Acknowledgments

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Chartered Accountants

Note: The Financial Statements and Notes to the Financial Statements are prepared in accordance with the International Bureau for Children’s Rights.
For a number of years now, members of the International Bureau for Children’s Rights (IBCR) have applied all their knowledge and expertise to help children fully enjoy the rights they have been given. I think one of today’s greatest tragedies is the abuse of children and young people. All over the world—even in an egalitarian and progressive country like ours—society’s most vulnerable citizens are not always protected from negligence and violence. It is our duty to shelter them from all forms of abuse. We need more dialogue between experts and policy makers, and between young people and those working to help them. There is no doubt in my mind that this situation is urgent. The IBCR and its partners play a significant role in improving the quality of life of children and young people here in Canada and abroad. Their research in this area is invaluable and helps shed light on the nature of a problem to which concrete solutions must be found. Through their efforts, they give hope to those most in need and enable them to realize their dreams.

I would like to recognize the will and commitment of the women and men who work tirelessly to stop all forms of violence against young people. They are true champions and I am proud of their accomplishments.

Michaëlle Jean
2007
Message from the Director General

This report contains information on IBCR’s activities and key achievements for the period from April 2, 2006 to March 31, 2007.

To begin with, IBCR’s 2006-2007 efforts on the reporting and analysis of the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in the national level produced not one but two publications, with Country Profiles on selected countries of South East Asia and on countries of North Africa, respectively. See page 10 for more details.

Following last year’s adoption of the Guidelines on Justice in Matters Involving Child Victims and Witnesses of Crime by the United Nations (ECOSOC resolution 2005/28), IBCR focused its efforts on raising awareness about this new instrument and on developing tools in order to provide technical assistance to Members States in the implementation of the Guidelines. Members of the IBCR team took part in various UN Experts Group Meetings, including one which resulted in the formulation of recommendations on criminal justice responses to violence against children and in ensuring that the Guidelines were integrated into the final report of the UN Study on Violence Against Children. Please see page 7 for more on our activities and results pertaining to the protection of child victims and witnesses of crime.

In 2006-2007 saw the completion of the first phase of IBCR’s vigorous research project entitled Strategic Action Plan for the Protection of Victims of Child Trafficking in Quebec. As explained on page 9, our team of experts and professionals conducted an empirical study on the phenomena in Canada and particularly in Quebec. The results of this study gave rise to a series of recommendations which in turn will form the foundation of IBCR’s action plan in response to child trafficking.

In addition to these activities, the reader will find information on the mission and objectives of the IBCR, financial contributions from some of our professionals, interns and board members, and finally, a summary of IBCR’s financial results for the year.

I would like to thank the IBCR’s Board of Directors for their support and advice and to express our gratitude to the donors. In particular the religious congregations of Quebec and Canada for their unwavering support. We are also thankful to the governments of Canada and Sweden for their support of our projects. Finally, special thanks to the 40+ dedicated interns and volunteers for so generously contributing their knowledge and time to the IBCR and the cause.

Jean-François Noël
Director General
Without you the Bureau wouldn’t be what it is. You are all contributing on your own level, according to your expertise and availability. You are all key figures in the Bureau’s activities as well as an integral part of its future.

Guillaume Landry, Program Manager in Charge of the Country Profiles program, since 2006

“I joined IBCR in September after spending many years overseas. I often have to travel to Africa to meet with our partners all over the world. I also have to travel to Ottawa to participate in meetings. There are 3 to 4 international workshops, meetings with me at IBCR. Without their energy and contributions it would be impossible to do what we do.”

Mélanie Gagnon, Associate Researcher for the Trafficking Program, since 2005

“The Bureau defines the same values that are dear to me, and that is the major reason why I decided to become involved as a volunteer. My work involves research on various projects. I enjoy my work here at the Bureau, and as a psychologist, it gives me a more objective stake in my daily work with children.”

Dominique LaRochelle, volunteer for the trafficking program since autumn 2006

“I try and help out the team whenever they need me. Personally I feel it is essential to me that the rights of children are respected, that their needs are met and that the Canadian population is aware of this serious increasing problem. In my own way, I help the Bureau to do the work that the employees, interns and volunteers that make up the Bureau do.”

Nawel Smoua, Intern for the Country Profiles program, from February to May 2007

“I first got involved here at the Bureau while working on the study of Children’s Rights in North Africa and they appreciated my ability to speak Arabic.”

Nikolai Friman, IBCR Board Member, Vice-president - fundraising (international)

“My collaboration with IBCR started in 2002 as a member of the steering committee for the guidelines on child victims. I joined IBCR and the Board of Directors and the Treasurer, and try to attend to all the meetings. I helped in the search for new offices and I act as the liaison between the Bureau and the religious community.”

Louise Gayet, Volunteer - Community Relations Coordinator, since 1999

“I originally started with the Bureau as a volunteer, and in 2001 I was able to convince IBCR to work with a group of volunteers made up of professionals that would work directly on respecting the rights of unaccompanied children arriving at our border. They are now on the project on fighting against trafficking of children. Thank you!”

Sister Sheila Sullivan, IBCR Board Member and Treasurer, since 2002

“Defending the rights of children is part of our heritage and an important part of our values as society. Since 2003, religious communities around the world have come together to fight against the trafficking of women and children. The Bureau helps us, it promotes our values. I am a member of the IBCR Board of Directors and the Treasurer, and try to attend to all the meetings. I helped in the search for new offices and I act as the liaison between the Bureau and the religious community.”

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The research paper

In 2006, the International Bureau for Children's Rights (IBCR) conducted a descriptive study on child trafficking in Quebec. This study is part of an action research that aims to develop a better understanding of child trafficking and improve the efficiency of intervention practices.

The project began by collecting data on current knowledge regarding children who are victims of trafficking and on the preventive, protective, reintegrative and prosecution measures. Then, concerned parties at the local, regional and provincial levels were given the opportunity to share information about their practices and experiences as well as express their concerns and needs.

This study on child trafficking is the first to address the situation in Quebec, and to identify the needs of its victims. Furthermore, a multidisciplinary committee of experts was formed to assist the research team and to systematically assess the work that has been done. This committee forms a link with people and groups concerned with different aspects of child trafficking in Quebec, and it provides valuable support by guiding the project through subsequent steps and making sure the information that is collected is relevant.

The principal results

The analysis of results highlights the varying degrees of awareness and knowledge concerning human trafficking, as well as the absence of a common definition of the phenomenon. The actors we met relied on the importance of raising awareness on human trafficking for the general public, as well as for both governmental and non-governmental actors that may encounter cases of trafficking through an effective public educational campaign.

Professionals that intervene directly with child victims of trafficking or children who are at risk must be well-informed. Those respondents admitted not being aware of the case-relevant to the trafficking in persons denoting the definition of trafficking, the laws and possible resources, as well as the parameters governing stakeholders’ work.

The use of a common definition of human trafficking which is relevant to the realities of the Quebec and Canadian context will permit a better understanding between stakeholders, as well as facilitate the identification of victims and the gathering of more accurate data on this phenomenon.

Despite the absence of accurate statistics, the persons consulted believed that the phenomenon of trafficking is expanding. In order to truly understand the gravity of the problem, it is necessary to gather more accurate data regarding child trafficking.

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The phenomenon of child trafficking is described as a clandestine problem that is difficult to detect, even for a professional that is well informed on the subject. Several respondents expressed their need for further support in order to create and maintain partnerships against child trafficking. In order to ensure the protection of victims and to minimise the risks of retrafficking, the cooperation between different partnerships is essential. Better systems of information exchange should be developed in order to intervene and to ensure an appropriate follow-up of victims of trafficking, while ensuring the respect of their right to confidentiality.

Prospects for the future

Following the results obtained, recommendations relating to the fighting against child trafficking in Quebec were proposed. In the intent to validate them, this fall we organised focus groups and gathered written comments and suggestions.

During the spring 2007, IBCR will issue recommendations addressed to the federal interdepartmental group on trafficking in persons and the Quebec interdepartmental group on trafficking in migrant women.

In the next months, IBCR will circulate information relating to child trafficking in Quebec to stakeholders and develop a training programme. Additionally, IBCR will encourage partnerships between governmental and non-governmental agencies. For example, IBCR will create and coordinate a working group composed of one or more government representatives whose mandate will be to find specific solutions to ensure better protection of child victims of trafficking.

IBCR's recommendations will serve as the foundation of an action plan that will be elaborated and implemented in close collaboration with its partners in the course of 2007.

The project on separated children

Since IBCR published in 2003 the Best Practice Statement on Separated Children in Canada, it has been presented to the concerned federal and provincial authorities to sensitize them to the situation of separated children.

This year, IBCR and other non-governmental organizations participate actively on the advisory committee to study questions concerning separated children, created by the Department of Citizenship and Immigration of Canada. The committee addresses different subjects such as family reunification, appointment of a legal guardian and guidelines for immigration officers or board members.

IBCR contributes to maintaining separated children’s rights at the center of the preoccupations of governmental and non-governmental actors.
Analysing the status of the implementing the CRC between countries of a same region

The programme on Country Profiles on the Status of the Implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) is one of the core IBCR activities. It involves analysing and reporting on the status of implementation of the CRC and its Optional Protocols. The overall objective is to fill the disparities in monitoring children's rights at the national and regional level, and facilitate the implementation of the CRC and its Optional Protocols globally by providing governments with successful international practices that could be implemented in their respective countries. The programme particularly aims at identifying the research and verification techniques piloted in the first report on South-East Asia, while also increasing the participation of local stakeholders in drafting the report and disseminating the findings. In order to validate the preliminary results of the IBCR's in-house research and analysis, IBCR sent its Programme Manager to some of the selected countries on a short-short in rotation. Moreover IBCR's country profiles are now based on the Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child. An important part of the programme is to create a comparative analysis and enhance knowledge of the situation of children's rights at both national and regional levels, highlighting achievements, variations and remaining challenges particular to a regional ensemble.

Focusing on South-East Asia and North Africa

In July 2006, with funding from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), IBCR published its first regional report on South-East Asia, “Making Children’s Rights Work: Country Profiles on Cambodia, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Timor-Leste and Viet Nam”. The launch of this report was the result of six years of efforts in documenting the experience of South-East Asian countries in implementing the CRC and its Optional Protocols. So far, the report has attracted much interest on the part of Canadian agencies as well as international partners worldwide.

Introducing a Regional Analysis

A new feature in this second publication is the inclusion of a regional analysis. Indeed, lessons learned from the first regional report on South-East Asia as well as consultations with local stakeholders indicated the need for a regional perspective and analysis of the situation of children's rights in order to facilitate understanding and hand-holding of good practices between countries. This second regional report on North Africa therefore introduces a chapter at the end of the report to compare accomplishments and remaining challenges in the promotion and protection of children’s rights in Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia. IBCR’s country profiles team used the same research and verification techniques piloted in the first report on South-East Asia, while also increasing the participation of local stakeholders in drafting the report and disseminating the findings. With the help of the Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child. The study was the result of the collaboration of the Programme Manager, panellists and the local stakeholders involved in the process, including government officials, civil society representatives, and researchers.

Accomplishments and challenges in North Africa

The report on North Africa highlights that there have been significant accomplishments in these countries, particularly in the area of national legislation reform to ensure compatibility with the CRC and the promotion and protection of children’s rights. The report also outlines remaining challenges such as poverty, discrimination, and lack of access to education and health care. The report also underlines that there has been little progress in creating at country level an independent institution to monitor compliance with the CRC’s principles, and in creating a change of attitudes, including cultural and traditional practices for ensuring the full respect of children's rights.

Overall, the report shows that there have been some advances in the area of child protection but far more rigorous actions are needed to address factors that impede progress, including negative social attitudes, stigma, discrimination, taboos, and cultural and traditional practices and beliefs. The enforcement of some of the new laws that protect children’s rights is also a significant challenge, according to the study. The report notes that since the publication of the first report, children's rights have gained greater attention in all five States, with a particular focus on children's rights in national agendas, although the level of commitment may vary. This commitment, combined with a heightened awareness of children's rights, both within government and civil society, is a good foundation for progress in the effective implementation of the CRC through further legislative reforms and the enrolment of laws adopted. Further and better policies and programmes that specifically target the realisation of children's rights, and most importantly, an increased allocation of resources to address the remaining challenges identified.

Based on the findings of the study, IBCR concludes that the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in the five North African countries is still work in progress with some challenges ahead that require further and more vigorous actions in some areas and also an enhanced partnership with civil society and the children themselves.

Perspectives

In order to facilitate the dissemination and cross-referencing between actors of the five examined countries in North Africa, IBCR has undertaken the translation of the report in Arabic. It is hoped that this version will be launched in the region in the next year to ensure greater impact.

In the meantime, IBCR continue seeking partners and funding in order to accelerate the pace of the implementation of the programme covering other regions of the world, with a particular interest on the remaining countries of Africa. Ultimately, the programme aims at covering all the countries which have ratified the CRC and presenting a global country-based analysis of the situation of children's rights along the benchmarks of the CRC.