



Governor General

A Message from Her Excellency the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean, Governor General of Canada and Patron of the International Bureau for Children's Rights (IBCR)



For many years now, members of the International Bureau for Children's Rights (IBCR) have applied their knowledge and expertise to help children fully enjoy all of their rights.

I believe 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 realise their dreams.

I would like to recognise 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
2009

The President

Message from the President



The Bureau continues to grow and is now 14 years old.

It has become a thriving adolescent. It hasn't forgotten its parents (Andrée Ruffo and Bernard Kouchner), but has become autonomous. It still needs to gain in weight and size in order to fully flourish, but you just need to give it time. It's already quite mature. It has stabilised itself thanks to both the current and the previous Director Generals: Nadja Pollaert and Jean-François Noël. Its permanent team, assisted by a number of interns, is extremely efficient and has recently won new "deals" (such as the African Great Lakes project and the Middle Eastern project) which can only reinforce the Bureau's credibility on an international scale. It will win other deals in the future.

I would like to thank and congratulate everyone: employees, volunteers, administrators and, of course, individual donors and public funds partners without whom nothing could be achieved. The Bureau has maintained its ideal: to consider the child – in law and in fact – as both a subject and actor of fundamental human rights, but also as a beneficiary of specific laws (such as the right not to be separated from their parents, for example in the case of foreign isolated minors who come to affluent countries) or reinforced rights (having access to medical care or education).

Today, the lot of children all over the world living in precarious – if not unacceptable – situations is cause for concern, to say the least, and can only get worse in the current economic crisis. If the rich complain about losing significant amounts, the poor could easily lose everything – not much as it were. Without a doubt, we will more than ever find abandoned children, exploited children, children being traded, children not being given access to the medical care or education that they deserve. Moreover, new conflicts amongst communities or countries, linked to the impoverishment of resources, are to be expected. Human relationships will become more complicated as people's priority becomes survival. Welfare budgets, both public and private, will be restricted and will not be able to meet all our needs.

In every country and on a global scale, a new model emerged little by little, accepting disparities – which are inevitable – but respecting a common order which gave a minimum of advantages to everyone. In this context, the battle in favour of fundamental human rights scored points. The risk is plain to see: an "All Bad" philosophy which legitimises a "to each his own" attitude, an increase in violent attitudes which justify State violence or domestic violence; and as a consequence, a regression of rights and freedom.

Explosions (individual violence linked to psychological collapse, collective violence, or even armed conflicts) are to be expected.

In this context more than ever, the Bureau has a role to play alongside all of those who refuse this decline in the light of the achievements of the latter half of the 20th century.

Paris, April 2009

Jean Pierre Rosenczveig
IBCR President
President of the *Bobigny's Children Tribunal* (France)

International Bureau for Children's Rights

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Table of contents

- 2 A Message from Her Excellency the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean
- 3 A Message from the President
- The Board of Directors 2008-2009
- 4 A Message from the Director General
- 2008-2009 Team
- 5 Mission and Objectives
- 6 2008-2009 Highlights
- 8 The IBCR and you...
- 9 2008-2009 Report
- 10 Country Profiles
- 11 Country Profiles in the African Great Lakes region
- 12 Children in Armed Conflict Programme
- 13 Child Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation of Children
- 14 Child Sex Tourism
- 15 Child Victims and Witnesses of Crime
- 16 Revenues and Expenses
- Acknowledgements

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We would like to extend our sincere appreciation to Mr Patrick Hagarty (KMPG) for his support and his commitment to the Bureau throughout the year.

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The Director General

Message from the Director General



This past year, we have spread our wings and thus consolidated the Country Profiles programme and the battle against Child Trafficking.

From the start, our ambition has been to make the publishing of Country Profiles about the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child our first step.

Indeed, in order to turn children's rights into a reality, this publication is the basis for the development of a global plan of action featuring governmental and non-governmental players as well as children. This year's partnership with the Save the Children organisation (Sweden) will at last enable us to go further, by involving and making children participate, thus supporting field organisations in North Africa and the Middle East in

their work for the defence of children's rights. We will therefore be present in 17 countries for over three years!

Our expertise concerning Child Trafficking in Quebec and Canada has driven us to develop a training course for grass-root organisations in order to help them better identify potential victims or youngsters who are already being exploited. The objective for next year is to transpose and adapt this knowledge on an international scale.

At the time of my accession to office, the team and I decided that the Bureau's priority would be placed on the implementation of Article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, in other words "1. States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child". I am very proud to confirm that we were able to put this principle into practice and that all our activities take into account the child's right to participate.

During the next financial year we will be celebrating the 20th anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child by the UN. In 2009, we will still have to face many challenges in order to ensure that children's rights are taken into account and respected at home and abroad.

The present report paints a brief picture of the activities and accomplishments of the IBCR from April 1st 2008 to March 31st 2009.

Besides information on these activities, readers will find further details on the IBCR's mission and objectives in this report, as well as personal accounts of contributions from several members of its team, whether staff members, interns, or members of the Board of Directors. As usual, the reader will also find a financial summary for 2008-2009.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to the members of our Board of Directors for their support and ever-informative advice, our financial partners for their confidence in our activities, and particularly the religious communities of Quebec and Canada for their unwavering support. The IBCR would also like to thank the Canadian and Swedish governments for their support of our projects. Last but not least, I would like to express my gratitude to the Bureau's team for its professionalism and quality work and particularly the dozens of interns and volunteers throughout the 2008-2009 year who generously contributed their knowledge, expertise and time to the Bureau and the cause it defends.

Nadja Pollaert

Nadja Pollaert
Director General, International Bureau of Children's Rights

Mission and objectives

Mission

The International Bureau for Children's Rights (IBCR) is an international non-governmental organisation established in 1994 by Judge Andrée Ruffo (Canada) and Mr. Bernard Kouchner (France). It is based in Montreal, Canada.

The Bureau's primary mission is to **promote and protect the rights of the child** in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and its Optional Protocols, while taking into account the objectives set by the international community concerning children's rights, notably the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Objectives

The IBCR exists because today ...

... children are *victims of trafficking* for the purposes of *sexual exploitation, forced labour and organ trafficking*

In spite of some achievements in the fight against human trafficking, many children from all parts of the world are still victims of this criminal industry. By compiling data on the phenomenon and by developing tools to better equip those who work to eradicate this issue, the Bureau contributes to the protection of children from trafficking, in Canada and beyond.

... children are *victims of sex tourism*

According to UNICEF's most recent figures, an estimated 300 million children are victims of violence, exploitation and abuse. The tourism industry employs 8% of the global labour market and generates more money than any other industry in the global economy.

In 2006, this industry generated two billion American dollars per day. The launching of this new programme against child sex tourism falls within the scope of the IBCR's mission.

... children are *victims and witnesses of crime*

Millions of children throughout the world must confront the judicial system, often to testify for a crime they endured or witnessed. The rights of these children must be respected. Special guidelines should be followed when seeking testimony from child victims or witnesses of crime, as these children have specific rights and require special protection.

... children are *affected by armed conflict*

Hundreds of thousands of boys and girls on every continent are forced to endure the repercussions of armed conflict. The Bureau coordinates joint actions of Canadian civil society and the Canadian government to improve politics and programmes designed to uphold the rights of children in armed conflict.

Plan of Action

Information

In response to these challenges, the IBCR works to ensure that the rights of these children remain at the centre of the agenda in both governmental and non-governmental organisations.

To this end, the Bureau compiles key information to develop effective prevention and intervention strategies.

The IBCR is convinced that sharing knowledge and good practices, as well as developing strategic partnerships, will have a positive impact on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Research and Expertise

IBCR brings to the table...

- Experience creating models and tools for the monitoring and implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in different countries;
- An ability to establish coalitions to address strategic questions and to share knowledge and good practices;
- Legal and analytical expertise in the area of children's rights recognised by various organisations and by local, national and international partners;
- Methodological rigour in human rights research, a professional approach and a committed, multidisciplinary team.

2008-2009 Highlights...



From the 17th to the 22nd of March 2009, the Programme Director was invited to Colombia by the Canadian Embassy in Bogota, where he gave a series of speeches on the role of civil society in discussing matters with governments on the topics of children's rights.

On the 12th and 13th of March 2009, the Director General took part in the **2nd Consular Table of the Canadian Ministry of Foreign Affairs on parental kidnapping**.

On the 9th of March 2009, the Programme Manager on children in armed conflict participated in a panel organised together with Amnesty Canada – French section – in order to mark the **International Women's Day**. The Bureau gave a speech about associations working in the African Great Lakes region promoting girls' rights.

On the 3rd and 4th of March 2009, the IBCR took part in a preparatory meeting for the **2nd meeting of the States Parties of the Organisation of American states on Human Trafficking in America and the Caribbean**.

On the 27th and 28th of February 2009, the **Canadian Coalition of Children's Rights Conference** was held. The Bureau was part of the Organising Committee and ran a workshop during a conference on the refugee and/or immigrant child's best interests (Toronto, Canada).

On the 19th of February 2009, the Programme Manager on children in armed conflict led conferences for young people from secondary school during the **7th Annual Conference on Global Questions**, which took place at Carleton University (Ottawa, Canada).

From the 22nd to the 25th of February 2009, the IBCR took part in the first meeting with strategic partners in Beirut (Lebanon), within the framework of the children's rights project in the MENA region alongside *Save the Children* Sweden.

On the 30th of January 2009, the Bureau led a course entitled "International Law and vulnerable populations, childhood international law" in the Law department of the *Université du Québec à Montréal* (UQAM, Montreal, Quebec).

On the 5th of January 2009, Rouba Al-Salem joined the Bureau as head of the MENA project, followed by Natalie Doyle, who, after having concluded her contract for the African Great Lakes region, was hired as Programme Manager for war-affected children.

In January 2009, the IBCR published its third regional report, in French, on children's rights in the African Great Lakes region "**Making Children's Rights Work in the African Great Lakes region: Country Profiles of Burundi, the Republic of the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda**".

From the 25th to the 28th of November 2008, the **3rd World Congress against Sexual Exploitation of children and adolescents** was held. The Bureau gave a presentation on the Guidelines Project in partnership with *UNODC Brazil*.

On the 20th of November 2008, the IBCR celebrated Universal Children's Day with *Via le Monde* and *UNICEF Quebec*, alongside hundreds of children (6 to 12 years old) sharing their ideas on children's rights.

On the 19th of November 2008, the Bureau led a course entitled "Children in Armed Conflict: the media's view" in the Geography department of the UQAM (Montreal, Canada).

From the 8th to the 18th of November 2008, the 2nd identification mission for the MENA project took place in Tunisia and Morocco.

On the 7th and 8th of November 2008, the IBCR took part in the **Conference on children's rights within the framework of the International Conference on family law** organised by the *Association internationale francophone des intervenants auprès des familles séparées and the Fédération des associations de juristes d'expression française de common law inc.*

On the 6th of November 2008, the Bureau led a course entitled "Children in Armed Conflict: a hope of development" in an International Development course at University of Ottawa (Canada).

On the 6th of November 2008, the IBCR participated in the *Soirée des veilleurs* (Night Watch) on the topic of respect of children's rights (Christian Action for the abolition of Torture).

On the 25th of October 2008, the Bureau took part in a Forum on the issues at stake for people having endured trafficking (*Association des aides familiales du Québec*).

On the 22nd of October 2008, the IBCR participated in the launching of *Unanima International*'s campaign "Put a stop to woman and child trafficking".

From the 13th to the 28th of October 2008, the Programme Director travelled to Jordan, Lebanon and Egypt within the framework of the first of two missions, together with *Save the Children* Sweden, in order to identify potential partners for the MENA project.

From the 14th to the 18th of October 2008, the International *Institut des droits de l'enfant -IDE-*seminar (Sion, Switzerland): "Child Victims and Witnesses. A Question of Justice... and Rights" was held. The Bureau presented the Guidelines and had the honour of being elected non-governmental organisation of the month (October) at the IDE.

From the 1st to the 3rd of October 2008, the international conference and training course "Put an end to violence in the judicial system for minors: from words to action", organised by the *Défense des enfants international* (DEI), was held. The IBCR's Director General led a workshop on the UN's directives for Child Victims and Witnesses (Brussels, Belgium).

On the 25th and 26th of September 2008, the Bureau was part of the Organising Committee for the thematic consultation on *Companies' Social Responsibility and the Role of the Private Sector in the Battle Against Sexual Exploitation of Children for Trading Purposes* (Winnipeg, Canada) in preparation for the 3rd World Congress (Rio, Brazil).

On the 15th of September 2008, an agreement was signed between the *Agence suédoise de Développement international* and *Save the Children* Sweden so as to launch a three and a half year project in order to reinforce civil society organisations for children's rights in the 17 countries of the MENA region. The Bureau is a key partner in the implementation of this project. The Programme Director then went to Beirut (Lebanon) in order to start the project and work on a draft agreement between *Save the Children* Sweden and the IBCR.

In September 2008, two representatives of the Bureau went on a field trip for four weeks to Burundi, the Republic of the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda, in order to collect information and meet with partners for the publication of Country Profiles for these four countries.

In July 2008, the IBCR once again acted as a coordinator for the **Forum on Children in Armed Conflict**, under the aegis of *Paix Durable* (Ottawa, Canada).

Late June 2008, Natalie Doyle joined the Bureau as a consultant on the African Great Lakes region project.

On the 19th of June 2008, the Bureau participated in the **29th International Programme in human rights training courses** (*Equitas*).

On the 3rd of June 2008, the IBCR launched its "Tool Box for the protection of children victims of trafficking or likely to become one".

On the 22nd of May 2008, the Bureau took part in a competition for young people of Quebec alongside the *Éducaloi* organisation (Montreal) and *UNICEF Quebec* in order to commemorate the **20th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child**.

On the 16th of May 2008, the IBCR signed a project jointly with the *Organisation internationale de la Francophonie* so as to lay out a series of Country Profiles in the African Great Lakes region.

On the 14th of May 2008, following the previous years' tradition, the Bureau gave two classes on Children in Armed Conflict during the **UN's Peace Missions** seminar organised by the *United Nations Institute For Training and Research (UNITAR)* and the UQAM (Montréal, Canada).

On the 4th of May 2008, the Bureau participated in an event entitled "**On the refugees' tracks**" (UQAM, Montréal, Canada).

On the 24th and 25th of April 2008, the IBCR organised, in collaboration with the *Agence canadienne de Développement international*, a training course in French on minimal norms on matters of education in emergency situations (Montreal, Canada).

On the 22nd of April 2008, the Programme Director participated in an information exchange session organised by the *Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Commerce* on the topic of the **38th General Assembly on the Organisation of the American States** as well as the **5th Summit of the Americas** (Ottawa, Canada).

On the 10th of April 2008, the Bureau took part in the Canadian conference "Slavery in the 21st century: Human Trafficking Temple Coalition", organised in order to heighten young people's awareness of sexual exploitation for trading purposes (Montreal, Canada).

On the 2nd of April 2008, the Bureau participated in a conference "Trafficking of People in Canada: reality and challenges", organised by the *Groupe d'étude et de recherche sur la sécurité internationale de Université de Montréal* (Montreal, Canada).

IBCR *and you...*

Without them, the Bureau would not be what it is. Here are the testimonies of some of the individuals essential to the Bureau's success ...



Ambassador Moushira Khattab, Vice President of the IBCR Board of directors - Secretary General of the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood (Egypt) and Member of the

Committee on the Rights of the Child

"The IBCR contributes greatly towards global efforts to implement the rights of the Child, with at least two major accomplishments: The "UN Guidelines on Justice Matters relating to Child Victims and Witnesses to Crime" and its series of country profiles. The Committee on the Rights of the Child systematically recommends to all States that they use the Guidelines. I am proud to be part of the team of the IBCR. I will spare no effort to contribute to its mission".



Benoit Van Keirsbilck, DEI-Belgium, Young People's Rights' department

"The International Bureau for Children's Rights is in fact a small structure, somewhat atypical compared to the various other international

NGO's working on children's rights, but it has shown a true ability to lead important projects, ambitious both in their achievement and the objectives they imply. One must not forget that if the Guidelines on Child Victims and Witnesses were adopted by the ECOSOC, it is mainly thanks to the IBCR's hard work.

Therefore, Jean-Pierre Rosenczveig considers, and justifiably so, that the IBCR fathered this project. Today, the IBCR once again faces a considerable challenge: to draw up country profiles concerning children's rights, representing true pictures of the implementation of these fundamental questions in each country. These country profiles are a first-class source of information for anyone wishing to learn more about the state of a country through the prism of children's fundamental rights.

Let's hope the IBCR will keep forging ahead and thus contribute, modestly but with determination, towards making children's rights a reality".



Natalie Doyle, Programme Manager and part of the IBCR team since June 2008

"In the context of the Country Profiles programme, I had the opportunity to travel to Rwanda, Burundi, and Congo to meet local

and international partners that work on children's issues. The objective of our study was to examine the implementation of the CRC in the African Great Lakes region. Our work focused on positive advances rather than only on the problems and challenges, which is a unique approach and a strength in the IBCR's work. With the help of numerous interns and the management, our hard work culminated in the publication of a thorough report on the situation of children in the region, which was disseminated to local partners, international media and international organisations. It was professionally engaging and also taught me a thing or two about myself".



Pauline Anger-Bourez, intern for the training project on Child Trafficking, from January to June 2009

"My internship at the International Bureau for Children's Rights enabled me to contribute to numerous

actions for the Bureau and discover an interesting work environment.

Working on the Child Trafficking Programme, I mainly participated in the elaboration of a training course for professionals in Quebec. This task notably enabled me to discover how the Canadian – and more precisely the Quebec – system works, as well as to meet numerous professionals working on the protection of children and children's rights.

I also had the privilege of attending events and conferences as well as taking part in activities organised to develop awareness in children, professionals and the general population.

This work experience was extremely fulfilling and made me want to pursue my commitment to the defence and protection of children's rights and gave me hope of a better world for children".

2008-2009 REPORT

Country profiles



Guillaume Landry
Programme Director

Country Profiles Programme

Making a difference

The programme on Country Profiles is one of the core activities of the International Bureau for Children's Rights (IBCR). Its main objective is to analyse and report on the status of the implementation of

the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and its Optional Protocols, thereby contributing to filling the gaps in the United Nations monitoring system in the implementation of the CRC. The second objective of this programme is to promote the exchange of commendable practices and to contribute to the monitoring system, complementing the work of the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

Published in the form of Country Profiles, our analysis focuses on the progress that has been made, on innovative programmes and remaining challenges on a national and regional scale. Furthermore, this regional perspective allows us to showcase progress made in all the countries studied while accounting for common obstacles to overcome. These profiles are also used to nurture the dialogue between decision-makers in the studied countries in order to help States integrate a variety of conclusions and fully implement the CRC.

Ideas of solutions to share: Country Profiles in the African Great Lakes region

There are numerous reports denouncing the violation of children's rights in French-speaking countries of the African Great Lakes region and justifiably so: the situation children find themselves in in these countries is extremely worrying and abuse is common. But the Bureau has a new and unique approach in this region. The IBCR is conscious of the fact that several reports have already stated the problems in these countries and has felt the need to contribute by focusing on their advances and therefore show the various actions led by those who specialise in childhood issues, such as governments, local civil societies or international organisations, in order to make children's rights work in this region. The Bureau is convinced of the importance of highlighting these practices in order to motivate and inspire people to take action in favour of a greater respect of children's rights, through

public politics as well as non-governmental programmes. This new approach is based on the idea that comparisons can be very useful when done between countries presenting a certain number of similarities, on a cultural, historical, economic and social level. Therefore, a regional comparative approach, on a small scale, between very different countries with common interests and challenges, seemed to us the best solution for any hope of change.

In May 2008, the IBCR signed an agreement with the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie in order to undertake a new children's rights monitoring project in central Africa, aimed at measuring progress made and at promoting good practices in Burundi, Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda.

Support civil society in order to make children's rights work in the Middle-East and North Africa (The MENA Project)

These past few years, the IBCR has adapted its approach in order to pass on its expertise and increase its collaboration with partners from the targeted region, thus trying to encourage them to not only produce their own Country Profiles and detailed regional surveys in an autonomous way, but also use these results to take action in favour of the complete implementation of the CRC in their country and region. This approach is based on the principle according to which civil society organisations can and must play a key role in the protection and promotion of human rights and particularly those of children. This approach implies covering more countries of a same region on a long-term basis, enabling us to strengthen relations with partners and follow their implication in the long run.

Following this approach, the IBCR has been working since September 2007 with the NGO Save the Children Sweden (SCS) Bureau for the MENA region on a project proposal aimed at 17 countries in the region. During the following months, the IBCR and SCS developed a joint vision which led, on the 15th of September, to the signature of a framework agreement with the Swedish Agency for International Development in order to back up the project over three and a half years for an amount of 3.2 million US dollars.

Country Profiles in the African Great Lakes region



Natalie Doyle
Programme Manager

In June 2008, Natalie Doyle joined the Bureau as a consultant on the African Great Lakes region project. With the help of numerous devoted and competent interns, Natalie first started to consolidate the profile drafts that had been developed using literature on children's situation in

Burundi, Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda.

In September 2008, Guillaume Landry and Natalie Doyle traveled to the African Great Lakes region to meet with local and international civil society representatives, ministries and local and international organisations to explain the project. The involvement of these bodies was essential to the project's success, as they would be able to use the report in their future work and spread its results. This mission's objective was also to develop, check and update the information used for the profile drafts of these four countries.

Finally, a consultation with children was organised in each country in order to hear their point of view on the promotion and protection of children's rights.



Back in Montreal, the Country Profile Programme team completed the four countries' profiles by integrating all the information that had been collected. The final result was then sent out to the bodies they had met in Africa in order for them to add their final inputs and corrections.

Several of them gave clarifications and complementary information that enabled the team to enrich the contents of the report.

At last, once in possession of qualitative and quantitative information, the regional comparative analysis was integrated in the publication as the 5th chapter. This survey underlined the positive actions that give us hope for the future of children's rights, each country having its own strong point.

For example, the DRC promulgated, in early 2009, a law on child protection which offers a complete legal framework on child protection, thus enacting one of the most important advances in legislative terms in the region. Thanks to this law, acts of violence against children are severely sanctioned. It is also the first law in this region to officially ban the use of physical punishment at school.

In Rwanda, national politics on matters of child vulnerability and orphans as well as the Nkundabana ("I love children") programme particularly attracted our attention. These initiatives aim at setting up a support system enabling children to elect a member of their community to become a "big brother or sister" to them and thus support them and defend their best interests.

In Congo, a bill for native communities protection is eagerly awaited. Indeed, in an effort to set right the situation of these people, often victims of discrimination, the Congolese government, together with civil society, reflected on this issue, leading to the implementation of a bill on native communities' promotion and protection. This law will be the first in the region to specifically protect native communities' rights and has to be considered a major initiative, as it will enable native children to have special protection.

Finally, the adoption by the government of Burundi in November 2008 of Penal Code reforms concerning children's rights' protection is an initiative that needs to be mentioned. Thanks to these reforms the penal age of majority has gone from 13 to 15, sentences against minors have been lightened and sentences against people having committed sexual assaults on children have been reinforced. These reforms also offer a definition of rape in accordance to international norms. Moreover, the death sentence has also been abolished.

There is, however, a persisting challenge: implementing adopted laws and policies in order to promote and protect children's rights. Therefore, the IBCR plans to organise a restitution seminar in the African Great Lakes region.

Whilst an increasing attention is brought to governmental and political reforms in the MENA region and the importance of "right-friendly" approaches is gradually recognised – in theory at least – civil society's role concerning the fight against poverty, development help efficiency and the promotion and protection of human rights is particularly followed. In this region, the role that civil society organisations play in the promotion of children's rights is both vast and varied. Therefore, critical and independent perspectives for civil societies concerning the respect and implementation of the CRC are essential. These organisations can also play a big part in public awareness of the contents and mechanism of the CRC, as well as defending and pressurising pertinent leaders so that they take adequate measures to ensure that the CRC's norms are respected both in law and in practice.

The project's main objective is that regional and national politics, strategies and legislation in accordance with the CRC should be developed and implemented in the MENA region. The project will assist and consolidate civil society and NGO's existing networks' expertise and will focus on the following four components:

- (1) The production of surveys and reports on children's rights
- (2) The constitution of a network between various actors involved in the sector
- (3) Advocacy in favour of children's rights and the application of the CRC
- (4) The programming, based on children's rights, in the work of those implicated in human rights and development in the MENA region issues

Between September 2008 and March 2009, the IBCR and SCS prepared the project, fine-tuned the plan of action, consulted regional bodies and selected partners. In January 2009, Rouba Al-Salem joined the Bureau's team as head of the project. After having gone to Lebanon in September 2008 in order to coordinate the launching of the project with SCS, the Bureau took part in several partner identification and consulting missions in Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt, Tunisia and Morocco during fall 2008. The preliminary period of this project culminated in a strategic meeting in Beirut, Lebanon, at the end of February 2009, where the four strategic partners identified during the field missions – ALEF (Lebanon), Bayti (Morocco), Mizan (Jordan) and Naba'a (Lebanon) – joined the IBCR and SCS teams to finalise and comment on the plan of action and objectives.

The report that closes the preliminary period was therefore submitted to the Swedish Agency for International Development at the beginning of last March.

At the time of the drawing up of this report, we were still awaiting a decision from the Swedish Agency for International Development concerning the next steps of the project.



Children in Armed Conflict Programme

The IBCR : Coordinator of the Canadian Forum on Children in Armed Conflict

Since September 2007, the IBCR has held the role of coordinator of the Forum on Children in Armed Conflict and co-chairs the Forum's meetings with Canadian governmental representatives. The Forum is a reunion of Canadian civil society's main actors. Its objective is to promote strategies and politics in order to make progress on Children in Armed Conflict issues, both in Canada and elsewhere.

The first term of this financial year brought doubts concerning the Forum's future. Indeed, the Durable Peace network, which oversees and finances the Forum's activities, was not able to obtain a permanent financing from the Canadian government. After numerous efforts from Canadian civil society to try and prove to the Canadian government how important it is to support the Durable Peace network – and therefore the Forum on Children in Armed Conflict – the Canadian Agency for International Development decided, on the 15th of July 2008, to grant over 800 000 Canadian dollars for the next three years on a the basis of a decrease each year.

Thanks to this support, Durable Peace was then able to renew its trust and satisfaction in the Bureau's work as coordinator of the Canadian Forum on Children in Armed Conflict. This framework agreement also enabled the Forum to increase its capacities in terms of coordination, which led to the appointment of Natalie Doyle, who joined the IBCR team on the 5th of January 2009 as Programme Manager for Children in Armed Conflict. Natalie's mandate for the IBCR is therefore to back the Forum's Coordination and develop initiatives concerning children in armed conflict.

Promote the application of the Optional Protocol on Children in Armed Conflict



Moreover, during the past year, the Bureau took part in several conferences on children in armed conflict matters. For example, in May 2008, the Programme Director participated once again in the UN Seminar on Peace Missions organised by the United Nations Institute for Training and Research and the *Université du Québec à Montréal* (UQAM), by giving two lectures on children in armed conflict matters to the 40 students enrolled in the programme. Furthermore, the Bureau is currently in discussion with the Peace Operations Training Institute in the hope of signing a partnership deal in order to produce a complete training unit on children in armed conflict for the purpose of civil and military personnel about to join world peace maintenance.

Therefore, various initiatives are being studied in order to relaunch publications concerning norms and laws applicable to children in armed conflict and widen knowledge in various sectors, including that of girls in armed conflict.

Child trafficking and sexual exploitation of children



Me Catherine Gauvreau
Programme Manager

During 2008-2009, the IBCR developed, with the help of the Status of Women Canada's women promotion programme, a training course on child trafficking destined for community helpers working with young people concerned by, or implicated in, human trafficking.

In the framework of the *La traite des jeunes, une forme de violence qui existe chez nous* programme, the IBCR aims at countering child trafficking by contributing to the protection of young girls in their environment:

- (1) By training front line workers joining young people at risk or concerned by, or implicated in, human trafficking;
- (2) By making the general population aware of trafficking issues and increasing the participation of young people at risk;
- (3) By passing on our knowledge in the hope of contributing to a decrease in the number of young people concerned by, or implicated in, human trafficking.

A training course that answers the needs of the community

From mid-May to mid-August 2008, the IBCR consulted 20 community organisations in order to learn more about their expectations concerning the form and contents of the training course.

They work, among others, with young people from the First Nations, from cultural communities, sexual minorities, runaways, or young victims of assault, etc.

The IBCR consults young people

The IBCR has led awareness activities on child trafficking in Quebec for secondary school pupils. This has enabled us to collect commentaries about the elaboration of tools and actions destined to young people at risk or concerned by, or implicated in, human trafficking.

The IBCR shares its expertise

On a national scale...

The IBCR carried out appearances in the media and took part in two documentaries in order to create public awareness of child exploitation and more specifically child trafficking in Canada. It has held several seminars on children's rights, separated children and child trafficking in Quebec and Canada.

On an international scale...

On the 3rd and 4th of March 2009, the IBCR took part in a preliminary meeting for the second States Parties meeting of the American States Organisation for human trafficking in America and the Caribbean. In the course of the discussion, we were able to present the different advances and challenges concerning human trafficking in Canada. The NGO representatives that were present – including the IBCR – then formulated recommendations relating to (1) prosecution, (2) administration of justice, (3) international cooperation and institutional reinforcement, (4) prevention, (5) victim protection and assistance. These recommendations were presented to government representatives that were present at the meeting in Buenos Aires that took place from the 25th to the 27th of March 2009.

Directions for 2009-2010 ...

The expertise gained by the Bureau to counter child trafficking will express itself in the training courses that should be held in September 2009.



Child Sex Tourism



Me Nalini Vaddapalli
Programme Manager

With the expertise acquired thanks to the child trafficking programme, in 2008 the Bureau chose to continue contributing to the battle against all kinds of child exploitation by identifying child sex tourism as an increasing phenomenon affecting a greater number of regions around the world. The year 2008 in

Canada was marked by new cases of indictments and convictions of Canadian citizens having sexually exploited children during a trip to foreign parts.

Several factors have contributed to the expansion of child sex tourism, but the emergence of information and communication technologies as well as the increase in the number of travellers and migrants are the two main ones. These crimes, as well as being – for the most part – committed by tourists, are also more and more frequently committed by young people. This worrying fact can be explained by the abundance of low-cost trips and the easy access, via the Internet, to local networks that enrich themselves through child exploitation. We must keep in mind that the tourism industry employs 8% of the global labour market and generates more money than any other industry in the world's economy. In 2006 this industry generated two billion American dollars per day.

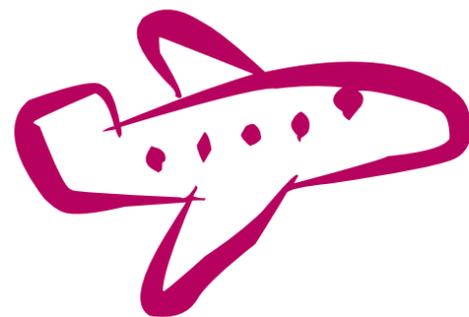
In November 2008, the IBCR was present at the 3rd World Congress Against Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents in Rio de Janeiro. The IBCR had been invited in order to lead a workshop in collaboration with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. It was therefore a second opportunity for the Bureau to contribute to the work advancement, since the IBCR was also invited to the previous Congress in Yokohama in 2001 as part of the Canadian delegation.

During the preparatory regional thematic consultations for the 3rd Rio Congress, the IBCR was able to contribute to the reflections as a member of the organising committee of the North American thematic consultation on companies' social responsibility.

In this first year of the child sex tourism programme, the IBCR first invested its efforts on a national scale, because it noticed that following positive Canadian initiatives elaborated in order to better protect children here and elsewhere, Canada is taking its time in joining the ranks of other countries that have firmly followed suit regarding child sex tourism.

For this reason, the initial objective of the IBCR's actions is to install, on a national scale, a collaboration between the government, the private sector and non-governmental organisations, by taking international models as examples. This collaboration represents the necessary platform in order to, on the one hand, better inform and equip the Canadian population to face this problem and on the other hand, to help companies officially commit themselves to this fight. To this effect, we should point out that, up to now, only two Canadian companies, Incursions Voyages and the Association canadienne des agences de voyages, have signed the *Code of conduct for the protection of children from sexual exploitation in travel and tourism (The Code.org)*, whereas on an international scale, over 800 companies in over thirty countries have adhered to it.

The year 2009 will therefore be one to watch, since it will see the development of a concrete action on a national scale, thus revealing the IBCR's efforts and unwavering commitment in the fight against child sexual exploitation in travel and tourism.



Child Victims and Witnesses of Crime Programme

Background

Millions of children throughout the world are harmed as a result of crime and abuse of power. The rights of these children have not been adequately recognised and they may suffer additional hardships when involved in a judicial process. Children are vulnerable and require special protection appropriate to their age, level of maturity and individual special needs. Girls are particularly vulnerable and are likely to face discrimination at all stages of the judicial system. Furthermore, children who are victims and witnesses of crime may suffer from being mistakenly viewed as offenders, rather than victims and witnesses. Improved responses to child victims and witnesses can make children and their families more willing to disclose instances of victimisation and more supportive of the judicial process.

In response to this context and the need expressed by governments and professionals for guidance, the IBCR created the Child Victims and Witnesses of Crime programme in the late 1990's. We began by conducting research on existing norms and standards in this field. Notably, the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* establishes principles to secure effective recognition of the rights of children, while the *Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power* sets forth principles to fulfil each victim's rights to information, participation, protection, reparation and assistance. Research was also conducted on existing best practices in this field, while taking into account a vast diversity of legal systems and traditions.

Considering the fact that crime is increasingly transnational and that Child victims and witnesses of crime should be assured equivalent protection in all countries, the IBCR has developed a set of guidelines that offer a practical and user-friendly framework to support and guide professionals working directly with affected children. The guidelines also provide support in the development, review and implementation of laws, procedures, and national practices in this field.

Determined that the guidelines be implemented in practice and to raise awareness about the situation of child victims and witnesses worldwide, the IBCR decided to lobby for the adoption of its guidelines by the United Nations. On the 22nd of July 2005, ECOSOC adopted the *UN Guidelines on Justice in Matters Involving Child Victims and Witnesses of Crime* (Resolution 2005/20), with official recognition of the IBCR's contribution to their development.

To ensure that children are made aware of the guidelines, informed of their rights and how to protect themselves, the IBCR and its partners – namely the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), UNICEF and the INNOCENTI Research Centre – recently finalised a child-friendly version of the guidelines. These were published simultaneously in all six official UN languages (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Spanish and Russian), and in both electronic and hard-copy formats.

Results obtained in 2008-2009

Throughout the year, the Bureau participated in various events and activities to promote the guidelines. It is particularly proud of the forum offered by the Institute of Child Rights in Sion (Switzerland) which organised a meeting in partnership with UNICEF, UNODC and the IBCR for the promotion of the guidelines, the training units and the model legislative provisions to representatives of several dozens of countries.

Furthermore, the secretary of the non-governmental international organisation *Défense des Enfants International (DEI)* invited the Bureau to its international conference, whose first objective was to offer a training course to its members on the topic of young people in conflict with the law: *Mettre fin à la Violence dans les Systèmes de Justice pour Mineurs: des Mots à l'Action*.

However, the UNODC, UNICEF and the IBCR continue to finalise interactive training units for actors working with child victims and witnesses of crime.