



Monthly Review

published by the International Reference Center for the Rights of Children Deprived of their Family-ISS

N° 202

MAY - JUNE 2016

EDITORIAL

The thousand and one facets of communication as keys to unlock the mysteries of adoption and its unspoken aspects?

When communication, in its most varied manifestations, is used for the benefit of adoption issues, a multitude of paths open up expressing the deeper meaning of adoption beyond words and numbers, and help to make the unspoken evident, as this can be a source of much suffering.

Let us not forget: 80% of communication allowing people to connect takes place in the non-verbal sphere, the unspoken. Thus, the ISS/IRC invites you to explore the intention that lies hidden behind the unspoken. From the political world, to the art world, through to the most personal realms of family life, let us immerse ourselves again in the endless mysteries of adoption, this time from the perspective of communication.

Transparency in the face of the unspoken

To put transparency and politics side by side is not without irony: nevertheless, it is an ideal that we must never stop fighting for especially when the lives of children and families are affected by these decisions. The political dimension and the hidden agendas in adoption are multiple and sometimes far removed from the needs and rights of children. The absence of real efforts to speak openly about the challenges to be met and the mistakes made in the past bear witnesses to this. Each of us, as defenders of the rights of the child, need to continue our advocacy work in order to reclaim transparency and accountability from all the stakeholders in adoption. Let us not be shy in addressing sensitive issues, such as adoption breakdowns or even illegal adoptions, so that mistakes are not repeated (see p. 3). Let us also continue to work with governments so that decisions regarding the initiation of cooperation in intercountry adoption or even, for

example, the imposition of a moratorium, are based on the interests of children, and are properly planned and communicated in a transparent manner (see p. 3). Communication in adoption begins when an intention of abandonment exists and in the process of informing, assisting and supporting the birth parents, whatever their choice. Complete knowledge, together with all traces of the first decisive stages, are essential to ensure transparency in the adoptive family and facilitate communication in the future.

More knowledge to avoid fewer unspoken issues

Communication is surely the basis of all good relationships, communication that is honest and respectful of each other's personal experiences. Achieving this knowledge is necessary as a prerequisite: knowledge for the adoptive parents concerning the pre-adoptive experience of their child, knowledge for the professionals supporting the adoptive family about the specifics of adoption, knowledge of the child's environment, particularly school, and the implications of the adoption in this area of the child's life. Having this knowledge available is a first step, and it then remains to know how to convey this knowledge in an appropriate manner. Thus, it is necessary to counsel (see p. 13) and equip parents and teachers thanks to the development of handbooks (see p. 8) or guidelines (see p. 5) so that even the most sensitive and complex

subjects, such as abandonment, neglect and abuse, can be addressed in confidence. This also applies to questions of origins at a time when new technologies proliferate (see Monthly Review N° 173 of June 2013); parents must take the lead, to the best of their abilities, and support their children on this journey (see p. 10).

Are words sufficient in explaining the unspoken issues of adoption?

Are words alone capable of expressing the deep meaning and shared perception of adoption among adoptees? Do they alone have the strength to release these unspoken words buried inside which erupt without warning? To convey authentically their own experience, to free themselves of internal sufferings and injuries, and to articulate what these are, some adoptees have demonstrated their considerable artistic talent. Writers, musicians, graphic designers, film makers, there is no shortage of artists in the

world of adoption, as illustrated in the publication mentioned on p. 11. This path, which is also proposed by some post-adoptive support and counselling services for adoptees and their families (see Monthly Review N° 06-07/2010 of June-July 2010), is undoubtedly an incredible richness and opens up endless fields of communication and self expression.

Exploring the world of adoption is an endless journey during the course of which transparency, knowledge and creativity are major assets in coping with the unspoken, and sometimes the unknown. Let us listen to adoptees speaking, singing, shouting, rejecting or expressing satisfaction with their adoption; whichever way they express this to us shows us the way forward.

The ISS/IRC team
June 2016

