Founded in 1994, the International Bureau for Children’s Rights is an international non-governmental organisation that has consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC).

Our team of 20 professionals and highly qualified interns is based in Montreal. Together, they provide technical expertise to individuals who interact with children in a professional capacity in Quebec, Canada, and more than 15 other countries, especially in Africa and the Middle East, but also in Latin America and Asia. By supporting local partners who work directly with children, the Bureau actively contributes to changing work practices and behaviours to make them more effective in protecting minors.

Guided by the vision of a world in which children’s rights are fully respected and implemented, the Bureau aims to help promote and protect these rights by remaining faithful to its defining values: professionalism, thoroughness, and the desire to achieve a lasting impact. Wherever it operates, the Bureau tailors its activities to local realities and the needs of its partners. It seeks to recognise and promote local knowledge systems and encourage the participation of children themselves.

The Bureau is a centre of technical expertise designed to build capacity among those who work directly with children, including social workers, representatives of security forces, officials in the judicial system, civil society groups, organisations in the formal and informal private sectors and decision-makers, to help them devise practices consistent with respect for children’s rights. The Bureau supports efforts by its partners to introduce structural reforms leading to professional practices informed by greater respect for the rights of children. This support takes many forms:

- **Enhancing the expertise** of actors in the child protection system by incorporating an integrated and sustainable approach into the national curricula of specialised training centres (schools for magistrates, police and military academies, schools of social work, and so on);
- **Conducting evaluations, comparative analyses and research** focusing primarily on the promising efforts made by front-line actors who deal with major issues concerning children;
- **Providing training to trainers** seeking certification and enabling them to become proficient in andragogy as a learning process;
- **Providing technical support** for legal and procedural reforms concerning children;
- **Participatory design of child-friendly skill-building kits**;
- **Producing tools to monitor and enforce** the application of the Convention on the Rights of the Child;
- **Developing constructive ways** of promoting and building institutional support for children’s rights;
- **Supporting the building of coalitions and strategic networks** involving governments and/or civil society organisations with a view to equipping change agents with ideas, techniques and documentation that will enhance their ability to promote and protect the rights of children.
The Bureau's objective is to provide high-calibre technical support to the parties responsible for safeguarding and promoting the rights of children throughout the world.

Through its activities, the Bureau seeks to foster change in the practices of governments and public agencies as well as international and civil society organisations, enabling them to fully play their role as professionals within the national child protection system.

The Bureau's approach to bringing about the desired changes consists of three types of complementary activities: supporting, building and influencing. The Bureau develops initiatives that have an immediate impact on the attitudes and behaviours of those who work directly with children. It forges partnerships and strategic alliances to create enduring structural change, nationally, regionally and globally. For example, with the help of educational institutions devoted to training child-work professionals, the Bureau is developing course material on the rights of children to be integrated into the curriculum. By sharing promising practices and lessons learned and by disseminating a variety of publications, the Bureau and its partners raise awareness and exercise influence among decision-makers and stakeholders — especially governments, public agencies, international organisations and civil society groups — about how to achieve better protection for the rights of the child.

The Bureau's programming strategy for 2015-2020 consists in consolidating the areas in which it has established itself over the years as a credible point of reference. It also involves innovating on the basis of careful attention to emerging phenomena affecting children's enjoyment of their rights.

Thus, the Bureau intends to continue to emphasising and sharing with partners the expertise it has acquired in recent years in the following areas: children and armed conflict, children and the justice system, and the fight against the sexual exploitation of children.

In order to adapt to changing circumstances, the Bureau also intends to broaden its understanding of certain issues and environments, including the impact that natural disasters caused by climate change and population movements have on children, child trafficking, opposition to early and forced marriages, corporate responsibility towards children, and the empowerment of girls in society.
Children and emergency situations

The goal of the IBCR's humanitarian programme is to protect the rights of children in cases of man-made crises, especially armed conflict, and in the event of natural disasters, particularly those related to climate change. Of special concern to the Bureau is the fate of children in situations of armed conflict, whether they are internally displaced or refugees.

The commercial sexual exploitation of children

The IBCR's programme to combat all forms of violence and exploitation involving children targets various types of abuses to which children are subjected in their communities, school environments, and even in illegal commercial transactions. The Bureau works with its partners to combat sexual exploitation, child pornography, child trafficking, sex tourism and early and forced marriage. The Bureau strives to prevent these forms of exploitation and to help governments, public institutions, the formal and informal private sector and local communities to take responsibility for addressing the problem of sexual exploitation and give a voice to the children who are its actual or potential victims.

Children and the justice system

The aim of this IBCR programme is to help defend the rights of children in the criminal and civil justice systems and to ensure that their best interests are served both during proceedings and afterwards, when judgments that may affect them are rendered. The IBCR conducts in-depth multidisciplinary analyses of juvenile justice systems and makes concrete recommendations in keeping with states' commitments to child protection.

The centrepiece of this programme is an international cooperation initiative funded by the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development (DFATD) to be implemented from 2015 to 2020, in concert with Lawyers Without Borders Canada in five regions: Central America (Honduras, Guatemala, Costa Rica), the Caribbean (Haiti, Jamaica), the Andes (Colombia, Peru, Bolivia), West Africa (Ivory Coast) and North Africa (Tunisia, Morocco). More than 200 Canadians will be deployed to partner organisations working in the area of human rights to enhance the protection of the rights of children, women, and poor and marginalised communities. They will also work to strengthen democracy and the rule of law by promoting access to justice.

Children and the economy

In recent years, the Bureau has developed informed expertise regarding the impact of economic activity on children. The Bureau plays a constructive role by helping the private sector be attentive to the rights of children when developing corporate social responsibility strategies and by helping governments take their commitments to children's rights into account when planning budgets. This innovative positioning enables the IBCR to develop new partnerships and engage in new types of activities.

Empowering girls

The Bureau plans to work with and for girls, not only to protect them from potential dangers, but also and above all to emphasise the central importance of girls' personal development and raise awareness of their contribution to social progress. The gender-specific approach in the field of children’s rights is often limited to specific questions, such as access to education and prevention of sexual violence. The Bureau seeks to broaden the scope of activity and underscore the contribution of girls to the struggle for full respect of the rights of the child.
THE CHILD PROTECTION SYSTEM

All children grow up within some type of child protection system. This is true throughout the world, in both rich and poor communities, urban and rural areas, peaceful regions and those affected by armed conflict. It is true of communities that are aging and communities that are multietnich. It is true where communities are connected to the internet or where they benefit from few public services. This system is made up of girls and boys, men and women, all of whom have a role to play in creating a protective environment for children. The diagram below illustrates how the child protection system is based above all on children themselves and takes into account their capacity for development, their point of view, their potential, their strengths and also their weaknesses. The concentric circles nearest the child typically encompass the people who are closest to and most trusted by the child and have a major role in his development. The further away we move from the child, the more multilateral the scope of action becomes. Responsibility for protecting children never recedes. Indeed, the fourth circle, for example, highlights the vital role played by civil servants, parliamentarians, heads of state, and decision-makers more broadly. They must ensure that laws and policies concerning the rights of the child are consistent with applicable international standards so that services are tailored to children’s needs, so that the views of the primary stakeholders are reflected in decision-making processes, and so that a social framework is created in which it is normal for attitudes, behaviours and practices to be informed by respect for children’s rights.
The Bureau’s geographic and linguistic flexibility is a major asset. The Bureau’s staff operates in French, English, Arabic and Spanish, producing tools and organising activities in those languages. Because the Bureau’s expertise can be tailored to a variety of situations, it is not restricted to operating in countries where it is already well-known due to a long-standing presence. The Bureau can tailor its approach to the specific needs of whichever region requests its services.
These are the IBCR’s activities, strategies, approaches and resources.

### Strategies and Approaches

**How do we operate?**

Our **human rights-based** approach treats children, and particularly those who are most vulnerable, not as beneficiaries with needs to be met but as full citizens whose rights should be respected. Based on the concept of empowerment, this approach also makes it possible to determine the obligations of governments and institutions that are responsible for taking action at the legislative, political and local levels.

With respect to **gender equality and development**, our approach aims at an equitable sharing of power between women and men. Through our activities, the IBCR fosters recognition of equality between boys and girls and men and women and promotes participation of girls and women in the socio-economic and cultural development of the community.

Our **sustainability** strategy is based on building capacity among our partners. We develop our activities on a participatory basis in conjunction with local partners and we strive to integrate capacity-building processes within established educational frameworks, with national trainers capable of teaching courses in a self-sustaining manner.

By communicating our priorities to key stakeholders in our milieu, we ensure that our activities are **coordinated and complementary**. This integrated approach allows us to maximise our effectiveness and develop new alliances.

Based on results-driven management and quality control, our **tracking-evaluation-learning-accountability** strategy enables us to highlight the impact of our work and showcase our methods and programmes. By identifying best practices and lessons learned, the IBCR has been developing a systematic approach to the learning process and to our operating procedures that capitalises on the expertise we have acquired over the last 20 years. Sharing information about our experiences in our many publications allows us to strengthen the IBCR’s credibility and influence with partners, donors, governments and, ultimately, with children.
To carry out its work and ensure the continuity of its operations, the Bureau opts for a participatory approach that makes building expertise among partners in developing countries a priority. With a sound methodology, professionalism and proven ability, the Bureau can adapt its capacity-building know-how in the field of child protection to many different situations.

To exercise influence and help bring about long-term structural change, the Bureau builds strategic alliances, takes part in major events, and participates in a variety of networks. This makes it possible to play a meaningful role in organisations and associations concerned with issues related to the Bureau’s mission.

These strategic alliances include:

- Child Protection Working Group
- The Code
- NGO Panel for a Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty
- International Child Protection Network Canada (ICPNC)
- Taskforce to End Sexual Exploitation of Children in Travel and Tourism
- Child Rights Connect Network
- Canadian Coalition for the Rights of Children
- CPC (Child Protection in Crisis) Learning Network
- Canadian Council for International Cooperation
- ECPAT international
- Better Care Network
- Latin American and Caribbean Network on Protection of Children and Adolescents (REDLAMYC)
- International Juvenile Justice Observatory
- The Child Welfare League of Canada (CWLC)

Resources

Our staff is our best asset. We employ experts and interns directly involved in executing our programmes. The IBCR team has the credibility and expertise needed to build sustainable relationships with our partners and to consolidate our reputation for meeting the challenges we face. Bureau employees include professionals with graduate and post-graduate degrees in various fields, such as anthropology, humanitarian assistance, criminology, law, economics, and political science. In addition to French, the Bureau’s other working languages include English, Arabic, Spanish and Portuguese. On average, the Bureau’s programme team staff members have more than eight years of experience in the field of development and humanitarian assistance. Our multilingual interns are recent graduates from the best Canadian and foreign universities.

In 2014, the IBCR revenues stood at CA$2.5 million, having grown steadily for two years.

The Bureau projects annual revenues of more than CA$5 million by 2020, which will enable us to continue to deliver high quality work and achieve our objectives. This growth is based on diversification of funding sources combined with a strategy to communicate effectively, network and participate in major events with a view to increasing the IBCR’s visibility. It is also based on a tracking-evaluation-learning strategy to make donors aware of the calibre of the IBCR’s work. Thematic and geographic diversification will also expand funding opportunities.