

Parenting across Borders Policy Plan 2025-2028

Vision

Parenting across Borders envisions a world where international parents experience sufficient support from their surroundings (their personal networks and professionals) and feel confident as new parents in their first 1000 days¹. Being a parent is one of the most fascinating and rewarding experiences in life, and yet it is true that for many new parents transition to this role is not always smooth and comes with its unique struggles. For parents who reside in a foreign country, such struggles can be even greater and involve unexpected challenges. International parents need to navigate their parenting experience in a foreign country with potentially less social support and guidance. In addition, they need to find the balance between the norms and expectations of their origin culture and that of the culture they live in. Despite these extra challenges, there is little formalized support to address their unique situation in the Netherlands. In the absence of this, Parenting across Borders aims to address this niche and enhance the wellbeing and experiences of all new international parents.

Mission

Parenting across Borders is a social initiative that offers individual support to international parents, in their first 1,000 days of parenthood, in a dialogue setting. Through a series of dialogue sessions, we offer international parents a safe space for a process of self-reflection and personal learning. Also, the dialogue group is a place where the new parents make new connections and develop a sense of belonging to a community. Moreover, by meeting other parents and listening to their experiences, parents find recognition and acknowledgement of the various challenges they face in raising a child in a foreign context.

We believe that supported parents are more confident parents who take better care of their inner selves, their children and their environment.

Foundational values in our work

Our work is grounded in a series of fundamental values. These values guide not only our collaborations with parents, but also all internal and external interactions within and among PAB's team, board members and stakeholders.

Respect: we respect the dignity of each individual and wish to promote and exercise mutual understanding in doing so. We act in a confidential manner. We show respect for everyone; regardless of origin, gender, religion, color, language, marital status, sexual orientation, age, socioeconomic status, disability, political beliefs or any other distinctive characteristic.

¹ 1000 days includes the period of pregnancy and the first two years of parenthood.

Honesty and transparency: We act openly and transparently within our team, as well as with all beneficiaries of our work.

Responsibility: We aim to catalyze the growth and development of the international parent community, while recognizing and protecting the agency and autonomy of every participant.

Hope: We believe that hope is an essential driver/element in any transformation process, and see it as a fundamental element in our dialogue facilitation approach.

Humility: Every experience and perspective are respected and acknowledged. Our expertise lies in recognizing the different experiences brought to the dialogue process, and seeing these as strengths.

Target group, social network and community

Activities are intended for all international parents living in the Utrecht region of the Netherlands and for parents in general who are looking for information and support related to parenting and the common challenges parents face in raising a child in a foreign country in the first 1,000 days of a child's life. This can include (im)migrants, expats, refugees, or anyone new to the Netherlands with a diversity of language, gender, sexual orientation, marital status and socioeconomic background. We welcome all compositions of families far from home experiencing parenthood for the first time in the Netherlands.

Our **social network** includes the interconnected relationships among individuals and organizations from various sectors/networks who are concerned with the first 1000 days: all with different kinds of roles in enhancing the wellbeing of parents in this intensive period.

Who is our broader **community**?

- Parents with children or pregnant in first 1000 days, including former dialogue participants.
- PAB team members and volunteers: ideally many are former dialogue participants and/or international parents
- Partners: the professionals that we connect with (and contract with) directly
- Network of broader stakeholders (e.g. advisors from municipalities)
- The broader group of parents seeking resources or community as new parents in the first 1000 days, regardless of region or location.

Activities

Parenting across Borders has been offering **dialogue series for international parents** in Utrecht since 2019. To date we have organized and facilitated dialogue series for parents from target neighborhoods in Utrecht, parents living in Utrecht asylum centers, and the Utrecht University. We have facilitated series in multiple languages, primarily English and Arabic with view to expanding PAB's linguistic repertoire. In these groups, parents from all over the world participated in the dialogue process and formed a support network. Since we

began, PAB has developed a unique reflective approach aimed at centering self-knowledge among dialogue participants through appreciative inquiry: a strength-based change theory which focuses on strengths and successes to drive positive change and development.

Each dialogue series consists of 8 to 10 sessions with 6-8 participants, and function as a closed group. Each dialogue series is facilitated by two facilitators trained in the Parenting across Borders dialogue method. At the end of the dialogue series, all group members are encouraged to continue the dialogue as a social group.

In addition to organizing and facilitating dialogue groups, we host regular **CommuniTea Dialogues** to provide enriching conversations and meaningful connections with international parents and professionals beyond the dialogue series setting. This complements the dialogue series activities through offering standalone sessions to discuss relevant topics, create a broader community of parents, and create opportunities for new people to become familiar with PAB's work and mission.

We **offer dialogue facilitation trainings** for international parents and other interested residents who have participated in a dialogue series and would like to learn dialogue facilitation skills. Upon completion of the training, trainees are able to facilitate new dialogue series for international parents in a language chosen by the participants and spoken by the dialogue facilitators.

We are branching out in our activities through **collaborations with healthcare professionals** in Utrecht to create meaningful conversations and encounters between international parents and relevant maternal and child healthcare professionals through limited dialogue sessions or other activities.

We **have created a knowledge and learning center** for dialogue methods for new parents. We create an open and inspiring environment for professional development among facilitators and provide space for information and experience sharing. This allows us to continuously develop the dialogue method and make it transferable.

Finally, we **use [web](#) and [social media](#) platforms** to exchange knowledge about parenting. We do not want to give advice or tips, nor help parents become the perfect parent. We provide information and share personal experiences that may appeal to and comfort them.

Parenting across Borders' goals for the period 2025-2028.

PaB has the ambition to achieve the following goals in 2028:

1. PaB develops a way for international parents to offer support related to parenting and the common challenges faced by parents in the 1st 1000 days of parenthood in a foreign country, through an evidence-based structured dialogue method. We aim to document this dialogue method to make it adaptable and scalable to other locales,

- and to provide other organizations and/or regions the opportunity to apply the PAB dialogue approach.
2. PaB enhances its knowledge and expertise in parenthood support and shares this with relevant stakeholders to increase the well-being of international parents in their first 1000 days of parenthood.
 3. PaB establishes long-term professional collaboration with different organizations and institutions within the Utrecht region and in the national "Birth network in the first 1000 days".
 4. PaB becomes a sustainable organization with a structured team of paid staff and volunteers committed to fulfilling our mission and vision.
 5. PaB develops an evidence-based method to measure the impact of its activities on participants, in collaboration with academic experts in relevant scientific fields.

Roadmap of planned activities and milestones

The following set of activities over the years will support achieving these goals. For all these activities, we remain sharply focused on international parents in the first 1000 days of parenthood. We are committed to serving parents with a diversity of migration, linguistic, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, and socioeconomic backgrounds.

1. PaB organizes the dialogues in collaboration with our community of international parents. Namely, former-participants of our dialogues take up new roles in the dialogue series, for example in the form of becoming facilitators and organizers. (Goal 1)
2. PaB has expanded contact with birth and maternity networks and healthcare providers in the city of Utrecht to access parents as potential community members across stages or circumstances of relocation/immigration. (Goal 2)
3. PaB offers the dialogue not only in English and Arabic but other languages (e.g. Ukrainian) depending on the needs of the group in order to reach a more diverse group to address language barriers. (Goal 1)
4. PaB invests in networking efforts (including [NIZU](#), [Utrecht Omarmt](#) and the [Vesta project](#)) and establishes presence across the city in relevant events. (Goals 3, 4)
5. PaB monitors continuously its activities internally and invest in measuring its impact through post-dialogue surveys and in-depth interviews with participants. (Goals 1, 2, 4, 5)
6. PaB guides our participants to relevant resources when needed, as a standard component within the dialogue series program, through established partnerships with coaches. (Goals 1, 2, 3)
7. PaB further embed the Knowledge and Learning Center as a center to train and create a community of facilitators who benefit from long term professional development. (Goals 1, 2, 4)

The following milestones will be used to identify progress:

2024-2025: PaB conducts 4-5 dialogue series per year with the focus on diversifying the target group to include for example single mothers, fathers, couples and dialogue between professionals (in the child healthcare system) and international parents.

2026-2027: PaB increases the number of dialogues in order to meet the needs of the target group. Provisionally, we expect to organize about 10 groups per year. We develop the dialogue method and training for facilitators and make them in concept transferable for publication / for other cities.

2028: PaB expands its network and branch out to new cities in a broader, inclusive social ecosystem. We ensure strong bidirectional ties with policymakers, advisors and liaisons through this expanded network.

Fundraising methods

Parenting across Borders submits applications proactively (to open calls) or reactively (upon invitation) to project-based funding opportunities. These proposals achieve policy goals of the funders: public funders such as the Municipality of Utrecht and Utrecht University/Utrecht Young Academy as well as private funders such as Oranjefonds. We engage crowdfunding on an incidental basis to help fund non-project specific costs (e.g. renewed website). Based on a fundraising consultant in January 2024, we are actively developing strategies to expand our methods and increase funding opportunities (see Financial Outlook, below).

Financial management and expenditure

Our organizational capital is human: comprised of the experience, knowledge and contributions of the board members and team members including paid and volunteer positions, and the broader community of international parents and stakeholders.

Project finances, including budgeting and expenditures are managed per project by a project coordinator. The Board Treasurer approves and manages payments on behalf of the organization. Accounting oversight, periodic project reporting and (annual) reporting services are provided by a bookkeeper.

Board, governance and strategic planning

Board members perform the following functions (membership effective 1 October 2025):

President: Rosa Lucassen
Secretary: Mariana Gallo
Treasurer: Özge Bilgili

Board members work on a voluntary basis to advise the organization and create policy. Members occupy a 3-year term and may be reelected two times to a given role. PaB's project leader consults with the Board, oversees the various activities and implements policy decisions. PaB engages volunteers and freelance professional services to carry out its facilitation and training activities. Volunteers receive an allowance for their involvement at the maximum amount allowable.

Compensation policy for board and governance members

Parenting across Borders currently retains no salaried or hourly employees. Board members fulfill their governance roles as volunteers and do not receive compensation for their contributions. Reimbursement for costs incurred (e.g. travel to meetings) may be requested.

Overview of income and financial outlook, 2025-2028

Parenting across Borders currently works with project-based funding: income received compensates our freelance professionals, provides allowances to our volunteers, and reimburses project-related costs. In-kind contributions include unpaid volunteer time (e.g. Board activities) and physical space to host walk-in hours (e.g. Welkomhuis).

In 2024 the goals and activities of Parenting across Borders are supported by following income streams:

- Volunteer in-kind effort contributions: approximately 6,0 FTE
- In-kind physical contributions (i.e. access to physical space): PAB uses office and meeting space in Welkomhuis 1 day per week and on request for meetings and events. PAB has access to additional space in the JGZ in Al-Masoedilaan 1 day per month, space in COA facilities in the AZCs, and 1 day per year at DOCK for community events.
- Municipality of Utrecht funding
 - Nadere regel subsidie Herstel en veerkracht voor de Utrechtse jeugd (2023-2025): €58 340
 - Versterken van Veerkracht in het ouderschap ver van huis in de eerste 1000 dagen (September-December): €9 946
 - Kansen voor Kinderen program bij Oranjefonds, Gesteunde Ouders Geborgen Kinderen (2022-2024): €27 340
 - Income from other funds: €0

Our financial goals in the coming years focus on an expansion of funding capacity and diversity of funding sources in these key areas:



Stichting Parenting across Borders
With and for International Parents in the First 1000 Days

- Embedding our funded collaborations with the Municipality of Utrecht to support international parents in the region, including those living in refugee housing centers.
- Becoming an attractive service provider to (semi-)public and private organizations. These include higher education institutions and (inter)national corporations who employ international parents and parents-to-be in the Netherlands and/or who are committed to their health and wellbeing.
- Creating a low-threshold mechanism to enable PaB donors (one-time or recurring) to support our mission.
- Obtaining robust structural funding to hire core salaried employees and pay ongoing organizational costs. This will give PaB stability for future planning and growth and allow better retention of team members over time.

Bank Information/IBAN: Triodos Bank – NL18 TRIO 0320 3269 85

RSIN/fiscaal nummer: 861783542