



Published by the International  
Reference Center for the Rights of  
Children Deprived of their Family

# Monthly Review

## EDITORIAL

### The importance of sharing good practices and tools amongst alternative care professionals

*In this Monthly Review, the ISS wishes to promote and support the exchange of good practices and tools amongst professionals, in particular through the dissemination of reports, research and handbooks, which have been published in recent months.*

In his day-to-day practice, each professional faces the need to keep himself updated with regards to ethical (see p. 8), theoretical (see pp. 4 and 7), legal (see p. 3) and social (see p. 5) progress and thoughts, in order to thrive on them and to adapt them to his reality and to ensure quality services and support. These exchanges enable the professionals to maintain a critical approach to their professional practice in order to respond as closely as possible to the needs of children in alternative care, through the implementation of tools that are constantly updated and adapted to current realities. The understanding of new phenomena, such as the impact of new technologies on the professionals' practice (see pp. 5 and 8), as well as the sharing of innovative tools (see pp. 4 and 7), are fundamental.

#### Investing in the training of professionals

The need to allocate human and financial resources to this issue has been reiterated many times, in particular by the Committee on the Rights on the Child. It is therefore incumbent on institutions, NGOs and governments to support the ongoing training of their staff. Governmental and non-governmental child protection services often do not benefit from adequate support in the training of their professionals – a situation that has even become worse since the 2008 economic crisis. It is also to be deplored that private donors remain little inclined to financially support projects that include an important component of training, as the impact of the latter is difficult to 'measure'.

However, some inexpensive alternatives enable professionals to share experiences and to remain informed. Involvement in national, regional and international networks is an efficient way of facilitating the sharing of knowledge, practices and tools, whilst also enabling the capitalisation of experiences. Amongst the international and regional networks that are

**N° 185**  
**SEPTEMBER 2014**

#### TABLE OF CONTENTS

##### EDITORIAL

The importance of sharing good practices and tools amongst alternative care professionals **1**

##### ACTORS

Australia, Guinea, Spain and United Kingdom **3**

##### BRIEF NEWS

UNHCR: An exponential increase in the number of children from Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador and Mexico in need of international protection measures **3**

##### LEGISLATION

Europe: The ECtHR issued a decision on the recognition of a judgement establishing parentage for children conceived through surrogacy **3**

##### PRACTICE

The Secure Base Model: Promoting attachment and resilience in foster care and adoption **4**

##### INTERDISCIPLINARY RESOURCES

Second part of the report on the impact of the Internet on adoption **5**

Securing children's rights: A guide for professionals working in alternative care **7**

Social media and Social Work practice: A new guide published in Quebec **8**

##### READERS' FORUM

Thoughts on the term 'abandonment' **9**

##### FORTHCOMING CONFERENCES AND TRAININGS

France, The Netherlands and United Kingdom **10**



32 Quai du Seujet ■ 1201 Geneva ■ Switzerland  
irc-cir@iss-ssi.org ■ www.iss-ssi.org

specialised in issues relating to children without a family and alternative care, the Better Care Network (BCN), Family for Every Child, Child Rights Connect or RELAF<sup>1</sup> may be mentioned, as well as online newsletters such as those of BCN, CRIN or Terre des hommes Child Protection in Europe<sup>2</sup>.

### The call of ISS

Through its mandate, the ISS intends to facilitate the dissemination of information and to promote exchanges among professionals and organisations. The ISS acts at various levels, which all complement each other, and allow to inform, share, disseminate and promote good practices and tools by supporting professionals worldwide. Indeed, the latest projects undertaken respond to specific needs in terms of dissemination of knowledge and good practices, in particular through the project *A better future is possible for children living with disabilities in institutions*<sup>3</sup>, which offers trainings, has developed specific tools (a handbook for professionals working for children with disabilities in institutions and a lifebook for children<sup>4</sup>), and promotes the sharing of good practices amongst entities. Through the development and dissemination of various handbooks in cooperation with other partner organisations and/or international groups of experts, who are specialised in this issue, such as *Moving Forward: Implementing the 'Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children'*<sup>5</sup> and *Resolving family conflicts : A Guide to international family mediation*<sup>6</sup>, the ISS intends to develop the implementation of good practices internationally, in order to ensure the respect for the rights of children. In addition to these specific projects, the ISS has developed an expertise in several fields (mediation, intercountry adoption, children without parental care, children with disabilities in institutions, etc), and offers simultaneously information (Monthly Review) and research services as well as in-country practice assessments relating to child protection systems, alternative care policies or intercountry adoption procedures.

**Thus, in this Monthly Review, the ISS would like to launch a call upon all professionals to share documents, articles, publications, reports, assessments, training materials, theses, innovating and pertinent initiatives relating to the care of children deprived of a family, which you consider relevant and which it would then, in accordance with the availability in each issue of the Monthly Review, disseminate amongst all its readers. The sharing of experiences and knowledge, contacts, dialogue and cooperation amongst the professionals of governmental and non-governmental bodies worldwide is essential in order to ensure the best possible protection of children's rights and best interests.**

The ISS/IRC team,  
September 2014

---

### References:

<sup>1</sup> Better Care Network, <http://www.bettercarenetwork.org>; Family for Every Child, <http://www.familyforeverychild.org/>; Child Rights Connect, <http://www.childrightsconnect.org/>; Red Latinoamericana de Acogimiento Familiar (RELAF), [http://www.relaf.org/index\\_engl.html](http://www.relaf.org/index_engl.html).

<sup>2</sup> Child Rights International Network (CRIN), <https://www.crin.org/>; Terre des hommes Child Protection in Europe, <http://tdh-childprotection.org/>.

<sup>3</sup> For further information on this project, see: <http://www.iss-ssi.org/2009/index.php?id=191>.

<sup>4</sup> Both materials are pending finalisation and will soon be available and presented in a forthcoming issue of the Monthly Review.

<sup>5</sup> Cantwell, N.; Davidson, J.; Elsley, S.; Milligan, I.; Quinn, N. (2012). *Moving Forward: Implementing the 'Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children'*. UK: Centre for Excellence for Looked After Children in Scotland. The handbook is available free-of-charge in English, French, Spanish, Russian, Italian and Mandarin at: <http://www.alternativecareguidelines.org>.

<sup>6</sup> Caratsch, C., *Resolving family conflicts : A Guide to international family mediation*, ISS, 2014. The handbook is available in English and French at: [http://www.iss-ssi.org/venteonline/?id\\_lang=1](http://www.iss-ssi.org/venteonline/?id_lang=1).



---

## ACTORS

- **Australia, Guinea, Spain and United Kingdom:** These countries have updated the contact details of their Central Authorities.
- **Australia and Spain:** These countries have updated their lists of accredited adoption bodies.

*Source:* The Hague Conference on Private International Law,  
[http://www.hcch.net/index\\_en.php?act=conventions.publications&dtid=43&cid=69](http://www.hcch.net/index_en.php?act=conventions.publications&dtid=43&cid=69).

---

## BRIEF NEWS

### United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees: An exponential increase in the number of children from Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador and Mexico in need of international protection measures

In July 2014, the UNHCR published a report on unaccompanied and separated children from El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala and Mexico, entitled *Children on the run*. This report tracked a notable increase in the number of these children, who sought asylum in the U.S.A., in 2011, and subsequently reaching a total of 21,537 children apprehended by U.S. Customs and Border Protection in 2013. Thus, the UNHCR launched a study and undertook individual interviews with 404 unaccompanied or separated children (approximately 100 from each of the four countries), in order to better understand why these children had left their countries of origin and whether some of these children could benefit from international protection measures. The study demonstrated that 58% of the children, who were interviewed, had left their country on grounds linked to their protection, mainly violence at the hands of the organised crime as well as domestic violence. The children from Mexico mentioned, in particular, issues linked to the recruitment and exploitation in the criminal business of human trafficking. Given the extremely high rate of children identified as in current or potential need of protection, the report promotes that 'all unaccompanied and separated children from these four countries must be screened for international protection needs', in order for these children not to be sent back to their countries and to dangerous or violent situations.

*Source:* Full report and overview available in English and Spanish at: <http://www.unhcrwashington.org/children/reports>.

---

## LEGISLATION

### Europe: The ECtHR issued a decision on the recognition of a judgement establishing parentage for children conceived through surrogacy

*In June 2014, the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) decided that the French State had exceeded its margin of appreciation insofar as it totally refused to recognise the parentage of children conceived through surrogacy undertaken in the U.S.A.<sup>1</sup>*

Two French couples, who faced infertility problems, entered into a surrogacy agreement with two surrogate mothers in the United States of America. The embryos came from the gametes of the two husbands. Following the establishment of the children's parentage through the decisions of American courts, the parents wished to register the birth certificates on the French Civil Registry's records, but faced a refusal to do so, based on the argument that the surrogacy agreement contravened the principles of public law relating to the unavailability of the human body and the status of persons.

#### Parentage, a component of identity

The ECtHR identified a violation, by the French tribunals, of Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights, relating to the respect for private life. By reminding that this article requires that everyone may establish the details of his identity, including his parentage, the Court retained that the position of French case-law maintained children in a situation of legal uncertainty, even though they were born from the gametes of each husband. They could therefore not benefit from their parents' nationality, nor from their legal inheritance rights.



## Recognition of children conceived through surrogacy

France's wish to deter its citizens from resorting abroad to a method of procreation that is prohibited on its territory does not have, according to the Court, the same weight as the right to biological parentage being part of the child's identity. For the Court, France exceeded its

margin of appreciation by prohibiting, not only the recognition of the children's biological parentage in relation to the intentional father through the registration of the children's birth certificates, but also through the confirmation of such a parentage via a recognition of paternity or an adoption.

**It is interesting to note that the ECtHR's decision was made unanimously, even though it addressed a very sensitive and controversial issue. There is still no consensus in Europe on the legality of surrogacy, nor on the legal recognition of the parentage between the intentional parents and the children conceived through this method abroad. The ECtHR does not order the legalisation of surrogacy, but it remains to be seen whether the decision does not result in the same effect<sup>2</sup>.**

### Reference:

<sup>1</sup> *Labassee v France* (Application N<sup>o</sup> 65941/11), available at: [http://hudoc.echr.coe.int/sites/eng/pages/search.aspx?i=001-145180\\*#{%22itemid%22:\[%22001-145180\\*%22\]}](http://hudoc.echr.coe.int/sites/eng/pages/search.aspx?i=001-145180*#{%22itemid%22:[%22001-145180*%22]}).

<sup>2</sup> An example of this aspect is the recognition, in Switzerland, of same-sex parenting of children born through surrogacy by the tribunals of the Cantons of Zug and St Gallen.

## PRACTICE

### The Secure Base Model: Promoting attachment and resilience in foster care and adoption

*This guide<sup>1</sup>, published by BAAF, explains and applies the latest thinking on the importance of family relationships for children's development to the world of foster care and adoption.*

Secure Base is a model of caregiving in fostering and adoption that is based on theories of attachment and resilience while also drawing on child placement research. Providing a secure base is at the heart of successful family relationships. This guide is designed to support parents, social workers and other professionals involved in all aspects of fostering and adoption practice. It provides a valuable framework that can support children to fulfil their potential.

#### Attachment and resilience concepts

All children need to feel secure in their relationships with the adults, who look after them. Where children have not experienced the kind of sensitive parenting that promotes security and resilience, they will find it difficult to trust and will struggle with managing their feelings and behaviour. For children, becoming resilient means developing the capacity to cope with adversities, to face future challenges with hope, confidence and competence. Factors, which are linked to

resilience, such as self-esteem, are associated with security of attachment.

Most children, who are fostered or adopted from care have experienced harmful parenting. Therefore, they have to learn, through attachment, to feel safe.

Attachment patterns are ways of thinking and behavioural strategies that children develop in order to feel safe and to maximise their opportunities for receiving protection. The guide provides examples of secure and insecure attachment patterns. Attachment theory would suggest that exposure to warm, consistent and reliable caregiving can change children's previous expectations. Therefore, the role of adults, who can provide secure base caregiving, is essential.

#### The Secure Base model

As mentioned previously, many fostered children show behavioural characteristics of insecure attachment patterns, which indicate an absence of secure base.



The guide explains that there are five secure base dimensions: availability, which helps the child to trust; sensitivity, which helps the child to manage feelings; acceptance, which helps the caregiver to build the child's self-esteem; cooperation, which helps the child to feel effective; and family membership, which helps the child to belong. It then gives very concrete examples for each dimension to help give a secure base to the children: day-to-day caregiving, how to build caregiving when the caregiver and the child are apart, as well as games and activities. For example, it is essential, to build the child's self-esteem, that the child begins to think 'I am accepted and valued for who I am. I do not have to be perfect in order to be loved and valued'. To reach this, the caregivers can, among many other things, praise the child for achieving small tasks

and responsibilities, encourage the child to draw, paint or play music to express how it feels to feel good about himself, support activities that the child enjoys and is good at, help the child manage feelings whether winning or losing, and use positive language.

#### How to use this Secure Base model?

It is important to note that this guide applies to children and teenagers. The transition to adulthood will need a whole range of personal, cognitive and emotional skills and resources, as external supports from families, friends and sometimes professionals. The guide shows how to assess prospective foster carers and adopters and the capacity of caregivers to provide a secure base for children in their care, how to support caregivers and to assess and review the development of fostered and adopted children.

**The ISS/IRC welcomes this very concrete publication, and recommends it to all professionals working in adoption and foster care. This guide includes a DVD, which provides us with examples aimed at illustrating each of the five Secure Base dimensions, as described by foster carers, adopters and young people.**

---

#### Reference:

<sup>1</sup> Schofield, G. and Beek, M., *The Secure Base Model - Promoting attachment and resilience in foster care and adoption*, BAAF, 2014, available at: <http://www.baaf.org.uk>.

---

## INTERDISCIPLINARY RESOURCES

### Second part of the report on the impact of the Internet on adoption

*A year after its first report on the implications of the Internet on adoption practices<sup>1</sup> (see Monthly Review N° 173), the Donaldson Adoption Institute published the results of an extensive survey involving over 2,000 adopted individuals, adoptive and birth parents in December 2013.*

The report published by the Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute, entitled *Untangling the Web II: A research-based roadmap for reform<sup>2</sup>*, presents the findings, conclusions and recommendations from the most comprehensive study conducted to date on the impact of the Internet – and, in particular, of social media – on adoption as an institution, as a process and as a daily reality for millions of people. This nationwide research (including some response from abroad) was an extensive survey of over 2,000 adoptive parents, adopted individuals, birth/first parents and adoption professionals. As one of the main findings, it results that the most powerful impact

of the Internet is on the search and reconnection of parents and children in closed adoptions.

#### Overview and key findings

Based on these testimonies, the report presents the positive and negative aspects of the use of the Internet by all the persons involved with adoption. The report demonstrates that the Internet has greatly increased the commercialisation of adoption and the risks to expectant and prospective parents. Expectant parents describe sites, which actively seek out pregnant women, promising a range of enticements if they surrender their babies. Prospective parents also received fraudulent or misleading information about the adoption



process. The report also insists on the fact that a significant majority of professionals do not receive training about the Internet's use in adoption.

At the same time, the report describes the numerous opportunities created by the Internet:

- It constitutes an invaluable source of community and connection for adoptive parents, birth parents and adopted people;
- It greatly expands the ability of adopted persons to search for birth family members;
- It enables regular and quick exchanges of information between members of adoptive and birth families. The persons involved seem to appreciate the 'contact with distance' that the Internet provides. It feels less intrusive. The report shows that birthparents feel more involved in their children's lives;
- It seems to provide a valuable outlet for adopted people as well as for birth parents to express their ongoing struggles and pain with others.

It is also interesting to notice that few respondents reported that the Internet had led to unwelcome intrusions.

### Recommendations

The report includes hundreds of comments provided by the respondents, and suggests many ways in which the adoption field should assure an ethical practice. Amongst the recommendations formulated by the Institute, it suggests, in particular, that:

**The ISS/IRC welcomes this very concrete second part of the publication launched by the Donaldson Adoption Institute and recommends its reading by all the professionals working with adoption and foster care. In particular, the parents and children's testimonies are very enriching. We are looking forward to reading the *Guide to Internet Use in Adoption*, soon to be published by the Donaldson Adoption Institute, and whose aim consists in assisting parents as well as professionals.**

---

### References:

<sup>1</sup> Howard, J. A., *Untangling the web – The Internet's transformative impact on adoption*, Policy and Practice Perspective, Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute, December 2012, [http://www.adoptioninstitute.org/publications/2012\\_12\\_UntanglingtheWeb.pdf](http://www.adoptioninstitute.org/publications/2012_12_UntanglingtheWeb.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> Whitesel, A., Howard, J. A., *Untangling the Web II: A research-based roadmap for reform*, Policy and Practice Perspective, The Donaldson Adoption Institute, December 2013, [http://www.adoptioninstitute.org/publications/2013\\_12\\_UntanglingtheWeb2.php](http://www.adoptioninstitute.org/publications/2013_12_UntanglingtheWeb2.php).

- State and federal policy-makers, law-makers and law-enforcement authorities, in coordination with major Internet companies, should work with ethical adoption experts and organisations to create best practice standards;
- Leaders in the field of adoption and foster care should collaborate on the creation of an awareness campaign about the impact of the Internet and social media, training programmes and other tools for professionals;
- Adoption professionals must educate adopted individuals, expectant/prospective adoptive and birth parents that most, if not all, adoptions may, one day, be open, no matter how they begin. As part of the process, professionals should provide everyone concerned with information and resources about openness in adoption, how to shape and navigate relationships and other related subjects;
- Given the concerns about fraud, commercialisation and manipulation, systems must be devised – in coordination with law-enforcement authorities, Internet providers and ethical adoption organisations – to provide better information to consumers and the public about the differences among the various types of web-based adoption services. It is vital to explain the differences between charitable, tax-exempt, licensed, not-for-profit agencies and online brokers/facilitators, who are not bound by ethical professional requirements or by sufficiently protective laws or regulations.



## Securing children's rights: A guide for professionals working in alternative care

This guide and its toolkit<sup>1</sup>, written by SOS Children's Villages International and the Council of Europe in 2013, offers practical approaches to improve the social and care workers' practice. It accompanies Discover your rights!<sup>2</sup>, a booklet, which informs children and young people of their rights, and shows them what they mean in practice.

This guide is based upon country consultations of real experiences of social workers, young people in care, academics, social ministries and the children's ombudspersons in Albania, Croatia and Estonia. It seeks to demonstrate to care and social work professionals that using a child-rights-based approach in their every-day work enhances the care experience for the child and the professional's own practice. The rights of children living in alternative care must be at the centre of all care processes.

### Children's rights and guiding principles

The guide explains that children's rights consist in survival, development, protection and participation rights, based on national laws and policies as well as on international instruments. These set out minimum standards, which must be met no matter how someone has behaved. The guide also reminds the essential importance of the family of origin.

The participation of the child in decisions affecting him is essential. It implies time and patience from the social workers. Children must be informed, should be able to discuss and be listened to. The children's opinions must be considered and the children must receive feedback in relation to their opinions. The principle of non-discrimination means that non-relevant characteristics should not be a reason for treating a child differently, but differences must be taken into account by supporting the child in an adequate way. The children should be protected from external threats and dangers. Finally, in all decisions affecting children, their best interests must be put first.

**The ISS/IRC strongly recommends this toolkit to all professionals because of its very practical approach to children's rights, including checklists, drawings, personal stories and very detailed examples. This guide does not provide more work, but provides a different perspective for the work undertaken by professionals.**

### From home to care and care-taking phase

There are four processes for entry into care: the decision-making process, the selection process, the mental (emotional, psychological) transition, and the planning process (development of an individualised care plan). The guide reminds that it is essential that the child knows what is happening at each stage, and provides a list of questions, which must absolutely have been discussed with the child at each stage. The decision to take the child into care must remain an exception, based on a rigorous assessment, guarantying full enjoyment of the child's fundamental rights, in his best interests. A suitable care environment implies having explored the best options and having kept the family informed.

The child's involvement and participation in selecting the care environment is essential. The guide defines genuine listening and talking, which imply knowing the child and having earned his trust. For this purpose, a checklist for the identification of his best environment is proposed. Finally, the care plan should be a 'living document', as the child's needs will change.

The plan must include security and protection goals as well as development and equality goals. The period of care must be based on children's rights, and include respect, protection, equality and listening. It is also always important to balance safety with the views of the child. Leaving care should also be planned. The key points are participation, housing, education, employment, health, well-being and information.

*'Being respected and listened to creates a friendly atmosphere between us and social workers'*  
**Young person in alternative care in Albania**



## References:

<sup>1</sup> Available at: [http://www.coe.int/t/dg3/children/childrenincare/DraftSecuringRights\\_en.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/dg3/children/childrenincare/DraftSecuringRights_en.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> Available at: <http://www.coe.int/t/dg3/children/childrenincare/C&YP%20IN%20CARE-ANGLAIS%28web%29.pdf>.

## Social media and Social Work practice: A new guide published in Quebec

*In January 2014, the Canadian Association of Social Workers (CASW) published a guide on the use of social media in the context of Social Work practice<sup>1</sup>.*

The objective of this tool is to address some of the ethical challenges and considerations that are faced by social workers in the resort to social media in the context of their practice. It is based on CASW's Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Ethical Practice, both published in 2005.

### Potential risks and references to the Code of Ethics

Social workers are confronted with very concrete issues, such as: Should one follow a 'client' (term used in Quebec) on social networks? May one post information relating to work with a client on a Facebook page? May one use the personal stories of clients posted on professional websites?

**Respect for the inherent dignity and worth of persons (Value 1 of the Code of Ethics)**, entails, among others, that the social worker considers, as a priority, his client's best interests, whilst also taking into account the interests of other involved persons. His intervention in the personal matters of clients must be limited to issues linked to the services provided.

**Integrity in professional practice (Value 4)** entails that the social worker maintains appropriate professional limits throughout the professional relationship, and even beyond. The social worker must avoid conflicts of interests, which may hinder his professional discretion and his impartial judgement.

**Confidentiality in professional practice (Value 5)** means that the social worker must ensure that he does not discuss confidential information in public or semi-public places. He has a duty to take

the necessary measures to ensure and maintain the confidentiality of the information he has been provided with. It is recommended that the social worker does never post any information relating to a client on social networks.

**Competence in professional practice (Value 6)** means that the social worker has a duty, if he resorts to social networks in his practice, to have the necessary knowledge on its operation in order to be able to identify the risks and benefits.

### A strategy of risk management

In order to reduce the risks linked to the use of social media, the social worker may implement several measures, such as:

- consult his colleagues and develop joint strategies aimed at reducing the risks;
- ensure that the information relating to his clients remains private;
- attend ongoing professional training;
- gain knowledge on the operation of social networks, and ensure that the highest confidentiality settings have been installed;
- keep notes on his discussions with the client in relation to social networks (for example, to mention how he has addressed a client's request to be added to his list of friends);
- keep notes on the fact of having obtained information on a client through a social network;
- have knowledge of his own online profile, i.e. what is being said about him;
- ensure that his client has understood well his own professional policy in terms of social media.

**As mentioned in CASW's Guide, issues relating to the use of social media by social workers are linked to ethics. It is therefore difficult to make a clear-cut decision. Thus, it is incumbent upon each social worker to shape his own judgement, to gain information periodically from the regulatory body, and to keep the dialogue going with his colleagues and clients.**





---

**Reference:**

<sup>1</sup> Canadian Association of Social Workers, *Social Media Use and Social Work Practice*; available at: <http://www.casw-acts.ca/en/social-media-use-and-social-work-practice>.

---

**READERS' FORUM****Thoughts on the term 'abandonment'**

*As a follow-up on a presentation, in our Monthly Review N° 178 of January 2014, of the research undertaken on the various European practices relating to abandonment and its prevention, and in order to support and enrich the point of view of Bertrand Rouiller, presented in the Readers' Forum section of Monthly Review N° 180 of March-April 2014 (p. 12), please find below further thoughts shared by two of our readers.*

**W**e are a team of intervention professionals and offer services in the stages prior to and post intercountry adoption. Since the establishment of our specialised programme in 2001, we noticed to what extent the word 'abandonment' was used carelessly, whether in the colloquial language, in materials or in legal terms. As clinical professionals, this trivial use immediately caused us a certain unease, which led us to reflect on the question of 'how can a child build himself a sound identity based on an abandonment?'. We believe that it is fundamental to change the mental representation developed by the adopted child as to his birth parents and his country of origin, given that, most of the time, this picture is that of a child, who is neither kind nor appealing, and that this is the reason for him having been 'abandoned'. In addition, one must add that to talk about abandonment is to issue a value judgement with regards to the birth parents. It also puts the adoptive parents on a pedestal by presenting them as the 'saviours'; thus, implying that they are the 'good' ones and that the biological parents are the 'bad' ones. However, it is known that the adopted child develops on the basis of both couples of parents.

In order to help the adopted child to overcome his feeling of having been abandoned and rejected, it is important to reframe the adoption experience as an act of protection, given the life circumstances that lead some parents to have to

**separate** themselves from their child; whether through their consent, by anonymously leaving the child in a public place or via a child protection body. The aim is to support this child in the development of his life story, so as for the latter to be coherent and to provide him with a feeling of continuity by linking the past and the present, in order to prevent any fragmentation between his self prior to the adoption and his self after. The child needs to feel a partnership between both his couples of parents, even if it is merely symbolic.

We have been able to observe the impact of this approach and to recognise its effectiveness. The children feel protected, valued and even experience a feeling of pride for having several parents, countries, cultures. They can link their various experiences and usually feel calmer as they do not have to choose between the two. They may therefore feel better. On the other hand, the adoptive parents feel more at ease when faced with their child's story. They are more sensitive to the birth parents, to what may have led them to separate themselves from their child. They know that they must manage the child's feeling of abandonment and feel better prepared and more at ease, given that the ambiguity relating to the adoption story lessens to give way to more clarity.

**The adoption intends to enrich the child's life and not to make him feel unwanted.'**

---

**Note:**

<sup>1</sup> Domenica Labasi and H  l  ne Duchesneau shared their opinion as members of the multidisciplinary team at the Health and Social Service Centre Jeanne-Mance – a public service under Quebec's Ministry of Health and Social Services – which offers specialised intercountry adoption services.



---

## FORTHCOMING CONFERENCES AND TRAININGS

- **France:** *Législation et procédure de l'adoption interne et internationale en France* [Domestic and intercountry adoption legislation and procedure in France], COPES, Paris, 13 November 2014; duration: 4 days. For further information, see: <http://www.copes.fr>.
- **The Netherlands:** *International Conference 25 Years CRC*, The Department of Child Law of Leiden University, Leiden, 17-19 November 2014. For further information, see: <http://law.leiden.edu/organisation/private-law/child-law/25yearsarc/>.
- **United Kingdom:** *Communicative openness in adoption: A day with Dr David Brodzinsky*, BAAF, London, 19 November 2014. For further information, see: <http://www.baaf.org.uk/training/all-events/2014-11-19t000000-0>.

The ISS/IRC would like to express its gratitude to the governments (including certain Federal States) of the following countries for their financial support in the publication of this Monthly Review: Andorra, Australia, Belgium, Canada, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, New Zealand, the Netherlands, Norway, South Africa, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland.

