



Alternative care and adoption

The life of the child before his or her adoption

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Introduction

- 2.7 million children living in institutions
- Importance of life before adoption
 - Fosters solid adoptions - reasons for recourse to adoption
 - Improve understanding of current behaviour
 - Identity and access to origins etc.

As for me, I resemble a little Chinese, the imagination is fertile, fragile and flexible: I dream, I invent stories, I invent one history, but I am lying, I am lying to myself, I know: It is not the same each time ... I don't know where I came from. Where can I go now? « L'enfant meurtri – S'en sortir sans rancune », Genny Le Thi Mui, 1993



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Outline

1. International standards
2. Life of “individual” child (subjective factors)
3. Environment of the child (objective factors)
4. Alternative care conditions of the child
5. Child’s preparation for adoption

Conclusions



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1. International law

- 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child
 - continuity in a child's upbringing (art 20(3))
- 1993 Hague Convention
 - report about individual child (art 16)
 - report of PAPS (art 15)
- 2010 Guidelines on the alternative care of children
 - support and prevention
 - gatekeeping and continuum of quality care
 - principle of subsidiarity



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2. Child's individual background (subjective factors)

- Relinquishment
- Abandonment
- Administrative or judicial decision
- Death of parent(s)
- Emergency situation
- Etc.



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3. Environment of the child (objective factors)

- Level of poverty
- Regional environment
- Enabling factors leading to illicit practices
- Political situation
- Health conditions
- Daily living habits
- Concept of the family
- Adoption culture
- Etc.



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4. Alternative care conditions of the child

- Gatekeeping mechanisms
- Contact with family of origin etc.
- Foster care
- Number of placements and length of time
- Living in an institution
- Etc.
- **Examples:** Chile, New Zealand and South Africa



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5. Child's preparation for adoption

- Accounting for subjective factors
 - Quality of psychological and physical care?
 - Separation of siblings
- Accounting for objective factors
 - Living habits, concept of family and adoption culture
- Accounting for care factors
 - Child's participation
 - Presentation of “adoptive” family
 - Lifebook



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Conclusion

- close link of past to present behaviour
- unlikely to know 100% of subjective & objective factors
- duty to collect as much information as possible
- ISS is available support (“objective” factors, search for origins, adoption breakdowns, illicit practices)

“Life can only be understood backwards, but it must be lived forwards” Soren Kierkegaard

“ Learn about the future by looking at the past” Tamil Proverb



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