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SPECIAL ISSUE

The training and support of professionals

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EDITORIAL

Specialised and supported professionals for the year 2017 to thrive in children's rights

A country may have an 'ideal' legal framework available for children in need of protection but if, at the same time, the professionals responsible for putting this into effect are not qualified and supported in carrying out their functions, it will remain unworkable.

Ensuring that child protection is implemented by specialised professionals is part of a State's obligations, as stipulated in international standards¹ and some domestic laws, as is the case in Peru's recent Decree No. 1296, issued in December 2016 (see p. 3)². This obligation responds to a real need, repeatedly raised by the professionals themselves during the October 2016 International Alternative Care Conference. Making instruments, such as Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children are a reality, particularly for children with special needs, such as those with a disability, may be achieved through the provision of skilled professionals to understand the journey of these children and to assess, with the child's full participation, the life project most adapted to their profile. What skills and knowledge must the professionals gain? Are they supported in carrying out their responsibilities? These are major questions that the ISS/IRC suggests raising.

Professionals trained to listen to children, young people and families (skills)

The support offered to a child and family in a situation of crisis linked, for example, to violence within the family or even to communication problems, requires an ability to listen, compassion, empathy and non-judgement on the part of the professionals concerned, along with a solid belief in the ability of individuals. How can we achieve this attitude that is far from being natural and systematic? Is it not strengthened through the basic training of child protection professionals, irrespective of their field of expertise, together with supervision sessions? These sessions are invaluable in the sense that they offer an extremely useful space for dialogue and

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support, allowing professionals to work on their own representations and resonances. Furthermore, for family situations of an international nature requiring cultural sensitivity, should we give priority to the resort to local professionals to complete social reports that respect cultural and social norms? This is one of the fundamental principles of the international social work carried out by ISS since its inception in 1924.

In addition, could the search for a solution for the child or family at risk be made without the participation of those principally concerned? This aspect – highlighted in international standards – also requires the acquisition of a culture of participation. What stage are we at today in the development of such a culture? An innovative practice launched in France and Italy deserves to be mentioned here. Individuals, with experiences of care, have developed a training programme aimed at professionals in institutions and child protection services. These professionals have therefore been able to experience the feelings of children and young people in care when they are not listened to or when they are isolated from decisions concerning their life (see p. 4).

Professionals trained in the special needs of some children (knowledge)

In addition to an quality initial training (see p. 3), the profiles of some children in vulnerable situations require access to specialised training offering professionals the necessary knowledge and tools to ensure good care for these children. Has any progress been made in this field? In adoption, the growing proportion of older children, groups of siblings or children with an illness or disability proposed for intercountry adoption requires the intervention of competent professionals capable of preparing and supporting prospective adoptive parents in the care of these children. Several countries have developed specific training that is available to this effect (see p. 6). Similarly, ISS has developed training on the care of children with disabilities, guided by a better respect of their fundamental rights, such as the right to grow up within their family environment³. Without the sharing of expertise in these particularities, adoption projects find themselves exposed to high risks of failure – a situation that all adoption stakeholders – starting with States – must prevent.

Professionals supported in carrying out their functions

Professionals must have access to training and supervision fora, but what about their working conditions? The understaffing of some services linked to child protection – due in particular to budgetary cuts – pressure from an overwhelming bureaucracy or lack of resources (transport difficulties, access to professional and logistical tools, etc.) – may all threaten the quality of the professional intervention for children and families? One may add the frequent changes in professional teams following, for example, political elections. The stability and continuity of teams guarantees retaining the expertise gained, and generates invaluable confidence for a better quality of work. In this field, civil society offers valuable assistance to States, through the development of training courses in social work (see p.7), particularly for children in migratory situations (see p. 9), or the establishment of free and accessible online courses on topics such as alternative care – a multi-agency project, which ISS is strongly committed to, and which will be launched in May 2017⁴.

At a time of reflection on our 2017 resolutions, the availability of experienced professionals, who are supported in their complex task with children and families, cannot be omitted. We work with people, and as Jean Dorst underlined, ‘nothing that is human is simple’ but all that is human should receive unconditional support.

The ISS/IRC team
January 2017

References:

¹ For example, Article 11.b. of the 1993 HC or Paras. 40, 80 and 99 of the Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children.

² See Article 4.b: *“La actuación estatal es planificada y se realiza a través de profesionales y técnicos debidamente especializados. La capacitación es periódica”*.

³ For further information, see: <http://www.iss-ssi.org/index.php/en/what-we-do-en/cwd-en>.

⁴ See: <http://www.alternativecareguidelines.org/PracticalTools/tabid/5976/language/en-GB/Default.aspx>.

BRIEF NEWS

New legal instruments in India and Peru on alternative care and adoption

A new Decree No. 1297 on the protection of children and adolescents deprived of their family or at risk of so being has been published in *El Peruano* on 30 December 2016. This new legal instrument addresses domestic and intercountry adoption in articles 3 (Definitions) and 123 to 147 (Chapter 2). Furthermore, Article 123 (c) reiterates the principle of subsidiarity of intercountry adoption. A version in Spanish of the Decree, which will enter into force on the day following the publication of its Regulations – currently in the process of drafting – is available at: <http://busquedas.elperuano.com.pe/normaslegales/decreto-legislativo-para-la-proteccion-de-ninas-ninos-y-ado-decreto-legislativo-n-1297-1468962-4/>. The ISS/IRC is monitoring these developments and will update its Country Situation on Peru accordingly.

In India, new guidelines on foster care and adoption have been notified by the Indian government in 2016 and 2017 respectively. The new Adoption Guidelines replace those of 2015. The ISS/IRC Country Situation on this country is being reviewed and updated, and will be published soon. These instruments are available at: <http://www.wcd.nic.in/sites/default/files/November2016-FC.pdf> and http://www.wcd.nic.in/sites/default/files/NTESCL_636194033071198891_english%20regulation_0.pdf.

LEGISLATION

Equipping the future generation of child-rights professionals

One way of safeguarding children's rights is to ensure that professionals are well prepared. The ISS/IRC is pleased to include the personal story of Juliette Duchesne, who describes the Master's Dreecree in International Children's Rights at Leiden University in The Netherlands – an exceptional learning opportunity.

Why this course?

After completing my undergraduate degree in European Studies and a Master's Degree in European law and Human Rights Law in Belgium, the time had come for me to begin my professional career. However, I faced challenges if I wanted to work in my main field of interest: children's rights. Prospective employers were seeking candidates with experience – an experience, which I did not have despite my numerous years of studies. As a consequence, I decided to apply to the LL.M. in International Children's Rights at Leiden University in The Netherlands, due to the University's prestigious international reputation.

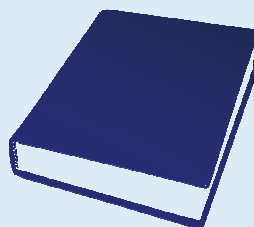
What did the course include and what did I learn?

The 2015 – 2016 academic year was the first year of the programme, a total of eight students from seven different nationalities. We represented a vast majority of continents and cultures worldwide. This cultural diversity

allowed us to better understand the various practices surrounding children's rights. Besides the cultural diversity, we all had different professional or academic backgrounds; some of us had already worked, whereas others had just graduated. The experience of the cohort was diverse and enabled some rich discussion and a multidisciplinary approach. The course content was also rich and varied, and covered a large scale of themes, such as child migration, juvenile justice, children and digital technologies, but also children's economic, social and cultural rights.

Who taught us and what were the networking opportunities?

The excellence of the programme is also due to the professionalism and rich knowledge of the professors. These experts provided us with their time, experience and network, inviting prestigious international experts from all around the world, such as Alfred de Zayas, Jaap Doek or Bernadine Dohrn, but also domestic experts such as the Children's



Ombudsperson and national prosecutors. These meetings were valuable, not only for the valuable contribution to knowledge, but it also allowed us to network with professionals for future job prospects. Personally, it is thanks to the LL.M. in International Children's Rights that I am currently interning at the General Secretariat of the International Social Service. Our programme included a one-week visit to Geneva, during which we attended some sessions of the Committee on the Rights of the Child and met with UNICEF and prestigious NGOs, such as Plan International, Defence for Children International and the International Social Service. Since the beginning of my studies, Private International

Law has been one of my main fields of interest, and I therefore naturally applied to the latter.

How did the course help with my current work?

It has now been five months since I have started working with the fabulous team at the International Social Service. The skills, which I acquired during my year in Leiden, have enabled me to competently and efficiently accomplish the tasks that I have been assigned and to integrate well into the team. This is one of the many benefits, which the high-quality course in Private International Law, coordinated by Julia Sloth-Nielsen and Machteld Vonk, has provided me with.

By way of conclusion, I can only recommend this Master's programme, as it rigorously trains you for a professional career and links to various job opportunities in children's rights. To those, who are still hesitating, you will not regret your investment in this challenging and fruitful year.

Where can I get further information?

Further information is available at: <http://en.mastersinleiden.nl/programmes/international-childrens-rights/en/introduction>, and/or by contacting Esther Uiterweerd at: childrensrights@LAW.leidenuniv.nl. For further information about the Child Law Department at Leiden University, see: <https://www.universiteitleiden.nl/en/law/institute-of-private-law/child-law>.

PRACTICE

And if the experience of young people helped to humanise the child protection system...

Gabrielle Chouin¹, Co-Founder of SOSep (SOS Enfants Placés) contributed to the creation and facilitation of a training module for child protection professionals on the rights of the child, as part of a European project led by SOS Children's Villages.

As children, who were placed in alternative care, we each have our own experience. How can our life experience be useful in developing actions and debates with professionals? What interest can we find in these collaborations? Currently, in France, many stakeholders, associations, politicians and researchers, are considering the participation of young people within the framework of child protection. Since 2014, the French Ministry for Families, Children and Women's Rights, has supported work in consultation with young people and, based on the latter, drafted the latest law on child protection of 14 March 2016.

The European Project for Training Professionals Working with Children in Care launched by SOS Children's Villages

For its part, SOS Children's Villages has collaborated with the Council of Europe since 2009 on the issue of the rights of the child placed into child protection. In 2014, it launched a project for professional training, supported by the European Commission, that brought together eight countries². Over 40 partners have joined this project, which aims to enable professionals to develop an approach based on the rights of

the child and to develop the participation of young people.

Youth participation in action

In France, young people, members of the projects' Steering Committee, decided that this participation would take the form of a training series designed and facilitated by themselves. Thus, nine young people – two former children's rights Ambassadors (JADE – a programme of the Rights Ombudsperson), and seven young people from different backgrounds, who all have an experience of care – came (back) together to develop their proposal. I participated in this group and in their work.

Within this group of young people, who share the experience in common of being placed in care – cooperation quickly emerged. We decided spontaneously to address the rights of the child in terms of their fundamental needs. The consensus between us identified six needs that had not been fully heard and respected during our own experiences.

A training series conceived as a pathway from emotion to reflexion

This series is broken down into three parts:

- **A game of needs:** This activity, created entirely by our group of young people, addresses six basic needs: to be informed, to be supported individually, to be listened to, to have our privacy respected, not to be stigmatised and to receive love and affection. The participants are encouraged to move from one case to the other as a form of hopscotch. In each of the cases, the need is presented in a different format (audio, video, texts, games...), and refers to actual situations experienced and presented anonymously. The professionals are asked to collaborate in order to respond to the questions raised by the facilitators. The role reversal is marked by the emotions experienced by the professionals when the young people put their own emotions to one side in order to take on their position as trainer.
- **The game of change:** This activity helps to pursue this situation, by asking the professionals to put themselves in the shoes of a child/young person confronted with changes in an abrupt way. They are asked to experience the

consequences that these decisions may have on a child, which, whilst they are justified based on their protection, are nonetheless difficult for the child to understand due to a lack of information and with insufficient time to absorb it. When evaluating the training, the participants stress the violence felt during this activity, and make the link with the child's experience as a result, for example, of decisions related to not only changing their home and emotional environment but also their social reference points.

- **The charter of commitment:** The participants determine what they could change in their practices to hear and respond effectively to the needs of the child, and to put the child's best interest at the heart of their support. Freely, in a playful or poetic, theatrical or graphic manner, the professionals rally and engage.

The feedback from participants and the results of the assessments show that this series, developed and facilitated by young people, is a necessary addition to training. The gamble from the beginning – *i.e.* handing over the controls to the young people – is appreciated and valued by the participants.

A meeting with another person ... and with oneself!

We have been able to enter into a space of participation thanks, in part, to the framework of cooperation: a free adherence for each one with possible back and forths, our requests have been heard (to be supported by a training expert) and our choices have been respected (no censorship or questioning of our proposals).

The creation and facilitation of this training series has led us to change places and status. These scenarios favour the promotion of a mutual understanding of the other person's world. We have succeeded in overcoming the emotions linked to our own journey, transforming ourselves gradually and looking to the future. The professionals, for their part, expressed that it was essential for them to look at their emotions in order to put themselves in the child's shoes, to overcome certain professional reactions and to commit to the future.

This experience shows that each of us can, through a genuinely collaborative process, find resources to distance ourselves from our own experiences, and to overcome our reactions or beliefs. In the end, it is the system itself that will benefit from this encounter and cooperation, in order to throw off the shackles and leave more space for the humane.

References:

¹ A Senior Education Advisor (National Education) and Administrator of *Généralités d'avenir* (ADEPAPE 94, <https://adepape94.wordpress.com/>), Gabrielle Chouin participated in national consultations on child protection in France. She is currently involved in peer research on the expression of children in situations of displacement, led by Pierrine Robin (University Paris East Créteil).

² See: European Project '*Former les professionnels de la protection de l'enfance aux droits de l'enfant*', <https://www.sosve.org/notre-engagement-pour-lenfance-en-danger/les-droits-de-lenfant/le-projet-europeen-de-formation-des-professionnels>.

Preparing to care for a child with special needs: Training for professionals and prospective adopters

Drs Fanny Cohen Herlem, a Paediatric Psychiatrist and ISS partner, and Anne de Truchis de Laye, a Paediatrician at the COCA¹ in Versailles, introduce us below to the recently developed training on the adoption of children with special needs aimed at professionals and prospective adopters.

Paediatric Psychiatrists, Paediatricians or Psychologists, we are all child health professionals. Our specialism has provided us with an in-depth knowledge of adoption: the journeys of adopters and children, legal, psychological or medical problems, etc. Concerned by the personal stories of adoption professionals regarding the difficulties encountered by applicants or adoptive families who are caring for – or are about to care for – children with special needs, we felt it was necessary to offer support for the adoption of these children.

Objectives of the training for professionals

After raising awareness about the characteristics of the adoption of children with special needs, our objective is to help professionals identify, amongst the applicants, those aspects of support and/or weakness with regards to their project. As a result, a training of two or three days has been established at COPEs², which is facilitated by a COCA Paediatrician and a Paediatric Psychiatrist.

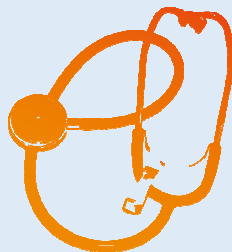
Initially, the current context of adoption is put into perspective from the epidemiological, anthropological, medical, psychological and legal point of view. Then, specific situations and role-

play are proposed and enhanced with examples drawn from our clinical experience in order to echo the representations and projections of the participants. We work on the following profiles of children: children with an illness, groups of siblings, children with disabilities, older children. Finally, we develop assessment tools with a participatory approach in the form of a repository intended to help professionals determine whether candidates have the ability to care for a child whose 'profile' they have identified. We notice during these workshops how the sharing of experiences has a mobilising effect, enabling the refinement of practice and the emergence of new ideas.

Objectives of the training for adoption applicants

The support of applicants is based on two lines of work, which will help them confirm their limits and make a decision: on the one hand, a better knowledge of their personality and, on the other, of childhood. Within the framework of *ALPA - Le fil d'or*³, we offer interactive workshops in small groups (two sessions of two hours), supervised by a Paediatrician/Paediatric Psychiatrist and a Psychologist.

The applicants are therefore prepared to care for a child marked by the deep wound of abandonment, episodes of illness, early



separations, through the acquisition of information on childhood, their strengths and weaknesses. They are then able to refine their project and to avoid giving in to the pressure to adopt a child 'at any price'. Indeed, the dynamics of the group enable a reciprocal enrichment. Trust is established amongst the participants and between them and the facilitators, in respect of confidentiality.

Strengthening knowledge on the specific needs of some children

Faced with the lists of illnesses and criteria set out by countries of origin, how can couples/single people and non-medical professionals decide? Even specialised Doctors are not always able to analyse the entirety of these criteria, which are absent from international classifications.

The goal of the training is therefore 'to put one's finger on' the particularities of adoption, which could collide with the background, the prejudices and the life style of the applicants. The

workshops intend to chart the development of the child's motor skills, to explain the way they create attachment bonds, and to understand how to care for them within an adoption. Once the general needs of the child are identified, the more specific needs of the ill or older child or a sibling group are addressed so that the applicants can imagine everyday life. Whether the child needs periodic somatic care or has suffered trauma or multiple separations and that their life story is going to affect, sometimes brutally, the organisation of the home. Taking the child to hospital for painful, repeated or costly treatment, or receiving several children of different ages with different needs and emerging from an idealised image of the family in order to understand the sibling dynamic, to become aware of learning and schooling gaps for an older child, all require the ability to adapt, patience, tolerance as well as availability and the financial resources to be aware of.

These workshops for professionals and prospective adoptive parents aim at preventing hasty or ill-prepared adoptions, particularly due to a failure to comply with the limits laid down initially, or not, by the applicants themselves. They are an effective way of avoiding too great a gap between the reality of the child and an idealised project, and, at the same time, to identify suitable prospective adopters to adopt children with special needs. They are therefore contributing to ensuring that the interest and protection of the child are at the heart of the process.

References:

¹ Guiding and adoption advice consultations.

² See: <http://www.copes.fr/>.

³ See: <http://www.alpa-lefildor.fr/>.

Using a competency-based approach to improve training of social service providers: An example from the Global Social Service Workforce Alliance

Amy Bess, Director of the Global Social Service Workforce Alliance, describes the important role of this network to advocate for workforce-inclusive policies and ensure that paraprofessionals have the necessary skills, knowledge and behaviours to provide quality services to children and families.

Social service workers are the foundation of a strong child protection system due to the critical roles they play every day regarding children and families. Fortunately, many child protection workers are highly trained, but according to a Kenyan child care worker, "we have had lots and lots of trainings. If you ask people to bring out their certificates, they will bring out a box. But at the end of it all, you have no identity... We need

to direct training to a profession and give a good career development path for people working in child protection'. Paraprofessional social workers often receive an array of brief, isolated courses that do not help them to progress along a specific career path.

A coordinated and effective child protection system requires a social service workforce comprised of the right number of workers in the

right place with the right training and skills. This requires a cohesive and coordinated approach to training, through consistent standards agreed to across government and various educational and implementing organisations in a particular country. Where possible, training would also lead to certification or recognition towards a profession, such as social work, child and youth care work, or community development work.

The Global Social Service Workforce Alliance¹

The Alliance was conceptualised during a conference in Cape Town in 2010 that brought together multi-sectoral stakeholders from 18 countries to identify challenges and successes in building social service workforce capacity. Participants recognised a need to continue dialogue and information-sharing across borders, sectors and organisations. The Alliance was officially launched as a network in 2013 to promote the knowledge and evidence, resources and tools, and political will and action needed to address key social service workforce challenges, especially within low- to middle-income countries. Alliance Ambassadors help to advocate for workforce-inclusive policies and programmes nationally and regionally. Alliance interest groups bring together members with expertise on specific areas to produce new resources and tools.

Development of the Competency Framework

Soon after the launch of the Alliance, members noted that their most prominent area of interest was improving understanding and support of community-level workers. The Interest Group on Paraprofessionals was formed and reached consensus on a set of guiding principles for working with paraprofessionals. Indeed, to help ensure proper preparation of workers and quality provision of services to children and families, a clear and agreed-upon outline of necessary skills, knowledge and behaviours is necessary. The Group therefore decided to develop a Competency Framework (CF) that would outline

the functions and competencies of paraprofessionals and that could be used to provide programme guidance, accountability and inform both training and supervision.

These sets of competencies have been validated by workers and supervisors in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda, and have been reviewed and discussed by participants at conferences held in Benin, the Philippines, South Africa and Zimbabwe. The CF applies to specific groups of paraprofessionals, such as Child and Youth Care Workers, Social Workers and Community Development Workers. The CF is meant as a discussion starter and provides a menu of options or a structure, from which to both design and fine tune programmes and worker training and development; not all competencies will be applicable in all contexts or programmes.

Using the Competency Framework in training programmes

The CF can be used to enhance training of social service by:

- **Creating training programmes:** The CF includes both practice and training competencies: the practice competencies can help to inform job descriptions and the training competencies can then help to guide applicable training.
- **Identifying competency-based training needs:**
 - In ongoing programmes, training providers can compare their current training curricula to the CF to identify any gaps and prioritise areas for workforce improvement;
 - Discussions with workers about the competencies can help them to identify where they need more training.
- **Increasing the collaboration of multi-disciplinary teams:** The CF can be reviewed with one cadre of workers to discuss and identify the roles of other cadres of workers in their communities and how they can best collaborate.

The second edition of the competency document is due to be released in late February 2017. It is open for feedback from all, and we look forward to your ideas and inputs about ways that it can be useful in the further development of this workforce essential to ensure that children and families are well cared for and supported.

Reference:

¹ For further information or to join the efforts of the Global Social Service Workforce Alliance, see:

ISS ACTION WORLDWIDE

Increasing the capacity of social workers to improve and ensure international child protection

The ISS-USA Branch recalls, through this article, the fundamental role of social work in the process of protecting children on the move, and describes its new service called 'Community Survey', which is extremely useful for both the legal and judicial partners as well as ISS country partners.

The cooperation of legal, judicial, and social work partners in child protection, specifically when it involves children, who are separated by an international border from their families, is crucial in promoting the best interests of the child and ensuring best practices in cross-border child welfare. There are two key areas, on which the ISS network focuses its efforts in support of those two outcomes: strengthening and supporting adherence to international treaties, compacts and conventions on the one hand, and increasing the capacity of social workers to manage complex international child welfare cases in accordance with these laws and policies on the other. It is only through collaboration of all stakeholders in the process of supporting children on the move that each set of partners – legal, judicial and social work – will recognise the unique contribution each makes to the successful outcome for each child.

Strengthening the social work case practice models and the use of social workers to better protect children

The growing number of child migrants travelling between countries, particularly unaccompanied children, is of special concern to social work agencies operating in regions where there is a growing number of them. There is a lack of explicit reference to the need for, or role of, social workers in these cases. Furthermore, there is little understanding of how social work can promote adherence to domestic and international laws, conventions, or policies on child protection. It is notable that the effective implementation of international treaties, and domestic public policies on children on the move, will best be met by using the expertise of social workers. Strong social work case practice models and the use of social workers in providing broad

spectrum services to children on the move is paramount to ensuring that children are safe and protected as they leave or return to their country of origin or as they negotiate the complex legal world of regularising their immigration status in a foreign country. Social work agencies must be willing and able to respond to the needs of these vulnerable children by adjusting case practice models to accommodate emerging needs.

The Community Survey: A new service of ISS-USA

In response to the growing number of unaccompanied children from the region of the Northern Triangle over the past three years, ISS-USA created a new service: the Community Survey. This service can best be described as an in-depth ethnographic view of the specific communities, from which a child came. The survey outlines both the resources available to the child if they are returned to their country of origin, and details the potential dangers and threats to which the child has been, or could be, exposed and gaps in services in that neighborhood. Furthermore, the community survey documents all agencies, both domestic and multi-national, that are working on key issues within that community as well. This allows ISS-USA to develop a clear map of the resources available to a child if they are to be returned, and for the ISS partner in that country to know to whom a child can be connected for reintegration services.

This service has been extremely useful for both the legal and judicial partners and for our ISS partners in country. These Surveys allow immigration attorneys to have community level information about a child's home community to successfully argue for the child's right to remain in the U.S.A., or when appropriate, return safely to their home community. In the absence of

community-level data, the judicial partners in the immigration process have little more than general anecdotal information about the child's home country, upon which to base their decisions

about whether the child should or should not remain.

It is important to acknowledge the contributions of all stakeholders in the process of protecting children on the move. Legal, judicial and policy protections, however, are only one piece of this complex puzzle. Social services are the all too often an over-looked part of the equation. If we truly want to protect and serve children on the move, we must complement the vast array of legal services with crucial social services before, during and after the child emigrates, and when necessary during the processes of return and reintegration.

FORTHCOMING CONFERENCES AND TRAININGS

- **France:** **a)** *Un cadre institutionnel pour prendre soin de l'enfant en pouponnière*, Practical training, Pikler Loczy, Paris, 8 March and other dates throughout 2017; **b)** *L'éthique du soin et de l'éducation dans l'accueil du jeune enfant*, Pikler Loczy, Paris, 27 – 28 March 2017. For further information, see: <http://pikler.fr/Formation>; **c)** *Accompagnement des familles en grande difficulté, L'accompagnement constitue-t-il un soin?*, COPES, Paris, 27 – 28 March 2017. For further information, see: <http://www.copes.fr/>.
- **Ireland:** *World Congress on Family Law and Children's Rights 2017 (WCFLCR)*, University College Cork, Dublin, 4 – 7 June 2017; early bird registration by 31 March 2017. For further information, see: <http://www.worldcongress.co/>.
- **Switzerland:** **a)** *Massive Open Online Course: Children's human rights: Interdisciplinary introduction*, Centre inter-facultaire des droits de l'enfant, University of Geneva; available now at: <https://www.coursera.org/learn/childrens-rights>; **b)** *La compétence des familles*, conference by Dr Guy Ausloos, Espace A, Lausanne, 15 March 2017. For further information, see: <http://www.espace-a.org>.
- **The Netherlands:** *The Children's Rights Moot Court 2017*, Leiden Law University, Leiden, 29 – 31 March 2017. For further information, contact: childrensrights@law.leidenuniv.nl.
- **United Kingdom:** *Children and Childhoods Conference 2017*, University of Suffolk, Ipswich, 18 – 19 July 2017; call for papers until 31 March 2017. For further information, see: <https://www.uos.ac.uk/content/children-and-childhoods-conference-2017-0>.
- **United States of America:** *The Society for Research in Child Development (SRCD)*, Conference, Austin (TX), 6 – 8 April 2017. For further information, see: <http://www.srkd.org/meetings/biennial-meeting>.

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