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## **Diversification of countries of origin and an increase in the age of adopted children against a background of inter-country adoption that continues to be tense. 🏠**

*The fall in inter-country adoptions, which is common throughout the world, reflects amongst other things, an improvement in the provision of domestic care for children in the countries of origin. Faced with this situation, the receiving countries are looking for new countries to adopt in, particularly in Africa.*

**T**he 2007 statistics illustrate clearly: inter-country adoptions around the world are continuing to plunge (see the statistics on page 5). This pattern, which started for certain countries at the beginning of the 2000, was clearly confirmed in 2005, and seems to be continuing. It is explained by several factors that this bulletin has already addressed, namely, the fact that more and more countries of origin are developing and strengthening their national systems for child protection, particularly by means of family placement and domestic adoptions, thus reducing their need for inter-country adoption. Today, the latter therefore constitutes an appropriate response for older children and/or those suffering from problems of physical or psychological health, for whom it is more difficult to find a family

### **The increase in the age of adopted children requires a change in the plans of adoption applicants.**

The profile of children adopted at the inter-country level has changed, as the following article shows. The data is still inadequate for drawing up a full picture of the adopted children, but the increase in their average age is a recognised fact. But such a change implies a change of plans for the adopting applicants from receiving countries. The latter, of course, wish most often to adopt a young child in good health. It is therefore essential that the professionals in charge of their preparation transmit correct information and only authorise realistic projects. That requires significant work in order to create substantial progress amongst adoption applicants, guided and accompanied by professionals, who must also ensure that the applicants' plans are still genuine, and that they do not evolve just to be able to rapidly adopt whatever child.

The fact that the majority of the receiving countries are now convinced of the need to

prepare adoption applicants, reflect this thinking. But if one notes that the reality of inter-country adoption is better and better known and mediatised, there is still some way to go so that the wishes of adoption applicants correspond best to the needs of adoptable children.

### **The receiving States in search of new countries of origin to respond to their applicants**

Even if existing data is not available, it is noticeable that the number of adoption applicants continues to rise. The waiting lists of accredited agencies are getting longer, and in future one must wait several years for the country of origin to make its first proposal of a child. This imbalance thus creates pressures, both on the authorities and the professionals of the receiving countries, as well as on the countries of origin. Countries of origin are preparing different strategies to try to juggle with this pressure and avoid abuses by means of quotas or bilateral agreements, by being more demanding, as far as the profile of applicants is concerned, even deciding to suspend the procedures for more or less extended periods. These diverse provisions have incited the receiving States to look for new countries of origin for their adoption applicants.

### **An Africa that is courted more and more**

The available figures show clearly that the African continent, occupies a position of growing importance in the inter-country adoption statistics, becoming even the first continent of origin for France. But if it is true that many African countries acknowledge a high number of children deprived of family, the majority of children are those with special needs (HIV AIDS orphans, older children, sibling groups). Like elsewhere, there are numerous difficulties that complicate adoption

procedures. On the one hand, adoption, as it is conceived by the receiving countries is not a very widespread notion in Africa and is often misunderstood. It is sometimes difficult to obtain the well informed consent of the biological parents for the adoption, without forgetting that numerous populations are of the Muslim faith, and do not therefore practise adoption. On the other hand, the administrative and judicial social services are often scarcely able to guarantee transparency in the procedures. Several African states have, nonetheless, taken steps in an effort to limit risks and the abuse of time needed to put in place stricter procedures to ensure a better protection of children deprived of family (read the editorial of the monthly Bulletin 2008/5). This phenomenon is comparable with the evolution, which can be seen in other parts of the world, particularly in the countries of Eastern Europe, and those of the former USSR.

#### **A logical evolution that one must build upon**

The diversification of the countries of origin is fully symptomatic of the evolution of inter-country adoption. The development of the countries of origin forces applicants to seek countries "where it's possible to adopt". Under these conditions, it is logical that the African

continent is emerging since in some ways it was the last on the list. Inter-country adoption has spread across Asia, South America, Eastern Europe and Central Asia in the course of the last 40 years. It is now reaching Africa, where it is developing in a very unequal way between the countries so far concerned.

It is fundamental that this evolution be accompanied and built upon as closely as possible, so as to avoid the mistakes made elsewhere in the past. If the affair of Zoe's Ark has well illustrated that the worst is always possible, vigilance is essential when new adoption channels open up in countries that have neither experience, nor the resources to set up reliable systems. As stressed on several occasions in this bulletin, it is a question therefore of working to put in place a system of shared responsibility between the receiving countries and the countries of origin, making it possible to protect the latter from all pressures and to give them the necessary tools to respond to the needs of their children. As for the receiving countries efforts must be pursued, particularly to improve and generalise the preparation of adoption applicants to build upon the accredited agencies and encourage the adoption of children with special needs.

The ISS/IRC team

#### **IRC NEWS**

- **Changes to the team:**

*Christina Baglietto*, Children's Rights Specialist left the team at ISS/IRC in June. After 2 ½ years with us, Christina largely contributed to the activities of the program, not only in Geneva but also in other countries, due to multiple missions that she participated in. Christina is now working as an expert in Guatemala, where she is supporting the Government's efforts to ameliorate their procedures for international adoptions. All the team wishes Christina the best of luck in this new experience et warmly thanks her for her commitment and the great times passed together.

- *Mia Dambach* has replaced Christina and started in this new function on 1 July 2008. She is an Australian and is a lawyer by profession. She has consecrated multiple years defending children in conflict with the law, where she acquired a solid knowledge of the rights of the child. She has equally worked with the Australian NGOs and later with UNICEF in Geneva. We welcome her to our team.

#### **ACTORS IN MATTERS OF ADOPTION**

Source: Permanent Bureau of The Hague Conference: [http://hcch.e-vision.nl/index\\_en.php?act=conventions.authorities&cid=69](http://hcch.e-vision.nl/index_en.php?act=conventions.authorities&cid=69).

- **Belgium:** This country has updated the contact details of its Flemish Central Authority.
- **Slovak Republic:** This country has updated the contact details of its competent authority and central authority.
- **United Kingdom:** This country has updated the contact details of its public authorities.

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## IN BRIEF

**MYANMAR: Family reunification a priority in response to cyclone** 🏠: The devastation of cyclone Nargis on 2 and 3 May 2008 resulted in approximately 77 740 deaths, 56 000 missing, 2.5 million people affected, of which 40% are children. In response, the Myanmar Government has prioritised family based interim care within the existing community and family tracing and in early June announced a ban on adoptions of children affected by the cyclone. This announcement was made in the context of national laws prohibiting intercountry adoptions. For further information on ISS/IRC views on responses to emergency situations, see special edition on the “Tsunami” in the Monthly Review n°1/2005

Sources: Myanmar takes care of cyclone orphans, bans adoption [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2008-06/11/content\\_8348195.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2008-06/11/content_8348195.htm), US Department of State [http://www.travel.state.gov/family/adoption/country/country\\_3044.html](http://www.travel.state.gov/family/adoption/country/country_3044.html) and UNICEF EAPRO media centre [http://www.unicef.org/eapro/media\\_8511.html](http://www.unicef.org/eapro/media_8511.html)

**ZAMBIA: End of the suspension on the adoption of Zambian children by foreign parents** 🏠 On 15, May 2008, the Government of Zambia officially ended the suspension on the adoption of children by foreign parents. As a reminder, this suspension was effective since 22, December 2007. According to the information provided by the US State Department, the Ministry of Community Development and Social Welfare in Zambia has not announced its revised intercountry adoption procedures to date. ISS/IRC recommends waiting for the new regulations before initiating adoption procedures with this country. Furthermore, as mentioned in the Editorial of the Monthly review 5/2008, it is essential to support and encourage Zambia as other African countries, to ratify THC-1993 in order to offer better guarantees to the protection of the rights of children adopted in these countries and whose number is currently growing.

Sources: US Department of State Embassy of the United States in Zambia, [www.travel.state.gov/family/adoption/country/country\\_4251.html](http://www.travel.state.gov/family/adoption/country/country_4251.html); Ethica, [www.ethicanet.org/newslist.php?pagestyle=default#2008-06-13](http://www.ethicanet.org/newslist.php?pagestyle=default#2008-06-13); Editorial of the Monthly review n°5/2008, [www.iss-ssi.org/Resource\\_Centre/Tronc\\_DI/documents/Edito20085eng\\_001.pdf](http://www.iss-ssi.org/Resource_Centre/Tronc_DI/documents/Edito20085eng_001.pdf).

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## LEGISLATION

### **EUROPE: a new resolution relating to the abandonment of children** 🏠

*On 27 June 2008 the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe adopted a resolution that aims to prevent the first act of violence inflicted on children: abandonment at birth.*

**F**aced with the presumption that abandonment at birth still persists in certain States of Central and Eastern Europe, and even reappears in western Europe, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe adopted Resolution no. 1624 (2008), aims to encourage States to set up appropriate responses to this problem of abandonment.

After reaffirming its commitment to the deinstitutionalisation of abandoned children and to the priority to be given to alternative

family forms for taking the latter into care, the Assembly stressed the need to articulate family policies based upon respect for the rights of the child, particularly, the right to live in their family and know their origins.

Furthermore, it encourages the prevention of abandonment of children by means of better information about the possibilities of economic aid, medico-social accompaniment for future parents (particularly young couples, and those born to vulnerable groups) and the development of temporary accommodation for mothers and their children. In fully recognising

the rights of women to have legalised and simplified access to sexual rights and reproductive health services, this resolution has not failed to arouse sharp controversies among anti-abortion associations.

It should also be noted that the text consecrates considerable space to the protection of mothers and children amongst migrants exposed to the risks of abandonment. In this sense, it mitigates somewhat the provisions recently adopted by the European Parliament that were markedly detrimental to them.

Lastly, the Assembly recalls the obligation of States; to encourage mothers to make their

identity known; promotes compulsory free registration of children at birth; and transparency in the abandonment procedure for newborn children for domestic adoption purposes, and, as a last resort, inter-country adoption (a reasonable period of time for the mother to retract her consent, and for the father to gather his, etc).

Source: Resolution 1624 (2008), "Preventing the first form of violence against children: abandonment at birth",  
<http://assembly.coe.int/Mainf.asp?link=/Documents/AdoptedText/ta08/FRES1624.htm>.

## PRACTICE

### The global reduction of inter-country adoptions that started in 2005 and that has persisted in 2007

*The statistics likewise show changes among the countries of origin, an increase in their number and a trend towards an increase in the average age of adopted children.*

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Canada	1'866	1'874	1'926	2'180	1'955	1'871	1'535	N/A
Denmark	716	631	609	522	527	586	448	429
France	2'951	3'095	3'551	3'995	4'079	4'136	3'977	3'162
Italy	**3'115	1'797	2'225	2'772	3'402	2'874	3'188	3'420
Netherlands	1'193	1'122	1'130	1'154	1'307	1'185	816	N/A
Norway	589	713	747	714	706	582	448	426
Spain	3'062	3'428	3'625	3'951	5'541	5'423	***4'472	3'648
Sweden	981	1'044	1'107	1'046	1'109	1'083	879	800
Switzerland	610	543	558	722	658	452	455	394
USA*	17'718	19'237	20'099	21'616	22'884	22'728	20'679	19'613
<b>Total</b>	<b>32'801</b>	<b>33'484</b>	<b>35'577</b>	<b>38'672</b>	<b>42'168</b>	<b>40'920</b>	<b>36'897</b>	<b>N/A</b>

Sources: Citizenship and Immigration (Canada), Department of Family Affairs (Denmark), Mission for Inter-country Adoption (France), Committee for Inter-country Adoption (Italy), Dutch Ministry of Justice, Bufdir (Norway), Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (Spain), Swedish National Board for Inter-country Adoptions, MIA (Sweden), ), Federal Central Authority for Inter-country Adoptions (Switzerland), US Department of State (USA).

\* Tax years (from the month of October of the preceding calendar year to the month of September of the calendar year mentioned)

\*\* Data for the year 2000: ISTAT (Italian National Statistical Office)

\*\*\* Data for 2006: Secretariat of State for social, family and disabled services 18.07.07

The reduction in the volume of inter-country adoptions started between 2000 and 2005, persisting in 2007 for the great majority of countries. Thus while there was a reduction of 4% in 2006, France experienced a more

drastic drop in 2007 with 20% less inter-country adoptions than the previous year. Other countries also experienced a notable reduction: nearly 9% in Sweden, about 5% in Norway, etc. The United States also recorded a significant drop despite their numbers

continuing to be much higher than those of other countries. Thus in 2007, they recorded a total of 5% inter-country adoptions less than in 2006, when in that year they had already registered a reduction of 9% compared with 2005. Once again, only Italy has seen its total number of inter-country adoptions rise in 2007 with 232 adoptions more than in 2006; that is an increase of 7%. The causes of this general decline in inter-country adoptions remain similar to those in other years. They are explained in more detail in the Editorial of this bulletin, together with an analysis of other 2007 trends offered below.

### **Changes and greater diversity among the countries of origin**

As outlined in the Editorial, the African continent is more and more represented in the countries of origin. Ethiopia is, for example, becoming the leading country of origin for France, it was only the third in 2006 and the third for the United States, when it was only the fifth in 2006 and the seventh in 2005. Mali is also emerging in a significant manner and countries like Uganda, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Niger, South Africa and Gambia occupy a place of importance varying according to receiving countries. On the other hand, in Asia, China and Vietnam that still figured last year among the top countries of origin for numerous

receiving countries, have slipped back in the ratings.

### **Trend in children's age increasing at the time of their adoption**

Moreover, a trend in the average age of adopted children increasing seems to be emerging, even if statistics that have little to say on this subject suggest prudence. The available information shows, for example, that in Quebec, the average age of children at the time of their adoption was 33.6 months in 2007, when it was 29.2 months in 2006 and 22.4 in 2004. In France, more than 30% of the adopted children were less than a year old in 2006 and the following year they were no more than 23.7%. On the other hand, only 19% of the children were more than five years old at the moment of their adoption in 2006 while in 2007, they were more than 23%. In Spain, according to The Periodical "Adoption" - a publication of the Adoptantis information centre for preparation and support of adoption - the adoption of a child of less than three years of age and in good health, is becoming ever more difficult and requires longer waiting periods.

Furthermore, it would be interesting to receive data on the children's state of health at the time of their adoption, as well as the proportion of the siblings adopted.

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## INTERDISCIPLINARY RESOURCES

### **CHILE: an intervention Guide for the recovery and integration of children who are victims of abandonment and placed in alternative families**

*Among the documents prepared by SENAME\* for the realisation of programs to remedy situations where there has been a contravention of rights, the ISS/IRC wishes to draw attention to this guide addressed to professionals working with children in cases of abandonment.*

**T**he *intervention Guide for the recovery and integration of children who are victims of abandonment and placed in alternative families*<sup>1</sup>, recently adopted by SENAME, provides a set of guidelines for the different stages and themes that should be addressed during therapeutic involvement with institutionalised children who have suffered from abandonment and whose future envisages an alternative family, distinct from that of their origin. To succeed in bonding the

child with this substitute family, the Guide introduces a Recovery Process that is organised in two stages: the repair work itself to remedy the abandonment and the preparation for family integration.

#### **Recovery for victims of abandonment by returning to the child's past**

The recovery work is an entire process for the child, beginning with an awareness period and then with the integration of his life history. At this point it entails revising the latter so that the

child will succeed in connecting with and in understanding as far as possible the components of his past. For the child it means reconstituting the positive ties and giving new meaning to the more painful or traumatic experiences, on the condition the latter do not impede his current development.

In this context, it is very important to help children, particularly older children, to mourn for their biological family. On this subject the Guide refers to and adapts the work of J. Worden who has identified four "tasks" of experience in overcoming the loss of a loved one: accept the fact that the person is dead and will not come back (in the case of these children there is not necessarily any death, so accepting factual evidence is especially difficult), work through their emotions, the pain at the loss and its symptoms; adapt oneself to an environment where the loved one is missing and to reposition the absent person emotionally and carry on living. The Guide provides details on how to address each of these tasks.

**Recovery for victims of abandonment, due to the integration of the present and visualisation of the future**

In their recovery work therapists encounter not only the child's past but also his present, their actual reality. For this phase it is recommended to work with the child through drawings or photographs that represent his world, and from this base to tackle his emotions and expectations. Here it is hoped that a treatment of the child will include aspects of psychological support, like managing anger and anxiety etc. This analysis allows the therapist to get to know the child's personal resources and adaptation mechanisms.

The next step will consist of encouraging the child's projection into the future in such a way as to succeed in representing what he wants or hopes for from that future. In this phase, one should work not only with ideal or desirable concepts, but also with what the child is afraid of or rejects. It is recommended that techniques, like images, puppets or dolls that allow expression of these projections be used.


**Preparation of the child's integration into an alternative family**

The preparation, the second and last stage of the Recovery Integration Process aims at assisting the child to understand the meaning of his integration in a new family setting. Once

the professionals can be sure of counting on a family available to look after the child, the first task should be to work with the child on the possibility of this alternative. The images for the future worked on before, should be looked at again and on that basis help the child to express his feelings aroused by his insertion into a family. The professional should be attentive to the idealisation that the child might entertain and work with him on the way they display themselves.

Secondly, it is a question of the professional linking the feelings of the child with his substitute family before their first physical encounter. For this encounter, there should be the promotion of an exchange and interaction between both parties by written as well as audiovisual means, like photographs, letters etc. At this juncture, it is proposed that together with the child, the family work on his Life-Story book, which will serve as a means for telling his story that can in addition to text, contain trinkets, and souvenirs etc. In the end, one has to plan in fine detail the

family encounter. It should work on the child's fears generated by the proximity of this encounter so that he can live this moment in the best possible conditions, facilitating a good family integration.

<b>READING SUGGESTIONS</b>

<p><b>Los retos de la postadopción: balance y perspectivas (challenges of post adoption follow up: evaluation &amp; perspectives)</b>, Ana Berástegui and Blanca Gómez-Bengoechea, Publication Centre of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Spain, 2008. This book is the first Spanish publication that collects information which is diverse and concrete treating the theme of post adoption follow up. Like elsewhere, it valorises the diversity of disciplines and view points, as well as the territorial diversity which is notable in this complex domain. This work encourages deeper thought into the adaptation and integration of the adopted child and his family and offers a series of tools based on various surveys and professional experiences. Amongst the numerous questions addressed, is the integration of the adopted child in the education system, the influence of the social image of immigration in the adaptation of adopted children, post adoption follow up in special cases etc.</p>

The preparation of the substitute family will also influence the success of this encounter. The latter will have to be prepared to face this moment and assume its role with assurance in a way that transmits to the child the confidence needed in this new stage of his life.

\*National service for minors.

<sup>1</sup> Available at the following address:

<http://www.sename.cl/wsename/licitaciones/p4-2008/anexo1.pdf>

## **Cultivating the child's bond or how to be an adoptive parent gardener**

*Johanne Lemieux, the Quebecker social worker specialising in inter-country adoption, developed this theme at a conference given in July for adoptive parents and the staff of a number of Swiss Central Authorities for adoption.*

**W**eaving, a bond between a child and his parents whether they be biological or adoptive is a matter of survival for the child. Thanks to this invisible link that replaces the umbilical cord, parents can understand their child and respond to his needs. For the child's part, he acquires the capacity to enter into a relationship with others. This link exists when the child entrusts completely his survival and development to his parents. In fact, the bond is not synonymous with love, but rather is targeted towards a relationship of confidence and security that the child establishes with his parents. If this link does not exist or has been broken, for example by abandonment, the child instinctively develops his own means of survival, the latter can be harmful for him. This link unfortunately is not automatic: even in biological families, everything needs to be built.

How does one set about cultivating a bond? Johanne Lemieux, the Quebecker social worker specialising in inter-country adoption, proposes tools and a method to achieve this bond. She presented them last July to professionals and Swiss adoptive parents at a conference, in which the ISS/IRC team attended.

### **Evaluating the child's capacity to bond**

Since it's a question of an adoptive relationship, parents must first of all evaluate the child's capacity to enter into such a relationship with others. In other words, according to Johanne Lemieux, it's up to the parents to grasp what stage of construction, that is "operational model of internal security" the child finds himself in. Does he still have room to weave a link with his parents or is this space completely invaded by mechanisms of survival that he has developed? In the latter case, the adoptive parents have to "reprogram"

their child to allow him to improve his operational model of internal security.

### **How to develop a bond**

The Quebecker compares the child with a young plant that has just bloomed and his parents are the gardeners responsible for nurturing it. Between them, there is the garden, a shared intermediary where they can construct a secured link. Each parent contributes a number of important resources, needs and "antipersonnel mines" that epitomise the tests of their life that are hard to overcome and hidden in the core of their being. These mines render the weaving of the bond more complex. The child for his part brings needs by the dozen, but also resources. Different from the biological child, the adopted child brings his own mines, (abandonment, neglect, abuse...). The role of adoptive parents is to welcome them no matter how they are. To do that, they must be even better gardeners than the biological parents. Certainly, they do not have to expect to no longer have any mines, but it is important that they are aware of the latter and that they have at their disposal more resources than mines to be able to be sound parents.

### **The seasons for bonding**

Depending upon their past, the children arrive in their adoptive family with more or less mines and a predisposition more or less favourable to bonding. In this framework, Johanne Lemieux speaks about the seasons for bonding and proposes the following classifications of adopted children:

- The Spring Children (10 to 15% of adoptees): these children grow up without major problems. They are generally born on time and in good health. They have



benefited from individual care and have been adopted at a young age.

- The Summer Children (about 40% of the adopted): these children experience a number of bonding difficulties, in the wake of painful and/or numerous separations. After a year of care and appropriate attention, they are capable of accepting that an adult can be reliable and they go on to develop well.
- The Autumn Children (about 40% of adoptees): These children present development and behavioural difficulties. When their adoptive parents find an adequate means of caring for them, these children can develop well even if they have constantly tested woven bond. It is, therefore, important that the adoptive parents be younger, so they have sufficient energy to take up the challenge.
- The Winter Children (10 to 15% of adoptees): These children present a development problem and suffer from a severe bonding handicap. Without external professional aid the parents will not be able to manage their relationship with the child and to accompany him in his development.

In this context, Johanne Lemieux insists upon the importance of rapidly asking for help from the professionals as soon as the child's troubles arise. As part of her other fundamental pieces of advice for adoptive parents, she considers it indispensable to be constantly present with the child during his first year of arrival.

#### **How to check that the child is well bonded**

To verify the child is well bonded to his adoptive parents, Johanne Lemieux gives several indicators including: the child allows people to look him in the eye; allows himself to be consoled and touched; is able to understand that his mother still exists even when she isn't there; understands that his parent knows things that he does not know, and that he is there to protect him. Thus, a good signal of the child's bonding is when he takes refuge in the arms of his parents in the presence of strangers.

These factors together make it possible to check that the parents and the child have become one in the world and irreplaceable one from the other.

For more information: [www.meanomadis.com](http://www.meanomadis.com)

## CHILE: Creating a system of alternative care provision for children, that is uniform and centred upon the family.

*The regional application of policies and national strategies for the protection of children has enabled the country to significantly reduce the institutionalisation of children.*

The system of child protection in Chile has improved considerably in recent years. The direction that the country has taken largely matches the standards promoted by the UN Guidelines for the usage and appropriate conditions for providing alternative care for children, particularly with the choice regarding the most appropriate means of care chosen and the political–legal and financial framework in which it is registered.

### A joint political, legislative and financial framework

In concrete terms, Chile has chosen to centralise decisions in matters of policy and strategies for child protection within SENAME (National Service for Minors) so as to set up a framework for a unified protection for the whole national territory. Thus SENAME is in charge of elaborating government policy

for child protection and the standards for applying it. It is also responsible for the supervision of the system. The application of

decisions is regional and undertaken by the recently set up local offices endowed with qualified staff for the protection of the rights of children.

These structures constitute new openings for children in the child protection system, in addition to the already existing legal procedures.

Their direct intervention with children and families is supplemented by the activities of civil society, whose role is also important. Chile has allocated part of its public budget to developing this system of protection for children. This funding is completed by

the contributions from the private sector. At the legislative level, and along the lines of the International Convention on the Rights of

### The principles of Guidelines for the framework of child care and determining the most appropriate means

The Guidelines invite States to gather the following elements for setting up their alternative care framework:

- Gather adequate legislative, political and financial conditions that give priority to family and community solutions.
- Envisage the availability of a wide range of suitable options for providing alternative care for emergency situations and those that are short and long term.
- All persons involved in providing care and those in authority should be subject to supervision and inspection by a competent authority.
- Guarantee that competent authorities are informed of informal placements and that they are provided with the necessary support as well as regular supervision of the child's welfare.

Furthermore, the Guidelines propose various standards for determining the most appropriate form of care provided, particularly:

- Elaboration of legal and administrative procedure based on a process of evaluation, planning and rigorous review as well the structures and mechanisms established, in order to enable a multidisciplinary team of qualified professionals to succeed in making case by case decisions in the shortest amount of time.
- Use this evaluation report as a rapid planning tool for making decisions so as to prevent, in particular, contradictory steps and interruptions of the process.
- Plan permanent care provision based, among other things, on the nature and the quality of the child's bonding with his family, and clearly indicating the aims of the placement and the means to achieve them.
- Guarantee information and the participation of various actors involved in respecting the special needs, the convictions and the wishes of the child.
- Envisage a thorough and regular review - preferably at least every three months - of the suitable nature of the treatment and care that the child is receiving.

*For more information, consult the ISS/IRC Fact Sheets for training at the following address:*

<http://www.iss-ssi.org/Resource Centre/Tronc DI/tronc di fic.html>

the Child, the country has armed itself with a series of laws dedicated to protecting the rights of the child, of which it would be prudent to unify in the future for greater legibility.

### **A mixed palette of child care options**

Measures for alternative ways of caring for children deprived of their family, proposed by the Chilean system vary greatly. They extend from placement in specialised institutions to family placement, and various complimentary programmes centred upon the family, notably the strengthening of the family of origin. Furthermore, in accordance with international standards for alternative child care, keeping the child or reintegrating him in his family of origin is given priority by SENAME. In the event such an option proves to be impossible, placement in the extended family is preferred to an adoption placement, and a permanent placement in a family kind of institution only occurs as a last resort.

### **Promising results for keeping the child in a family environment**

The search for the best option for each child on this palette and setting up this protective system for children throughout the territory, have made it possible to reduce the institutionalisation of children and their separation from their family of origin. Thus in 1990, 62% of children followed up by

SENAME were in institutions, compared with 2005 when there were no more than 26.3 %. In the same year, there were 73.3%, benefiting from the one of the complimentary programmes centred on the family, while there were only 38% in 1990. Furthermore, the total number of children profiting from protection has increased. There were 67,746 in 2005, whereas there were only 52,566 in 2000, making one think that less and less children are excluded from the protection system. Moreover, Chile has improved its programme of foster families in developing standards for setting them up. Amongst the breakthroughs in this field, the extended family is henceforth, recognised as a foster family and as such receives the necessary aid for providing child care.

These results bear witness to the Chile's significant progress in implementing the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and particularly the child's right to be brought up in a family environment.

For more information: SENAME, [www.sename.cl/](http://www.sename.cl/).

*The ISS/IRC would like to thank Matilda Luna, who is responsible for projects within the RELAF (Network of Latin America for placement in foster families) for her valuable contribution to this article. Contact : [matildeluna@relaf.org](mailto:matildeluna@relaf.org).*

## FORTHCOMING CONFERENCES, SEMINARS, SYMPOSIA AND COURSES

- **Brazil:** *II Congresso Internacional do Instituto Brasileiro de Direito de Família. Afeto e Estruturas Familiares (II International Congress from the Brazilian Institute of Family Law. Affection and family structures)*, IBDFAM, 15 -17 October 2008, Cuiabá. This conference will explore current realities faced by new family arrangements and the importance of bonding, superimposing in this manner the blood relationship. Some of the issues that will be discussed include: shared custody by law; intercountry adoption, models of family, anonymous childbirth. For further information: Instituto Brasileiro de Direito de Família (Brazilian Institute of Family Law), [www.ibdfam.org.br](http://www.ibdfam.org.br).
- **France :** a) *Construire une relation avec un enfant qui n'est pas le sien*, Association Pikler Lóczy, 6-7 October and 17-18 November 2008, Lyon. For further information: Association Pikler Lóczy de France. Website: [www.pikler.fr](http://www.pikler.fr), email: [pikler-loczy@wanadoo.fr](mailto:pikler-loczy@wanadoo.fr). b) *Législation et procédures de l'adoption interne et internationale, en France (Legislation and Procedures regarding domestic and international adoption in France)*, COPEs, 6-10 October, Paris. The conference will discuss child adoptability, interests of the child in the intra-family, national and intercountry adoption, the cost of adoption, access to origins and other issues regarding procedures. The conference will be led by Christelle Gosme-Le Vacon, Psychologist as well as other specialists. For further Information: COPEs; Tel: +33 (0)1 53 68 93 40; E-mail: [copeseformation@wanadoo.fr](mailto:copeseformation@wanadoo.fr); <http://www.lecopes.org>.
- **Scotland:** *Using the attachment style interview in adoption and fostering*, Aberlour Trust, 24-26 September and 7 November 2008, Edinburgh. This training involves a 4-day intensive course with the use of attachment style interview to assess the attachment style of adults in terms of secure and insecure styles, the quality of a couple's marital relationship and patterns of support and relating. The training aims to help the staff to plan how to implement and integrate the use of the attachment style interview either in adoption and fostering, kinship care or child care context. For further information: [www.childandfamilytraining.org.uk](http://www.childandfamilytraining.org.uk)
- **United Kingdom:** a) *Family health legacy. Ethical dilemmas in promoting health for children separated from their genetic roots*, BAAF, 6 October 2008, London. The aims of the conference are to consider the scientific basis and ethics of DNA testing for ethnicity, to explore mental health outcomes in light of the latest research on nature and nurture, to examine the impact on children and families when important family information is lacking and to consider the ethics and approaches to sharing family health information through case studies. For further information: [www.baaf.org.uk](http://www.baaf.org.uk) b) *Achieving permanence in foster care*, BAAF, 29 October 2008. The conference explores different pathways that children take when local authorities make a plan for permanence in foster care; provides a framework for recruiting, approving and supporting foster carers when placements are planned to be permanent; gives insights into how foster carers experience the challenges and rewards of offering permanent family life to children etc. For further information: [www.baaf.org.uk](http://www.baaf.org.uk)
- **United States of America:** *5<sup>th</sup> Biennial Adoption Conference. Identity and the Adopted Teen: Surviving the Crucible of Adolescence*, St. John's University in collaboration with Montclair State University, Rutgers University and NYU, 24-25 October, New York. This conference will explore the challenges regarding the identity formation in adopted adolescents. The issues that will be covered include identity questions in the context of his/her adoption experience, challenges faced by adopted adolescents and their development struggles. For further information: Adoption initiative, <http://www.adoptioninitiative.org/Conferences/Conferences.html>

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*See Activities.*

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