation.



## **Texts:**

Dr. M Kromhout

Mr. A. Reijersen van Buuren

Dr. R Kloppenburg

Dr. L. van Doorn

with the co-operation of. mr. drs. E.C.C. van Os

## **Reference group:**

Prof. dr. M. Kalverboer & dr. Dr. Elianne Zijlstra (University of Groningen)

Mr. K. Kloosterboer (UNICEF the Netherlands)

Drs. N. Oepkes (Municipality Utrecht)

Drs. T. Smets (Stichting Kinderpostzegels [stamps sold to benefit children] The Netherlands)

Prof. dr. R. Staring (Erasmus University Rotterdam)

## **Contact:**

Stichting LOS, [www.stichtinglos.nl](http://www.stichtinglos.nl)

It is mandatory to acknowledge the source

This study was funded by:



Municipality of Utrecht  
Korte Minrebroederstraat 2  
PO Box 16200  
3500 CE Utrecht

ERASMUS SCHOOL OF LAW SCHOOL OF LAW  
Department of Public Law  
Prof. Dr. R.H.J.M. Staring  
*Visitors* Burgemeester Oudlaan 50  
L-Building/room L7-013  
*Mail address* PO Box 1738  
3000 DR Rotterdam  
The Netherlands  
*Phone* +31 10 408 8807/81505  
*Fax* +31 10 408 9195  
*E-mail* [staring@law.eur.nl](mailto:staring@law.eur.nl)  
*Homepage* <http://www.esl.eur.nl/english>

Our reference

Date

U2914.036-RS/kp

1 May 2014

Subject

Study report Children out of view

Dear Sir/Madam,

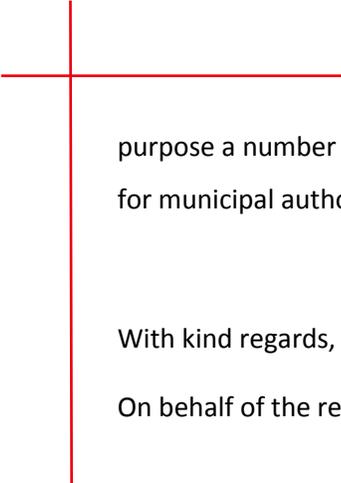
This letter accompanies the report *Children out of view. A study into the home and living environments of undocumented children*. This report is the result of empirical research performed by a large number of people involved in the research project 'Invisible Children in Utrecht'.

The report and the project that was its basis are important for three reasons. Firstly the report holds up a mirror to us and it questions us as to where we as the Dutch society want to go in a time of extensive migration and how we want to relate to migrants. In a world with free movement of ideas and goods, we deem a society where migrants can freely find a home and stay undesirable. At the same time various specific movements are noticeable which voice the wish to make exceptions for specific groups in specific situations. The Child's Pardon is a case in point to which we immediately have to add that the problems of children with illegal residence have not been solved, due to the restricted interpretation of the Child's Pardon.

Another reason why this report is important is the methodical way in which the students of the disciplines Welfare Rights, Social Work and Service Provision and Social Education Services have performed the interviews with the children and adolescents. It is important that the Hogeschool Utrecht has reserved room in the curriculum of these disciplines to pay attention to the living environment and the specific problems of this group of 'undocumented children'. The students did not perceive the interviews as an impersonal assignment they had to carry out to earn course credits. These conversations - as they themselves put forward during their training - have left an indelible impression. These experiences with a relatively unknown group of children and with peers have also meant that the students later on in their professional lives will be familiar with the problems of people without valid residence documents and that they can respond to these problems better.

But above all the authors have succeeded in gathering a wealth of valuable information about the hidden living environment and complex living situation of these children without residence permits. It is beyond doubt that the value of this report is the penetrating way in which these findings have been described. The image that will irrevocably force itself upon the reader is that of children who - just like all other children - want to play and who can be curious, cheerful or naughty. But another image that will force itself upon the reader is that of children who grow up in poverty and who will lag behind in school for example because they have to move house frequently; these children cannot not have a fulfilling development. These children feel under psychological pressure and perceive their undocumented status as a heavy secret that they have to keep hidden from as many people as possible in order not to be detained by the police.

I hope that the report *Children out of view* can serve as a means to raise more awareness for this group of vulnerable children and will contribute towards improving their living situation. For this



purpose a number of specific recommendations have been made in this report, which may serve for municipal authorities as the first steps for improving the situation of these children.

With kind regards,

On behalf of the reference group

Prof. dr. Richard Staring

Department of Criminology

Erasmus University Rotterdam

## Index

<b>FOREWORD</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>SUMMARY</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>GLOSSARY AND STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT</b> .....	<b>16</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH QUESTION</b> .....	<b>17</b>
1.1    REASON FOR THE STUDY .....	17
1.2    STUDY DESIGN .....	18
1.3    PURPOSE OF THE STUDY AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS .....	19
<b>2.    ESTIMATE OF THE NUMBER OF UNDOCUMENTED CHILDREN IN UTRECHT</b> .....	<b>21</b>
2.1    ESTIMATES IN LITERATURE .....	21
2.2    ESTIMATES ACCORDING TO SCHOOLS, CHILD HEALTH CARE CENTRES AND MUNICIPAL REGISTRATION FILES IN UTRECHT	25
<b>3.    HOME AND LIVING ENVIRONMENTS OF UNDOCUMENTED CHILDREN</b> .....	<b>30</b>
3.1    LITERATURE ABOUT THE HOME ENVIRONMENT AND THE DEVELOPMENTAL SITUATION OF UNDOCUMENTED CHILDREN	30
3.2    INTERVIEWS WITH UNDOCUMENTED CHILDREN.....	33
<i>Delineation of the sample</i> .....	34
<i>Recruitment of the children</i> .....	35
<i>Interviewers</i> .....	38
<i>Interviews</i> .....	39
3.3    BACKGROUND INFORMATION OF THE CHILDREN WHO WERE INTERVIEWED .....	40
3.4    DEVELOPMENTAL REQUIREMENTS WITHIN THE FAMILY .....	41
<i>Privacy</i> .....	47
<i>Affective support</i> .....	49
<i>The role of the parent</i> .....	49
<i>Health</i> .....	50
<i>Considerations as to the decision to visit a physician and access to additional medical care</i> .....	50
3.5    DEVELOPMENTAL REQUIREMENTS OUTSIDE THE FAMILY .....	51
<i>Contact with children the same age</i> .....	52
<i>Education</i> .....	53
<i>Social network</i> .....	55
3.6    PERCEPTION OF ILLEGALITY.....	56
<i>Living with a secret</i> .....	57
<i>Fear from authorities</i> .....	58
<i>Establishing emotional relationships</i> .....	58
<b>4.    CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS</b> .....	<b>60</b>
4.1    CONCLUSIONS ABOUT THE ESTIMATES OF THE NUMBER OF UNDOCUMENTED CHILDREN IN UTRECHT .....	61
4.2    CONCLUSIONS FROM THE INTERVIEWS WITH UNDOCUMENTED CHILDREN.....	62
<i>Developmental requirements within the family</i> .....	63
<i>Developmental requirements outside the family</i> .....	64
4.3    RECOMMENDATIONS .....	68

**SOURCES ..... 70**

**ANNEX 1 DEVELOPMENTAL REQUIREMENTS ACCORDING TO KALVERBOER & ZIJLSTRA (2008)..... 73**

**ANNEX 2 QUESTIONNAIRES CHILD HEALTH CARE CENTRES AND SCHOOLS..... 75**

**ANNEX 3 ITEM LIST SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS ..... 77**

**ANNEX 4 MEMBERS REFERENCE GROUP..... 87**

**ANNEX 5 NAMES INTERVIEWERS..... 88**

## Foreword

You have a unique report in front of you. Both the subject and the way in which the information has been obtained are special. We are being presented with an impression of what undocumented children in the Netherlands have to cope with, what their daily lives look like and in my view these issues are very important.

Undocumented, out of view, illegal. The descriptions of the children in this publication emphasize what they are not or what they lack. They have no documents, they are not legal and they are not officially in view. This in itself, being defined on the basis of what is lacking, is significant.

Because this report also concerns children who are indeed something and who do have qualities. This report simply concerns children who are funny or clever or naughty, creative, lively or shy. It concerns children who have parents, brothers, friends and schoolteachers. And what they also have is rights, the Child Rights that have been agreed internationally, apply to them just as to any other child.

As the Child Ombudsman I exert myself to see to it that Child's Rights are being observed for all the children in The Netherlands. I therefore find it important that a first attempt has been made to outline the number of undocumented children in the city of Utrecht. This turned out to be difficult. They are and often stay genuinely 'out of view'.

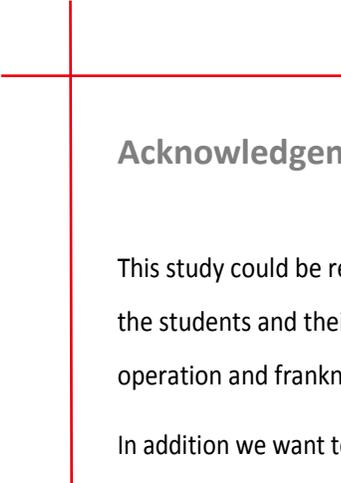
I am happy to see that this study presents us with a wealth of information about these children's lives. The researchers were able to outline undocumented children's daily lives by means of extensive interviews with children from the four large cities. This report enables us to read what it is like to be fearful on a regular basis or to live with a secret. Growing up without worries is not their lot in life. We read that it is difficult to just be a child, and that a real childhood is out of the question in many cases. The majority of these children want to stay in the Netherlands, but worry about their future. The study also showed that the living standards are often insufficient by far.

I think it is of major importance that this report shows what the childhood of these children looks like. I found other striking reasons for hope. The majority of the children have indicated that family and friends were present in their lives and most of these children attended school. The study also showed that many of these children were surrounded by a group of helpful Dutch people who care about the fate of this vulnerable group.

Let's not forget that the government also has a role to play and should care about the fate of the children as well. This obligation is simply a consequence of the International Convention on the Rights of the Child. Therefore the recommendations rightly focus on the municipalities.

Just as all children these children who are 'out of view' deserve the prospect of a future!

*Marc Dullaert – the Dutch Child Ombudsman*



## Acknowledgements

This study could be realized thanks to the dedication and co-operation of various intermediary organizations, the students and their trainers. We owe the children and their relatives a lot of thanks for their ready co-operation and frankness.

In addition we want to thank the members of the reference group for the valuable input that they have provided during the various stages of the study.

We are also very grateful to the Stichting Kinderpostzegels Nederland [stamps sold for the benefit of children], the municipality of Utrecht and the Hogeschool for funding this study

## Summary

Since the early nineties living in the Netherlands without the required documents has become increasingly difficult. Policies with respect to migrants, which are becoming ever more restrictive, have their consequences for municipalities as well. After all, undocumented parents and their children, who are trying to hold out, live within municipal boundaries. Local authorities are faced with real people and not just with abstract policies.

This study focused on the home and living environments of undocumented children in the city of Utrecht and in the other G4 cities (Rotterdam, Amsterdam, and The Hague). The objective of the study is gaining insight into the extent, background and into the developmental situation of these children.

The research questions were:

1. How many undocumented children are living in the Netherlands in general and in the municipality of Utrecht in particular?
2. How do undocumented children perceive their home and living environments?
3. To what extent have the developmental requirements of undocumented children been safeguarded?
4. Which recommendations can be phrased for the purpose of drawing up municipal policies that safeguard the developmental requirements of undocumented children?

Initial attempts were made to perform the study among children from Utrecht alone but in order to be able to answer the sub-questions 2 - 4 including, in the course of the study the research group was extended to the cities of Rotterdam, The Hague, and Amsterdam.

In order to answer the research questions two substudies have been performed, the first of which was quantitative in nature; this study attempted to estimate the number of undocumented children in Utrecht. Two methods of data collection were applied - information was gathered through municipal registration files and a questionnaire was distributed at elementary schools, at institutions for secondary education, and at child health centres.

The second substudy was qualitative in nature and focused on the development of undocumented children in Utrecht, The Hague, Amsterdam, and Rotterdam. The results of this substudy were based on a brief literature study and on semi-structured interviews with 29 undocumented children aged 6-19 years.

#### *The role of students*

An additional objective of the study is that both the National Support Centre for Undocumented Migrants [the LOS foundation] and Defence for Children want to bring under the attention of prospective professionals in the social and legal services the problems of this group of vulnerable children. For these and other reasons we opted for performing this study in collaboration with students at Hogeschool Utrecht. The students interviewed the children. This had a profound effect on the students; the interviews made them aware of the precarious circumstances in which these children have to grow up. In their reflection reports and during their graduation presentations the students showed a strong commitment towards and compassion with undocumented children.

#### *Statistics*

The literature does not provide much information on the number of undocumented children in Utrecht. It turned out to be rather difficult to obtain data about the number of undocumented migrants residing in the Netherlands and in the city of Utrecht. Moreover, these studies provide no age-specific information from which to infer the number of children. Therefore no conclusions about the number of undocumented children and their backgrounds could be drawn on the basis of the existing literature for the city of Utrecht.

From information from the municipality of Utrecht it emerged that 45 school-going children and adolescents live in this city although they are not registered in the municipal register [Gemeentelijke Basis Administratie (GBA)]. Presumably a part of these children is undocumented.

A survey supplemented with a series of telephone calls among intermediaries provided summary information about the number of undocumented children in the city. The impression arose that the children are being shielded from the outside world in order to preserve their anonymity. On further inquiry informers from the institutions indicated that they had doubts as to whether the number of undocumented children in Utrecht is actually large. When estimates were made through the help of

intermediaries it also came to light that it was not always clear whether children could be considered to belong to the group of undocumented children in Utrecht.

### *Home and living environments*

The second substudy addressed two questions: how do undocumented children perceive their home and living environments and to what extent is the fulfilment of developmental requirements under threat. For this purpose the fourteen developmental requirements from Kalverboer and Zijlstra (2008) have been applied; these requirements have been derived from the remedial teaching sciences' vision on the International Convention on the Rights of the Child. For the present study a selection from these conditions was made. The study focused on the developmental requirements of livelihood, living conditions, parenting climate and health within the family as well as on certain developmental requirements outside the family such as social network, education, contact with children in the same age group, and on future prospects.

### *Poverty*

Interviews were conducted with 29 children from 27 households, a part of which were completely dependent on others for their livelihood. Some households have some earnings from jobs (usually in the informal circuit), such as cleaning or newspaper rounds. A small number of these households received living expenses. Although the study does not provide information as to the exact extent of these earnings from the interviews with the children it emerged that the incomes are insecure and low.

The children indicated that they lacked basic things due to a shortage of money. For example some children mentioned that there was not enough money to buy school necessities, let alone sports clothing. Others said that sports clubs' membership fees are too high. Other things the children reported they were lacking were proper footwear and clothing, bicycles, computers and Internet connections. The children received little pocket money if any. Sometimes they were given a little money by people from their networks. In addition to this the interviews have brought to light that the children's eating patterns are not very varied, perhaps even unhealthy. Some children indicated that there was not enough money to buy fruit for example.

### *Living environment*

As for the living environment the interviews showed that the children and their families frequently moved house and that a lot of them were living in cramped circumstances. Many children were living with their parents in one room rented from a private landlord. Others lived with their parents in relatives' or friends' houses or they stayed in sheltered accommodation. Some children told that the family had not enough (space for) beds so that several family members had to sleep in a bed together or on the living room floor.

### *Family life*

The children indicated that they had the sense that they received a lot of support from their parents, brothers, and sisters. Some of the children who were growing up with their mothers alone expressly indicated that they were missing their fathers. A few children mentioned that they had witnessed domestic violence. Some children seemed to have taken over some of their parents' roles and responsibilities (parentification). This gives rise to the question whether they have sufficient opportunity to be children and to develop as children.

Fifty per cent of the children (n=15) indicated that they had an extensive group of friends - outside the family.

### *Health*

Apart from the worrisome diet and the huge psychological pressure experienced by the children, the interviews did not provide information that was specifically related to the children's health. The children did not face many problems if they wanted to visit a general practitioner. Other care providers did not seem to be equally accessible

### *School*

All the children who were interviewed attended school, the majority at pre-vocational secondary education level. They indicated that they liked going to school, even though their living conditions took their toll on school performance. The children perceived their contacts with teachers as supportive. A little under fifty per cent of the children were lagging behind in school. The children thought that this was due to the fact that they had moved house many times or that problems between their parents were the cause.

### *Secrets and fear*

The interviews made it clear that the children suffered from considerable psychological pressure. A number of the children indicated that they felt they were living with a secret and expressed the fear that they would be detained by the police (in the streets). They did not know whom to trust either. In addition they worried about their future, which they perceived as highly uncertain. Two-thirds of the children wanted to stay in the Netherlands. The majority of these children have no ties with their country of origin (or that of their parents), they have no command of the language of their country of origin and they do not want to live there either (apart from a few cases).

### *Protective coats*

It is notable that undocumented children seemed to have a protective circle of people around them - citizens, volunteers, care workers and agencies, teachers and other relevant people parties who care about the fate of these children. They provide the children and their families with services such as occasional donations of money or goods, practical and emotional support, they keep a 'finger on the pulse' and help out in case of need. This protective circle shields the children as well, as became clear when the children were approached for participation in this study. The research workers noticed that the people in this circle gave signs of (considerable) reserve - they kept the children out of the wind and guarded over their anonymity in order to protect them.

### *General and specific problems*

We would like to note that the problems mentioned by the undocumented children who were interviewed overlap with the problems of other children in the Netherlands (irrespective of their legal status) and specifically with the problems of those children who are growing up in poverty. Many children who live in poverty, for example, contend with problems around the lack of a healthy and varied diet or they cannot afford membership fees of (sports) clubs. With respect to these problems the situation of undocumented children is not unique.

However, the problems of the undocumented children have a more severe effect or are more fundamental in nature than those of documented children of the same age who grow up in poverty. Various aspects of this study have brought this to light. For example many of the undocumented children lack a number of fundamental things such as school necessities, toys,

(sports) clothing or a bicycle. The many house moves and the cramped living conditions (for example because they had to lodge with others) were perceived as a burden by the children as well.

In addition as many as seven of the 21 families to which the children belong, were completely dependent on donations. If we take into consideration the fact that change in or improvement of these families' (financial) situations is unlikely, the poverty in which the children are growing up is highly structural in nature.

Moreover, a part of the problems of undocumented children are indeed more persistent than the problems experienced by documented children in the Netherlands (irrespective of whether they grow up in poverty or not). The problems of undocumented children specifically concern exclusion from or limited access to social provisions and to health care. At a later age they have no access to the same matters that documented children in their age group do have access to because they have no documents; these matters include jobs, obtaining a driver's licence for a moped or car, visiting places where they have to identify themselves or going on holidays abroad. Besides they contend with considerable uncertainty about their future, they are burdened with 'living with the secret' of their legal status and with the psychological pressure they experience due to the fact that they have no documents and with a direct or indirect fear of being discovered and detained.

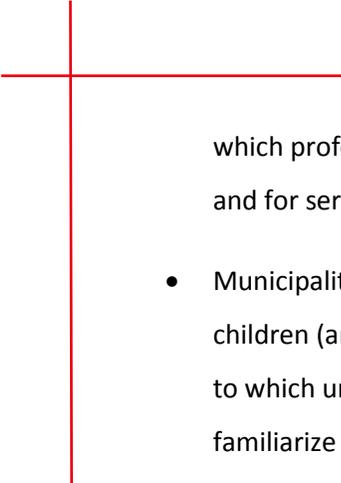
### *Scope of the study*

The research data from the interviews are a rich source of information about undocumented children although the scope of these data is somewhat limited. Because of the search strategy only those children were approached who were known to care workers and schools. For this reason the study has provided an insight into a select group of children who are living in illegality.

### **Recommendations**

The following recommendations emerged from the study:

- Municipalities themselves should make all the institutions within the municipal boundaries aware of the fact that the rights of undocumented children are to be observed. For this purpose it is necessary to inform professionals about these rights and about the way in



which professionals can be reimbursed for the expenses they have incurred for the support and for services provided to undocumented children.

- Municipalities should safeguard the right to accessible health care for undocumented children (and their parents). For this purpose municipalities should be aware of the extent to which undocumented migrants have access to health care; the authorities should familiarize themselves with possible obstacles and remove these thresholds.
- Municipalities should support and facilitate the informal networks around undocumented children and their parents - networks consisting of volunteers and other active citizens (irrespective of whether they have a professional background as teachers, care workers etc.) so that the participants in these informal networks can monitor and intervene if the development of these children is at risk.

For the purpose of improving the situation of undocumented children municipalities can make use of the following instruments - usually the municipal institutions know which schools in their municipality have undocumented children among their pupils. Municipal authorities should provide these schools with (additional) funds which are to be used for these children. These funds could be applied for such things as the purchase of school necessities or library passes, for the costs of (public) transport to and from school, for subsidizing remedial teaching to improve school performance, for membership fees of (sports) clubs, or for the purchase of (sports) necessities et cetera.

Besides municipalities can provide undocumented children and their parents with (more) information about their rights and about the possibilities for support (access to health care for example). This information can be given directly to the children and their parents, for example through a dedicated telephone line. Information can be provided indirectly through advice to teachers, care providers or volunteers who are in contact (or may come into contact) with undocumented children and/or their parents.

## Glossary and structure of the report

### The concept undocumented

Being undocumented means staying in a country without having the required documents, in other words it is staying in a country without a residence permit. Undocumented people are sometimes called 'illegal'. This group includes migrants whose residence permit has expired;, people who never could meet the requirements for a permit; asylum seekers who have exhausted all legal remedies; foreign men or women with or without children who were turned away by their partners who had legal residence before they themselves were entitled to an independent residence permit or victims of human trafficking who are afraid to inform the police. They have never had a residence permit, have lost it or the permit has expired. Some of these people would like to stay in the Netherlands; others want to return to their country of origin or to migrate to yet another country.

### Structure of the report

This report consists of four chapters. In the first chapter the research question is presented. The second chapter addresses an estimate of the number of undocumented children in Utrecht. Chapter three describes the substudy into the home and living environments of the children. Chapter four contains conclusions and recommendations.

### Quotations of children

For the purpose of readability grammatical corrections have been made in some of the quotations from undocumented children that have been included in this report. Besides, they have been given fictitious names and some descriptions in the quotations that could lead to the recognition of the children have been altered.

### Annexes

The annexes contain a survey of the developmental requirements derived from the model developed by Kalverboer & Zijlstra, the item lists for the interviews, the questionnaires for schools and child health centres and a survey of the members of the reference group and participating students.

## Introduction and research question

### 1.1 Reason for the study

Ever since the nineties living in The Netherlands without a residence permit has become considerably more difficult. Because of the adoption of the Benefit Entitlement (Residence Status) Act in 1998 migrants without legal residence - in this study to be referred to as undocumented migrants - can only lay claim to medically required health-care, education for minors and to legal assistance. They are not eligible for other provisions such as child benefit or assistance benefit. Besides national government have taken other measures that have made life for illegal immigrants more difficult such as the Act on the requirement to carry identification papers and checks on illegal residence that are becoming intensified to an ever increasing extent.

The fact that policies concerning migrants have become more restrictive has consequences for municipalities as well. Undocumented parents and their children, who are trying to hold out, live within municipal boundaries. Local authorities realize that they are being faced with real people and not just with abstract policies. They want to respect the human rights of this vulnerable group but at the same time they see how harsh laws limit their scope for action.

It is not known exactly how many undocumented children there are. Undocumented children cannot be included in the municipal register [GBA, Gemeentelijke Basisadministratie]. According to estimates by different researchers and organizations there are several thousand undocumented children in The Netherlands.

Research has shown that undocumented children grow up in difficult circumstances (Staring & Aarts, 2010; Kalverboer & Zijlstra, 2006; Braat, 2004). Many of these children live in the margins of society which diminishes their opportunities for participation, in their living environment as well as at school. In addition these researchers have concluded that many children see no future for themselves. The circumstances in which these children grow up have become even more difficult because the policy towards migrants recently has become even harsher.

No current information is known as to the present situation of undocumented children in the city of Utrecht. This was the reason to perform this study into the number of undocumented children and their living environment.

## 1.2 Study design

This study focused on the home and living environments of undocumented children in Utrecht and on these environments of children in the other G4 cities Rotterdam, Amsterdam, and The Hague. For this purpose the study addressed the question whether these children's developmental requirements are met to a sufficient extent - requirements which are based on the International Convention on the Rights of the Child. In addition the number of undocumented children in the city of Utrecht was estimated.

The initiative for the study was taken by Fanga Musow, a support project for women and undocumented children in Utrecht. The study was performed in response to a request by the municipality of Utrecht. The municipal authorities wanted to know what they could do to improve the social situation of undocumented children in the city of Utrecht.

LOS foundation carried out the study in co-operation with the Kenniscentrum Sociale Innovatie [Knowledge Centre Social Innovation] of the Hogeschool Utrecht [HU University of Applied Sciences Utrecht]. Defence for Children have advised about the child right aspect of the study and have provided input for the development of the measuring instrument and the design of the report. The LOS foundation was responsible for recruiting undocumented children and for estimating their number. The Hogeschool Utrecht was responsible for the qualitative aspect of the study, the recruitment and coaching of fourth-year students who conducted the interviews and for the final report.

The study was practice-based, which is to say that an answer is sought to questions that had their origin in practical circumstances, in this case the municipality of Utrecht. An additional purpose was that the LOS foundation and Defence for Children wanted to raise awareness in prospective professionals in the social and legal services concerning the problems of this group of vulnerable children. For these and other reasons it was decided to involve students in this study. Twelve fourth-year students from the disciplines Sociaal-Juridische Dienstverlening (SJD; Social-Legal Services), Maatschappelijk Werk en Dienstverlening (MWD; Social Work and Service Provision) en Sociaal Pedagogische Hulpverlening (SPH; Social Education Services) of the Hogeschool Utrecht participated as interviewers as part of their final project.

An external reference group was put together for the purpose of the study (refer to annex 4). The responsibility of this group was to oversee the quality of the study and of the final report. The reference group consisted of experts in the field of undocumented migrants and their children.

### 1.3 Purpose of the study and research questions

The study focused on the living circumstances and the social situation of undocumented children in the city of Utrecht and in the other G4-cities (Rotterdam, Amsterdam, and The Hague). The study's purpose was to obtain insight into the extent, background and developmental situation of these children.

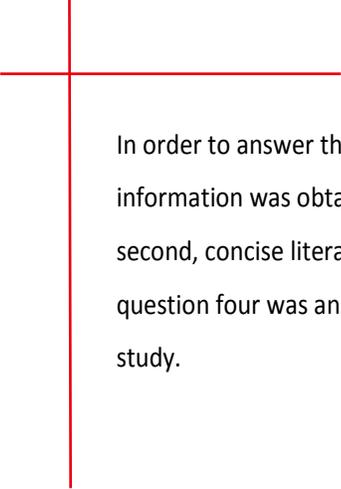
The research questions were:

1. How many undocumented children are living in the Netherlands in general and in the municipality of Utrecht in particular?
2. How do undocumented children perceive their home and living environments?
3. To what extent have the developmental requirements of undocumented children been safeguarded?
4. Which recommendations can be phrased for the purpose of drawing up municipal policies that will safeguard the developmental requirements of undocumented children?

In order to find answers to the research questions a substudy, which was quantitative in nature, has been carried out; this substudy focused on assessing the number of children. Beside this a substudy with a qualitative nature, which focused on the developmental situation of the children, has been performed.

The following data collection methods were used:

- Survey among elementary schools, institutes for secondary education and child health centres in Utrecht.
- Obtaining information through municipal data files.
- Semi-structured interviews with undocumented children aged 6-19 years in Utrecht, Rotterdam, The Hague, and Amsterdam.
- Literature study.



In order to answer the first research question a literature study was performed, a questionnaire was sent and information was obtained about municipal data files. The semi-structured interviews, in combination with a second, concise literature study focused on answering the research questions two and three. Research question four was answered by means of the information from the interviews, the survey and the literature study.

## 2. Estimate of the number of undocumented children in Utrecht

For the purpose of obtaining an impression of the number and the background of undocumented people (children) in The Netherlands and particularly in Utrecht one of the sources used was the existing literature. In connection with this we should, however, note that each of these sources have certain limitations. The majority of the available statistics exclusively refer to the total number of undocumented adults estimated, whereas other sources only provide information about a specific group of undocumented children. Therefore it remains very difficult to draw conclusions about the total number of undocumented children residing in The Netherlands and Utrecht. Because the estimated number of adults will provide an indication of the number of children some statistics about the adult population have been presented here. In addition it has been attempted to obtain an impression of the number and the background of the undocumented children who reside in Utrecht. Lastly the municipal data files have been used in order to assess the number of undocumented children who attend school by means of the available information about their fictitious education numbers. Because none of these sources in themselves will provide sufficient conclusive information, we opted to use a combination of these sources.

### 2.1 Estimates in literature

Undocumented migrants cannot be included in the Municipal Register [Gemeentelijke Basisadministratie, GBA]. Therefore it has always proved to be unfeasible to determine how many people without residence permits reside in The Netherlands. Only those people who have come into contact with such institutions as investigation departments (e.g. the police) or those who have registered because they have made use of a special medical expenses scheme for uninsurable migrants.

The research team Van der Heijden et al. (WODC 2009, 2011) have attempted to estimate the total size of the adult population of undocumented migrants in The Netherlands based on the numbers of 'known' undocumented migrants. For this purpose the researchers consistently used the so-called 'capture-recapture method' (Leerkes et al. 2004; Sikkel et al. 2006). This method assesses the total group of undocumented migrants on the basis of the data of those who have been registered in the registration systems of the Politie Suite Handhaving Vreemdelingen (PSH-V) and the Vreemdelingen Basis Systeem (VBS; aliens' data bank system) of the Royal Netherlands Military Constabulary [Koninklijke Marechaussee]. According to the most recent estimate they made for the year 2009 the total number of undocumented migrants residing in The Netherlands amounted to 97,000 with a range of 60,667 to 133,624. This ample margin is associated with uncertainties of the assessment method applied. At the moment this report was

written the research group of the Scientific Research and Documentation Centre worked on an estimate of the number of migrants who resided in The Netherlands illegally during the period of 2012-2013. For further information please refer to Table 1.

**Table 1: Estimates of the number of undocumented migrants in 2009**

Sex	Observed	Estimated number	Per cent
Male	3.774	63.651	66
Female	556	33.495	34

*Source: Van der Heijden et al. 2011*

The researchers estimated that thirteen per cent of the total number of undocumented migrants was living in Utrecht, notably 12,621 migrants. This would mean that in The Netherlands the largest number of undocumented migrants resided in Utrecht, more than in the other three large cities. However, this estimate differs considerably from earlier estimates, such as those of Leerkes et al. (2004). According to Leerkes et al. With respect to the number of undocumented migrants Utrecht takes fourth place after the (police) regions of Amsterdam-Amstelland, Rotterdam-Rijnland and Haaglanden. Specifically Leerkes et al. estimated that only six per cent of the total estimated number of undocumented migrants resided in Utrecht in the year 2003. This compared to eleven per cent in the (police) region Amsterdam-Amstelland; eleven per cent in Rotterdam-Rijnmond and nine per cent in the (police) region Haaglanden.

The distribution among these cities matched the statistics of the College voor Zorgverzekeringen [Health Care Insurance Board] (as of 1 April 2014 the name was changed into Zorginstituut Nederland) (2013). On the basis of section 122a of the Zorgverzekeringswet [Zvw; Health and Social Care Insurance Act] since 1 January 2009 the College has been responsible for providing reimbursements to health care providers who have lost income because they rendered medically necessary health care to migrants who cannot be insured. This concerns migrants with illegal residence in The Netherlands; migrants who have applied for regular residence permits as well as migrants who have lodged a notice of objection or an appeal against a negative decision on their application for a regular residence permit. Health care providers claim the expenses they have incurred for migrants who cannot pay their bills at the Health Care Insurance Board. From the seventh monitor, which provided a distribution of the costs according to community health service region [GGD; gemeentelijke geneeskundige dienst], it can also be concluded that Utrecht with 4% is

in fourth place after Amsterdam (45%), Rotterdam Rijnmond (15%) and The Hague (14%) where the expenses for medicinal drugs are concerned.

The monitor of the Health Care Insurance Board is unique because it contains a clear differentiation into age groups. Table 2 provides a categorization of expenses made for pharmaceutical care costs expressed in percentages for undocumented migrants according to age (2012).

**Table 2: Expenses for pharmaceutical care according to age expressed in percentages**

Age	2012	2011	2010
0 -10 years	1,6	1,8	1,6
11 – 20 years	1,4	1,2	1,0
21 – 30 years	17,0	15,7	18,4
31- 40 years	29,1	31,9	34,0
41 – 50 years	30,0	31,3	28,6
Older than 50	20,9	18,1	16,4
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: 7<sup>e</sup> monitor Regeling financiering zorg onverzekerbare vreemdelingen van het College voor Zorgverzekeringen (2012) [Special medical expenses scheme for uninsurable migrants as drawn up by the Health Care Insurance Board]*

From the monitor it can be concluded that in 2012 for pregnancies expenses for obstetric care and maternity care were claimed. The Board commented on these statistics by noting that many of the children who were born from these pregnancies had legal residence in The Netherlands based on the status of the father. For that matter it should be kept in mind that the statistics only refer to those undocumented migrants for whom expenses for medical care were claimed with the Board. Therefore these statistics also provide but a limited insight into the number of children who reside in The Netherlands without residence permits.

To the question posed by the Child Ombudsman ‘How many children currently await eviction and what is - for each of them - the duration of their actual stay in The Netherlands?’, Leers, the then minister of Immigration, Integration and Asylum, replied that he was unable to generate from the system of the Immigration and Naturalisation service [IND, Immigratie- en Naturalisatiedienst] statistics for the category of asylum children who had exhausted all legal remedies because in most cases the individual members of

a family had not been registered separately. However, Leers could indicate that at the end of 2011 approximately 220 minor undocumented migrants stayed in freedom-restriction centres [vrijheidsbeperkende locaties] and approximately 420 in family locations.

After announcing these figures the Minister, has provided statistical information about all migrant children on request of the Child Ombudsman; this means not only about those asylum children who had exhausted all legal remedies. This concerns children who reside in The Netherlands with their families and therefore these data do not pertain to unaccompanied minors. For that matter it should be noted that the statistics refer to children for whom applications for a residence permit had been submitted. For example children who had entered with a visa but for whom never a procedure for a residence permit had been started have not been listed in the table below. The same holds true for children who were born here and for whom a residence permit has never been applied for. In the accompanying letter Leers supplemented the statistics with the following observation: *'it is not possible to give an exact figure for the children who reside in The Netherlands without residence permits. This is caused by the fact that a part of the migrants have made an autonomous decision to stay out of view of the migrants' chain after their application had been rejected. It cannot be indicated whether this means that they have left The Netherlands'*. (Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations), 2012. For further information we refer to table 3.

**Table 3: Number of migrant children without residence permits in early 2012**

<b>Duration of stay migrant children without residence permits</b>	<b>4 years or more</b>	<b>5 years or more</b>	<b>8 years or more</b>
<b>In sheltered accommodation (whether in procedure or not)</b>	420	250	170
<b>Not in care, in procedure</b>	1030	690	540
<b>Out of view but no registration of actual leave</b>	17.320	13.100	10.340

*Source: Letter of Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations of 28 February 2012 to the Child Ombudsman*

The problem with the statistical data also occurs with the statistics concerning the so-called Child's Pardon, the regulation for children who have lived in The Netherlands for a long period of time (WBV 2013/1, nr 2573). According to the present regulation only children or adolescents qualify for the Child's Pardon if they or their parents had submitted an asylum application at some time. Moreover this regulation pertains

to children and adolescents who were born after 29 October 1991; for this reason adolescents have been included in these statistics as well. On 19 November 2013 Teeven, Secretary of State for Security and Justice, informed the Dutch Lower House that applications had been submitted in pursuance of Regulation 3,270 (*Parliamentary Documents II 2013-2014*, 19 6367, nr 1756). This concerned the children as well as their family members. Of this number 1,340 applications have been granted. This concerned 630 central persons (children and adolescents who meet the requirements) and 710 family members. Four hundred of the 1,800 applications were rejected because there was no previous asylum application; this concerned children who were not in asylum procedures or who were involved in a procedure different from the asylum procedure.

In short, in spite of a multitude of questions and studies no exact statistics are available that provide an insight into or even come close to estimating the total number of children who reside in The Netherlands without residence permits. Many of the available sources only provide insight into statistics relating to a subgroup of the total population and do not refer to the total population of undocumented children. As has been mentioned before, according to Van der Heijden et al. (2011), in 2009 approximately 97,000 adult undocumented migrants resided in The Netherlands. According to these researchers thirteen per cent of this number was supposed to reside in Utrecht, notably 12,621 migrants. This percentage does not match the estimate of Leerkes et al. (2004). On the contrary - according to his estimates on average fewer undocumented migrants resided in Utrecht than in other cities, notably only six per cent. The various studies into estimates of the number of undocumented migrants in The Netherlands do not break up the numbers into age groups. According to government statistics in 2012 there were 17,320 children with illegal residence in The Netherlands who had stayed here for over four years and who had not been registered as actually having departed. However, on the basis of this information it is impossible to draw tenable conclusions on numbers. Moreover, it should be taken into account that there is a group of children for whom applications for residence permits were never submitted and who therefore cannot be found in any government statistics.

## **2.2 Estimates according to schools, child health care centres and municipal registration files in Utrecht**

In order to obtain more specific information as to the size and the background of the group of undocumented children residing in Utrecht, a brief questionnaire has been drawn up of the institutions in

Utrecht that are confronted with children without residence permits. In order to increase the willingness to participate it was decided to hold an anonymous survey. For each age group one category of institution was approached in order to prevent children from being counted twice. For the ages from zero to four years, children of non-school-going age, child health care centres were approached.<sup>1</sup> For the ages from four to twelve elementary schools were asked and for older children, aged twelve to eighteen years, institutions for secondary education. The survey asked the institutions to provide anonymous information about the numbers and the backgrounds (sex, age, native country child/parents, and duration of their stay in The Netherlands) of the children without residence permits who had received their care or who attended their schools. In addition the child health care centres were asked whether children without residence permits had specific problems that required the employees' special care, such as common diseases, vitamin deficiencies or being underweight or obese. The schools were also asked whether they experienced specific problems with children from the target group.<sup>2</sup>

For this substudy it was assumed that the major part of the undocumented children attended school, because children without residence permits are entitled to education, just as are all other children. The Compulsory Education Act [Leerplichtwet] and the Education Number Act (WON; Wet Onderwijsnummer), in force as of 1 February 2002, apply to them as well. Under this Act each pupil in funded education is issued an individual number. For those who have no National Security Number [BSN, BurgerServiceNummer] schools should apply for a (fictitious) education number at the Education Executive Agency (Dienst Uitvoering Onderwijs) as soon as possible. Other studies have brought to light that there are also parents who, out of fear, keep their children at home or who do not know that their children are entitled to education in The Netherlands (Bommeljé & Braat, 2002). Moreover Bommeljé and Braat have pointed out that some families wander through The Netherlands, so that it is not possible to register at a school. They also pointed out that not all children move on to secondary education because some of them have to supplement the family income with work in the informal economy. However, because of the trajectory of the education number described above, it was assumed that schools would be aware of the residence status of their pupils, which would enable us to assess the number of school-going children.

An online survey was opted for, because it was assumed that filling in such a form would be less time-consuming than participating in an interview, which would improve the willingness to participate.<sup>3</sup> The

---

<sup>1</sup> The survey explicitly enquired after children who do not yet visit school.

<sup>2</sup> The complete survey has been included in Annex 2.

<sup>3</sup> Online surveytool Survey Monkey.

purpose of the study was explained to the institutions in an accompanying letter and they were asked to return the survey before a certain date. Once this term had elapsed the institutions were called up in order to bring the survey once more under their attention. Because many schools had not responded to the online survey in the first instance we chose to hold the survey by telephone as well.

The survey was sent out to each of the eight child health care centres in Utrecht. Seven centres filled in the survey online and one centre responded by telephone to the questions posed. Only one centre indicated (by telephone) to know three children from the study target group. During the recruitment process these children were also entered by the centre. Because of their ages at the time of the study (six months, three years and five years, respectively) they were not eligible for in-depth interviews. The other centres indicated to know no children from the target group.

In addition all the elementary schools in the city of Utrecht ( $n = 83$ ) received the online survey, 49 of which responded to the survey (19 online and 30 by telephone). Only two elementary schools indicated they had a total of two pupils without residence permits who attended school. Both of these children had already been included in the study because they had been entered earlier by intermediaries.

The institutions for secondary education ( $n = 24$ ) were approached for a survey by telephone. In the end five schools for secondary education indicated to have searched their student files. Only the International Intermediate Class, a non-faith school for pupils with little or no command of the Dutch language, provided an insight into the background of five pupils without residence permits, of whom one adolescent (18 years of age) who herself had a two-year-old child. Three of these children have been included in the study. One of the other children was approached for an in-depth interview but eventually she found it too harrowing to speak about this aspect of her life. In addition this child was anxious to participate due to an experience with the police. The other child had not attended school for some time and therefore could not be reached.

The schools brought forward several reasons not to want to participate in the survey or not to be able to do so. Most of the 34 elementary schools that did not want to participate in the study indicated that they did not have enough time to do so. One institution indicated that they taught children from the target group but that they did not feel the need to provide the information requested.

In comparison with the elementary schools relatively many schools for secondary education were not willing to participate in the survey; most of these institutions also indicated that it was too time-consuming for them to retrieve the data requested. For these institutions it often proved difficult to reach the person or the department who had an insight into the data we asked for. We presume this has to do with the fact

that the number of pupils at these organizations is usually quite large. Once the department for school records had found whom this concerned, the tutors had to inquire after the backgrounds of the pupils in question.

Based on the above it was assumed that not all the institutions that are in contact with the children knew that the child concerned had illegal residence status and/or did not want to provide information about their status. Possible reasons for this could be protection of the child or practical considerations such as the time required. Please do keep in mind that all the children who were interviewed in Utrecht attended school and some of the children attended institutions that filled in the survey or spoke to us on the telephone. However, these institutions indicated not to know any children from our study target group.

Although the reasons not to respond described before are interesting, this substudy did not provide the information that we were looking for. For this reason it was attempted to assess the number of children who attend school in Utrecht on the basis of data available from the municipality concerning the (fictitious) education numbers. The fictitious education numbers are stored in the registration system 'de Bron' of the Education Executive Agency [DUO], which is accessible to the department of the municipality that is responsible for education. This department has been asked for information about the number of children in Utrecht without residence permits who attend school. Through this trajectory it came to light that 45 pupils without social security numbers and who were not registered in the municipal registration [GBA, Gemeentelijke Basis Administratie] were attending school.

On the one hand this number of 45 pupils is higher than the number of seven children identified through the survey. On the other hand it still is a relatively low number of undocumented children attending school in Utrecht. Moreover it is also possible that there are children in Utrecht who do not attend school and whose existence is not known to care givers. In view of the outcome of this study it does not need much explanation that these children are a cause for concern. Lastly it is very well possible that children do attend schools but that schools do not want to go through all the red tape to arrange special registration for these children.

In addition this number requires a comment. This number may include children who:

- a) have legal residence in The Netherlands and have come from Eastern-European countries. In practice it turns out that not all of them have been included in the municipal register [GBA].

- 
- b) have stayed in The Netherlands for a period under four months. For them registration in the GBA is not mandatory.

It can be concluded that 45 children attended school in Utrecht who had not been registered in the municipal register and that this study has not provided clear evidence as to the size of the group of undocumented children who are not registered and who are not known to intermediaries either or who are being shielded by them.

### 3. Home and living environments of undocumented children

This chapter will address the home and living environments of undocumented children. Firstly a survey of the information from literature will be provided followed by the design and outcomes of interviews with undocumented children.

#### 3.1 Literature about the home environment and the developmental situation of undocumented children

This section will provide a concise survey of the literature on the home and living environments of migrant children in The Netherlands. It is remarkable that the available studies often pertain to the situation of unaccompanied minor asylum seekers, youths who entered to The Netherlands without their parents. Less information is available about the children described by the present study, notably undocumented children who live with their parent(s).

Below a brief description will follow of the themes that have frequently been mentioned in studies of children who have no right of residence. Studies that made no distinction between children and adults have also been included. Subsequently a brief outline will be provided describing which topics have been described concerning children in families and unaccompanied minor migrant children, respectively.

##### **Studies of migrants and migrant children without legal residence**

Engbersen et al. (2000) have explored the highly vulnerable position of undocumented migrants on the labour market. The number of illegal labour subcontractors, who provide undocumented migrants with informal employment, appears to be on the increase. Sectors where black labour is difficult to supervise - the hotel and catering industry and personal services - have turned out to be increasingly important.

PICUM (2013) and the European Committee (2008) have emphasized the vulnerable position of undocumented children. A significant problem they specifically mentioned was the severe poverty that undocumented children have to contend with. The home environments of undocumented migrants (minors as well as adults) are often inadequate. In many cases they lived with relatives or

acquaintances or in boarding houses. Many other migrants lived in shelters for the homeless or for asylum seekers who have exhausted all legal remedies (Kromhout et al., 2008; Engbersen et al. 2000).

PICUM (2009) have detected a gap between legislation and the concrete realisation of international conventions on the right to education. The consequence is that there is still much inequality concerning access to education. In some cases schools refuse access to children with illegal residence, as a study by Braat (2004) has brought to light. Kromhout et al. (2008), who have summarized previous studies, have concluded that school absenteeism in undocumented children is predominantly caused by psychosocial problems and by the fact that these children often move house. It is likely that a part of the undocumented children do not go to school at all.

With respect to the future outlook of unaccompanied minor migrants without legal residence Staring en Aarts (2010) have detected that these youths have a distinct preference to stay in The Netherlands and to obtain legal residence. Braat (2004) has shown that children without residence documents dispose of considerable resilience even though they have a dim view of their future outlook in The Netherlands. They do everything humanly possible to lead their lives as normally as possible. School is an important factor in this respect.

Below an outline will be presented of a study of children who live in their family circles in asylum centres and of the lives of unaccompanied minor migrants. These studies have provided important insights into the social environment of undocumented minors.

### **Study of children in families in asylum centres**

In The Netherlands over 3,500 children are growing up in families who live in asylum centres (Werkgroep Kind in azc, 2013 [Working Group Child in Asylum Centres]). They entered The Netherlands with their families from different countries to ask for protection here: asylum. Their applications are dealt with during the asylum procedure and the families are accommodated in asylum centres until a definitive decision has been made about the question as to whether they will be allowed to stay here.

Based on studies among children in asylum centres the Child Ombudsman (2013) has emphasized the considerably difficult circumstances in which these children live. Based on their study Kalverboer & Zijlstra (2008) have concluded that the living environment in which these children

grow up is often inadequate and that this may cause severe emotional problems, which may in part also be caused by traumatic experiences in the country of origin. The researchers have categorized the problems according to different areas such as housing, food, income, clothing, education, health, absence of a social network, limited contact with children the same age, limited future outlook etc. According to the researchers the development of these children will be jeopardized if they do not receive effective support. With this study Kalverboer & Zijlstra want to investigate to what extent the Immigration and Naturalisation Service [IND, Immigratie- en Naturalisatiedienst] in decision-making procedures give due weight to the developmental requirements of children as well as to their specific rights. They have concluded that there was insufficient awareness of these requirements and rights.

A study by Kloosterboer (2009) has shown that children and their families often have to move house. This has been confirmed by the *Werkgroep Kind in azc* (2013). This Working Group has emphasized that children on average have to move house once a year during the asylum procedure, which forces them to leave their familiar environment. For this reason the children got behind in school, stopped attaching themselves and were no longer willing to develop new friendships.

Kloosterboer has also detected that these children want to follow as much further education as possible in order to improve their future prospects.

Kloosterboer has mentioned various problems children in asylum centres are faced with such as limited prospects of participation in society of these children; their fear of the police; stress symptoms and uncertainty about the access to health care.

The problem of the access to health care has been also mentioned in a study by Pharos (2010). Beirens et al. (2007) have emphasized associated psychological problems.

### **Study among unaccompanied minors aliens who entered the Netherlands**

In a study into illegally residing (former) unaccompanied minor migrants by Staring and Aarts (2010) these youths mentioned that they had encountered problems such as:

The predominant feeling minor unaccompanied migrants had was one of injustice. Many of them are living in fear of the police and relatively often they had to contend with mental health problems. They were ashamed of their illegal status and felt that their status formed a reason for

rejection. For this and other reasons they often tend to keep hidden their status as illegally residing migrant, for fear that an institution or person might be able to make improper use of this. Because of this they feel more limited in their freedom of movement than their friends with legal residence.

In addition unaccompanied minor migrants often contend with problems surrounding the completion of their study, for example because the financial support by Nidos is discontinued or because training institutes refuse to register these youths. They meet with problems when trying to find work experience places as well. As a rule school leavers had difficulties finding work. Being unemployed a part of them dispose of a lot of free time - for these youths this leads to a solitary existence with a minimum of social contacts, another part of them flourish and have large networks with many activities in the outside world.

Many youths keep hoping that a procedure that will provide them with a legal status will be successful. They seize every opportunity to realize this hope, because they feel at home in The Netherlands, in part as a consequence of the lengthy asylum procedure and the presence of friends or a partner. In addition most of the youths have contacts with caregivers from private support organizations whereas relationships with relatives and friends in the country of origin in many cases have been broken up or kept simmering (Staring and Aarts, 2010).

### **3.2 Interviews with undocumented children**

The home and living environments of undocumented children who lived with their parent(s) and other family members were explored through interviews. The interviews were semi-structured and were carried out face to face by means of a list of topics. For this purpose eight child rights themes had been identified and worked out. These themes were derived from the fourteen conditions for the development of children phrased by Kalverboer and Zijlstra (2008).<sup>4</sup> Kalverboer and Zijlstra distinguished between developmental requirements that should be met within and those outside the family; these requirements are essential for a favourable development of the child. In the present study the following requirements were investigated further:

---

<sup>4</sup> The model of Kalverboer and Zijlstra is partly defined by the International Treaty on Child Rights.

*Developmental requirements within the family:*

1. Livelihood
2. Living accommodation
3. Parenting climate
4. Health

*Developmental requirements outside the family:*

5. Contact with children the same age
6. Education
7. Social network
8. Future

The four themes that have been worked out in this study as developmental requirements within the family are associated with what Kalverboer en Zijlstra have called 'sufficient care', 'safe physical direct environment' and 'affective and supportive parenting climate'. The themes that are defined by developmental requirements outside the family are identical with the conditions of Kalverboer and Zijlstra. Please refer to annex 1 for a survey of the developmental requirements by Kalverboer & Zijlstra. When discussing the results this categorization into themes will be retained.

### **Research questions**

The research questions for the interviews were:

*How do undocumented children perceive their home and living environments?*

*To what extent have the developmental requirements of undocumented children been warranted?*

The answers to these questions have been analysed in accordance with the eight developmental requirements mentioned above.

### **Delineation of the sample**

In order to find answers to the research question concerning the living environment of children without legal residence in The Netherlands the group of children to be investigated had to be delineated first. This group consisted of undocumented children:

- with and without an asylum past;
- ranging in age from six to nineteen years;
- who had not come from an Eastern-European country;
- who had sufficient proficiency of Dutch.

Children who had no command of the Dutch language and children who were younger than six years were not eligible for the interviews. We opted for a categorization into interviews of children aged six to twelve years and children aged twelve to nineteen years. This was decided because children under twelve require a different approach. Using two different questionnaires, notably one for children twelve years or older and one for children of six to twelve enabled us to include this group of young children in the study as well. We could have chosen to work with an interpreter for children who had no command of the Dutch language. But this idea was abandoned because interviewing with the aid of an interpreter on the one hand could provide a hindrance for the children to tell their story and on the other hand it could lead to a loss of too much information due to the translation process.

In the original study we aimed at composing a sample group of a hundred undocumented children from which we would select thirty children with whom in-depth interviews would be performed. The idea was that the material obtained through this group of children would be sufficiently representative of the number of two thousand undocumented children living in Utrecht according to initial estimates. Because of the problems with the recruitment of the children, which we will explore in the next section, it was decided to interview all the children we found who turned out to be suitable on the basis of the delineation of the target group.

### **Recruitment of the children**

Through organizations for care and support from the network of the LOS foundation contact was taken up with the undocumented children and their parents for face-to-face interviews. This may have led to the exclusion of a group of children who were not known with social and care services. The expectation was that the relationship that intermediaries usually have with the children would increase the children's willingness to participate in the study. In each institution, organization or interest group that may come across undocumented children a key figure was asked to help think

about the best way to approach the children. The network of the LOS foundation already contained a multitude of contacts that was extended further by means word of mouth contacts. This network includes support organizations<sup>5</sup>, institutions within the health sector<sup>6</sup>, welfare organizations, centres for children and families, child health care centres, sports- and cultural institutions, migrants' organizations and religious organizations (including migrants' churches). Letters with an explanation about the study were sent to schools after which they were called up to discuss the study and the request for candidates for the interviews in more detail. Most schools said they needed more time. After some time they were contacted again. Different support organizations and schools were visited and we participated in activities organized for undocumented migrants, such as theme evenings followed or preceded by a meal. Eventually many schools announced that it was (too) time-consuming to search their pupil files for children from the target group. In addition some schools indicated that it was not feasible to contact the children's parents to facilitate an interview within the available time period.

The employees of the child health centres in Utrecht were informed about the study and were asked to discuss participation in the study with the parent (and the child) during consultations with undocumented children.

Many intermediaries indicated to have been in contact with undocumented families in the past but that these contacts were difficult to maintain because the families concerned very frequently moved house. In part this can be explained from the fact that many undocumented migrants alternated staying with relatives, friends or acquaintances and in part because the families often moved house for fear of being discovered and detained.

Several general practitioners within the city of Utrecht indicated that they usually saw undocumented patients in their surgeries in emergency situations.<sup>7</sup> Because they had only occasional contacts with the target group the physician does not usually register the children,

---

<sup>5</sup> Including: STIL, Huize Agnes, SNDVU, Seguro, Bureau Dienstverlening aan Buitenlanders, Moviera, Stichting de Tussenvoorziening (Meisjesstad), Voedselbank, Nachtopvang.

<sup>6</sup> Such as general practitioners, obstetrics' practices, GG&GD, pharmacies and school doctors.

<sup>7</sup> Many undocumented migrants do not know that they are entitled to health care, they worry that they cannot pay the health care expenses, they are ashamed of their financial situation or they are afraid to be discovered or deported. Please refer to, among other publications: Nationale Ombudsman, Medische zorg vreemdelingen: over toegang en continuïteit van medische zorg voor asielzoekers en uitgeprocedeerde asielzoekers, 3 October 2013, Rapport 2013/125; T. Veenema, T. Wieggers, W. Deville, *Toegankelijkheid van gezondheidszorg voor 'illegalen' in Nederland: een update*, Nivel, 2009.

which limits the contact options afterwards. Therefore participation through general practitioners was only feasible for 'new contacts'.

In the city of Utrecht the only detail some institutions that are in contact with these children (such as the Centrum Jeugd en Gezin and Bureau Jeugdhulpverlening [youth welfare services]) register in their physical files is whether the children have a National Insurance Number. These institutions could not check all their files for the residence status of the children because this was too time-consuming.

Moreover there turned out to be a lot of distrust among the target group. Some migrants' self-help organizations and migrants' churches were approached who in the first instance indicated not to know any children from the target group and during later contacts provided information with great reserve.

Because it was not possible to find a large enough number of children in Utrecht within the study period, it was decided to extend the recruitment area to the four large cities (G4). This enabled us to contact a total of 58 children for the study. Within the cities of Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and The Hague the majority of the children were recruited through organizations associated with the LOS foundation.<sup>8</sup> Ten children out of these 58 or their parent(s) or carer(s) did not want to participate in an interview - often for fear of negative consequences. Three of these children were living in Utrecht.

In the first instance fifteen children or their parent(s) or carer(s) - five of whom in Utrecht - agreed to co-operate with the study but withdrew for reasons of their own. The reason predominantly seemed to be diffidence and fear of the children to discuss their situation. In a few cases the child or the parent could not be contacted any longer to make an appointment. In total 33 children were interviewed. The recruitment of respondents was subsequently discontinued because the students were not available to hold the interviews at a later date.

Four of the 33 interviews have not been included in the analysis. At the moment of the interview these children had recently been granted residence permits (less than a year ago). However, in the interviews with these four children their perceptions of the past situation could not sufficiently be

---

<sup>8</sup> Including: Amsterdams Solidariteits Komitee Vluchtelingen, Steungroep Vrouwen Zonder Verblijfsvergunning (Amsterdam), Harriet Tubmanhuis (Amsterdam), Rotterdams Ongedocumenteerden Steunpunt, Vluchtelingenwerk Den Haag, Wereldhuis Den Haag, the ecclesiastical pastoral care in The Hague.

distinguished from those of the present. Therefore the results presented in the sections 3.3 to 3.6 including refer to the interviews with 29 children.

The children who were interviewed in this study had been recruited through

Amsterdam (n=10):

- Vrouwenopvang [women's shelters]: three children
- VluchtelingenWerk: three children
- Hulpverlening [organizations for support and assistance]: four children

Utrecht (n=7)

- Child Health Care Centres: two children
- International Preparatory Class: three children
- Hulpverlening [organizations for support and assistance]: two children

Rotterdam (n=6)

- Rotterdams Ongedocumenteerden Steunpunt (ROS): six children

The Hague (n=6)

- VluchtelingenWerk: six children

## **Interviewers**

The interviewers were twelve fourth-year students from the disciplines Sociaal Juridische Dienstverlening [Welfare Rights Services], Maatschappelijk Werk en Dienstverlening [Social Work and Service Provision] and Sociaal Pedagogische Hulpverlening [Social Education] of the Hogeschool Utrecht. These students had been recruited within the Hogeschool Utrecht by teachers of these disciplines. The study formed a part of the students' final project. Lecturers at the Institute for Social Work of the Hogeschool Utrecht trained the students in conducting and analysing the interviews concerned. In addition they received domain-specific courses by prof. dr. R. Staring (Erasmus University Rotterdam); prof. dr. mr. M. Kalverboer (University of Groningen), and by mr. drs. C. van Os (Defence for Children) and ir. R. Ederveen (LOS foundation).

## Interviews

Once LOS had made the initial contacts with the parents or guardians, the interviewers made an appointment for an interview. During the first (telephone) contact with the children, the parents or the mentors the interviewers explained the purpose of the interviews. Before they started the interviews the students explained that the information of the children was to be processed anonymously to be on the safe side and that it was self-evident that they did not have to answer questions if they did not want to or found them too difficult. During the interviews this predominantly turned out to concern questions about the absent father. Five (young) children did not want to respond to these questions.

The children or their parents chose the interview locations. This could be the place of residence, the school, an organization for social and care services or a public place. Sixteen interviews took place in the children's homes. The other interviews were held at the school or at the work experience place (n=7); at the office of VluchtelingenWerk (n=5); and at Steunpunt Amsterdam (n=1). The majority of the younger children were accompanied by a parent or another relative. One child had brought a female friend to the interview. A parent (or another relative) or mentor was present at most of the interviews with the older children. In five cases nobody else was present.

The interviews lasted 25-75 minutes and were held from March to May 2013. They were semi-structured in nature; the students worked with an item list. There were two versions: one for young children (six to eleven years of age) and one for older children (twelve to nineteen years of age). Two different item lists were used in order to accommodate the perceptual world of each of the age categories. The older children were asked two additional questions about their education:

1. How did the child view his or her future after secondary school?
2. To what extent did the child perceive obstacles in education and during work placements?

The item lists had been tested in two trial interviews.

All the interviews were held in Dutch. The interviews were transcribed *verbatim* (by the interviewers) and subsequently analysed by researchers of the Hogeschool Utrecht. The qualitative software programme MAXQDA was used for the analysis.

### 3.3 Background information of the children who were interviewed

In this section the following background information of the children interviewed have been presented: age, sex, country of origin, family composition, duration of residence in The Netherlands and residence status.

#### **Age, sex and country of origin**

Fifteen of the 29 children who were interviewed were under twelve years of age. Fourteen children were twelve years or older.

The number of boys interviewed (n=15) was almost equal to the number of girls (n=14).

The children came from fourteen different countries from all over the world. Sixteen of the 29 children were born in The Netherlands. Their parents came from Morocco, Mali, Ghana, Angola, Ivory Coast, Nigeria, China, Malaysia, and Suriname. The thirteen children who were not born in The Netherlands came from Somalia, Nigeria, Cape Verde, Ghana, Liberia, Iraq, Armenia, Germany, and Colombia.

#### **Family composition**

Over half (n=17) of the children in this study were growing up without their fathers. This was more frequent (n=11) for children who were born in The Netherlands than for children who were born in other countries (n=6). The seventeen children who were growing up without their fathers had no contact with their fathers or only very occasional contacts.

One child was living with friends of the mother's. The mother herself was living abroad with her new partner. Two children had been placed under supervision of the Child and Youth Services Office (Bureau Jeugdzorg). The 29 children belonged to 21 families in total.

#### **Duration of stay**

Twenty-six of the twenty-nine children who were interviewed had had illegal residence in The Netherlands for over four years. The period of the residence procedure was not taken into account.

There is a difference in duration of stay between children who were born in The Netherlands and children born elsewhere.

- Children who were born in the Netherlands had lived here ‘illegally’ for a relatively long period of time.
- Children who were not born in The Netherlands had lived here for a shorter period of time. Three children had lived in The Netherlands for two years or shorter. The other ten children have lived in The Netherlands for five years or longer, with a maximum of twelve years. The youngest child was nine years of age and the oldest child was nineteen years.

### **Status**

An important theme for the children was whether or not they were to be granted a residence permit. One child had been issued a residence permit one month previous to the interview.

During the study the parents of twelve children had taken legal steps in order to obtain residence documents. Six children had submitted applications for the Child’s Pardon. The parents of the other six children tried to obtain residence documents for The Netherlands through different procedures. It was not clear whether the parents of the other sixteen children had submitted applications to obtain residence documents.

### **3.4 Developmental requirements within the family**

In this section the results of the interviews will be discussed according to the topics of livelihood, living accommodation, parenting climate and health. These topics provide an insight into the living environment in which the undocumented child is growing up. Kalverboer en Zijlstra (2008) have stated that the optimum development of the child within the family can only be guaranteed providing that certain requirements have been met, including sufficient care. By these requirements they mean care for the physical well-being of the child, the parenting climate and appropriate health care. They define physical well-being in terms of income, housing accommodation, heating, clothing, food etc.). Parenting climate involves support, inducement, and

delimitation by the parents. They defined suitable health care as the availability of medically required care.

## **Livelihood**

The theme of livelihood will be described below by categorizing it into income, allocation of money and food.

### *Income*

The parents or guardians of the children provided for themselves in different ways. Ten parents lived off occasional donations or off living expenses. A somewhat smaller number received income from paid work. The 21 families to which the children belonged provided for themselves in various ways:

1. Work (seven families)
2. Donations (seven families)
3. Assistance benefit (three families)

It is not known how the other four families provided for themselves.

The families mentioned had combined sources of income. Two families supplemented their income by obtaining food from the food bank.

#### *Sub 1. Work*

For seven families (informal) work was the main source of income. The majority of these parents worked in the personal service industry and in the hotel and catering industry.

- Five parents worked in the personal service industry. Four of them worked as home helps or as child minders.
- One parent worked in a restaurant. In the same family an adult-aged child worked as a help in a butcher's shop. Besides he generated income delivering advertising brochures.
- Of one family it was unknown which type of work the parents performed.

It is not self-evident that both parents worked in families in which both parents were present and where income was generated through work. In two (of these seven) families both parents worked.

Financial dependence of one parent will render the family vulnerable. The same holds true for single parents.

One of the children indicated that his family were afraid that the father would lose his job. The father, the sole breadwinner, had lost his former job after a police raid. According to the child this had had unpleasant consequences for the family: they could no longer afford the rent, the parents argued constantly and there were tensions between the parents and the children.

Vulnerability may take other forms as well. For example if the host family expect something in return for board and lodging. This happened to one of the children in this study:

*'I lived with my aunt for two or three months. Most of the time I had to work and to mind the children of friends of my aunt's. Or I had to prepare food for her husband. Or do shopping, I don't know what else. I also had to accompany her to her work to help her. She cleans other people's houses. Sometimes I had to take over her work. Then she used to just stay at home. She was always gone, to parties and things like that. I had to do all the chores that a woman can do in the house. But I was only twelve years old. And if I refused she used to punish me. That sort of thing. I had to give all my money to her. I only had to work and work. That is why I don't know a lot about The Netherlands and everyone thinks this is strange.'* (girl, aged nineteen)

Not much is known about the working conditions. Only in two cases information was obtained as to the number of hours people worked. The parent who worked as a cook (illegally) in a restaurant worked for twelve hours a day, seven days a week. The adult-aged child attended a course and worked for twenty hours in the informal economy.

### *Sub 2. Donations*

As has been said before, donations formed the most important source of income for seven families. Donations may consist of clothing, footwear, foodstuffs, (school) books or money. Apart from the three cases below these donations were structural in nature:

- One family received a fixed amount on a regular basis - weekly - from or through the foundation that had helped find accommodation for them.
- Two families were dependent on the Food Bank.<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>9</sup> The first contact with the Food Bank was made through an organization that is in contact with this family.

Examples of monetary donations are: pocket money for the children; money for public transport or small donations from the school, the church or from community groups.

### *Sub 3. Assistance benefit*

Three families were dependent on assistance benefit. In one case this concerned an old age pension. This pension was meant for a guardian, someone over 65 years of age. He offered lodging to an undocumented child whose parents lived outside of The Netherlands. In the other two cases it concerned benefit money that the families received from the municipal authorities. One of these families was eligible for benefit money because they had recently been granted a residence permit. It is unclear which type of benefit the other family received. According to the children concerned this benefit was issued by the municipal authorities.

### *Spending*

All the children and/or their parents indicated that it was a matter of finding the middle ground with money. From the discussions the impression emerged that the families had insufficient income to meet their daily needs. Families needed to establish priorities: at one time meat or chicken for dinner, at other times doing without. Or shoes have been bought, which leaves no money for other clothes for the remainder of the month.

*'My son always wants to have good-quality shoes. Adidas shoes or the like, but they are something like fifty or sixty euros a pair. I know that they are pricey but they last for a long time. Yet I can only buy cheap footwear. I wait for special offers at Van Haren and buy shoes there of five or ten euros. I buy one or two pairs for the entire year for him. I know that these shoes wear out quickly. But then he can still wear them for a bit. Or I buy them second-hand.'* (mother of a boy, aged fourteen)

In addition many parents and their children indicated that there was no money for leisure activities such as membership fees of sports clubs. One parent had three children who all wanted to join the football club in the neighbourhood. However, the mother could not afford the membership fees, sports clothing and footwear for all these three children. She decided to enrol only the eldest of the three children. One girl told us that she wanted to take dancing classes, but that this was too

expensive without an Ooievaarspas [Stork pass - the stork is in the municipal coat of arms of the Hague].<sup>10</sup>

There was hardly any money for school necessities and Internet connections. A computer with an Internet connection is especially important for the older children. For many school assignments having an Internet connection it is essential to have an Internet connection. Two children indicated they compensated for the lack of Internet at home by staying at school after hours, so they could use the school's Internet connection.

Earlier in this section it emerged that many families were given donations. Donations in the form of goods (clothing, footwear, toys etc.) often consist of second-hand goods.

The parents gave a (very small) part of the financial donations - if this was feasible - to the children. These children saved up the money. Children who were doing paid chores of different sorts saved up for little extras such as toys or computer games.

Below you will find a list in random order with items missed by children because there was no money to buy them.

Shampoo	School necessities
Shower gel	Bicycle
Medicinal drugs	Sports clothing and -footwear
Toys	Shirts
Games appliances	Sweaters
Dancing lessons	Other (new) clothing
Computer	Hair accessories
Internet	Varied food

<sup>10</sup> The Ooievaarspas is a free reduction pass for people from The Hague with low incomes. It entitles people to reduced entry fees for sports and clubs, movie and theatre shows, museums and other attractions, courses, the library, the pedicure etc. In many cases only half the price needs to be paid. Undocumented children are not eligible for this.

### *Food*

From the stories it can be inferred that the diet is often rich in carbohydrates. Pasta, rice, chips and pizza formed a large part of the diet. A small number of children frequently had the same food for several consecutive days because there was no money for varied food. For example one child told us that she and her mother had lived on cake for several days at a time because there was no money for (different) foodstuffs and the cake happened to be there. In the evenings she often had cake and tea for dinner.

Parents do not like to tell strangers that they are struggling. One child told us that his family is given fruit by someone from the church after he had owned up to the fact that his family needed it.

*'One gentleman from the church once asked "Is there something I can buy for you?" And we said "nothing". Then I said furtively "fruit, fruit". From then on this gentleman gave us five euros every week with which my mom or dad buys fruit.'*  
(boy, aged 12)

### **Housing accommodations**

There was no clear insight into previous living environments of the children. We asked the children whether they had always lived at their present address. None of the children had continually lived at the present address. Eighteen children remembered all of their previous house addresses. Eleven children could not mention each of the previous addresses. In most cases this concerned the younger children.

The prevailing impression was that undocumented children move house frequently. Twenty children indicated to have moved house more than once. Four children had lived in several Asylum Centres. Other reasons for moving house frequently were: problems within the family (among parents or with other relatives); the rent was too high; the house had to be demolished; being on the run from the police. One child told us that the suitcases were always ready at his home in case they would have to leave suddenly. His family (two parents, two children) had been on the run from the police for some time. In 2012 they had exhausted all legal remedies.

*'Since we fled from the asylum seekers' centre we have had no fixed abode. We were moving from one address to the other. Sometimes we sleep rough. This does not feel right. I do not know whether to be afraid or whether I find it all exciting. If we meet with the police and they ask us why we live in the street, chances are that they will send us back to our country. In this house, where we live now, the situation is such that we hide when someone knocks on the door. We think that it might be the police or it is the neighbours who want to know who we are.'* (boy, aged 12)

Almost fifty percent of the children (n=14) live with their parents or guardians in independent accommodation.<sup>11</sup> In ten cases this concerned a house that was obtained through the church or an aid organization. Ten children of this group lived with their parents in one room they had rented from private landlords. The other children had found shelter with their parents at relatives' or in one room in sheltered accommodation (for undocumented migrants).

### **Privacy**

Twelve of the thirteen children who lived in independent accommodation with their parents had their own bedroom. The sixteen children in the other residences had little or no privacy. They shared a room with other family members. Some of these children slept in bunkbeds, while the parents slept in another bed. Sometimes family members had to share one bed between them. The number of family members who occupied one room together ranged from two to five. Some children longed for privacy, others for a house with a garden. Two children who indicated that it was important for them to live quietly, phrased this as follows:

*'I long for a quiet existence. Really, yes, just quiet. Quiet. Of course everyone has his cross to bear, but I want a life with fewer problems. I no longer want frustrations. I wouldn't care if I had to live in an office block 144 meters high if this would just provide some peace and quiet.'* (boy, aged 17)

---

<sup>11</sup> Independent accommodation means accommodation with independent access and a kitchen and toilet of its own.

*'I just want peace, I don't want to have to run away from the police all the time. We left all our possessions in our previous house. That was a big house and we want to go back to that house.'* (girl, aged 17)

Two children who lived in sheltered accommodation said they longed for peace. Moreover five children said that they would like a large(r) house, preferably with a garden and play areas close by.

### **Parenting climate**

The children indicated that they experienced a lot of support from the contact with their parents and siblings, but there were tensions at home as well, caused by uncertainty and sometimes by bad living conditions.

#### *Tensions at home*

In many cases when families had to share housing accommodation there were frequent rows between the families. This may occur when children take each other's toys to play with them or because one of the families is too noisy. These frequent tensions did not only occur between families. According to one of her relatives one of the children had been traumatized because for a long time she had been a witness to rows between her parents. Her aunt related:

*'Lida<sup>12</sup> (girl, aged 7) often had to witness that her parents got into arguments. After these rows her mother always took her to a different address. The rows went so bad that the police had to be called. Eventually Lida's father went back to his native country. The rows with the mother had drained him. All this time Lida did not go to school because she stayed at a different address or was no longer brought to school after her grandad's death. And since that time she has been living with me.'*

One child told us about an incident that caused her to call the police:

*'In fact my stepfather and my mother had rows all the time. Often my father and my mother were very angry. One time my father hit my mother really hard. I was very frightened because I thought that my mother was dead. She had fainted. Then I called the police. It took a little too long before they came, because my stepfather had already gone. Mom had many wounds, but now she is a lot better. Mom did not visit the doctor. She did not want to*

---

<sup>12</sup> This is a fictitious name.

*go. Only my mother's best friend is allowed to know that this has happened. Nobody else.'*  
(girl, aged 9)

### **Affective support**

The majority of the children who were interviewed had a positive relationship with their parent(s) or guardian(s). In a few cases this relationship seemed to be strained. In the case of one child an aunt mentioned that there was a severe lack of attention for the child.

*'The mother is just stressed out because she has no documents and no better future for her daughter and the situation with the father does not exactly improve things. And sometimes the mother is failing as a parent so to speak. Lida has had to take care of herself from the age of two or thereabouts. I can still remember clearly that Lida, then two years old, fetched a slice of bread or something like that for herself when she was hungry. Her school teacher has noticed a few things as well. She does not approve of the fact that Lida is cycling back home on her own. In the beginning the teacher thought this is a bit dangerous. I agree with this, but I can't help it either. Nobody pays any attention to her.'* (girl aged 7)

### **The role of the parent**

Although it is not always easy for children in illegal circumstances to live like ordinary children are supposed to, only in the minority of interviews did it emerge that the children took on tasks and responsibilities of the parents for a prolonged period of time. Examples where this is the case concerned a fifteen-year old boy who acted as an interpreter and a discussion partner for the parents and one girl of nineteen who acted as prop and stay for her mother.

*'My mother has some kind of allergy, caused by the sun I think. When my mother came here, she went to live with my aunt as well. But after two months the aunt kicked us out. So my mother went to a shelter. I went to a woman whom I did not even know. She was kind enough to take me in. I went everywhere to ask for a place where I could live with my mother. Therefore I went to the Pauluskerk.<sup>13</sup> This is a sort of foundation that helps people. They gave us a house where we are living now. Although we could only stay there for three months, we've been living there for three years now. Every night I pace up and down*

---

<sup>13</sup> Shelter in Rotterdam.

*thinking. What is going to happen? What can I do about it? What are the possibilities? I want a better life for me and my mother. But you really cannot sleep when you are worrying about that. And when I watch the clock it is time to go to school. Then I go to school and I have work placement and then I am home again, I am very tired but I still cannot sleep.'*  
(girl, aged 19).

## **Health**

Twenty of the 29 children who were interviewed indicated that they were ill frequently. They mentioned several symptoms resembling flu and colds and/or headaches or abdominal pains. A few children said they were troubled by backache or itches or that they had trouble sleeping. A number of children mentioned a combination of symptoms. One child was diagnosed with autism, his brother with PDD-NOS. It was remarkable that two-thirds of the children indicated they suffered from medical problems. This seems to be a high percentage. However, from the list of medical problems and the explanation the children gave for these problems it has not become clear to what extent their medical problems were caused by the fact that these children are undocumented. Two children mentioned medical problems that were clearly associated with their undocumented status. The first child's health problems showed a direct relationship with the poverty in which the family lived. This concerned a child who indicated to have been ill only a few times. Afterwards the child turned out to have been severely ill and that it had not eaten or slept for a long period of time. The child had a poor diet (and so did her mother) because there was only very little money. She did not sleep enough because she took care of her ill mother. The second child's (psychological) health problems were directly related to her status. This concerned a child who had been treated by a psychiatrist for a year because she had been witness to a suicide by a co-occupant of the asylum seekers' centre.

## **Considerations as to the decision to visit a physician and access to additional medical care**

From the stories of the children it emerged that the parents made a conscious consideration about consulting a physician if a child falls ill. These considerations were predominantly inspired by a combination of their own appraisal of the severity of the disease and by the expenses.

The severity of the disease of the child is decisive for the question whether a doctor is called in. This showed that only a small number of parents knew that the care provider can claim - a part of - the

expenses at the Health Care Insurance Board [Zorginstituut Nederland] if they are unable to pay the bill themselves.<sup>14</sup> In the case of infections the physician will not be visited. In those cases parents make do with administering home-made herb potions, sometimes paracetamol, or they wait until the infection has resolved of itself.

Because of her insufficient command of the Dutch language one mother visited a physician of her own ethnic group. The usual treatment consists of a consultation where she is given specific herbs - on payment of a certain amount of money. According to an informant she liked this because it was easier to communicate with this general practitioner.

In a number of more severe cases the children visited other care providers. For example one child was treated in hospital to have its adenoids surgically removed. The medical expenses were reimbursed by a support organisation. A second child received physiotherapy when she still had asylum status. Once her asylum status had been withdrawn this physiotherapist would no longer treat her. A third child was helped in hospital when she had broken her toe.

In all the cases mentioned above the children and their parents had positive memories of the contacts with the care providers. In three other cases the experiences were negative: with a dentist, a physiotherapist and a general practitioner. These care providers refused to help children who had no valid health insurance documents.

*'My mother went to the general practitioner with my sister when my sister turned out to have something odd on her nose, some growth or something. But this physician turned them away. He said that he would not be paid anything by the insurance. Mom said that she would pay him. It had happened before with this physician when my sister had something wrong with her foot. At that time this same physician sent her away as well.'* (girl aged 17).

### 3.5 Developmental requirements outside the family

Section 3.5 will address the following domains: relationships with children the same age, education, social network and future outlook. According to Kalverboer en Zijlstra (2008) these domains are

---

<sup>14</sup> The starting point of the regulation is that the patient is always held responsible for paying the bill. If a bill is not paid (in full) physicians and other care providers can claim at the Zorginstituut [Dutch Health Care Board] 80% of the expenses they incurred for 'medically necessary care provided to certain groups of migrants without residence permits who are unable to pay'. Only care provided because of pregnancy and delivery is reimbursed in full.

important for the development of children. In this section it will be investigated whether these children had contacts with other children in various situations; whether they attend school; whether had access to different sources of support and whether they thought they would have a future in the Netherlands.

### **Contact with children the same age**

Half of the children (n=15) had a group of friends. These groups of friends consisted of children the same age whom they knew from school, from their (former) neighbourhood or through church. This specifically pertained to the older children. Eight of the eleven children we interviewed had contacts with several children of the same age group. A little over half of the younger children had contacts with children the same age from different groups.

The children who were not members of a club had contacts with children the same age through different means. In nineteen cases these contacts had developed through school. Two children had contacts with children the same age of their church. The same number of children was in contact with children the same age from the neighbourhood. One child's contacts were limited relatives.

### *Access to sports and leisure activities*

Sport is a way to come into contact with children the same age. Five children aged 10 to 17 were members of some club. Four children had joined a football club. The fifth child was a member of an athletics club. In total 17% of the children we interviewed were members of sports clubs. This number is in sharp contrast with the 42% who, according to The Netherlands Institute for Social Research, are currently members of sports clubs.

The majority of the children were not members of sports clubs or had had to end their membership. Three children had previously joined a club but were too busy with school to participate in sports activities. Twenty-one children had never joined a club. Seven children would like to join a sports club, but their parents did not have enough money.

The children appeared to live lives just like other (documented) children: they had contacts with children the same age, and they had friends. Some children were members of a football club or other sports clubs. Yet the stories of some children create the impression that their circumstances are less favourable for their development; circumstances that were directly related to their situation. From what we have discussed before it has become clear that seven children would like

to join a sports club but that this was impossible due to lack of money. Of course it is not known how many children had already adjusted their wishes to the constraints of their situation. Poverty was an obstacle for them. Undocumented migrants have a slim chance of escaping poverty in the course of time: these children will live in poverty for a long time or even permanently.

In addition to this they are living in fear that their status as undocumented person will be discovered. This has a negative impact on their friendships as is illustrated by the following quotation:

*'My friends know nothing about my status. This has been a conscious decision. I really keep this to myself. Because if anyone would know he could pass it on. Therefore I also am very alert when I am with my friends as well.'*

*'Some friends find me mysterious because I never talk about the situation at home. In fact I feel locked up. I do not feel free, I don't know what to do if I meet the police in the street. Do I stand still or run away? This causes many frustrations.'* (boy, aged 17)

The fear of these children that their undocumented status will be discovered and the distrust towards children of the same age, towards friends and others is structural in nature as well.

## **Education**

All the children who were interviewed attended school. The older children followed courses; the highest level being pre-vocational secondary education, whereas they were dreaming about future professions that require a university degree. It is remarkable that many of them mentioned medical, legal or economic professions: five of the eleven older children wanted to become doctors, lawyers or economists.

*'When I was little, I wanted to become a lawyer. I often watched films with lawyers and so on, and I like that, because in fact lawyers solve problems. They help people.'* (girl, aged 14).

### *School performance*

Fifteen children completed school without noticeable problems. Eleven children seemed to have problems with their school performance. They had a language deficiency or learning deficiencies or

deficiencies because they had started school at a later moment in time. Three children did not provide information about their school performance.

### *Bullying at school*

Almost a quarter of the children (n=7) had to cope directly or indirectly with bullying in the classroom, the school yard or at their work experience place. Four children had suffered verbal bullying and had been subjected to comments about their appearance or their intelligence. In the fifth case, which concerned a child in work placement, it was unknown which form the bullying took. The other two children had been witnesses to bullying. They observed that 'some classmates do not like foreigners very much'. In all these cases the school had taken action.

*'I think some classmates are racists. They are constantly offending others. This gives me a bad feeling. I watch it, but don't do anything'. (boy, aged 17)*

Another child - who was growing up in poverty - was bullied in school because he was wearing old clothes.

*'Sometimes during break they will laugh at my clothes and so on, but I just ignore this. Yes, just about my clothes, what I'm wearing and that. Something like that. They say it is old or something but I just walk on. I don't let it bother me.'* (boy, aged 14)

### *Work placement*

Three children were in work placement. Initially two of them did not have access to work placement. One institution for work placement stated as a condition that if they were to receive a fine (in case of a check by the labour inspectorate) this fine would have to be paid by the school. The school agreed to this. In the second case the school acted as a mediator to find a work experience place. The third student had no problems with her work placement which she performed at the Food Bank. One child who will shortly have to start work placement indicated to have experienced problems in finding a work experience place. In spite of the fact that work placement is also accessible for children without residence permits, some children encountered problems in finding work experience places. A possible reason for this is that the person who supervised the children in finding work experience was not sufficiently informed.

### *Support by teachers*

The extent to which the schools showed concern about the well-being of the children is remarkable. In over three quarters of the children (n=25) the teachers acted as mediators if finding work experience places turned out to be troublesome - they helped with school assignments, they took an active role if children were being bullied or abused in other ways, they stepped in when money was needed for school activities or glasses or if children required advice and personal attention. Some children expressed their appreciation for the fact that the school had not let on that they had no legal residence in The Netherlands.

### **Social network**

The previous sections have made it clear that social networks were of importance for the children. All the children disposed of a social network to fall back on and that supported them in practical matters but also in legal procedures. The contacts had developed through school, through the church and through support organizations. The children were well integrated into Dutch society and perceived better acceptance. However, these children saw the differences between their own social situation and that of other children in the Netherlands more clearly and indicated that this caused them to have more problems with this.

### **Future outlook**

The majority of the children (n=19) had dreams about a future in the Netherlands. Among them is a small group (n=5) who thought they only had a real chance of a future in the Netherlands if they were to be granted a residence permit. In each of these five cases it concerned older children.

*'I believe that I will succeed in finding a job, at least I hope so, ha ha. Yes, even for us this is not certain. We will get our certificate this year, but, yes, well what to do next? I don't know. Only a Child's Pardon can help, but this is not possible because we never applied for asylum.'*  
(boy, aged 17)

Fourteen of the nineteen children who had dreams about a future in the Netherlands assumed that their future anyhow would be in the Netherlands. Half of these were born in the Netherlands.

*'I was born in the Netherlands and this is my own country. In Africa there are flies in your eyes and mouth and that...'* (boy, aged 10)

*'I want to stay in the Netherlands. I do not understand the Ghanaian language and I find Ghana scary. In the Netherlands nobody will hurt me.'* (boy, aged 6)

A minority (n=3) did not see a future for themselves in The Netherlands. They were dreaming about a future as a doctor or a stewardess in another country. One of these children had already invested in this.

*'I would like to become a stewardess and live in France. I am already taking French language lessons. When I did not yet have a residence permit, I had given up hope that I would get such an opportunity. Now I am certain that I will have a better future.'* (girl, aged 14)

A slightly larger group (n=7) does not know. Most of these children were born in the Netherlands. Three of them were dreaming about a future as a doctor.

*'When I have finished elementary school, I would like to become a doctor.'* (girl, aged 8)

### **3.6 Perception of illegality**

In addition to the subjects that are associated with the developmental circumstances the children also told us in the interviews about the way in which they perceived their lives as undocumented people. Each of the children had a different perception of illegal residence. The perception of children who had previously lived in asylum centres were confronted with (the consequences of) illegality differed from that of the children who have never lived in such institutions. The former group will predominantly be faced with the aliens' police who keep reminding them of the fact that they are not allowed to live in the Netherlands. The latter group are told by their parents or by other people that complete participation in this society is exclusively reserved for people with a valid residence status. These children will become aware of their situation the moment they go to (secondary) school, through work, leisure activities etc. The social divide within the group of children with whom we spoke did not diminish their awareness of being illegal. What the children had in common is that they had no chance of a normal life in The Netherlands. It made no

difference whether or not they were born in The Netherlands and whether or not they had a good command of the Dutch language.

*'Only when I was in group eight did I find out that I was in The Netherlands illegally. This was quite shocking because I was completely unaware of this. My parents never spoke about this at home, I think because - as I heard afterwards - they had been cheated when my father had thrown in his lot with people who had promised him a British passport. I think that this situation embarrassed them. So when I went looking for a secondary school in the neighbourhood, together with my parents I heard it from the head of that school. He told us that he could not enrol me because we have no residence permits. At that time I did not understand what this meant. Only after a while it registered with me - I would never get a driver's licence, would not be allowed to work. I cannot visit a discotheque either. Employers would like to take me on, but I do not want them to take risks with me because customers can go to the aliens' police and ruin the business. But on the other hand I do not want to run a risk either. I do not want to be on television like Mauro. This would mean that everybody knew that I am illegal. This does not feel quite right to me.'* (boy, aged 17)

Three noticeable themes are living with a secret, fear of authorities and the problems the children have with establishing emotional bonds.

### **Living with a secret**

By far the greater majority of the children who were interviewed had not told others that they had no valid residence documents for fear of deportation or for fear of being judged by their social environment. It is a reality that they prefer to keep to themselves; in many cases this reality is unseen by anyone. They do not want their friends to treat them as inferiors or to pity them. Many children worried about problems such as whether or not they would be granted a residence status, or about the outcome of the procedure for obtaining a Child's Pardon. One child phrased this as follows:

*'At times I keep thinking about how it would be if we had a residence permit. Actually this occupies my mind on a daily basis.'* (boy, aged 12)

Some children did not share with their parents the problems that living with a secret caused them. In a few cases the teacher or the head of the school told the class that the child has no residence

documents. To the question as to how the outside world responded to their illegal residence status one child gave the following answer: 'not with aversion or anything'. Another child said: 'I was nervous, because I was scared (...)'. These responses gave the researchers the impression that the children were afraid not to be taken seriously. One boy was not happy that the teacher had told the children in the class.

### **Fear from authorities**

Fear from authorities was mentioned by several children, notably fear from the police. For example one adolescent told us she was afraid to be detained by the police at some point.

*'I am thinking of the police more often. When I walk in the streets. When I am at my work experience place. Even when I am at home. Perhaps the police will enter without any warning, you can never tell. I am scared when I see policemen walking by. Usually I start trembling. Then I try to walk quickly. I think ... 'if they look at me, they will arrest me'. So I try to walk as fast as I can. Once I was on the tram and a policeman came to sit beside me. I was very scared, I started shaking. And this policeman noticed it. He asked: 'why are you trembling like that?' I said that I was cold. And it was cold. So he started talking to me. I started to walk. He said: 'I will walk along with you for a bit'. He had given me his coat. But I was so frightened. He was quite kind. But er... I was still afraid. But I also felt kind of safe with this man'. (girl, aged 19)*

The fear that the children contend with can take two forms: direct fear and indirect fear. Direct fear includes being afraid to be detained, in the street by the police - like in the quotation above -.

Indirect fear is the fear that 'the truth will get out': they had not told their friends that they are undocumented because they can pass this on to others and they could be detained as yet.

### **Establishing emotional relationships**

Older children had a certain idea about their stay in The Netherlands. Some children indicated not to establish emotional relationships. Two adolescents told us never to want to fall in love as long as they had an illegal status. One of them phrased this as follows:

*'...when I think about. my situation, why would I get a child who would have a life like mine? This is no life. So I will not inflict this on another person. People without residence permits have no happy lives. I know what I am talking about. I know adolescents - a bit older than me - without residence permits whose children were placed in foster families. They had no permit so they had no future. But if I had a child I would never want it to be taken away, I can't bear thinking about this.'* (girl, aged 19)

For others falling in love is part of life, whether or not this life is led in illegal circumstances. For example an older child (girl, aged 17) told us that she has been in a loving relationship for about four years.

## 4. Conclusions and recommendations

In this chapter we will present the conclusions of the two substudies. It also contains a review of the different parts of the study. At the end of the chapter some recommendations will be provided.

Undocumented children are growing up in difficult circumstances (Staring, 2010; Kalverboer en Zijlstra 2006; and Braat, 2004). Many of these children live in the margins of society, and therefore have fewer opportunities to participate. In addition the researchers have mentioned before that many undocumented children take a dim view on their future prospects. The starting point of this study was that the circumstances in which these children are grow up are made even more difficult because the policy towards aliens has become increasingly harsher during the last couple of years.

The objective of the present study is gaining insight into the extent, background and developmental situation of children without residence permits. There are no recent data as to the present situation of undocumented children in the city of Utrecht. This was the reason to perform a study into the number and the situation of undocumented children in this city. During this research project the scope of the study was extended and undocumented children who were growing up in The Hague, Rotterdam, and Amsterdam were included as well.

The central question was the extent, background and developmental situation of children without residence permits in Utrecht and in the other three large cities. The research questions were:

1. How many undocumented children are living in the municipality of Utrecht?
2. How do undocumented children perceive their home and living environments?
3. To what extent have the developmental requirements of undocumented children been safeguarded?
4. Which recommendations can be phrased for the purpose of drawing up municipal policies that safeguard the developmental requirements of undocumented children?

In order to answer the research questions two substudies were performed.

The first substudy was quantitative in nature and focused at estimating the number of undocumented children in Utrecht. Two methods of data collection were used for this purpose: information was gathered through municipal registration files and a questionnaire was distributed among elementary schools, institutions for secondary education and child health centres.

The second substudy was qualitative in nature and focused on the developmental situation of undocumented children in Utrecht, The Hague, Amsterdam, and Rotterdam. The results of this substudy are based on a concise literature study and on semi-structured interviews with 29 undocumented children aged 6-19 years.

#### **4.1 Conclusions about the estimates of the number of undocumented children in Utrecht**

The literature provided little information with which the first research question could be answered - the number of undocumented children in Utrecht. It turned out to be quite a task to obtain information about the number of undocumented migrants residing in the city of Utrecht and in The Netherlands. Moreover, the available studies did not categorize undocumented migrants into children and adults. Therefore no conclusions could be drawn as to the number of undocumented children and their backgrounds based on the existing literature.

Through the education department of the municipality of Utrecht inquiries were made about the number of children without residence permits who attended school in Utrecht. From this it emerged that 45 pupils attended school in the municipality of Utrecht who had not been registered in the municipal register [Gemeentelijke Basis Administratie (GBA)]. On the one hand this number of 45 pupils is higher than the number of seven children who had been identified through the questionnaire. On the other hand it still is a relatively low number of undocumented children who attended school in Utrecht. In addition there is the possibility that there are children in Utrecht who do not attend school and who are not known to care providers. In view of the outcome of the conversations held with the children this would be worrisome.

The telephone interviews among intermediaries and the questionnaire that was distributed among schools and child health centres in Utrecht did not provide much information about the number of undocumented children in this city either. This led to the impression that the undocumented children were shielded from the outside world and kept in anonymity by some intermediaries such

as schoolteachers. In one case an (elementary) school indicated that they provided education to one or more undocumented child (children) but they were not willing to impart information about this. This school said that the children were known to the health and welfare services in Utrecht where we might be able to obtain information. In addition many institutions where we made inquiries indicated that practical objections prevented them from co-operating with the study - notably staff shortages and time constraints. On further inquiry informers from these institutions indicated to be in doubt as to whether there were large numbers of undocumented children in Utrecht.

Another finding was that it was not always clear who could and who could not be counted as belonging to the group of undocumented children.

#### **4.2 Conclusions from the interviews with undocumented children**

The second substudy focused on the question how undocumented children perceived their home and living environments and to what extent the developmental requirements of these undocumented children are under threat.

Through intermediaries 58 children were approached for the study (usually through their parents), 33 of whom participated in the interviews. This concerned children with and without an asylum past, aged 6-19 years from Utrecht, Rotterdam, The Hague or Amsterdam.

Semi-structured interviews were held with 33 children by students from the faculty welfare rights [Maatschappij en Recht] of Hogeschool Utrecht who had undergone extensive interview training to prepare them for the interviews. Four interviews were excluded from the analysis. This was done because at the moment of the interview the children concerned had recently been issued residence permits (less than a year before). The information from the periods before and after the status had been granted could not be distinguished to a sufficient extent.

One additional objective of the study was to raise awareness in the group of upcoming professionals in the social and legal services for the target group and to make them more sensitive to the problems of illegal residence. A strong commitment and compassion emerged from the students' reflection reports and final presentations. The interviews left a deep impression with

them and provided great clarity concerning the vulnerable circumstances in which the children were growing up.

The interviews have been designed in such a way as to explore the undocumented children's perspectives on their situation and to investigate whether their developmental requirements were under threat. For this purpose we adopted the developmental requirements outlined by Kalverboer en Zijlstra (2008). The authors have described fourteen developmental requirements, which are based on the International Convention on the Rights of the Child. In this study we focused on a selection from these requirements, notably on the developmental requirements *within* the family (livelihood, housing, parenting climate, and health) and on developmental requirements *outside* the family (social network, education, health care, contacts with children the same age and future outlook).

### **Developmental requirements within the family**

With respect to the developmental requirements within the family the interviews focused on the children's livelihood, their home environment, parenting climate, and health. The children who were interviewed belonged to 27 households. Seven of these households were dependent on others for their livelihood. They received donations, in the form of money or in kind. These donations were mainly occasional in nature, which resulted in a considerable extent of uncertainty. Only in a few cases these donations appeared to be of a more structural nature. In addition seven households had income through work (usually in the informal economy), such as cleaning jobs or paper rounds. Three households provided for themselves through assistance benefits.

Although the study did not provide information about the exact extent of the income, the interviews with the children have made it clear that the income is uncertain and low. Besides most children were growing up in households that exclusively relied on the (single) mother; in relatively many households the fathers were absent. The parents of the children struggled to make ends meet. The children were growing up in poverty. The children indicated that lack of money caused shortages of a number of fundamental items. For example some children indicated that there was no money to buy school necessities, there was no money to join sports clubs or to buy sports clothing. Beside this the children indicated they needed footwear, clothing, bicycles or computers or Internet connections. The children hardly received any pocket money. Sometimes they received money from their support networks. In addition from the interviews created the impression that

the children did not have a very varied and perhaps unhealthy diet. For example some children said that there was no money to buy fruit.

With respect to the living environment the interviews brought to light that the children and their families often moved house and that they lived in cramped houses. Ten children lived together with their parents in rooms rented from private landlords and three children and their parents had found accommodation with relatives or friends or stayed in sheltered accommodation. Some children told us that the family had not enough (room for) beds and that several family members slept together in the same bed or on the living room floor. It was striking that many of the children said they felt the need for some 'space for themselves' in the house: a place where it is quiet, where they can retire, where they would have some privacy.

In a number of cases the parenting climate left something to be desired. Some children indicated that they had been witness to domestic violence. Some children seemed to have taken up roles and responsibilities of the parents (parentification). This leads to the question whether they will have enough opportunity to have a proper childhood.

### **Developmental requirements outside the family**

With respect to the developmental requirements outside the family the study focused on social network, education, contacts with children the same age and on the outlook the children had on the future.

Usually the children mentioned that they perceived their parents, brothers and sisters as very supportive. Contacts with teachers were also described as supportive as well. Some children who grew up with their mothers in single-parent households emphatically mentioned they missed their fathers.

Half the children (n=15) indicated they had an extensive group of friends. These friends were children the same age they knew from school, the (former) neighbourhood or the church.

All the children who were interviewed attended school, the majority of the older children followed pre-vocational secondary education. The children indicated to like going to school although their home environment took a toll on their school performance. A little under half of them were lagging behind in school. They ascribed this to the many times they moved house or to problems between their parents. Another remarkable thing was that the majority of children were dreaming about

future careers in sectors and jobs that require a university education: for example they wanted to become judges or physicians.

Many children said they felt supported by their teachers or mentors with whom they could discuss their problems, share secrets, to whom they could turn if there were problems at their work experience place or with whom they could talk about their financial and practical problems such as lack of money to buy school necessities, to go on school camp or to buy a computer for use at home.

The study has brought to light that the children who were interviewed were surrounded by a supportive network consisting of professionals and volunteers. In some cases they were able to provide support and protection if the parents were unable to do so.

It was remarkable that many of the undocumented children were surrounded by 'protective coats' which consisted of citizens, volunteers, caregivers, teachers and other relevant people; people who care about the fate of these children, who lent a helping hand to the children and their families, who occasionally donated money or goods, who provided practical and emotional support, who 'kept a finger on the pulse' and who stepped in in times of need. During the study these protective coats became visible in another way. The search strategy we applied to come into contact with undocumented children consisted of asking people of whom we thought they knew undocumented children and their parents to bring us into contact with undocumented children. We noticed that the people concerned had (great) reservations: they shielded the children, kept them out of the wind and guarded over their anonymity to protect them. This circle, which consisted of citizens, volunteers, caregivers, teachers and other relevant people who cared about these children and their parents played an important part in warranting the developmental opportunities of these children. From the study it emerged that these people - teachers, volunteers etc. - were in contact with the children and their parents and helped out at critical moments if the children threatened to get into difficulties and if their developmental opportunities came under threat. They also helped out in some cases where the children's parents (temporarily) were unable to see to their children's safety or health or otherwise could not take care of them. Precisely because formal institutions will not notice these children as a matter of course, these 'protective coats' are of great importance for their development.

In addition the interviews with the undocumented children showed that they were under considerable psychological pressure. A number of children indicated that they felt they were living

with a secret, that they were scared they would be detained by the police (in the streets) and that they did not know whom to trust. Moreover they worried about their future. They perceived their future as highly uncertain. Two thirds of the children wanted to stay in The Netherlands. In many cases they had no relation with the country of origin (of their parents), did not speak the language and did not want to live there (apart from the odd exception). Many younger children did not know where they wanted to live later on in their lives. Some (older) children had mentally guarded themselves against possible disappointments by stating that they did not want to enter into intimate relationships. They did not establish emotional bonds with others to protect themselves and the others from disappointment in case they would have to leave The Netherlands unexpectedly.

We obtained little information about the children's health. What we did find is that accessing the general practitioner did not pose great problems for these children. Other care providers such as medical specialists appeared to be less accessible for the study sample.

Lastly it should be emphasized that the problems mentioned by the children who were interviewed, were in part similar to the problems of other children in The Netherlands (irrespective of their legal status) - notably with other children who were growing up in poverty. For example many children who grow up in poverty will have to contend with problems associated with the lack of a healthy and varied diet or they cannot afford membership fees of (sports) clubs. Concerning these issues the situation of undocumented children is not unique. However, the problems of undocumented children have a more severe effect or are more fundamental in nature than those of documented children in the same age group who are growing up in poverty. For example this study has brought to light that the undocumented children lack very basic things such as school necessities, toys, (sports) clothing or bicycles. Also the many times the children had to move house and cramped housing (for example because they lodged with others) was perceived as a burden by the children. Besides, of the 21 families to which the children belong, as many as seven families were completely dependent on donations. Considering that there is but little chance of change or improvement of the (financial) situation of these families the situation of poverty in which the children were growing up is very persistent in nature.

Moreover, a part of the undocumented children's problems are indeed different from those experienced by documented children in The Netherlands (irrespective of whether they were growing up in poverty). The specific problems of the undocumented children notably concerned

their exclusion from or the limited access to social provisions and health care. At a later age children without documents are precluded from doing many things that documented children of the same age can do, such as finding a work experience place, obtaining a driver's licence for a moped or a car, visiting establishments where they have to prove their identity, taking a (secondary) job or going on holiday abroad. In addition they contend with great uncertainties about their future, with living with the secret of their legal status and with the psychological pressure they experience because they have no documents and the direct or indirect fear to be found out and detained.

### ***Scope and limitations of the study***

The interviews form a rich source of information about undocumented children. They bring into focus how they perceive their situation. The study data, however, have a number of limitations too.

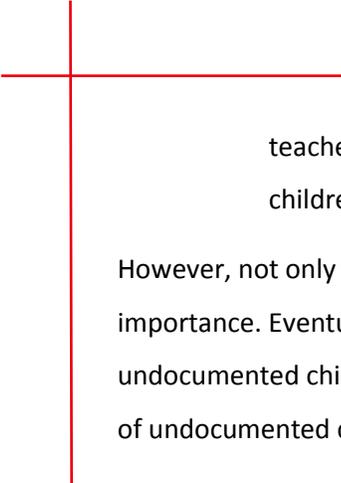
- The study was performed in a relatively short time period of a few months in part because the fourth-year students who held the interviews were only available for a short period before their final exam. This put the study under time pressure.
- Because of the search strategy followed care providers and to schools the children who were approached and interviewed were predominantly children who were known to care providers and to schools. This means that this substudy provides an insight into a selection of children who live in illegal circumstances. Only children who were known to care providers and schools have been included in this study.
- The interviews with undocumented children provided a limited insight into the selected aspects of the development of these children. Each of the children was only interviewed once, which means that the information about their development only pertained to a single moment in time, whereas the development of the children is a dynamic process.
- A major challenge of this study was interviewing *young* children. These were not as capable as the older children of phrasing their experiences and emotions. Therefore more quotations of older children have been included in this study. This will bias the findings to some extent.

### 4.3 Recommendations

The study has brought to light the ambivalence between illegality on the one hand and children's rights on the other. Undocumented children have illegal residence in our country. For one thing the authorities wash their hands of this group but for another it does still have the responsibility to observe the rights of these children. We would like to draw the attention of municipalities to the following recommendations:

- Municipal authorities themselves should make it clear to all the institutions within the municipalities that the rights of undocumented children need to be respected. This requires informing professionals about these rights and about the way in which the professionals will be reimbursed for the expenses they have incurred for their help and services to undocumented children.
- Municipal authorities should safeguard the right to accessible health care for undocumented children (and their parents). For this purpose municipalities have to have an insight into the accessibility to health care for undocumented migrants; they must know which obstacles there are and they have to remove these thresholds.

The study has brought to light that the undocumented children who were interviewed were surrounded by protective coats which consisted of citizens, volunteers, caregivers, teachers and other relevant people who care about these children. They provided services and support and occasionally donated money or goods. They provided practical and emotional support, kept a 'finger on the pulse' and stepped in in times of need. These circles are essential to safeguard the developmental opportunities of the children. The function of these circles of concerned citizens around children match the principles of the WMO [Social Support Act] and the 'big society' which encourages citizens to have (more) involvement with one another and to offer informal help and support. This has resulted in the following recommendations municipal authorities should support and facilitate the informal networks around undocumented children and their parents - networks consisting of volunteers and other active citizens (whether or not in a professional context such as



teachers, care providers etc.) so they can alert and intervene if the development of the children is under threat.

However, not only the support from the informal circuit around the undocumented children is of importance. Eventually it is the authorities that are responsible for protecting the rights of undocumented children. Therefore formal government services should also be used for the support of undocumented children.

Municipalities can mobilise the following policy instruments in order to improve the situation of undocumented children:

- Usually the municipal services know which schools in their municipality are attended by undocumented children. Municipal authorities should make available (additional) funds to these schools that can be used for these children. These funds could be used for such things as the purchase of school necessities or library passes, for the costs of (public) transport to and from school, for membership fees of (sports) clubs, the purchase of (sports) attributes or for subsidising remedial teaching to eliminate school backlogs etc.
- In addition municipalities should provide undocumented children and their parents with (more) information about their rights and about resources for support, such as access to education and to health care, for example through setting up a dedicated telephone line.

## Sources

Beirens, H., N. Huges, R. Hek, N. Spicer. Preventing Social Exclusion of Refugee and Asylum Seeking Children: Building new networks, *Social Policy & Society*, 6 (2), pp. 219- 229, 2007.

Bommeljé, S. & Braat, K.C. (2002). *Tussen recht en kwaliteit; een oriënterende studie naar 'illegale' kinderen in het Nederlandse onderwijs Amsterdam*, Defence for Children International Nederland in samenwerking met Cordaid, 2002

Braat, K. (2004). *Ik ben er wel maar ze zien me niet*. Defence for Children.

Bruning, M. (2003). Rechten van 'illegale' kinderen in Nederland. *Pedagogiek in Praktijk*, Juni 2013. <http://www.ack.vu.nl/htmls/publicaties/pedagogisch%20nieuws/pip13b.pdf>

Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau [file:///C:/Users/HP/Downloads/FS\\_Sport\\_9\\_2012\\_web.pdf](file:///C:/Users/HP/Downloads/FS_Sport_9_2012_web.pdf)

College voor zorgverzekeringen (2013), kenmerk CCZ/2013/057811

Defence for Children (2013). *Bescherming Alleenstaande Minderjarige Vreemdelingen in de knel*. Defence for Children, UNICEF. <http://www.defenceforchildren.nl/images/20/2547.pdf>

Engbersen, G., E. Snel, & Rusinovic, K. (2000), *De vier economieën: over sociale uitsluiting en bestaansstrategieën. Balans van het armoedebeleid*. Vijfde jaarrapport armoede en sociale uitsluiting. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press 5, 53-75.

Engbersen, G., Staring, R. , Leun, J. van der , Boom, J. , Heijden P. van der & Cruijff, P. (2002). *Illegale vreemdelingen in Nederland: omvang, overkomst, verblijf en uitzetting*, Rotterdam: RISBO Contractresearch BV/ Erasmus Universiteit.

European Commission, The Social Protection Committee (2008). *Child Poverty and Well-Being in the EU, Current status and way forward*. European Commission Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (2008). Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg, January 2008 [http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/publications/2008/ke3008251\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/publications/2008/ke3008251_en.pdf)

Heijden, P. van der , van Gils, G. van, Cruijff, M., Hessen, D., (2006), *Een schatting van het aantal in Nederland verblijvende illegale vreemdelingen in 2005*. Utrecht: IOPS- University of Utrecht.

Heijden, P. van der , Gils, van G., Cruijff, M., Hessen, D., (2011), *Een schatting van het aantal in Nederland verblijvende illegale vreemdelingen in 2009*. WODC, Den Haag.

Hoek, van der T. (2005). *Through Children's Eyes an Initial Study of Children's Personal Experiences and Coping Strategies Growing Up Poor in an Affluent Netherlands*. UNICEF: Innocenti Working Paper. [http://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/IWP\\_2005\\_06\\_final.pdf](http://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/IWP_2005_06_final.pdf)

Kalverboer, M., Zijlstra, E. (2008). *Kinderen uit asielzoekersgezinnen en het recht op ontwikkeling, Het belang van het kind in het Vreemdelingenrecht*. Amsterdam.

Kamerstukken II 2013 -2014, 19 6367 nr. 1756

Kinderombudsman (2012). *Wachten op je toekomst, Adviesrapport over de positie van en toelatingscriteria voor vreemdeling en kinderen*. Advies: KOM2A/2012

Kinderombudsman (2013). *Gezinshereniging, Beleid en Uitvoering 2008-2013*. Onderzoeksteam: mevrouw K.J.A. Brouwers, mevrouw drs. C.M. Oosterwijk. Advies: KOM/003/2013.

Kloosterboer, K. (2009). *Kind in het centrum: kinderrechten in asielzoekerscentra*. UNICEF Nederland.

Kromhout, M.H.C. en Y.H. Leijstra (2006). *Terugkeer en MOB bij Alleenstaande Minderjarige Vreemdelingen*. Den Haag, Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek- en Documentatie Centrum (WODC).

Leerkes, M van San, Engbersen, G., Cruijff M. , Heijden,P., van der, *Wijken voor illegalen, over ruimtelijke spreiding, huisvesting en leefbaarheid*. Den Haag, 2004.

Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken (2012) Brief aan de Kinderombudsman d.d. 28 februari.

Pharos (2010). *Ongedocumenteerde kinderen en de toegang tot ziekenhuiszorg. Onderzoeksrapport*. Defence for Children, Unicef.

PICUM (2009). *Undocumented Children in Europe: Invisible Victims of Immigration Restrictions*.

<http://picum.org/picum.org/uploads/publication/Undocumented%20Children%20in%20Europe%20EN.pdf>

PICUM (2013). *Child poverty and well-being: Spotlight on the situation of migrant children in Cyprus and the EU*.

[http://picum.org/picum.org/uploads/publication/FINAL\\_Roundtable%20on%20Child%20poverty%20and%20wellbeing%20of%20migrant%20children%2017%20October\\_Report%20Update%20with%20speakers%20approval.pdf](http://picum.org/picum.org/uploads/publication/FINAL_Roundtable%20on%20Child%20poverty%20and%20wellbeing%20of%20migrant%20children%2017%20October_Report%20Update%20with%20speakers%20approval.pdf)

Sikkel, D., Heijden, P.G.M. van der, Gils, G. Van (2006). *Methoden voor omvangschattingen van verborgen populaties, met name illegalen*, WODC, Den Haag.

Staring, R. (2011), *Moderne slavernij of gewoon werk?* Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam.

Staring, R., Aarts, J. (2010). *Jong en Illegaal in Nederland*. Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam.

Werkgroep Kind in AZC (2013). *Ontheemd: De verhuizingen van asielzoekerskinderen in Nederland*.

UNICEF Nederland, Defence for Children, VluchtelingenWerk Nederland, Stichting Kinderpostzegels Nederland.

WBV 2013/1, wijziging vreemdelingencirculaire d.d. 30 januari 2013, Stct. 31 januari 2013, nr. 2573, ve13000188.

## Annex 1 Developmental requirements according to Kalverboer & Zijlstra (2008)

### 1. Adequate care

Care for health, physical well-being, for example clothing, food, and housing.

### 2. A safe physical direct environment

Physical protection of the child in the family, no abuse, no toxic influences, safe housing accommodation.

### 3. Affective climate

Parents who offer security, support and understanding tailored towards the child.

### 4. Supportive flexible parenting structure

Order, incentives, checks, setting boundaries, room for children's own initiatives, not too much/too little responsibility for the child.

### 5. Effective model behaviour parents

Child can take over behaviour, attitude, norms and values from parents.

### 6. Interest

Parent shows interest in the child and the world it lives in.

### 7. Continuity in parenting and care, future outlook

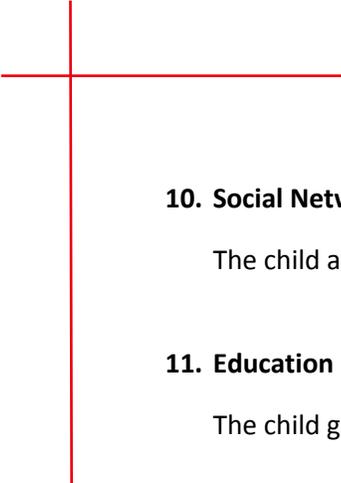
Parents establish a safe attachment relationship with the child. Basic trust is maintained through availability of the parent.

### 8. Safe broader physical environment

Safe neighbourhood and society. No war.

### 9. Respect

Child's environment takes seriously the needs and feelings of the child.



## **10. Social Network**

The child and its family have several available sources of support.

## **11. Education**

The child gets schooling and training and can develop its talents.

## **12. Contact with children the same age**

The child has contacts with other children in different situations, appropriate to the developmental level of the child.

## **13. Effective model behaviour society**

The child is in contact with others whose behaviour, values and norms it can adopt.

## **14. Stability in life circumstances, future outlook**

Changes in life are announced and understandable. Role models and sources of support remain present. Society offers the child an outlook on the future.

The first seven aspects pertain to the developmental requirements within the family, the following seven to those in society. The factors 1 to 6 including and 8 to 13 including are linked to the current situation; the factors 7 and 14 to the future and the past.

## Annex 2 Questionnaires child health care centres and schools

### Questionnaire for schools

1. Name school
2. Contact address
3. Type of school
4. How many children without a residence permit are attending your educational institution at the moment?

elementary school regular

elementary school independent

secondary education

Other, notably:

### CHILD 1

5. Sex and age
  - Boy
  - Girl
  - Age
6. What is the native country of the child?
7. If the child was born elsewhere, can you assess how many months or years the child has been living in The Netherlands?
8. What are the native countries of the parents? Please only fill in if this is known
  - Father
  - Mother
9. Which group is the child in?
10. Do you experience one of the following problems with this child? (You may click several boxes)
  - Acceptation problems (e.g. in the class/group)
  - Concentration problems
  - Backlogs in school

Frequent changes of school

Other, notably

11. Have you other children for whom you can fill in the data in this questionnaire

Yes (please proceed to CHILD 2)

No (please proceed to the end of the questionnaire)

### **Questionnaire child health centres**

1. Contact address child health centre

Please fill in the following data for each of the children:

#### **CHILD 1**

2. Sex and age

Boy

Girl

Age

3. What is the native country of the child?

4. If the child was born elsewhere, can you assess how many months or years the child has been living in The Netherlands?

5. What are the native countries of the parents? Please only fill in if this is known

Father

Mother

Have you observed anything specific in this child without a residence permits which requires additional attention? (For example things that worry you)

Please explain if the answer is yes.

6. Have you other children whose data you can fill in in this questionnaire

Yes (please proceed to CHILD 2)

No (please proceed to the end of the questionnaire)

## Annex 3 Item list semi-structured interviews

### STUDY UNDOCUMENTED CHILDREN IN UTRECHT

#### MSO ITEM LIST (FOR CHILDREN AGES 12 AND OLDER)

##### **HOUSING ACCOMMODATION:**

- With whom does the child live at this address? *[parents, brothers, sisters, friends, other people, who are they?]*
- How does the child perceive the present living accommodation? *[nice, beautiful etc.] [own space to play or to do homework, room of its own etc.?] [What does the child miss for example?]*
- Has the child always been living at the present address? *[If this is not the case, what was the child's first address? How many times has the child moved house afterwards? Which address did the child like best? Why? Was the child told in each case when and why it had to move house?]*
- According to the child what would the ideal place to live look like? *[Why?]*

##### **PERSONAL DETAILS:**

- Age child?
- How long in The Netherlands? *[date or year of entry]*
- Native country child?
- Native country parents?
- Is there anyone in the family with a residence permit? *[Who?]*

##### **EDUCATION:**

Establish whether the child is attending school.

- If so:
  - To what extent did the child attend different schools because the child moved house?
  - Which type of school and which class?

- Which nice experiences does the child have at school if any? Who are the child's best male or female friends at school? *[Where do they come from? Origin]* Do the children in the class like the child? How does the child notice that it is being liked?
- Does the child attend birthday parties of classmates? *[Who are these classmates? Origin, How often is this?]* Who would the child invite to his/her birthday?
- Which teacher does the child like? Why? Who helps with homework or with school assignments? *[This may be someone at school, but also someone different.]*
- **This part addresses the child's emotions and requires a proper introduction.**

Concepts such as fear, sadness, anger etc. are very abstract for this age group. Use as many examples as possible. For example start the conversation with the observation that other children (sometimes) can be obnoxious towards one another and provide examples. Does the child know classmates who have experienced this? How does the child think about this? Did the child experience this itself? *[Examples? Did anyone speak up for the child such as other classmates or the teacher?]* To what extent have there been other situations that have made the child sad? Are there children in the class who help if the child is sad? *[For example in case of problems at home]*

- If not so:

Why? Will it be attending school shortly? *[Date.]* What does the child do at home? *[possibly household chores, babysitting]* Does the child feel uncomfortable because it does not go to school? *[Explanation?]*

After secondary school:

Which course will the child take after finishing this school? Why? Does the child think it will succeed? *[Also refer to the section Future Outlook]*

ONLY ASK THESE QUESTIONS IF THE CHILD IS IN WORK PLACEMENT OR IS ELIGIBLE FOR WORK PLACEMENT

Does the child have to follow work experience training?

If so: To what extent does the child currently follow work experience training? Does the child like this? What kind of work placement? *[branch of trade, name work experience place]* What did it undertake to obtain this place?

To what extent has it experienced problems? Do these problems still exist? How have the problems been solved? *[involvement parents, school, teacher, otherwise]*

If not so: Why is the child not in work experience training?

**LEISURE TIME:**

What did the child do today? What does an average day for the child look like? Is there room for leisure time? *[intensity, watching TV, Internet, shopping, household chores, hobbies?]*

**CONTACT WITH CHILDREN THE SAME AGE:**

Is the child a member of one or more clubs?

If so: Which club? How did it come to know about the club? Are there children the same age who are also members?

If not so: Would the child like to join a club? Why hasn't it done so?

Does the child (also) have other contacts with children the same age in the neighbourhood?

If so: Which kind of activities does the child take part in with these children? *[at home, otherwise, play area in the neighbourhood]* How did the child get to know them? To what extent do the parents permit the child to play at other children's homes? Do other children often play at the child's home?

**SUPPORTING NETWORK:**

Did anyone ever give the child something nice? Who is important for the child (role models)?

Does the child talk at home about what it is concerned with? *[For example about clothing, appearance, school issues, friends, Internet use or other issues?]* What is the daily routine? Does the child feel that he/she is listened to?

Does the child speak about the things it has to do in the house? *[division of domestic chores]* What is the daily routine? Does the child feel that he/she is listened to?

*Subsequently the discussion will again deal with emotions. Remember the introduction and the examples.*

Is there someone that the child can ask for help if it does not know what to do? *[Who is this? Is it helpful?]* Is it the same person who the child addresses if it does not feel right, for example if it is sad or frightened?

How does the child feel at the moment? *[Glad, happy, or otherwise?]* Why?

### **HEALTH:**

Is the child ever ill? What does it suffer from? *[psychologically, physically]* Why is the child ill? *[stress, poor housing accommodation, work, and feeling hunted]* What does the child do when it is ill? To whom does the parent/guardian bring the child when it is ill? *[general practitioner, healer from his or her own group, pharmacy?]* Does the child visit the general practitioner (or other physicians/care providers)? *[kind of help, (general practitioner, GGD [community health service], psychologist, youth welfare services, hospital), intensity, appreciation]*. How easy is it to visit the physician or the hospital (or the care provider? *[e.g. financial, language]*

To what extent does the child use medicinal drugs? *For which conditions? How did it obtain them?*

### **LIVELIHOOD:**

Are the parents/guardians in work at this moment? Is there enough money to buy the items that the child needs? For example clothing, school books, food *[for example because of special diet]* etc. What is lacking that would really be required according to the child? To what extent are they given items from others? *[what and from whom?]* Which additional things would the child like to have if there were more money?

Does the child have money of its own? Where did the child get this money? What does the child spend the money on? To what extent does the child have to tell at home what it spends its money on?

Have the child describe what type of food they have on a weekday. Does the child think that they eat a healthy and varied diet at home? What is lacking according to the child? If the child would have more money, what type of food would it buy? Why?

### **STAY IN THE NETHERLANDS:**

This section addresses the perception of being undocumented, a reasonably abstract concept for the child. Be concrete. Refer to earlier moments in the conversation where the child was asked who in its family has a residence permit. How does the child perceive his/her situation? Work with examples as much as possible [for example does the child think that it is restrained in his or her daily functioning or that it experiences problems caused by his/her situation that other children do not have? *[which problems?]* *[this part is related to the section Personal Details]*.

### **FUTURE OUTLOOK:**

What does the child hope to become later? Does the child think this will succeed? Why does or doesn't the child think so? Which problems does the child think it will encounter? Where does the child want to live later on in life? *[The Netherlands, country of origin, elsewhere]* Why choose for/against The Netherlands? *[possible considerations: legal existence, friends, relatives, otherwise]* To what extent have plans been made? *[what do these plans consist of, what was the reason, who is helping and chances of success? Possible constraints, possibilities?]* If no plans have been made: *Why have you not made plans? What does the child need for making plans and carrying them out successfully?*

## **STUDY UNDOCUMENTED CHILDREN IN UTRECHT**

### **BSO ITEM LIST (FOR CHILDREN UNDER 12 YEARS)**

#### **HOUSING ACCOMMODATION:**

- With whom does the child live at this address? *[parents, brothers, sisters, friends, other people, who are they?]*
- How does the child perceive the present living accommodation? *[nice, beautiful etc.] [own space to play or to do homework, room of its own etc.?] [What does the child miss for example?]*
- Has the child always been living at the present address? *[If this is not the case, what was the child's first address? How many times has the child moved house afterwards? Which*

*address did the child like best? Why? Was the child told in each case when and why it had to move house?]*

- According to the child what would the ideal place to live look like? *[Why?]*

**PERSONAL DETAILS:**

- Age child?
- How long in The Netherlands? *[date or year of entry]*
- Native country child?
- Native country parents?
- Is there anyone in the family with a residence permit? *[Who?]* *[It is possible that the child does not know what a residence permit is. In that case you can explain that this is a piece of paper that allows someone to live and to work in a certain country]. If it still remains unclear for the child what a residence permit is in spite of this explanation, pose this question to the parent/guardian.*

**EDUCATION:**

Establish whether the child is attending school.

- If so:
- To what extent did the child attend different schools because the child moved house?
- In which group is the child currently?
- Which nice experiences does the child have at school if any? Who are the child's best male or female friends at school? *[Where do they come from? Origin]* Do the children in the class like the child? How does the child notice that it is being liked?
- Does the child attend birthday parties of classmates? *[Who are these classmates? Origin, How often is this?]* Who would the child invite to his/her birthday?

- Which teacher does the child like? Why? Who helps with homework or with school assignments? *[This may be someone at school, but also someone different.]*
- **This part addresses the child's emotions and requires a proper introduction.**

Concepts such as fear, sadness, anger etc. are very abstract for this age group. Use as many examples as possible. For example start the conversation with the observation that other children (sometimes) can be obnoxious towards one another and provide examples. Does the child know classmates who have experienced this? How does the child think about this? Did the child experience this itself? *[Examples? Did anyone speak up for the child such as other classmates or the teacher?]* To what extent have there been other situations that have made the child sad? Are there children in the class who help if the child is sad? *[For example in case of problems at home]*

- If not so:

Why? Will it be attending school shortly? *[Date.]* What does the child do at home? *[possibly household chores, babysitting]* Does the child feel uncomfortable because it does not go to school? *[Explanation?]*

After elementary school:

Which school will the child go to after finishing this school? Why? Does the child think it will succeed?

### **LEISURE TIME:**

What did the child do today? What does an average day for the child look like? Is there room for leisure time? *[intensity, watching TV, Internet, shopping, household chores, hobbies?]*

### **CONTACT WITH CHILDREN THE SAME AGE:**

Is the child a member of one or more clubs?

If so: Which club? How did it come to know about the club? Are there children the same age who are also members?

If not so: Would the child like to join a club? Why hasn't it done so?

Does the child (also) have other contacts with children the same age in the neighbourhood?

If so: Which kind of activities does the child take part in with these children? [*at home, otherwise, play area in the neighbourhood*] How did the child get to know them? To what extent do the parents permit the child to play at other children's homes? Do other children often play at the child's home?

### **SUPPORTING NETWORK:**

Did anyone ever give the child something nice? Who is important for the child?

Does the child talk at home about what it is concerned with? [*For example about clothing, appearance, school issues, friends, Internet use or other issues?*] What is the daily routine? Does the child feel that he/she is listened to?

Does the child speak about the things it has to do in the house? [*division of domestic chores*] What is the daily routine? Does the child feel that he/she is listened to?

*Subsequently the discussion will again deal with emotions. Remember the introduction and the examples.*

Is there someone that the child can ask for help if it does not know what to do? [*Who is this? Is it helpful?*] Is it the same person who the child addresses if it does not feel right, for example if it is sad or frightened?

How does the child feel at the moment? [*Glad, happy, or otherwise?*] Why?

### **HEALTH:**

Is the child ever ill? What does it suffer from? [*psychologically, physically*] Why is the child ill? [*stress, poor housing accommodation, work, and feeling hunted*] What does the child do when it is ill? To whom does the parent/guardian bring the child when it is ill? [*general practitioner, healer from his or her own group, pharmacy?*] Does the child visit the general practitioner (or other

physicians/care providers)? *[kind of help, (general practitioner, GGD [community health service], psychologist, youth welfare services, hospital), intensity, appreciation]*. To what extent is the physician or the hospital nice to the child? *[e.g. financial, language]* What do they say exactly? Does the child understand them?

### **LIVELIHOOD:**

Is there enough money to buy items that the child needs? For example clothing, school books, food *[for example because of special diet]* etc. What is lacking that would really be required according to the child? To what extent are they given items from others? *[what and from whom?]* Which additional things would the child like to have if there were more money?

Does the child have money of its own? Where did the child get this money? What does the child spend the money on? Does the child have to tell at home what it spends its money on?

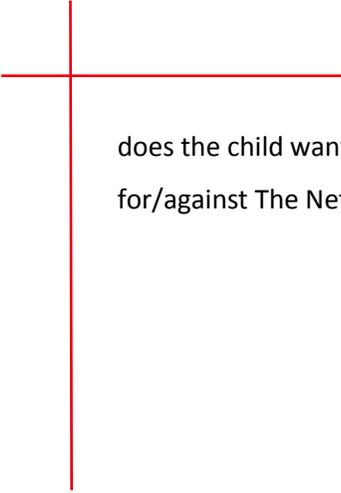
Have the child describe what type of food they have on a weekday. Does the child think that they eat a healthy and varied diet at home and is there always enough food? If the child had more money, what type of food would it buy? Why?

### **STAY IN THE NETHERLANDS:**

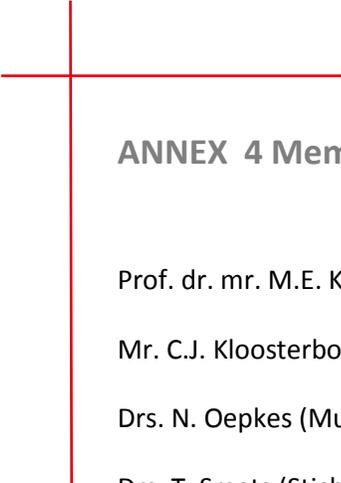
This section addresses the perception of being undocumented, a reasonably abstract concept for the child. Be concrete. Refer to earlier moments in the conversation where the child was asked who in its family has a residence permit. How does the child perceive his/her situation? Work with examples as much as possible *[for example does the child think that it is restrained in his or her daily functioning or that it experiences problems caused by his/her situation that other children do not have? [which problems?]* *[this part is related to the section Personal Details]*.

### **FUTURE OUTLOOK:**

What does the child hope to become later on in life? Does the child think this will succeed? Why does or doesn't the child think so? Which problems does the child think it will encounter? Where



does the child want to live later on? [*The Netherlands, country of origin, elsewhere*] Why choose for/against The Netherlands? [*possible considerations: legal existence, friends, family, otherwise*]



## **ANNEX 4 Members reference group**

Prof. dr. mr. M.E. Kalverboer & dr. A.E. Zijlstra (University of Groningen)

Mr. C.J. Kloosterboer (UNICEF The Netherlands)

Drs. N. Oepkes (Municipality of Utrecht)

Drs. T. Smets (Stichting Kinderpostzegels [stamps sold to benefit children] The Netherlands)

Prof. dr. R.H.J.M. Staring (Erasmus University Rotterdam)

## ANNEX 5 Names interviewers

The following students participated in the research:

R. Koenders	SPH
G. Koot	SPH
D. Kroon	SPH
M. Lagerweij	MWD
L. Pijpers	MWD
P. Rostami	MWD
T. Sewdas	MWD
M. Sitanggang	SPH
M. Staring	SJD
M. Thodé	MWD
S. Uil	MWD
I. de Vries	MWD

**We always have our luggage ready (to leave)**

(boy, 12 years)