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Children Deprived of their Family

Monthly Review

EDITORIAL

2013 statistics: Limited changes

Like every year, the ISS/IRC has gathered the intercountry adoption statistics from the main countries of origin and receiving countries, and offers an analysis of the trends and their implications.

Once again, receiving countries face a decrease in the annual number of intercountry adoptions, reflected in a global fall by 17% in comparison to 2012 (42% in comparison to 2010). This event of decline may be explained by various factors, such as legal reforms in child protection systems, aimed at greater compliance with the rights of the child, and the increased awareness-raising in countries of origin in relation to the implementation of the Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children (see pp. 4 and 7). However, by contrast to this global decrease in intercountry adoptions, there is also a constant and worrying increase in adoptions from countries of origin, which have not ratified the HC-1993, in particular in countries that experience armed conflict.

The situation in countries of origin

The important drop in intercountry adoptions is due, first, to the strong reduction in the number of procedures in the top six countries of origin (China, Ethiopia, Russia, Colombia, South Korea and Ukraine). In particular, South Korea has experienced the most notable decrease (74% compared to 2012), due, most probably, to the ongoing reforms of the protection and adoption system in the country – the HC-1993 was signed in May 2013 and its ratification is foreseen in the near future. Whilst countries, such as Nigeria, Thailand and Ghana have maintained a number of adoptions that is quite similar to previous years, other countries of origin have experienced a significant fall, including India, Brazil, Taiwan, and, most importantly, Mali, where adoptions are virtually no longer possible. Conversely, Haiti (over 77% in one year), Poland, Vietnam, the Philippines, South Africa and Latvia have undertaken more adoptions than in the previous year, even though most of these countries had initiated a decrease in their number of intercountry adoptions, in particular by promoting domestic adoption. This is also true for the Democratic Republic of Congo, where the number of intercountry adoptions has increased by over 70% between 2011 and 2013 (therefore placing the DRC amongs the top

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Receiving countries	2011	2012	2013
U.S.A. ¹	9,319	8,668	7,094
Italy	4,022	3,106	2,825
France	1,995	1,569	1,343
Canada ²	1,785	1,367	1,242
Spain	2,560	1,669	1,188
Germany ³	934	801	661
The Netherlands	528	488	401
Sweden	538	466	341
Switzerland ⁴	367	314	256
Denmark	338	219	176
Norway	297	231	154
Australia ⁵	215	149	129
Total	22,898	19,047	15,810

five countries of origin), Uganda, and the Central African Republic, which has experienced an increase in adoptions of 69% in one year. However, this situation raises concerns, given the current socio-political environment that prevails in both countries and makes it difficult to undertake transparent procedures.

The situation in receiving countries: Ever more children with special needs

Even though detailed statistics unfortunately remain insufficient, in particular in receiving countries, it is obvious that the number of so-called children with special needs has an increasingly important presence. Thus, Italy – which distinguishes between children with special needs (children suffering from mental or physical illnesses, which are mostly

incurable) and children with particular needs (children with characteristics that may improve or disappear) – has recorded a proportion of 21% in 2013 for both groups, whilst the latter only amounted to 13.8% in 2012. Italy's report states that the statistics are probably lower than the real numbers, given that the reports on the children's health situation are drafted by social workers in the countries of origin, and not by medical doctors, and because the diagnosis is often incorrect or incomplete.

In France, in 2013, 63% of all adopted children had special needs, whilst these only represented 52% in 2012 and 35% in 2011. France includes, in this category, children over the age of five years, groups of siblings and children with some pathology.

In Germany, the adoption of children over the age of three years represents over 70% of all adoptions, and over half of all adopted children are aged between six and 18 years. For example, in 2013, 358 out of 661 children (54%) were aged over six years.

However, these analyses are still extremely difficult to establish, as it remains complex to define children with special needs, in particular due to the fact that the diagnosis established by countries of origin may be inaccurate, and that the characteristics may appear after the adoption or, on the contrary, prove not to exist.

ISS's projects are adapted to the reality and the issues of intercountry adoption

In the world's shaken intercountry adoption context, ISS offers its support and advice to governments and professionals, in order to preserve, at best, the rights and the well-being of children without a family. Several innovative projects, in particular linked to the care of so-called children with special needs, have been undertaken. For example, the project *A better future is possible for children living with disabilities in institutions*⁷ offers training for professionals in charge of these children, in order to improve their care as well as the identification and assessment of the needs of each child and the development of a specific life project. Furthermore, ISS's project aims to support governments in the implementation of alternative measures that are adapted to the specific needs of children with disabilities. Currently, this project is implemented in partnership with four countries: Burkina Faso, Vietnam, Mexico and Mauritius.

Countries of origin	2011	2012	2013
1. China	4,098	3,998	3,317
2. Ethiopia	3,144	2,648	1,923
3. Russia	3,017	2,442	1,705
4. Ukraine	1,054	713	677
5. DRC	339	499	581
6. Colombia	1,522	901	567
7. Philippines	472	374	524
8. Haiti	142	262	464
9. Bulgaria	259	350	421
10. Poland	304	236	332
11. India	688	362	304
12. Vietnam	620	216	296
13. Uganda	219	246	290
14. Thailand	258	251	274
15. Brazil	359	337	251
16. Nigeria	218	238	226
17. South Korea	920	797	206
18. Taiwan	311	291	188
19. Ghana	107	172	188
20. U.S.A.	97	178	163
21. South Africa	120	81	147
22. Latvia	116	59	131
23. Hungary	154	145	105
24. Cantral African Republic ⁶	19	43	73
... Mali	154	127	4



Whereas the trend of decline in intercountry adoptions has accelerated over the last few years, and despite the safeguards set up at international level following numerous cases of irregularities in the past, it is of considerable concern to observe that there exists, in parallel, an ongoing increase in the number of adoptions from countries, in which the transparency of adoption procedures may be jeopardised. In this context, it is important to reiterate and support the implementation of the basic standards and principles enshrined in the HC-1993, whilst strengthening advocacy for adoption ethics.

The ISS/IRC team,
October 2014

Sources:

Central Adoption Authorities and other governmental bodies; for further details, please contact the ISS/IRC.

Notes:

¹ Fiscal year: 1 October 2012 – 30 September 2013.

² In 2011 and 2012, these numbers were provided by the Canadian Central Authority, whilst for 2013, this total number is based on the statistics of the Hague Conference on Private International Law.

³ This number only refers to adoptions undertaken by German agencies and accredited bodies, and does not include private and relative adoptions.

⁴ This number does not include relative adoptions. In 2011 and 2012, these numbers were provided by the Swiss Central Authority, whilst for 2013, this number is based on the statistics of the Hague Conference on Private International Law.

⁵ Fiscal year: 1 October 2012 – 30 September 2013.

⁶ Children from the Central African Republic have only been adopted by French citizens.

⁷ For further information on this project, see: <http://www.iss-ssi.org/2009/index.php?id=191>.

Several countries, like Germany, Italy, Australia and Norway, cluster some countries under general categories, such as 'several Asian countries' or 'other countries'; thus, it is impossible to list with precision the origin of these adopted children. These numbers do, however, represent a limited minority of all adoptions in each country.

Vacancy: UNICEF Ghana is looking for an individual international consultant to provide the needed technical assistance in operationalising the Central Authority for adoptions and foster care. The consultant will be based in Accra for a duration of 10 months. Please contact irc-cir@iss-ssi.org to obtain the Terms of Reference.

ACTORS

- **Dominican Republic:** This country has updated its list 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.

BRIEF NEWS

New guide on international family mediation published by ISS

ISS recently published a guide designed to familiarise the reader to the benefits of international family mediation when dealing with family conflicts, separation and divorce across borders as well as cases of international child abduction by a parent. The guide is addressed, primarily, at families confronted with such problems, but also at professionals from the psychosocial and legal fields, who work with these families. The guide's content draws attention to how mediation is linked with the law and, through many strong personal accounts, it also describes the emotional impact that cross-border family conflicts may have on all family members. The guide is a useful tool in child abduction prevention and is written in accordance with mediation practices and legislations of all countries. The guide is user-friendly and can easily be read by interested families.

Source: Caratsch, C., *Resolving Family Conflicts: A Guide to International Family Mediation. To help you. To protect your children*, ISS, 2014, 98 pages; available at CHF 12.-: http://www.iss-ssi.org/venteonline/?id_lang=1.



ISS/IRC's Monthly Review now available in Russian

Thanks to a partnership with the organisation Scientific and Methodological Center for Mediation and Law, the Monthly Review of the ISS/IRC is now translated into Russian and disseminated among child protection actors in Russia. It is an important step forward for ISS, as this partnership makes it possible to ensure a wider dissemination of the principles and good practices, which we promote, and to offer greater visibility to the organisation.

Source: For further information on the Scientific and Methodological Center for Mediation and Law, see: http://www.mediacia.com/en/en_index.htm.

ISS advocates at the Day of General Discussion of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on digital media and children's rights

During the Day of General Discussion, which took place in the framework of the 67th session of the Committee on the Rights of the Child in Geneva, ISS advocated, in particular, for children's rights in the context of adoption and the search for their origins. ISS recommended that the Committee and its partners identify promising practices that: (1) equip children to use social media to better implement their rights and be protected from the associated risks (e.g. development of guidelines, factsheets and awareness-raising); (2) promote training on maintaining a professional social media presence; and (3) identify effective sanctions for breaches of children's rights associated to digital media use.

Source: For further information on the Day of General Discussion, see: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CRC/Pages/Discussion2014Contributions.aspx>. ISS's written submission is available at: <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/CRC/Discussions/2014/InternationalSocialServiceandNetwork-ISS.pdf>.

LEGISLATION

Legal progress in the protection of children without parental care in Latin America

In the context of the promotion of the Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children and the #Speakupforme campaign in Latin America¹, it is worth focusing on two recently-approved laws in Peru and Mexico, which reflect relevant progress in this field.

The implementation of the UNCRC, in particular its Article 20, and of the Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children occurs, amongst others, through the adoption of new legal instruments, which reflect the principles and standards enshrined in these international instruments. Thus, this is how two new laws were recently approved in Peru and Mexico.

Peru: Law on foster care

At the beginning of this year, Peru's Congress approved the Law on Foster Care [*Ley de Acogimiento Familiar*²]. Through this Law, various key aspects of this form of alternative care are described, and thereby offer, by law, a family-type option for children without parental care in Peru, whilst also putting emphasis on this option as an exceptional and temporary measure, which must promote contact with the children's biological

family. In addition to this form of care being, in general, more appropriate than residential care, as it occurs in a family environment, the new Law also grants more weight to the development of this option at practical level. Indeed, it is worth highlighting that the Law includes provisions relating to the requirements as well as administrative and judicial procedures for foster care, whether within the extended family or with a non-relative family.

Peru had already initiated a process of creation of a foster care programme, through cooperation between Bucker, the former Ministry of Women and Social Development (MIMDES) and the National Comprehensive Family Welfare Programme (INABIF), which resulted in positive outcomes, given that between the year 2008 and the beginning of the current year, 'through the Foster Care programme, the right to live in a



family was implemented for 47 children and adolescents, of which 28 have subsequently left the programme, some due to family reintegration, others for having reached adulthood³. Thanks to this new Law, an opportunity is given to this form of care to be implemented more widely, to have a stronger legal basis and to be applicable across the country.

Federal District, Mexico: Law on alternative care

On the other hand, in Mexico, important steps forward have also occurred in legal terms through the adoption, in June of this year, of the Law on the Alternative Care of Children and Adolescents in the Federal District [*Ley de Cuidados Alternativos para Niñas, Niños y Adolescentes en el Distrito Federal*⁴], which is solely applicable in Mexico's Federal District. The approval of this Law is a milestone on the path initiated by the local government since the case known as Casitas del Sur⁵ was initially reported in 2009. Following the latter, several bodies of the local government initiated a process of supervision of care institutions in the Federal District, in order to better understand the situation of the institutions and to assess the number and the situation of the children cared in them.

The ISS/IRC welcomes these legal developments in Latin America, given that these are important steps forward in the inclusion of relevant international principles and standards, and hopes that their practical implementation will also be positive and fully compliant with children's rights.

References:

¹ #speakupforme - We are putting an end to the placement of children under the age of 3 in residential care institutions in Latin America and the Caribbean; IACHR, Movement for Children-LAC, RELAF, SRSRG on violence against children, UNICEF; <http://www.speakupforme.org>.

² *Ley de Acogimiento Familiar*, Law N° 30162, *El Peruano* of 29 January 2014, <http://spij.minjus.gob.pe/Normas/textos/290114T.pdf>.

³ Buckner Peru, 'Congreso aprobó ley de acogimiento familiar para menores', <http://www.bucknerperu.org/congreso-aprobo-ley-acogimiento-familiar-para-menores/>.

⁴ Available electronically at the ISS/IRC.

⁵ For further information on this case, see: Human Rights Commission of the Federal District, Recommendation 04/2009, http://cdhdfbeta.cdhdf.org.mx/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/reco_0904.pdf.

This Law on alternative care marks the beginning of a new stage towards a better protection of children affected by these situations. Amongst the most relevant aspects, it is worth mentioning: a focus on the prevention of family separation and the priority given to care within the extended family and subsequently other families; the description of the responsibilities of the various local governmental bodies in the implementation of the Law; the creation of three key bodies in this field (one for the promotion and development of public policies, one for case-by-case decision-making, and one for the supervision of different forms of alternative care); the promotion of the development of standards for the operation of the various forms of alternative care; the exceptional character of residential care (in particular for children under the age of six); the required actions aimed at deinstitutionalisation; as well as the creation of an information system in this field. Thanks to the inclusion of these aspects, it is hoped that there will be a more harmonised and efficient system of protection of children deprived of their family environment or at risk of so being. This Law will enter into force on 1 January 2015.

Determining the best interests of the child in intercountry adoption

UNICEF's Office of Research recently published a study on this issue by Nigel Cantwell, who has been cooperating with ISS and UNICEF on the protection of children's rights in intercountry adoption for over 20 years.

It is intriguing that international standards require 'the paramount consideration' in decisions on the adoption of children – *i.e.* nothing less than their determining factor – to be a deliberately vague notion on which there is no international consensus. That notion is the best interests of the child.

This is the point of departure for Nigel Cantwell's study, which seeks to contribute responses to a clearly fundamental, yet rarely, posed question: since we are duty-bound to give such prominence to the best interests of the child in intercountry adoption, what is it that enables a policy, process, decision or practice to be qualified as either respectful or in violation of those best interests?

Indeed, most conflicts of opinion about intercountry adoption as a child protection measure can be traced back to disagreement about the conditions to be met for the 'best interests of the child' to indicate intercountry adoption as a positive solution. This concerns not only decisions about individual children and the way in which the adoption process is carried out, but also the place given to, or restrictions placed on, intercountry adoption in national policies.

A chequered legacy

According to Cantwell, one part of the problem lies in the enduring legacy of the concept of best interests – which, in international human rights law, is applied uniquely to children's issues – as a benchmark for decisions before children's rights were codified, and the consequent difficulties of now integrating it into a human rights framework.

A historical perspective is used to demonstrate how 'best interests' arguments have been mustered to justify actions that pay little or no regard to human rights, as well as to examine the impact of 'best interests' more specifically on the development of intercountry adoption since the 1950s.

Two phenomena of special concern are pinpointed. First, the global decline in

intercountry adoptions since 2004 has led many receiving countries to seek out new non-Hague countries of origin, where even the most basic best interests safeguards may be highly flawed. Second, adoptions from post-earthquake Haiti clearly exemplified the fragility of compliance with international standards in disaster situations. Receiving countries invoked 'best interests' to justify what was tantamount to the forced migration of children and to circumvent vital established procedures designed to protect the rights of the child.

Lack of criteria

A second aspect of the problem obviously stems from the absence of any globally-accepted and well-defined basis for best interests determination in regard to intercountry adoption. Without that, claims that best interests are being respected or, on the contrary, neglected cannot be objectively assessed. Two glaring gaps are addressed.

At the policy and legislative level, inspiration can be taken from the Child Rights Impact Assessment proposed by the Committee on the Rights of the Child (General Comment N° 14). An assessment of this nature should make it possible to evaluate the extent to which the approaches, systems and procedures put in place by a given country in relation to intercountry adoption are consonant with the best interests of their children as a group.

As far as decision-making with regard to an individual child for whom intercountry adoption may be envisaged, Cantwell builds on work done (notably by the UNHCR in relation to unaccompanied and separated children) to put forward a list of issues in which the determination of the best interests of the child could be grounded.

A hostile environment

Cantwell sees another factor in particular as also being key to the problem: the current context in which intercountry adoptions take place is



generally 'hostile' rather than 'enabling' for ensuring that best interests can systematically and truly be the prime consideration in decision-making.

On the one hand, prevailing conditions in most countries of origin militate against systematic and meaningful best interests determination. In addition to resource constraints and lack of family strengthening and support schemes, domestic alternative care options are frequently inadequate. For example, in some cases laws may be more influential than the actual reality of situations as determinants of which grounds (e.g. the choice between "abandonment" and "relinquishment") are given for pronouncing adoptability.

On the other hand, and certainly no less important, is the profoundly unhelpful approach taken by certain authorities, agencies and prospective adopters in the receiving countries.

While this study cannot resolve such paradoxes and dilemmas, it sets out to pinpoint and confront them, and to propose a number of responses to maximize compliance with the best interests principle in a human rights context in the case of intercountry adoption.

Reference:

¹ Cantwell, N. (2014). The Best Interests of the Child in Intercountry Adoption, *Innocenti Insight*, Florence: UNICEF Office of Research, available at: http://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/unicef%20best%20interest%20document_web_re-supply.pdf.

Inter-American Commission on Human Rights launches a report on the right of children to a family

This report¹ follows a series of initiatives and guidelines advocating for the deinstitutionalisation of children worldwide, in particular the 2009 Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children.

The institutionalisation of children benefitting from temporary or permanent protection measures unfortunately still represents today the most common response in the Americas. Overcrowded centres, health and safety precariousness, lack of trained staff, children's rights violations – such as violence or mistreatment – or unnecessary psychiatric medication are only few of the serious consequences institutionalisation policies may have. This report therefore advocates for developing forms of care different from institutionalisation in the Americas.

When they resort to exerting unwarranted pressure and/or accept conditions, such as the compulsory payment of 'humanitarian aid' or other contributions, in order to secure children for adoption, they are inevitably consigning the best interests of the child to a secondary role in decision-making on the intercountry adoption of many children.

Paradoxes and dilemmas

Determining that the best interests of the child lie in adoption abroad is, in principle, the sole responsibility of that child's country of origin. Based on his analysis, Cantwell sees the most striking of many paradoxes in the field of intercountry adoption as being the fact that most of the 'best interests' dilemmas now faced by countries of origin stem simply from their acceptance of initiatives taken by receiving countries, not from any active effort on their part to have their children adopted abroad.

Children's right to live and grow up in a family

The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) recalls the children's right to live and grow up in a family which remains the first and best way to ensure their well-being and global development. In line with the 2009 Guidelines, the report stresses that the aim of alternative care measures should always be the children's protection and the preservation/restoration of their rights, never a way to punish them or their parents. The fact that poverty and lack of material means still are a common reason for a child to be separated from his family is then highly questionable.



Informal and formal foster care

Based on the quite broad use of informal foster care in the Americas – mainly in the extended or expanded family – solutions should be developed by the countries in order to develop family support and safeguards for the concerned children. Indeed, many different reasons can lead to the placement of a child by his own parents such as the need for the child to access health or education more easily or grand-parents taking care of the children after parent's decease. In these cases, the family might need to be strengthened and receive material, financial and/or psychosocial support in order to ensure that the child's rights are met. But informal care can also lead to abuses, such as children placed for domestic work as a source of revenue. In this case, the government needs to put in place effective child protection measures and sanctions.

Also, the IACHR put the accent on the importance of distinguishing foster care from pre-adoptive fostering, which has a completely

different aim. Foster care is an alternative care measure which should not be permanent, and might precede the reintegration of the child in his own family or another permanent measure such as national or intercountry adoption, if necessary. While the pre-adoptive placement is the phase of an adoption procedure which involves linking the child, already declared adoptable, with his prospective adoptive family, selected by the competent authorities, prior to formalising the corresponding legal adoption decision.

Implementation of minimum standards for residential care

Institutional/residential care is necessary, but large residential care should be banished and substituted by smaller care centres able to provide a more family-like environment. In this regard, the IACHR underlines the need to establish minimum standards for the provision of services in residential care, in order for the rights of the children they are taking care of to be protected.

In order to face such challenges, there is a real need for the countries of the region to support the establishment of the monitoring and capacity-building of all actors and institutions involved in child protection, as well as to implement systems for the compilation and analysis of data and information in order to better understand the needs.

Reference:

¹ *The right of boys and girls to a family. Alternative care. Ending institutionalization in the Americas*, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, December 2013: <http://www.oas.org/en/iachr/children/docs/pdf/Report-Right-to-family.pdf>.

INTERDISCIPLINARY RESOURCES

Maintaining the relationship: Children of imprisoned parents

Rachel Brett and Patrizia Scannella, of the Quaker United Nations Office in Geneva, briefly discuss the impacts on children of a parent or primary caregiver's involvement in the criminal justice system, including when facing a death sentence, and the welcomed attention that their situation has started receiving at the United Nations.

Children are often directly and deeply affected when their parent or primary caregiver is involved in the criminal justice system. The most visible, though smallest, group are the babies and young children, who accompany their parent (usually mother) into detention or prison. But millions of children are affected. Their needs are, regrettably, often overlooked in social services, school,

medical and prison settings, and, up until recently, have been virtually ignored at the United Nations.

Damaging consequences of parental incarceration

Parental incarceration can negatively impact on (among others) the children's mental health and well-being, living situation, relationships with



others, and educational prospects. It increases the risk of children living in poverty or experiencing household instability. Separation due to parental incarceration can be as distressing for the children as other forms of parental loss and can be even more complex and traumatic due to the stigma, lack of community support and empathy that accompanies it. Many of these negative impacts are exacerbated by parental death sentences. For example, in some countries, especially where the death penalty is routinely applied in domestic murder cases, a parental death sentence often means that the child will lose both parents and potentially lead to the start of life on the street¹.

Parental incarcerations may lead to permanent separation

Sometimes, parental incarceration can alter the legal connection between children and parents, with parents losing their parental rights either as part of the sentence or as a consequence of the sentence. Imprisoned parents may lose custody of their children permanently either because of legal provisions or practical problems – such as even a short prison sentence, which can lead to loss of job, accommodation, children going into state

care, and the parents not being able to reclaim them on release – and/or simply loss of regular contact with children over a period of time. Fundamental decisions regarding the children, such as their adoption or alternative care, might be made without necessary consultation or participation of a parent or other family members or due consideration for the best interests of the child².

Efforts to address adverse situation

These and many other concerns were discussed by experts from around the world at the Day of General Discussion on ‘Children of Incarcerated Parents’ of the Committee on the Rights of the Child (2011) and at the Human Rights Council’s Panel on ‘Children of parents sentenced to death or executed’ (2013).

The Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO) has been carrying out research and advocacy on issues around children of incarcerated parents, with a more recent focus on children of parents sentenced to death or executed, exploring the commonalities and the differences between the experiences of these groups of children.

The Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children and QUNO’s work on children of prisoners reflect the experience that generally children do better when able to maintain a relationship with their parents. Thus, States should (1) reduce the use of imprisonment, using alternatives if they must criminalise acts; (2) support children and families to assist them not to come into conflict with the law; (3) if parents are imprisoned, support children in maintaining a relationship with them, except where it is not in their best interests; and finally (4) particularly stop death sentences and commute existing ones.

References:

¹ See, for example, *Lightening the Load of the Parental Death Sentence on Children* (QUNO, 2013) and *Children of Parents Sentenced to Death or Executed: How are they affected? How can they be supported?* (Child Rights Connect, August 2013).

² See, for example, *Collateral Convicts: Children of incarcerated parents* (QUNO, 2012).

QUNO’s publications on this area of work are available at: <http://www.quno.org/areas-of-work/children-prisoners>.



FORTHCOMING CONFERENCES AND TRAININGS

- **Brazil:** *III Colóquio Internacional sobre Acolhimento Familiar* [III International Conference on foster care], Associação Brasileira Terra dos Homens, Campinas, 14-17 December 2014. For further information, see: <http://www.terradoshomens.org.br/pt-BR/pt-BR/noticia/380-III-Coloquio-Internacional-sobre-Acolhimento-Familiar.htm>.
- **France:** *L'observation du tout petit dans différents contextes culturels* [The observation of the young child in various cultural environments], COPES, Paris, 8 December 2014; duration: 4 days. For further information, see: <http://www.copes.fr>.
- **Switzerland:** *Colloque: La révolution silencieuse. 25 ans des droits de l'enfant* [Conference: The silent revolution. 25 years of children's rights], Geneva, CICG, 20-21 November 2014. For further information, see: <http://www.ville-geneve.ch/dossiers-information/2014-annee-enfance/evenements-annee-enfance/colloque-revolution-silencieuse/>.
- **United Kingdom:** **a)** *Special Guardianship: How is it working for children and their special guardians?*, BAAF, London, 9 December 2014. For further information, see: <http://www.baaf.org.uk/training/allevants/2014-12-09t000000-0> **b)** *Early Years High Impacts for Health*, London, The Mermaid, 9 December 2014. For further information, see: <http://www.infanthealthconference.co.uk/event-home>.

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