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EDITORIAL

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

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

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

Investing in the training of professionals

The need to allocate human and financial resources to this issue has been reiterated many times, in particular by the Committee on the Rights on the Child. It is therefore incumbent on institutions, NGOs and governments to support the ongoing training of their staff. Governmental and non-governmental child protection services often do not benefit from adequate support in the training of their professionals – a situation that has even become worse since the 2008

economic crisis. It is also to be deplored that private donors remain little inclined to financially support projects that include an important component of training, as the impact of the latter is difficult to 'measure'.

However, some inexpensive alternatives enable professionals to share experiences and to remain informed. Involvement in national, regional and international networks is an efficient way of facilitating the sharing of knowledge, practices and tools, whilst also enabling the capitalisation of experiences. Amongst the international and regional networks that are specialised in issues relating to children without a family and alternative care, the Better Care Network (BCN), Family for Every Child, Child Rights Connect or RELAF¹ may be mentioned, as well as online newsletters such as those of BCN, CRIN or Terre des hommes Child Protection in Europe².

The call of ISS

Through its mandate, the ISS intends to facilitate the dissemination of information and to promote exchanges among professionals and organisations. The ISS acts at various levels, which all complement each other, and allow to inform, share, disseminate and promote good practices and tools by supporting professionals worldwide. Indeed, the latest projects undertaken respond to



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specific needs in terms of dissemination of knowledge and good practices, in particular through the project *A better future is possible for children living with disabilities in institutions*³, which offers trainings, has developed specific tools (a handbook for professionals working for children with disabilities in institutions and a lifebook for children⁴), and promotes the sharing of good practices amongst entities. Through the development and dissemination of various handbooks in cooperation with other partner organisations and/or international groups of experts, who are specialised in this issue, such as *Moving Forward: Implementing the 'Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children'*⁵ and *Resolving family conflicts : A Guide to international family mediation*⁶, the ISS intends to develop the implementation of good practices internationally, in order to ensure the respect for the rights of children. In addition to these specific projects, the ISS has developed an expertise in several fields (mediation, intercountry adoption, children without parental care, children with disabilities in institutions, etc), and offers simultaneously

information (Monthly Review) and research services as well as in-country practice assessments relating to child protection systems, alternative care policies or intercountry adoption procedures.

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

The ISS/IRC team,
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