INTERNATIONAL BUREAU
FOR CHILDREN’S RIGHTS

2018/2019 ANNUAL REPORT
The International Bureau for Children’s Rights (IBCR) has been defending children’s rights since 1994 in 45 countries across Africa, the Americas, Asia and the Middle East.

**WHAT WE DO**

- **STRENGTHEN** the capacities of frontline community actors to address issues affecting children
- **PROMOTE** active participation from all stakeholders, including children
- **FOSTER** collaboration between the various professionals involved in child protection
- **SUPPORT** and **CHAMPION** reforms, action plans and legislation in favour of children’s rights

**OUR FIELDS OF ACTIVITY**

- **CHILDREN AND THE JUSTICE SYSTEM**
- **CHILDREN AND EMERGENCY SITUATIONS**
- **EXPLOITATION AND VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN**

**OUR FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES**

- The best interests of children
- Non-discrimination
- The right to life, survival and development
- Children’s right to participation and freedom of expression

**MISSION AND VALUES**

“A WORLD IN WHICH EVERY CHILD, GIRL OR BOY, ENJOYS THEIR RIGHTS EQUALLY AND EVERYWHERE.”
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PROTECTING CHILDREN’S RIGHTS: A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

Most people would agree that we all have a duty to protect children. But it’s all too easy to look the other way if addressing the situation could put your personal safety at risk. What would make a shopkeeper, neighbour, teenage bystander or bus driver step in to protect a child in danger? What pushes an individual to expose himself and help a child—especially one they don’t know—who is a victim of domestic violence, a humanitarian crisis, forced migration or a natural disaster?

At a time when millions of children around the world are experiencing violence, exploitation, abuse or negligence, it’s important to know what prompts individuals to take action and come to the assistance of minors. The answer lies in the various factors influencing the child protection system. Everything from social norms to local laws, cultures, traditions and institutions can motivate people from a broad range of professions to get involved and improve outcomes for children in their communities. Of course, education and experience also shape their decisions.

As social awareness of children’s rights increases, so does the sense of responsibility toward them. Building this awareness is key to ensuring that a community’s children, adolescents and adults feel a sense of duty to protect the development of minors.

The IBCR firmly believes that in order to achieve an integrated, effective and sustainable child protection system, practices must be professionalised and interactions with children must be standardised. In addition, practices and perceptions among key actors must change.

Girls cross borders illegally. Boys are victims of sexual trafficking. Teenagers are recruited for armed conflict. Students come into conflict with the law. And youth commit violent acts against one another. It has become more important than ever to develop a network that defends the rights of minors and takes action when the need arises, all while including children and adolescents in the process.

Najat Maalla M’jid
President

Guillaume Landry
Director General
GLOBAL INITIATIVES TO PROTECT CHILDREN’S RIGHTS

PREVENTING CHILD RECRUITMENT AND USE BY ARMED FORCES AND ARMED GROUPS

Children are associated with more than 60 armed forces and armed groups worldwide

According to the United Nations, seven state armed forces and 54 non-state armed groups currently recruit and use girls and boys. Most of these children are used as combatants, porters, cooks, spies, messengers, suicide bombers or human shields, or for sexual purposes. February 12 is Red Hand Day, marking the anniversary of the enactment of the Optional Protocol to the Convention of the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict. The IBCR spent the day in Colombia attending the presentation of a report prepared by COALICO entitled Broken Childhood: Girls, Boys and Teens Involved in War to the Special Peace Jurisdiction (JEP). The IBCR contributed to the report through a voluntary cooperation programme. The document supports the creation of a truth tribunal for child victims of armed conflict, and stresses the importance of restoring and guaranteeing the rights of victims.
In May and June 2018, roughly 2,300 children were separated from their families at the southern border of the United States. The IBCR strongly condemned these separations by voicing concern on Canadian media and by adding its name behind the Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action’s campaign to reunite children with their families. Specifically, we supported their recommendations which included facilitating fast family reunifications, providing psychological and psychosocial support to children and their families, implementing administrative and legal procedures to protect the best interests of children, and putting an end to detention practices to prevent more families from being separated.

**COMBATTING CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION IN THE TRAVEL AND TOURISM INDUSTRY**

After providing input for the Global Study on Sexual Exploitation of Children in Travel and Tourism, the IBCR took part in this year’s International Summit on Child Protection in Travel and Tourism, held in Colombia. The Summit brought together more than 500 participants from all over the world, including government representatives, members of civil society and private sector organisations. Attendees discussed the measures that have been taken since the study was published in May 2016, as well as best practices for combatting sexual exploitation.

**REUNITING MIGRANT FAMILIES**

The IBCR was invited to ECPAT International’s general assembly, which took place on the sidelines of the Summit. During the assembly, the IBCR led two workshops: one on the links between child sexual exploitation and humanitarian crises, and the other on the prevention of the exploitation of children affected by armed conflict and emergency situations. Participants discussed the possibility of establishing international communities of practice for organisations that work directly with victims, as well as the importance of increasing advocacy around the world to end impunity for persons of authority involved in child sexual exploitation.
HUMAN TRAFFICKING: MODERN SLAVERY

Even though human trafficking is a widespread problem in many countries, it remains an elusive crime. Its true numbers are unclear because of its clandestine nature.

Since occurrences can be hard to see and take many different forms, human trafficking is one of the most complex transnational crimes to prevent and eradicate.

A global effort

The International Congress on Human Trafficking, organised by Costa Rica’s CONATT (National Coalition Against Illicit Migrant Trafficking and Human Trafficking) and the IBCR, was held last September as part of the project to strengthen institutions in the fight against human trafficking, currently being implemented by the IBCR. The Congress was attended by more than 200 representatives from various institutions and embassies, as well as local, regional and national child protection and international cooperation organisations. They explored avenues for better management of human trafficking cases, including methods for implementing complementary and collaborative approaches. Discussions also focused on the latest forms of human trafficking, on statistics and challenges, and on prevention as a means of detection, identification and reporting.


JUSTICE AND CHILDREN’S RIGHTS

More than 800 participants were invited to the 2018 World Congress on Justice for Children to discuss and share perspectives on three current issues: children in violent and extremist activities and potential solutions; preventing children from coming into conflict with the law (first-timers and reoffenders); improving mechanisms for protecting vulnerable children and early prevention strategies. The IBCR played an active role at the congress, facilitating a workshop on “Core competencies for judges as an essential aspect of juvenile delinquency prevention.” During the discussions, child protection actors expressed keen interest in the training of judges and prosecutors, recognising that it is an essential prerequisite for achieving a child-friendly juvenile justice system.

Spotlighting the Invisible

While drafting Canada’s new policy to end human trafficking, Public Safety Canada consulted with experts on how to put an end to this heinous crime. The IBCR was called to a meeting to discuss recent progress in the fight against human trafficking and to identify Canada’s short and long-term challenges. The meeting also included a discussion about the need for Canada to address human trafficking domestically and internationally.

Continental Conference on Access to Justice for Children in Africa, Ethiopia


#J4C2018: World Congress on Justice for Children

The Continental Conference on Access to Justice for Children in Africa, entitled “Spotlighting the Invisible,” was organised by the African Child Policy Forum (ACPF) and Defence for Children International (DCI). Held in Ethiopia, the conference focused on reviewing measures to ensure that children in Africa have access to justice and are treated fairly and decently. IBCR board member Théophane Nikyema delivered a presentation on the IBCR’s capacity-building programme for child protection actors in Burkina Faso’s justice system. An urgent call to action was issued, addressing African governments, the African Union, treaty bodies, and any other party involved in the protection and promotion of children’s rights: “The future of our continent is dependent on the full realisation of the rights and wellbeing of our children today.”
An innovative global framework for child-friendly justice

What competencies do judges need to ensure that the rights of children in contact with the law are respected?

The IBCR has been studying this issue since it was first founded in 1994. Since then, the organisation has endeavoured to pinpoint which competencies should be given priority in training programmes for justice personnel around the world. With this goal in mind, roughly 30 judicial authorities, representatives of civil society, social workers and police officers met with psychologists and UN experts at an international workshop organised by the IBCR and the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie in Ouagadougou. Together, participants identified six core competencies needed to ensure child-friendly justice.

Following the workshop, the IBCR produced a framework document which was distributed to the various partners involved in justice system strengthening initiatives.

COMPETENCY 1
Interacting and communicating with children in an appropriate manner

COMPETENCY 2
Adapting procedures to the child’s specific needs, development and circumstances

COMPETENCY 3
Interpreting the rules of law through the use of national, regional and international case law and legal instruments relating to children

COMPETENCY 4
Taking action to effectively promote and protect the rights of the child

COMPETENCY 5
Optimising cooperation with formal and informal actors in the juvenile justice and child protection systems

COMPETENCY 6
Acting ethically and complying with judicial conduct principles relating to children

Core competencies for judges and prosecutors interacting with children

“Magistrates are leaders who oversee all judicial procedures involving children. In order to achieve child-friendly justice, we must help magistrates develop their skills, identify best practices in their field, and appeal to their sense of personal responsibility and dedication.”

Philip Jaffé, Director, Interfaculty Centre for the Rights of the Child at the University of Geneva and member of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child

“For a long time, the emphasis was on the adoption of legislation, but that vision has now been broadened. The focus has shifted to better equipping professionals to protect and uphold children’s rights.”

Sékou Traoré, DASR, Department of Justice, Human Rights and Civic Promotion
CIVIL RECOGNITION FOR ALL CHILDREN

The IBCR was invited to speak on the subject of «children without identity» at a session of the Parliamentary Affairs Committee of the Assemblée Parlementaire de la Francophonie. The session aimed to create a framework law to guide certain member countries in establishing free and mandatory birth registration systems.

The Bureau emphasized the importance of having official records that prove a child’s existence, as this is crucial for establishing the individual’s legal capacity and legal rights (recognition, status, protection, etc.). Participants also discussed new awareness-raising strategies, simplified record-keeping, and accounting for diversity in family units around the world.

GIVING A VOICE TO PRESCHOOLERS

The IBCR is proud to have supported La Grande semaine des tout-petits (Early childhood week) for a third consecutive year. This event gives a voice to Quebec’s 540,000 children aged 0 to 5 years with the goal of making early childhood a priority for society and in public debates.

In Quebec, most preschoolers are healthy and live in an environment conducive to proper development. But not all children enter the school system on equal footing. According to the Quebec Survey of Child Development in Kindergarten, some 24,000 children—that’s one out of every four children (27.7%)—are vulnerable in at least one area of their development. In underprivileged areas, the proportion increases to one out of every three children [...]

As a community, we all have a role to play in supporting children and ensuring that they grow up to be healthy, motivated adults who reach their full potential. Employers, elected officials, members of the community, we are all responsible for providing growth and development opportunities to young children. [...]

Making little ones a priority means investing in a more educated, fulfilled and prosperous society.

— Excerpt from the campaign’s press release
To mark the IBCR’s 25th anniversary, which coincides with the 30th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), we launched an innovative project to create a videogame that teaches kids in Canada and around the world about their universal rights.

Even though today’s youth are keenly interested in new technologies and start using them at an early age, there is currently no online tool that promotes children’s rights in Quebec or in Canada. Most children — and most of the population — are unfamiliar with the CRC and its articles. The IBCR decided to change this by creating a videogame with children’s help.

Two classes from Sainte-Cécile and Saint-Fabien elementary schools in Montreal were chosen to help create the videogame in a process led by students from Polytechnique Montréal and École nationale supérieure d’Arts et Métiers ParisTech (France).

First, the team met with the children to teach them about the CRC through various games. They then consulted the children on which rights to highlight in the game (access to education, access to health care, opportunity to participate, etc.). Finally, the Polytechnique Montréal students presented several game concepts to the children.
The children then split into small groups and enthusiastically discussed the different game concepts and features they liked best. Their lively observations helped the four Polytechnique Montréal students ensure the game prototype was relevant and suited to their needs.

The next step will involve developing the game in 4D, having children test the game, finalising it, and launching it nationally and internationally.

“Children have great imagination. We were expecting them to just have fun with it, but instead they were very focused and serious about shaping the game. They worked really hard to develop their ideas. I’m not sure I would have done as well when I was that age!”

— Polytechnique Montréal student, after meeting with the children

THE IBCR HOSTS A Y7 DELEGATION

In April 2018, the IBCR hosted the Young Diplomats of Canada (YDC, a non-profit organisation that provides training to young Canadians wishing to participate in Canada’s global diplomacy initiatives) and approximately 30 young delegates from G7 member countries.

Their visit coincided with the Youth 7 (Y7) Summit, an annual event that takes place at the same time as the G7 Summit. It brings together young representatives from member countries to discuss priority issues for youth and draft policy recommendations for the G7. The YDC, which organised this year’s summit in Ottawa, wanted to meet with the IBCR because of its dedication to children’s rights and international initiatives. During the meeting, the IBCR team introduced the organisation, talked about its projects and discussed its intervention methods.

RUNNING TOGETHER FOR CHILDREN’S RIGHTS!

On a sunny spring day, IBCR athletes took part in the Scotiabank Charity Challenge, a fundraising race held at Montreal’s Gilles-Villeneuve racetrack. Some 50 runners, including 15 children, proudly represented the IBCR in the kid’s run and the 5K, 10K and 25K events.

The IBCR exceeded its goal by raising more than $6,800. The funds were used to finance volunteer cooperation in the PRODEF programme, which is supported by Global Affairs Canada, as well as assessment and field training missions, and activities promoting children’s rights at the community and regional levels.

VOLUNTEER COOPERATION APPEALS TO YOUTH

Once again this year, the IBCR attended Collège Stanislas’ Career Day, an event that gathers professionals from different fields and targets students in grades 9, 10 and 11. The students were particularly captivated by international relations, volunteer cooperation, and children’s rights.

Many then expressed interest in university programmes leading to work in these areas.
Each year, thousands of Canadians offer their skills and knowledge to help partners in the countries of the Southern Hemisphere, in what is typically a transformative experience for them. After returning to Canada, these volunteers then focus on raising public awareness about the impact of these exchanges and the importance of protecting children’s rights and vulnerable communities.

This year, the IBCR held various events—including receptions, networking get-togethers, the International Volunteering Cooperation Organisations Forum and International Development Week—to generate interest in international development and cooperation issues. These events also provided opportunities for its staff and volunteers to share their experiences with the public and meet with other organisations.

Every year on the 20th of November, the IBCR celebrates World Children’s Day and the progress made in child-rights protection. It’s also an occasion to advocate for violence-free education and the opportunity for children to reach their full potential. On this day in 1989, the United Nations signed the Convention on the Rights of the Child, a document that is both the foundation and cornerstone of the IBCR’s work.
BRAZIL - International Children’s and Youth Fair

To mark World Children’s Day, the IBCR’s Brazil team partnered with the Salão Internacional de Cultura de Crianças e Adolescentes (International Children’s and Youth Fair), which took place November 15th to 19th, 2018

The IBCR set up an information booth to showcase its initiatives and raise awareness about the shared responsibility in upholding children’s rights. The organisation’s team also participated in a panel discussion with other national and international actors on how to effectively protect girls in today’s digital era.

CANADA - The rights of Aboriginal children

This year, the IBCR highlighted the rights of Aboriginal children with a screening of short films produced in collaboration with Wapikoni Mobile, a travelling First Nations audiovisual training and creation studio.

Nearly 100 people attended the event and watched the series of inspiring and often touching films, which were developed around select topics: expressing cultural identity through the arts, Aboriginal self-governance with respect to child protection, and child participation in community affairs. Afterward, speakers and audience members discussed the issues featured by the Mi’kmaw, Anishnabe, Innu, Atikamekw and Cree filmmakers in their short films.

The films explored a number of important topics, such as the right to explore cultural traditions without discrimination, the removal of children from their homes and communities, post-secondary studies and how Aboriginal youth are forced to integrate into unfamiliar environments, and the children’s desire to participate in their communities.

COSTA RICA - Round table discussion on children’s rights

To mark the 29th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the Costa Rican chapter of Defence for Children International (DCI) organised a round table discussion on the status of children and teenagers in the country. The IBCR attended the event, taking part in discussions along with child protection specialists, psychologists, researchers, sociologists and economists. Although everyone agreed that the CRC is a revolutionary document that recognises the rights of children and their individual liberties, there is still much to be done in the field of child protection, particularly with regard to ethics, innovation, recognition and dialogue.
A CLOSER LOOK AT OUR PROJECTS

AZERBAIDJAN - RAISING TEENAGERS’ AWARENESS OF THEIR RIGHTS

Children and adolescents need to know their rights. This is essential in order for them to be able to protect themselves, develop and participate in their communities. UNICEF invited the IBCR to Baku, Azerbaijan’s capital, to lead training sessions for a multidisciplinary group of experienced lawyers, social workers, psychologists, doctors, civil servants and members of civil society who work with children or develop programmes for them on a national level. The programme included various participatory activities enabling attendees to sharpen their skills for teaching youth about their rights. The training also covered several key principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, such as participation, development, best interests of the child, family life, and protection against violence, exploitation and abuse. Finally, the group discussed the rights of refugee children, children with disabilities and children in conflict with the law.
MAURITANIA - INCREASED PROTECTION OF MIGRANT CHILDREN

International migration has become increasingly widespread in recent decades. Europe has a strong interest in Mauritania, which is both a host and a transit country, and in 2015, the European Union created the Emergency Trust Fund for Africa to address the causes of irregular migration and forced displacements. As part of its AFIA project, which aims to improve immigration management while protecting migrant children from exploitation and trafficking, Save the Children contracted the IBCR to assist Mauritanian authorities by providing custom training tools and creating a pool of certified instructors. As a result, approximately 40 local actors (social workers from the Ministry of Social Affairs, Children and Families, lawyers from Child Protection Services and police officers) were equipped to train their colleagues on the protection of uprooted children and child victims of human trafficking.

Since 2011, the United Nations’ Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the IBCR have been working on a capacity-building project for security, military and civil forces deployed in peacekeeping operations. The IBCR trains and certifies instructors in various countries on the UN’s new child protection programme. Developed by the IBCR and adopted by the UN in 2017, the programme is made up of nine modules. This year, 20 instructors took part in the certification process in Entebbe, Uganda. Two other training sessions were held: one in Kingston, for the Americas, and the other in Vicenza, for Europe.

UGANDA, CANADA AND ITALY - CHILD PROTECTION TRAINING FOR UN PEACEKEEPERS

In total, 99 police officers from member states, 42 peacekeeping officers and 155 officers were trained and/or certified in the following fields:

- Child-friendly communication techniques
- Dejudicialising in situations of armed conflict
- Monitoring the six grave violations of children’s rights, as defined by the UN’s Security Council

Since 2011, the United Nations’ Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the IBCR have been working on a capacity-building project for security, military and civil forces deployed in peacekeeping operations. The IBCR trains and certifies instructors in various countries on the UN’s new child protection programme. Developed by the IBCR and adopted by the UN in 2017, the programme is made up of nine modules. This year, 20 instructors took part in the certification process in Entebbe, Uganda. Two other training sessions were held: one in Kingston, for the Americas, and the other in Vicenza, for Europe.

700 participants from 9 wilayahs received training on protecting children from exploitation and human trafficking

27 subsequent training sessions were provided to colleagues

Coordination was improved between child protection actors
The 2015-2019 child protection programme signed by the Government of Madagascar and UNICEF has many objectives, including strengthening the child protection system through a legal framework designed to promote children’s rights and reduce violence against children. As part of this programme, the IBCR partnered with UNICEF and Madagascar’s Department of Public Affairs, Social Protection and Advancement of Women to conduct a study on the cycles of violence against children at home, at school and in the workplace.

Child testimonials, experiences, opinions and suggestions were central to the study, along with input from child protection actors. More than 700 children and youths shared their experiences and perceptions of violence in their day-to-day lives. In addition, the researchers consulted with 2,500 adults—including community leaders, representatives from local authorities, justice personnel, enforcement officials, healthcare professionals and educators—from all six provinces.

In collaboration with Emergency Relief & Development Overseas (ERDO, a Canadian organisation), the IBCR led an ideation workshop for over 80 Haitian teachers on how schools can develop solid child protection policies to ensure that no child suffers prejudice, abuse, exploitation or violence at school.

Despite recent reforms implemented by the Chadian government, the country remains in a worrying state of emergency, notably in the Lake Chad region. The regional crisis has been waging strong since 2015, with military operations and attacks taking place in the areas bordering Nigeria and Niger. Armed conflicts have serious psychological and social consequences on civilians, especially children. For this reason, UNICEF and the IBCR have been providing support to the Chadian government through a project to map and assess the country’s child protection system. Compulsory training on children’s rights, prepared by the IBCR, was integrated into the national action plan for police, gendarmerie, judiciary and national army training schools. This year, the IBCR was once more called upon to include psychosocial services in the mapping of the Lake Chad region and to prepare a training programme for social workers.
Canadian police officers

Child protection is central to every peacekeeping mission. This is why deployed personnel need to fully understand the various child protection mechanisms in place wherever they intervene. Since 2017, all Canadian police officers have been required to receive training on the subject from the IBCR before being deployed on peacekeeping missions. During the training, police officers receive two pocket-size guides developed by the IBCR to help them better understand coordination mechanisms within and outside of the United Nations system.

Humanitarian Coalition

The Humanitarian Coalition brings together leading Canadian aid organisations to address international disasters. Representatives from roughly 20 of these organisations invited the IBCR to train their emergency coordination and policy staff to ensure that child protection is a priority in their interventions. Participants learned about various subjects, including girls in emergency situations, the UN Security Council’s monitoring and communications mechanism for the six grave violations of children’s rights, and the application of the Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action. This promises to improve child protection during Canadian humanitarian missions.

ANGOLA - IMPROVING SERVICES FOR CHILD VICTIMS OF ABUSE, VIOLENCE AND EXPLOITATION

In 2016, the IBCR completed an assessment of Angola’s juvenile justice system, a UNICEF-funded initiative. During the assessment process, the IBCR identified the main strengths and weaknesses of the country’s juvenile justice system and institutions, stakeholder interactions, and best practices. The IBCR also issued specific recommendations on how to strengthen the system and align ongoing reforms with international standards, including:

- Reinforce the legal framework
- Improve coordination between institutions assisting children in contact with the law
- Offer capacity building for the system’s key actors
- Ensure better resource allocation
- Improve information management

Most of the assessment report’s findings and analyses were included in the Government of Angola’s 2016 status report, which was presented to the UN Child Rights Committee in Geneva. On June 6, 2018, the Committee published its final observations, including most of the IBCR’s recommendations. In addition, this past year the IBCR held further discussions with UNICEF and the Angolan government concerning the implementation of a series of standard operating procedures for the country’s health, education, domestic, justice and social services sectors to ensure that cases involving children are properly recorded and child victims are monitored. With talks currently underway about the project’s implementation, concrete action is expected in the near future for the provision of efficient, child-friendly services to victims.
THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO - ASSESSMENT OF A PROJECT LED BY THE JAPAN INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AGENCY

The Project for Professionalisation of the Police for the Population and Peace took place in the Democratic Republic of Congo from March 2015 to December 2018. Funded by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the project aimed to support capacity building for the country’s General Directorate for Schools and Training and other directorates of the General Precinct of the Congolese National Police involved in the training of police officers. Its goal was to develop a durable professionalisation tool for national police personnel. After several meetings, during which the IBCR demonstrated its experience in police training, JICA mandated the IBCR to perform a final assessment of the project.

Led by a team of four IBCR experts, three researchers and a statistician, the external assessment helped measure progress made since the beginning of the project. It also helped draw lessons learned and better define future actions. The IBCR interviewed police officers who participated in JICA’s activities, high-level representatives from the Ministry of Security and JICA staff in order to prepare a qualitative and a quantitative overview of the situation. The IBCR then issued several recommendations aimed at improving the sustainability of the results of JICA’s next strategic plan in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which will focus on security and community police.

Presentation of the assessment, Kinshasa
“[...] I am proud to have taken part in the entire development process of standard operating procedures, which I feel ownership for. As the Permanent Secretary of CASO/Kinshasa, I will ensure that this tool is properly implemented by all social workers in Kinshasa for the well-being of Congolese children.”

Clarisse Phola, social worker and provincial permanent secretary, CASO/Province of Kinshasa

OUR MULTI-YEAR INITIATIVES IN AFRICA AND LATIN AMERICA

THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO -
« BATELA MWANA » (PROTECT THE CHILDREN)

One of the IBCR’s goals, perhaps even its most important one, is to help bring about long-term structural changes leading to the protection of children’s rights. To make this possible, the IBCR works with partners who are present in the field. At the end of the fourth year of the capacity building project for police, justice and social action services on the rights and the protection of children, results are now becoming apparent and involved institutions and actors are feeling excited, hopeful and proud.
Several professional bodies are now equipped with new tools, including procedural support documents and best practices for child protection, to help them improve the quality of their interactions with children. The following changes have been observed since the introduction of these resources:

**POLICE SERVICES**
The National Police’s child protection and sexual violence prevention squadrons are gradually becoming the link between police side and working-class neighbourhoods. They are increasingly seen as sanctuaries for women and children whose rights are threatened and who seek refuge for the night. Improving police practices within these squadrons has led to increased trust among children and the population as a whole.

**JUSTICE SERVICES**
Judges, social workers and court clerks working in juvenile courts have become increasingly aware of children’s rights. They are more respectful, patient and compassionate toward children who come in contact with the law. They are careful about protecting the children’s identity, explaining the judicial process to them and avoiding questions or comments that could hurt, stigmatise or traumatis the children. The tools included in the standard operating procedure have helped improve their responsiveness and effectiveness in processing juvenile cases.

**SOCIAL SERVICES**
Adding permanent social services within provincial squadrons makes a real difference when processing cases involving children and providing minors with care. Four squadrons (Matadi, Lubumbashi, Goma and Bukavu) now include these services and 19 social workers have just been assigned as points of contact at various police stations throughout Kinshasa and other areas. In addition, the Association for the Promotion of Qualitative Minorities has become a support structure where children can express their opinions and be heard.

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*“I didn’t know how to act when dealing with a child. Now, I know the attitude to adopt and how to talk with a child. It is important to build trust with children and to use the right communication techniques.”*  
— Tchikarambu Mamie, student, Kapalata site, South Kivu

*“This course has taught me many things about children, their rights, the need to respect them and the consequences of not respecting their rights or meeting their needs.”*  
— Bitota Mukendi, student, Institut national du travail social (National Social Work Institute)

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**IN THE PROJECT’S FOURTH YEAR**

- **270,680** Congolese girls and boys were helped by the IBCR’s project and now have access to more child-friendly services.
- **70%** of the **13,534** participating professionals and students report an improvement in their capacity to uphold children’s rights.

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Between 60 and 90 hours of training on children’s rights were included in the vocational training programme for police and social services.

Thanks to training kits and audio-visual tools developed to help participants acquire the core competencies needed for more sensitive, child-friendly interactions, **12,525** people reinforced their child protection skills.
BURKINA FASO - A MORE PROTECTIVE ENVIRONMENT FOR CHILDREN

Thanks to support from Global Affairs Canada, the IBCR has been working with various institutional and civil society partners since 2015 on capacity-building projects for those who work with children. These children—some of which are victims of violence or negligence, are homeless or are in contact with the law—are entitled to receive professional and child-friendly services.

Training that focuses on children’s rights

With the development and integration, on this fourth year of implementation, of four compulsory training courses in five national vocational training schools: École des cadres moyens en travail social (School of Middle Management Social Workers – ECMTS), École des cadres supérieurs en travail social (School of Upper Management Social Workers – ECSTS), École nationale d’administration et de magistrature (National Administration and Judicial Authority School – ENAM), École nationale de police (National Police School – ENP) and École nationale des sous-officiers de gendarmerie (National Gendarmerie Sub-Officers School – ENSOG), the IBCR continues to ensure that gender and child protection concerns remain at the forefront of current and future students’ technical training.

Police officers, gendarmes, justice staff, penitentiary security personnel, and social workers are now better equipped to listen to, support and protect children.

“We have changed the way we view children and we understand now that they need special attention. We need to take into account their personal, social and family situation, as well as several other factors, when processing their cases. I know now that I will act differently. Without this training, I would not have known to act otherwise […]”

— Student, ECSTS

COURSES ON CHILDREN’S RIGHTS ARE AIMED AT THE FOLLOWING CURRENT AND FUTURE PROFESSIONALS

- Social educators
- Specialised education assistants
- Educators working with young children
- Women’s studies officers
- Judges
- Head court clerks, court clerks and court secretaries
- Penitentiary security guards
- Judicial police officers

“…The train-the-trainer session has transformed our instructors: they apply your andragogical approach not only to the children’s rights course, but to other subjects as well. This is very beneficial for our future police officers.”

— Police commissioner Hié Djibril, Head of Internships and Education, ENP

Child-friendly professional practices

In order to interact with children in a manner that is effective and meets international standards, it is important to follow applicable procedures, methods and codes. This is where standard operating procedures (SOPs) can be useful. They are practical tools that outline how operations should be conducted and how cases should be processed. This year, in collaboration with local partners, the IBCR produced a standard operating procedure for assisting children in contact with the law. Meetings between counterparts were held in Benin, Morocco, Senegal, Togo, and …

Course on children’s rights, ENP, Ouagadougou

First course, National School of Social Work, Ouagadougou
Improved cooperation between judges and social workers resulting in more targeted and comprehensive social investigations and shorter processing times.

Adoption of educational measures and alternatives to detention, enabling better social reintegration of children in conflict with the law.

Increased awareness of child participation as a crucial consideration in procedures, enabling children to actively take part in their own protection.

“[…] The way I see children in conflict with the law has changed. I no longer view them as simply people who have broken the law, but rather as full-fledged individuals who need additional support […]. In fact, some of them are victims, and not delinquents as one might think.”

Judge attending a Justice SOP workshop (November 2018)

[...] The way I see children in conflict with the law has changed. I no longer view them as simply people who have broken the law, but rather as full-fledged individuals who need additional support […]. In fact, some of them are victims, and not delinquents as one might think.

FOCUS ON GIRLS
Throughout the project, special interest was given to girls and to gender-specific issues in the form of strong key messages, sections dedicated to gender issues in the training tools, case studies and situational examples. It is crucial to truly understand the different issues that affect girls in order to eliminate prejudices and develop solutions that protect and support girls.

HONDURAS - BUILDING A MORE COMPREHENSIVE CHILD PROTECTION SYSTEM

The PRONÍNEZ project is a collaboration between UNICEF Honduras, Plan Honduras, the IBCR and the Honduran government’s Directorate for Children, Adolescents and Family (DINAF) initiated in 2016. Funded by Global Affairs Canada, the project is part of the Honduran government’s efforts over the past few years to adapt its regulatory and operational frameworks to international standards that take into account children’s rights.

Strengthening institutions and implementing a protection strategy

Several elements are included in the project, such as institutional capacity building, political awareness, and community and local actions. The IBCR’s participation focused mainly on building the capacity and improving the services of DINAF, so that the organisation may fully and effectively play a pivotal role in protecting children and coordinating the national system.

Three key initiatives and promising results

A situational overview explaining the progress made and the system’s challenges, as well as technical assistance and service coordination needs, was officially presented during a major political awareness event, which gathered some 70 government and child protection representatives. In addition to fostering a dialogue between various sectors, the shared understanding of the current situation and of the issues to be dealt with was necessary to determine our next steps.

Many professionals took part in producing DINAF’s standard operating procedures aimed at reinforcing the protection and restitution of the rights of children and adolescents in situations of vulnerability. These tools, which
include flowcharts showing the various means available when processing children’s cases, are useful for DINAF personnel, justice and national police services, the Special Prosecutor for Children, the National Institute for Children in Conflict with the Law (INAMI), etc. The IBCR is proud to have supported the Honduran government in the production of the country’s first multi-sector national procedures that make children and child protection a top priority.

As for the pilot course and the train-the-trainer session at DINAF, these helped create a pool of professionals able to share the protection of children’s rights training with their colleagues. They also helped participants understand how to apply these approaches to their daily work. A legal advisor from one of DINAF’s regional offices said: “It is important not to limit oneself to filling out administrative forms. Instead, we must work to truly ensure that DINAF is protecting the rights of girls and boys in its care”.

At the end of this first phase, other child protection actors will take part in this capacity-building project, for which the IBCR hopes to have the opportunity to contribute its expertise.

As part of Canada’s crime-fighting efforts, conducted through the Anti-Crime Capacity Building Programme (ACCBP), the IBCR initiated discussions with the Canadian and the Honduran governments to improve the response of authorities to human trafficking. With support from the Interinstitutional Commission Against Commercial Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking in Persons (CICESCT), the National Police Academy, the Judicial School, the Labour Secretariat, and several Honduran civil society organisations, the IBCR was given the green light and funding by the Government of Canada to implement a project slated to begin in April 2019.

Jose Luis Martinez, Regional Leader, DINAF

“[…] Participating in this process has enabled us to reinforce our knowledge and to better understand the procedures. It gives us a clearer vision of how we can carry out our daily work in order to provide concrete answers and high-quality services to our country’s vulnerable children and youth.”
Thanks to financial support from Global Affairs Canada, the IBCR initiated a project in 2015 to support Costa Rica in its fight against human trafficking and particularly child sexual exploitation for commercial purposes. To do so, a satellite office was opened in San José and a local team was recruited to ensure closer proximity with partners and a field presence during the various project phases.

With the project’s final year on the horizon, the IBCR increased its efforts in the areas of advocacy, awareness-raising, capacity building and toolkit development. More specifically, this involved:

- Organizing the International Congress on Human Trafficking in conjunction with CONATT (Costa Rica’s National Coalition Against Illicit Migrant Trafficking and Human Trafficking). Roughly 200 people came to the event to discuss the issue and best practices for addressing it.
- Developing audiovisual tools about human trafficking prevention and reporting to support knowledge transfer and awareness building for the Preventive Police Programmes and CONATT.
- Developing a training toolkit and standard operating procedure applicable in multiple sectors.
- Leading pilot courses on the fundamentals of these tools and a train-the-trainer session on how to make effective use of key approaches for fighting human trafficking.

The project met its primary objectives, which included creating new capacity building tools for police officers, investigators, prosecutors and judges dealing with trafficking cases; enriching their professional practices; and adding a specialised training course on human trafficking to vocational training programmes in targeted sectors. As evidence, the IBCR has received a substantial amount of positive feedback about the initiative. Also, various prevention and reporting strategies have been implemented at the local and community levels. And in 2017, the authorities recorded a 163% increase in human trafficking reports*. But the IBCR’s vision goes much further. Since the organisation is only able to provide periodic support, the real drivers of change are its partners in Costa Rica. The final phase of the project will therefore focus on strengthening protection for child victims of human trafficking.

* Source: Office of the Deputy Prosecutor Against Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling (FACTRA)
CANADIANS COMMITTED TO VOLUNTARY COOPERATION

IMPROVING PROTECTION FOR THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN, WOMEN AND VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES

Implemented in 2015 as part of a joint initiative with Lawyers Without Borders Canada, the PRODEF volunteer cooperation programme has already sent nearly 100 volunteers to partner organisations working in the field of human rights in Africa and the Americas.

This year, 46 volunteer mandates, including 20 specifically tied to the IBCR, were completed in nine countries: Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d’Ivoire, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Morocco, Peru and Tunisia.

By providing partner organisations with in demand skills and knowledge, these volunteers help respond to local needs while gaining valuable personal and professional experience. Specifically, they provide technical support, capacity-building and awareness-raising activities, institutional support and more. Their contributions help drive changes in practices and sustainable actions.

“...The Association of Women Lawyers of Côte d’Ivoire greatly appreciated the volunteers’ open attitudes and innovative ideas and is pleased to have had the opportunity to interact and share experiences with them.”

— Testimonial from a representative of the Association of Women Lawyers of Côte d’Ivoire
THE PROJECT ADDRESSES IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENT ISSUES SUCH AS:

- Inadequate protection of children's rights
- Impunity
- Inequality of rights
- Discriminatory practices
- Limited access to justice
- Weak justice institutions
- Corrupt practices
- Post-conflict democratic transitions
- Pressure and threats experienced by civil society organisations
- Lack of technical competencies needed for the promotion, protection and defence of human rights
- Limited financial and human resources

PARTNER ACHIEVEMENTS SUPPORTED BY VOLUNTEERS

**OUR PARTNER: COALICO (Colombian coalition against the use and recruitment of children in armed conflict)**

- Presented a COALICO report on cases of child-rights violations in Colombia's armed conflict to the country’s Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP). The report aimed to lay responsibility for the facts and to reject direct or indirect child involvement in war.
- Established dialogue with government agencies and authorities along the Colombia-Venezuela border to discuss forced displacement of children and adolescents, and the consequences thereof, in the return and relocation process.

**OUR PARTNER: Fundación Paniamor**

- Analysed legislation concerning inappropriate relationships (sexual relations) between children and adults, child marriage and sexual crimes against children, and drafted and delivered recommendations to authorities on how to better interpret and apply the law.
- Raised awareness among 96 employees of the Ministry of Social Work and some 40 children on the issue of human trafficking and the law on inappropriate relationships.
- Developed a communication strategy focused on youth participation for the Foundation and its programs.

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“**My experience as a volunteer legal advisor in Costa Rica reminded me what first led me to the human rights field. Working with youth from less privileged communities and having the chance to educate them on their fundamental rights gives meaning to my profession. It was also a privilege to work with the partner organisation and grow together with their team.**

Testimonial from a volunteer paired with Fundación Paniamor
CÔTE D’IVOIRE

OUR PARTNER: Association of Women Lawyers of Côte d’Ivoire (AFJCI)

• Implemented a strategy to lobby authorities to align Ivorian laws with international standards on the exercise of parental authority and to clearly stipulate the equality between fathers and mothers.
• Improved child protection in nine cases involving child victims or children in conflict with the law by performing an analysis of the situation, informing children of official procedures, and addressing gaps in the judicial system.
• Developed management and governance tools and delivered them to the partner organisation to ensure better representation of persons in situations of vulnerability.

GUATEMALA

OUR PARTNER: Ixoqib’ Miriam

Strengthened the organisation’s management and communications capacities by developing an institutional guide, a strategy for regional and national lobbying, and a communications plan for activities aimed at defending and promoting the rights of children, especially those from indigenous families.

Thanks to the coaching and assistance that [the volunteer] provided for the development of a lobbying strategy, Ixoqib’ Miriam is now better equipped to fight inequality and violence against women and girls in Guatemala.

— Testimonial from a Ixoqib’ Miriam representative

MOROCCO

OUR PARTNER: Bayti

• Obtained funding from the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives (CFLI) for a project to combat child marriage and child domestic work through access to education and awareness building on the rights of girls.
• Defined a strategy to advocate for foster families as an alternative solution for children deprived of a family environment, with a view to convincing authorities to adopt legislation that upholds children’s rights and is aligned with international standards.
• Provided training on gender equality for 24 members of child protection organisations and institutions, as well as BAYTI staff members.
• Taught 195 children about their rights, with an emphasis on gender equality, the fight against sexual violence and the prevention of child marriage.

My second term as legal adviser in Morocco is coming to an end, but I will leave behind training modules ready to be used with children and social workers. These training modules and the fun educational tools that go with them are the result of a collaborative effort. They address issues like children’s rights, gender, and sexual violence and child marriage prevention. […] Our partner is now committed to delivering this training to other child-rights associations in Morocco.

— Testimonial from a volunteer at BAYTI

Awareness-building workshop, Essaouira

Information session, San Pedro
**PERU**

**OUR PARTNER: Capital Humano y Social Alternativo (CHS Alternativo)**

- Developed an assistance tool for human trafficking victims that explains the legal process clearly for children and the adults involved in their case (parents, social workers, etc.).
- Prepared and facilitated two training workshops on preventing online child sexual exploitation for 64 secondary school teachers and Internet café managers.
- Updated educational tools developed by our partner on online child sexual exploitation prevention, including fact sheets on the practice of grooming (when an adult conceals his identity to befriend a child for malicious purposes) and the need for children to protect their personal information.

**TUNISIA**

**OUR PARTNERS: ADO + and the Tunisian Forum for Youth Empowerment (TFYE)**

- Adopted a Code of Best Practices to enable the organisations’ members improve their interactions with children and share these practices with governmental and non-governmental partners working in the field of children’s rights.
- Taught 103 children about their fundamental rights as described in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and about the child protection mechanisms available in Tunisia.
- Offered awareness-building and capacity-strengthening to several youths with a view to empowering them to reclaim their status as citizens and weigh in on social issues (examples of testimonials on the opposite page).
- Implemented tools (internal regulations handbook, administrative and financial handbook, sample terms of reference, job description, child protection policy and planning tools) to help partners improve their operations and human resources management.

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Youth workshop

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“**In our civic education, we were never taught that citizenship is something you acquire at birth. Now that I know about my right to participate, I'm an active citizen!**”

Linda, age 16, active member of ADO +

“**Life isn’t just about getting a degree that leads to a job. We want to play an active role in managing projects.**”

Chedly, age 16, active participant at Club Visualize
HOW DOES A PROJECT COME INTO BEING?

ALIGNING INITIATIVES WITH LOCAL PARTNER NEEDS

When developing programmes, the IBCR targets places and opportunities where we believe we can make a difference by changing practices and/or helping governments meet their children’s rights commitments. For our initiatives to be successful, a strategic framework must be in place, consisting of contextual analyses, constructive political dialogue, awareness-building efforts, or the presence of a local or regional network of civil society organisations committed to protecting and promoting children’s rights.

To this effect, the IBCR carried out several exploratory missions this year in Colombia, Guatemala, Peru, Senegal and Tunisia. Proposed projects must address child protection issues that are inherent to the specific context, while also providing an inclusive, systemic and progressive response to partner needs.

FOCUS ON SENEGAL

In 2009, the IBCR initiated a series of meetings and workshops for Senegal’s child protection system’s main actors. One of the key issues they raised was the need for children’s rights capacity building for police and gendarmes. This prompted the IBCR to perform a situational assessment of security force training on children’s rights in the country, and then later develop training kits for them and hold train-the-trainer sessions. Today, Senegal has a core group of qualified instructors within its police force and gendarmerie.

The IBCR now hopes to capitalize on the progress made thus far and broaden the scope of its work to other important child protection actors in Senegal.

PROVIDING CAPACITY BUILDING FOR SOCIAL WORKERS, POLICE, GENDARMES, PRISON WORKERS, AND MAGISTRATES WHO SPECIALIZE IN CHILD PROTECTION

Bilateral meetings were held to identify needs and opportunities for strengthening the child protection system in a sustainable and inclusive manner. This was complemented by a multisector workshop attended by roughly 20 representatives from the prison, social work, justice, police, gendarmerie, and NGO sectors, as well as Save the Children, UNICEF and the IBCR.

After collecting data and obtaining commitment from local and international partners, the IBCR drafted a proposal and submitted it to a potential project sponsor. Since then, the IBCR has been pursuing conversations to ensure that stakeholder efforts lead to an appreciable improvement in the wellbeing of Senegalese girls and boys.
The organisation’s complete financial statements as at March 31, 2019 were audited by Deloitte S.E.N.C.R.L./s.r.l. and are available upon request.
THANK YOU TO ALL OUR PARTNERS, SPONSORS AND DONORS FOR YOUR TRUST, SUPPORT AND GENEROSITY

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Global Affairs Canada
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United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations
Royal Canadian Mounted Police
Quebec Ministry of Justice
Montréal International
International Organisation of La Francophonie
UNICEF

OUR PRIVATE PARTNERS
ADO + (Tunisia)
Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action (Global)
Amal Association for Families and Children (Tunisia)
Association of Women Lawyers of Côte d’Ivoire
Ixoqib’ Miriam (Guatemala)
Lawyers Without Borders Canada
Bayti Association (Morocco)
CHS Alternativo (Peru)
COALICO (Colombia)
Humanitarian Coalition (Canada)
École primaire Sainte-Cécile (Canada)
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ERDO (Global)
Paniamor Foundation (Costa Rica)
HAA (France)
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Plan
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Tunisian Forum for Youth Empowerment (Tunisia)
Universalia
Wapikoni Mobile
and some 40 Canadian civil organisations

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The IBCR would like to thank Andrea Querol and Shirin Aumeeruddy-Cziffra for their many years of support and hard work. They have demonstrated remarkable commitment to promoting and protecting children’s rights and it has been a privilege to benefit from their expertise. We wish them both all the best in the future endeavours.

The IBCR is also privileged to have many professionals, interns and students generously offer their time and services to make our programmes possible.

THANK YOU to everyone who has helped us support children’s rights.
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