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EDITORIAL

The end of the year is approaching and with it, the time for annual overviews. The year 2016 was a difficult year for children and the application of their rights. Some 28 million children across the globe are fleeing violence and the conflicts that ravage their countries. For some of them, war has been and remains the only context that they know. They were born into it, grew up with it and try to survive as best they can with it. Traumatized, they will need a long time and lots of medical, psychological and social support to attempt to become who they were meant to be all along. That is, children.

It's on this sombre note that UNICEF (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund) celebrated their 70th anniversary on the 11th of December. It's worth remembering that the day after the end of World War II, the UN hoped to 'offer help and hope' to the child victims of war. Sixty-six years later, this message is still relevant. Does that mean that nothing has changed for our children?

Certainly, there have been advancements and progress. The legislative framework exists: the United Nations Convention on the Right of the Child has been ratified by every country except the United States; its 3 protocols are in place and the most recent (the 3rd optional protocol regarding a communications procedure from the 14th of April 2014), was ratified by 29 States, including Switzerland very recently.

But what of the concrete application of the rights of the child in the field? A quick look at the numbers regarding right to education and access to health care show certain advancements, but also big issues linked to poverty, conflicts and gender.

In terms of access to education, enrollment in primary school has soared to 91% in developing countries. However, this positive number is somewhat tempered by the fact that 57 million children still do not have access to schooling, more than half of which are girls. Furthermore, more than half of the children not enrolled in school live in sub-Saharan Africa and 50% of the school age children who are not enrolled live in areas affected by conflict. Across the world, 103 million youths lack basic knowledge and over 60% of those are girls. ([Sustainable Development Goal 4](#))

Regarding the health and death rate of children, the number of deaths under the age of 5 has decreased to 17,000 deaths per day. However, the proportion of deaths is rising in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. Four out of every five deaths under the age of 5 take place in these regions. The risk of death is also higher in rural areas and in the poorest households. Thanks to vaccinations against measles, more than 15.6 million deaths were avoided since the year 2000. Since 2001, new cases of HIV among children have decreased by 58% and in 2013, 250,000 new cases of HIV among adolescents were registered. Two-thirds of these were girls. AIDS remains the principal cause of death among adolescents (10-19 years old) in Africa and the second most common cause of death among adolescents on the world's scale. ([SDG 3](#))

Sixty-six years later, we can conclude that the rights of children remain a privilege afforded to privileged children. Girls, children living in poverty no matter the location that they live in, children touched by war and children in disadvantaged geographic regions are the ones left up to the States and adults. What are we waiting for before 'offering help and hope?'

Dear readers, I wish you all a year 2017 in the name of the rights of **all** children!

Paola Riva Gapany

In this edition of the News Bulletin of the IDE, you will learn more about the many, varied activities that have kept the International Institute for the Rights of the Child busy from July to December 2016. Happy reading!

-  [raising awareness](#)
-  [professional training programmes](#)
-  [network](#)
-  [research](#)

RAISING AWARENESS

OCTOBER SEMINAR



Three intense, incredibly multicultural days (half of the world's nationalities were present), as intellectually rich as they were emotional, defined the 2016 edition of the International Sion Seminar. This flagship event for the IDE's awareness raising activities was this year exported to Geneva, where it was held at the International Center for Conferences (CICG), [from the 3rd to 5th of October](#).

The International Conference on Alternative Care, 'Building on the Momentum,' was co-organised by the IDE, the University of Geneva and a Steering Committee of 10 international agencies. The conference was based on the work accomplished thanks to the [Guidelines for the Alternative Care of](#)

Children, approved by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 2009. It was a resounding success!

Some 380 experts, professionals, academics, researchers, government representatives and children living in alternative care came together to evaluate the best decisions for children without or at risk of losing parental support.



Alternating between conferences and exchanges around stands devoted to relevant projects (poster sessions), the topics on the agenda allowed participants to approach the central question more broadly, all while being inspired by the variety of local practices. These included the principle of necessity, prevention and support for families, regulatory framework, private data and finance, children with disabilities, gatekeeping, quality care, foster care and small group homes, deinstitutionalisation (including children from 0 to 3 years old), workforce development and leaving care.

The only regret was the relatively few practitioners (ex. social workers) among the participants.

On Twitter and elsewhere on the Internet, the conference continued beyond the place between the 152 followers of the [@altcareGva](#) account, who also tweeted throughout, using the official hashtag, [#alternativecare2016](#).

Visit our [photo gallery](#), as well as the [website of the conference](#) (the lecturers' presentations can also be downloaded).

UNIVERSAL CHILDREN'S DAY

To celebrate **Universal Children's Day**, as well as the 27th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, a morning of reflection was organised on the theme of living and doing together in the educational system, as it pertains to the rights of the child. This was organised on the 16th of November by the IDE, the Interfaculty Center on Children's Rights of the University of Geneva (CIDE) and Geneva's cantonal Department of Education, Culture and Sport.

About thirty health, education and social welfare professionals gathered at the Museum of Natural History in Geneva, in the hopes of debating and

exchanging approach to the rights of the child, as well as educational tools to promote democratic and civic education to combat all types of violence, such as (cyber) bullying.

A [joint press release](#) (in French) was sent through the organisation Enfants du Monde, on the 11th of November.

[Photo gallery](#).

EDUCATIONAL MATERIAL

In honour of World Children's Day, the IDE also released [new educational material on children's rights](#) (in French, German and Italian) for teachers and students in Switzerland, in order to allow them to guide class discussions on the day ([free download](#)). 2016's theme: bullying at school.

BICENTENNIAL



On the 25th of November, the book 'The child in Valais, from 1815-2015', endpoint of two years of research on childhood in Valais, as part of the bicentennial celebration of the canton joining the Helvetic Confederation, was presented at the Gianadda Foundation in Martigny. The public, a hundred strong, were given the opportunity to attend various conferences, as well as performances by the students of the Cantonal Conservatory of Music.



'*Beau livre*' (Beautiful Book) illustrated through 3 imposing volumes, the publication achieved through a

collaboration with the Historical Society of French Speaking Valais and can be ordered on its [website](#).

The project '[The child in Valais, from 1815-2015: From Jean-Baptiste, the little goat keeper, to Ana Luisa, Interconnected Adolescent](#)' was led by the IDE, in collaboration with the CIDE.

MAY SYMPOSIUM 2017

The traditional [May Symposium](#) organised through a collaboration with the CIDE will take place in Bern on the 4th and 5th of May 2017. The theme this year will be 'The rights of migrant children in Switzerland.' The conference is intended for politicians at national, cantonal and municipal levels, as well as professionals such as lawyers and legal experts, youth and family judges (penal, civil, guardianship, etc.), employees from the many bodies handling migration, family mediators, psychologists, doctors, social workers, sociologists, educators and association representatives, among others.

The publication of the 2016 conference proceedings on the subject of '[New Forms of Parenting: Time to Share, but What about the Child?](#)' is intended for early 2017 (in French).

GENEVA SUMMER SCHOOL

Please be aware that enrollment for the Summer University on Children's Rights is open. It will take place from the 5th to the 17th of June 2017, within the framework of [Geneva Summer Schools](#) and will be titled Children at the Heart of Human Rights.

TRAINING PROGRAMMES

ABROAD

WEST AFRICA

The first [Certificate in protection and rights of the child](#) were awarded on the 22nd of July 2016 in Dakar, Senegal. The Swiss Embassy was present for the ceremony. On the 4th of August 2016, in Conakry, Guinea, the International Social Services organised a ceremony to present the certificates to the participants who hadn't been able to make the trip to Dakar.

In total, 32 participants received their certificate, signed by the IDE and Dakar's Centre for Judiciary Training, and with special mention 'with the collaboration of the University of Geneva.' This training programme, the first of its kind in West Africa, has been met with a resounding success!

PANAMA/LATIN AMERICA

Work continues on the development of an online programme ([Certificate of Advanced Studies in juvenile justice via e-learning](#)), resulting from a collaboration between the IDE, the CIDE and Terre des Hommes in Panama. The first of 5 modules will begin in March 2017. This training programme is intended for professionals engaged in interventions linked to the rights of children in conflict with the law or who are victims or witnesses. These include police,

prosecutors, judges, lawyers, institutional and penitentiary personnel, educators, psychologists, doctors (ex. paediatricians, paedopsychiatrists), criminologists, migration professionals, researchers, etc. The programme is aimed at professionals from Latin American or Spanish-speaking countries before any, as the first portion will be held in Spanish.

'INSIDE-THE-WALLS' TRAINING PROGRAMMES

The 9th edition of the [Master of Advanced Studies in Children's Rights \(MCR\)](#) will begin in February 2017 with approximately 20 participants.

The 8th edition of the [Interdisciplinary Master on Children's Rights \(MIDE\)](#) will begin this autumn. Candidates interested in joining for the 2017-2018 school year may apply through the [website of the University of Geneva](#), starting January 2017.

Classes for the fourth edition of the Certificate of Advanced Studies (CAS) '[Child victims, child witnesses: the word of a child in the justice system](#),' geared towards professionals of the socio-psycho-legal fields (child protection, mediation, magistracy, police, bar) continue until May 2017. Students will then write their thesis until September.

TAILOR-MADE TRAINING PROGRAMMES

SENEGAL

The third and fourth modules of the second training programme for educators in [juvenile justice](#) (FFJJ2), based on the model set by the 2012-2014 programme, took place in Dakar from the 18th to 22nd of June (themes: training of trainers, police intervention and restorative justice) and in Sion from the 29th of August to the 2nd of September, with a Senegalese delegation of 14 people. They were accompanied by the director of Dakar's Centre for Judiciary Training, M. Mamadou Diakhate, and human rights collaborator at the Swiss Embassy of Dakar, Mrs Sarah Fall. A representative of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs was also present for the welcome ceremony.



During this fourth module prepared by the IDE, visits on the ground were organised. Carried out in several French speaking cantons, they covered all the professional fields related to juvenile justice. These

include open and closed institutions, detention centres, juvenile courts, offices of penal mediation, a brigade for minors and the Commission on the Rights of the Child at the Geneva Bar. In each place, the persons in charge gave an incredible welcome to their visitors. At the end of the week, at the closing ceremony, all the participants received a certificate of participation.



BULGARIA

In Bulgaria, the Ministry of Justice asked the IDE to help flesh out last year's training programme to help reinforce the juvenile justice system, using three modules on training instructors, mediation in situations of juvenile crime and techniques on exercising a child's right to be heard. These three modules will be offered in the first semester in 2017.

SOMALIA

On the 7th of November, approximately 50 people participated in the [reflection day on the rights of the child in Somalia](#), co-organised by the International Institute on the Rights of the Child (IDE) and the [RAJO organisation](#) in Sion. The huge need for awareness raising and training in order to implement the UN's Convention on the Rights of the Child (newly ratified by this State-in-progress) were confirmed by the participants. Participants came from the government and academic world, from NGOs and the diaspora.



The organisers invited the different players present to build a network, in order to become more efficient. To participate: info@childsrighs.org

[More information.](#) [Photos.](#)

NETWORK



Alliance pour les droits des enfants migrants
Allianz für die Rechte der Migrantkinder
Alleanza per i diritti dei bambini migranti
Alliance for the rights of migrant children

On the 10th of November, at the Reformed Evangelical Church of Bern, the Alliance for the Rights of Migrant Children assembled federal and cantonal authorities, as well as representatives of institutions and NGOs, to discuss how to best handle unaccompanied migrant minors in Switzerland. The 2016 edition of the annual conference of the ADEM was also an opportunity to [evaluate](#) the recommendations made this spring by the Swiss Conference of the Cantonal Ministers of Social Affairs (CDAS). Read the report from the ADEM's website: enfants-migrants.ch

In August, the ADEM took a stance on the situation of rejected unaccompanied minors in Chiasso (Ticino) and Como (Italy), when they published a [press release](#) with Swiss media. Suicide attempt rates among unaccompanied minors living in Switzerland revealed in the press also [preoccupied](#) the ADEM.

Finally, the ADEM participated in an international symposium 'Global Migration / Asylum Governance: Advancing the International Agenda,' in Geneva. A workshop on migrant children was held on the 10th and 11th of October 2016. This symposium was organised by the University of Geneva, the University of California Davis and the League of European Research Universities (LERU).



At the occasion of the 20th of November, the [Child Rights Network Switzerland](#), of which the IDE is a founding member, published a 2016 assessment of the implementation of the [concluding observations](#) made by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child to Switzerland on the 4th of February 2015.

It is worth noting that Rahel Wartenweiler replaced Stefanie Knocks as the coordinator of this network in Bern, on the 1st of November 2016.

In Paris this October, the IDE also met in the name of the Child Rights Network Mrs Avenard, Defender of the Rights of the Child in France, in order to converse

on steps towards implementing the recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

THE VEILLARD CYBULSKI PRIZE

The Veillard-Cybulski Fund Association had the pleasure of awarding its 2016 prize to Moari judge Heemi Taumaunu for his pioneering work, 'The Experience and Protocols of the Rangatahi Court', which led to the founding of the courts in Rangatahi, New Zealand. Many countries combat the disproportionate number of ethnic minorities that appear before youth courts and are then subsequently interned. Thus, the jury gave special attention to one person – Judge Taumaunu – who followed an idea far beyond the usual procedures for young delinquents in his country. He introduced a system that works particularly well for Maori children and their families, who become implicated in the procedures, rather than alienated from them. This system has a promising future and is currently being adopted elsewhere.

THE SARAH OBERSON FOUNDATION

In 2014-2016, the Sarah Oberson Foundation put together a vast information campaign in schools throughout Valais romand and Haut-Valais ([activities report 2015](#)). To conclude this undertaking, the Foundation, with the help of students studying for an interdisciplinary Master's Degree on the Rights of the Child (MIDE) at the University of Geneva, began research on the impact of this awareness campaign.

The Sarah Oberson also undertook, in collaboration with the HES-SO Valais-Wallis, a quantitative research initiative on the disappearances of children over one or two years, in the canton of Valais. The goal was to gain sufficient elements to continue to raise awareness among authorities on the subject and the necessity to expand this knowledge across the whole of Switzerland, by setting up an annual national statistic and by encouraging scientific research.

RESEARCH

CSDH

The Thematic Cluster Childhood and Youth Politics and the Thematic Cluster of Gender Politics of the Swiss Centre of Expertise in Human Rights organised a conference on the 30th of August in Bern, discussing access to justice for women and children. A hundred or so people from many different horizons

attended this conference. The representative of Child Rights International Network (CRIN) of London, Leo Ratledge, broached the application of the rights of adolescents and children by exposing certain aspects of the Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children related to justice adapted to children and the experience of various European countries on the subject. The two workshops that followed the exposés included presentations by the Thematic Clusters of Gender and Childhood Politics on their on-going projects in this field of research. A debate with the participants followed. Regarding the participation of children in judiciary procedures, it became apparent that it is necessary to raise awareness and train key players. In particular, the relevant players are not always aware that a child's right to participation (guaranteed by art. 12 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child) goes beyond simply guaranteeing the right to be heard by Swiss legislation. It also means that authorities must take the desires and needs of the child into account, independent from their parents.

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To all of you, we wish happy holidays and a dynamic start to the New Year, in order to help face the many challenges remaining to uphold the rights of the child!

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