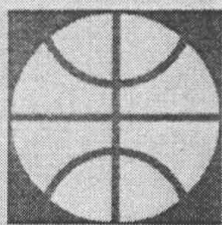


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FICE

NEWS

FICE was founded under the auspices of UNESCO in 1948. It has developed into an international forum of practitioners and academics for the exchange of experience in the field of care and education for children and young people both within and outside their families.

FICE is engaged in all aspects of child and youth care – across international borders.

Fédération Internationale des Communautés Educatives
International Federation of Educative Communities
Internationale Gesellschaft für erzieherische Hilfen
ONG – UNESCO/UNICEF/ECOSOC/CONSEIL D'EUROPE

Looking ahead for the next fifty years

This year, FICE, the oldest international organisation in the field of residential care, celebrated its 50th anniversary. When I say "old" I do not mean "old-fashioned". In fact, it is quite difficult nowadays in this particular area of child welfare, to act as an organisation "defending" placements outside the family. In fact, FICE is not defending the act of taking out a child from his family of origin. In the years after its foundation in 1948, this was perhaps true for some "children's villages" which considered the nuclear family as being partly responsible for the emergency of fascism. In large communities, children got the opportunity to learn to live in democratic, self-governed structures and to act as responsible "citizens" of their community.

Currently, FICE defends the rights of the children living in residential and other forms of extrafamilial care. These rights, might considered as additional rights to those formulated in the International Convention of the United Nations on the Rights of the Child. The compulsory nature of a placement outside his family makes a child more vulnerable because of the fact that he or she mostly doesn't understand quite well the necessity of the measure and that he or she quite often resists the placement more or less violently. The discussion about these rights started at a FICE-seminar in Espoo (Finland) and was continued by the publication in 1996 of a brochure by the Dutch section of Defence for Children International, together with FICE and the European Forum for Child Welfare (EFCW). Today, it is difficult to find comparable statistical material about placements in extrafamilial care in Europe: there are no common definitions of the different forms of placement, data are collected in different ways and records are not accessible in many countries or regions.

During the sixties and the seventies, the big institutions in Western Europe disappeared. During the eighties, units with 8-10 children living in small houses were the dominant form of residential care, but the number of children placed in such units decreased whereas the number of children in foster care increased. Today, this trend seems to be stopped, the number of children in residential care seems even to be growing slightly again. One tries to explain this by the increasing number of single parent families, the increasing number of women on the labour market, the fact that children are more and more aggressive and violent etc...



Summary

- FICE's through present and future
- The alarming situation in Russia
- News from FICE's world
- Dates and events

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The situation of Russian children is alarming

The Russian Federation is going through a deep socio-economic crisis. The overall worsening of living standard and the quality of life is painfully reflected in the lives of children and families with children. Children of single-parent families, big families and children with disabilities suffer most of all.

All basic indicators of well-being show alarming readings. For example, there is a significant growth of the number of children with disorders of bodily development. Under the worsening conditions of nourishment and the lack of vaccination there has been a steady increase in morbidity of children. Many children are underweight. The number of children with disabilities has increased due to the high morbidity of pregnant women, poor working conditions, the ecological situation as well as the low standard of health care institutions. Over the past years, life expectancy of teenagers has been steadily declining.

The economic crisis which has now gone on for many years, coupled with a disastrous fall in production volumes, has made the problem of poverty the key social issue, because it drags down all other social welfare indices. For the present, over half of the population is poor and over 20 % have low incomes...

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