ISPCAN Country Partner is Instrumental in Development of Child Protection System in Belarus

The problem of child abuse is as relevant to Belarus as to every other country in the world. In contrast to developed countries with advanced systems of violence identification and assistance to children victims, it is estimated that more than 90% of such cases are still not reported in Belarus.

There are several major reasons for the low reporting rate of such crimes, including the inefficiency of the disclosure process; citizens’ distrust of the police and other law enforcement agencies; and low availability of emergency, anonymous and high-quality psychological help. It is in respect of the latter when a nongovernmental organization could help.

The international nongovernmental organization (INGO) “Ponimanie”/“Understanding” is an active participant in the process of providing help to sexually abused children and assisting in the fight against violence and child abuse.

INGO “Ponimanie”/“Understanding” was established in 2000 as a result of the work of the organizational group and a group of young psychologists who were graduates of the Faculty of Psychology of the Academy of Postgraduate Studies. By 2002, “Ponimanie”/“Understanding” had gained an international status as its affiliated branches in Ukraine and Lithuania were opened.

Today the organization’s staff consists of 5 board members, 10 staff members, 24 experts and more than 140 volunteers. “Ponimanie”/“Understanding” also has a number of international experts and consultants in the fields of response to child abuse and neglect, child trafficking and providing care to children, as well as in the sphere of deinstitutionalization, support of children in boarding schools and asylums, and the development for family-based care of orphaned children.

The organization aims at promoting child and parental rights; preventing child abuse and neglect; and participating in projects and programs that develop a psychological basis for theoretical and practical actions in the field. All these objectives are summarized in the mission of “Ponimanie”/“Understanding”, which also serves as the motto for the staff: Professional and voluntary participation in the establishment of a humane world, suitable for all children to happily live in.
The most important target groups of “Ponimanie”/“Understanding” are children and their families, professionals in the field of children’s rights and child protection, orphanages, law enforcement, investigators, prosecutors, physicians, nurses, social workers, psychologists, and other professionals working to prevent and respond to child abuse. The organization provides the following activities and services:

- Preventing and responding to child abuse and neglect;
- Preventing child abuse in institutions and supporting deinstitutionalization and family-based care of orphaned children; and
- Creating a friendly social environment for children.

Activities at “Ponimanie”/“Understanding” are divided into five programs that have large areas of mutual intersection:

- **Formulating methods, strategies and policies** aimed at protecting children’s rights and preventing child abuse;
- **Direct assistance to abused children** and to children who have been the witnesses of violence;
- Creating a friendly social environment for children, including measures to change public awareness and inform society about children’s rights, the problems of child abuse and institutionalization, and ways to solve such problems;
- Supporting child victims and their families to protect their rights (advocacy); and
- **Supporting local NGOs** whose work aligns with the interests and mission of “Ponimanie”/“Understanding” at the local, town, regional and country levels.

In summary, the main activities and services provided by “Ponimanie”/“Understanding” are: summer camps, training seminars and workshops, consulting and assessment of interdisciplinary teams, expert participation, evaluation and consultation in international projects, and development of various methods for guarding and protecting children.

The years 2009-2011 were very productive for the organization, as its recent activities have become visible in the professional community worldwide. In 2009, INGO “Ponimanie”/“Understanding” launched the project “Dom Ponimaniya” (“House of Understanding”) which is a Belarusian counterpart of the Scandinavian model “Barnahus”, where children are provided with a whole range of services, beginning with child-friendly interviews and finishing with the rehabilitation process. More than 1050 specialists have been trained on the child-friendly approach to children participating in the penal and civil process during 2009-12. Also in 2009, the organization initiated the elaboration of the model and strategy on prevention of violence towards children and on providing assistance to children.
The years 2009-2011 were also marked by the implementation of projects in the field of child trafficking prevention, including awareness-raising among education specialists and the introduction of the human trafficking topic into continuation education programs for specialists. Moreover, during this period, 7 new child-friendly interview rooms were opened, covering every region of Belarus, increasing the number of these rooms to 8 in total. In 2012, the organization plans to open more such interview rooms in other Belarusian cities.

In April 2010, the First International Conference “Safe Belarus - for Children” was held and it laid the foundation for an annual conference. Every year this conference gathers about 200 participants from different countries and organizations. The fourth “Safe Belarus – for Children” international conference is planned for December 13-15, 2012 and cordially welcomes participants from the region of Eastern Europe and worldwide.

The main achievement of 2011 was the opening of 24/7 Child Help Line 8-801-100-1611, all calls to which are free of charge. The creation of Child Helpline has become a model example of state and private sector partnership, with the participation of two key government authorities (the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Belarus and the Ministry of Communications and Information of the Republic of Belarus), a public institution (the Republic Research and Practice Centre of Mental Health), a state utility enterprise (Beltelecom) and a public association (INGO “Ponimanie”/“Understanding”).

Today, “Ponimanie”/“Understanding” continues to work on long-term projects in partnership with the EC Funded Government and civil society for the development of child protection systems (British Council Ukraine – INGO “Ponimanie”/“Understanding”), discussion of comprehensive approaches to protect children from abuse, and youth participation in fighting child abuse (funded by the U.S. Embassy in Belarus). For the past 3 years, the organization has been implementing a program of capacity building and the development of direct services for protection from sexual abuse, following the CoE Committee of Ministers’ recommendations 2009/2010. INGO “Ponimanie”/“Understanding” has developed a strategy for child abuse prevention and support to abused children for Belarus, and has implemented some elements of direct support services. “Ponimanie”/“Understanding” also launched a Center for Missing and Exploited Children in January 1, 2012, which is aimed at assisting law enforcement agencies and raising public awareness about missing children.

INGO “Ponimanie”/“Understanding” is actively developing its international relations. “Ponimanie” has been the ISPCAN Country Partner in Belarus since 2006. It is also associated with the Children Rights Protection Coalition (Belarus, Russia, USA), CRPCI and CCWF (USA - International), National District Attorney Association (USA), Center of Child Abuse Studies of Oklahoma University (USA), National Children’s Advocacy Center (USA - International), Council of Baltic Sea States (Sweden – International), Child Helpline International (Netherlands – International), National Child Protection Training Center (USA), SOS-Kinderdorf (Belarus and Regional), and National Children’s Rights Networking (Belarus).

“Ponimanie”/“Understanding” has also established partnering programs and projects with the British Council (UK/Ukraine), the Nizhniy Novgorod Resource Center “Childhood without Violence and Cruelty” in Russia, and permanently participates as the partner in projects conducted by the IOM (Belarus office) and the UNICEF office in Belarus.

Since its organization, “Ponimanie”/“Understanding” has been led by Andrey Makhanko and his fellow associates. Thanks to skilful management and dedication to children, “Ponimanie”/“Understanding” is endowing the Belarusian civil society with a great number of cutting-edge initiatives including the first state-of-the-art forensic and clinical interviewing facilities, and fostering the development and expansion of a Belarus-wide network of professionals working to prevent and respond to child abuse and neglect.

Contact Information:
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Tel.: +375 17 259 4883; +375 17 257 1212
Email: office@ponimanie.org
www.ponimanie.org or www.rasskazhi.by
Chairperson: Andrey Makhanko
Message from the Leadership

Dear ISPCAN Members:

We are pleased to announce the results of the Executive Council 2012 election. Jenny Gray, Des Runyan, Joan van Niekerk and Tufail Muhammad have been re-elected and Yanghee Lee, Toshihiko Yanagawa and Rajeev Seth have been elected. The new Councilors will take their place on the Council in September and will serve until 2018; we look forward to their contributions to ISPCAN. We would like to thank the other nominees for participating in the election process – Carolina Øverlien, Lucia Williams, Figen Sahin, Lia Saralidze, Georgios Nikolaidis, Jan Horwath and Andrey Makhanko. We would also like to thank all of our members who voted. Further election details can be found later in this newsletter.

Elections for officers for 2012-2014 have also concluded. Joan van Niekerk has been elected President Elect, Victoria Lidchi has been elected Secretary, and Martin Finkel has been elected Treasurer. They will take their positions in September 2012.

For the benefit of our members, ISPCAN has translated more of its training materials into Arabic, Chinese, French, Russian and Spanish; these materials can be found at http://www.ispcan.org/?page=Training_Materials. The ISPCAN Child Abuse Screening Tools (ICAST) have also been translated into additional languages, including Albanian, Croatian, Macedonian, Marathi, Turkish and other languages. Information on the ICAST can be found at http://www.ispcan.org/?page=ICAST.

We would like to invite our members to submit articles for the LINK on the child protection work that they are doing. The article should be between ½ and 2 pages long and should be sent to our Executive Director, Sherrie Bowen, at execdirector@ispcan.org. Our members are always interested to hear of other members’ work. Also, if you have a new position, have received an award, or have other news you’d like to share, please send an email to Kayla Manzel, our Membership Services and Communications Coordinator, at membership@ispcan.org so we can include it in the Member News section of our website.

Online registration for the 2012 ISPCAN International Congress on Child Abuse and Neglect, which will be held 9 - 12 September in Istanbul, Turkey, is still open. Please check the congress website: http://ispcan2012.org/ for further details and for information on the Countries in Transition Forum, which will be held on 8 September; the Master Class, which will be held on 9 September; and the Working Group on National Child Maltreatment Data Collection, which will meet from 8:30 to 13:00 on 9 September. The ISPCAN Country Partner meeting will be held during the lunch break on Monday, 10 September and the ISPCAN Membership meeting will be held during the lunch break on Tuesday, 11 September. We hope to see you in Istanbul!

With Kindest Regards,

Dr. Irene Intebi
ISPCAN President

Sherrie L. Bowen
ISPCAN Executive Director

Legal Advisor/Parliamentarian
Henry Plum, JD
As you are aware, this is the first year that ISPCAN has implemented the option of on-line voting through the ISPCAN website along with the usual email, fax and postal voting. The on-line voting option stream-lined the process and thus far neither the ISPCAN Secretariat Office nor my office have received any complaints. I would like to acknowledge the excellent effort and assistance of the ISPCAN Secretariat Office in completing this voting process.

Ballots were collected at the ISPCAN Secretariat Office for the 2012-2018 Executive Councilor election and sent to the ISPCAN Parliamentarian/Legal Advisor. The official count of the votes was performed by the ISPCAN Parliamentarian/Legal Advisor and his staff.

The 2012 ISPCAN Councilor voting results are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nominee</th>
<th>Vote Total</th>
<th>Top 7 Selected</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jenny Gray</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Des Runyan</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joan van Nieker</td>
<td>74</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Tufail Muhammad</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yanghee Lee</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toshihiko Yanagawa</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rajeev Seth</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carolina Øverlien</td>
<td>58</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lucia Williams</td>
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<tr>
<td>Figen Sahin</td>
<td>54</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lia Saralidze</td>
<td>41</td>
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<tr>
<td>Georgios Nikolaidis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan Horwath</td>
<td>35</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Andrey Makhanko</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Votes cast by:

- **Online**: 145
- **Email**: 7
- **Fax**: 5
- **Postal**: 2

Number of countries represented by voters: **45**

Sincerely,

Henry J. Plum, J.D.
ISPCAN Parliamentarian/Legal Advisor

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**New ISPCAN Members**

ISPCAN warmly welcomes new members joining April - July 2012

**Australia**
- David Barton
- Maureen Dawson-Smith
- Murray Dawson-Smith
- Ronda Johns
- Maree Elizabeth Lubach
- Helen McLaren
- Rudi Rolih
- Dawn Wallam

**Brazil**
- Reginaldo Torres Alves Jr

**Canada**
- Karine Bari
- Sophie Boucher
- Francine Demontigny
- Annie Devault
- Donald Fuchs
- Dermot Joseph Hurley
- Susan Jack
- Louise Lemay
- Laura Wright

**Chile**
- Andres Fresno
- Paula Moreno

**Colombia**
- Esperanza Cabrera

**India**
- Kumudini Achchi

**Italy**
- Vincenza Palmieri
- Patricia Ray
- Gloria Soavi

**Japan**
- Masato Hirayu
- Kengo Kitajima
- Koji Tanoue

**New Zealand**
- Irene de Haan
- Frederick William Seymour
- Sarah Anne Wolstenholme

**Nigeria**
- Amaka Awogu
- Ezinwanne Azfredrick
- David Idowu
- Peggy Onuchukwu

**Pakistan**
- Muhammad Rafiq Khan

**Serbia**
- Ljiljana Bogavac
- Dusica Popadic

**South Africa**
- Louise Henderson
- Phathisiwe Ngwenya

**Sweden**
- Kjerstin Almqvist
- Tanja Maria Hilberg

**Taiwan**
- Hsin Yi Chang
- Tzu-Yi Huang
- Feng Jui-Ying

**Turkey**
- Mehmet Aközer
- Husniye Altan
- Ummu Aydin
- Ceyda DedeoÂŸlu
- Bahar Gokler
- Emre Günþür
- Medine Aysin Tasar

**United Kingdom**
- Debbie Ariyo
- Rose Crowley
- Sharon Anne Jackson
- Sonia Jenkins
- Christopher Tompsett
- Andrew Ware

**United States**
- Sepideh Adhami
- Felipa Chavez
- Jamye Coffman
- Christine Corken
- Catherine DeRidder
- Colleen Henry
- John Lutzker
- Kathleen MacFarlane
- Madelin McClure
- Shalon Nienow
- Maryalice Nocera
- Emily Putnam-Hornstein
- Bethany Roberts
- Valerie Simon
- Charles J Stecker
- Meagan Tucker
Meet Your ISPCAN Councilor: Jenny Gray

Greetings from London, England, where we are experiencing the wettest summer ever! I am writing this as I prepare to assume the role of ISPCAN President after the Congress in Istanbul. It is a very busy period - preparing presentations, making travel arrangements and trying to complete work before going home to New Zealand to celebrate my mother’s 80th birthday and then attend the Congress. It seems a familiar pattern, having attended my first congress in Chicago in 1992.

I have found my involvement with ISPCAN to be one of the cornerstones of my professional development and the source of many long friendships. As a Council we hope that this will also be your experience and welcome your thoughts on how we can continue to respond to your needs.

Having trained as a social worker in New Zealand in the late 1970s, I was always looking to ‘overseas’ for ideas and research findings to improve my work. Indeed one of the reasons I came to England was to do a Family Therapy course which, at that time, was not possible in New Zealand. Travel and excitement were the other major drivers!

I never intended to stay in England, not least because I thrive on sun and beaches, but having begun to work initially for a local authority and then at Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital (GOS) in London, I became so involved in my job I just never went home permanently. I do, however, remain a New Zealander at heart.

GOS, with its pioneering work in child protection and commitment to multi-disciplinary working, offered fabulous opportunities to a green social worker from the Antipodes. This learning, enhanced by working with first rate professionals, has stood me in good stead in my current role providing professional policy advice on child protection for the Government in England. Working for the Government has also enabled me to use my knowledge to develop policy, statutory guidance, training materials and inspection methodologies. In addition I have been committed to commissioning research and using these findings and statistical data to inform policy and practice. I have been fortunate to work with excellent researchers and clinicians as well as administrators. A key product from our endeavours was the publication of an overview of 15 research studies from the Safeguarding Children Research Initiative, which began in 2004. These studies were brought together last year in Safeguarding Children Across Services.

Through both my government and ISPCAN roles, I have been privileged to meet and work with professionals from many countries. These encounters are very important in sharing knowledge and experience internationally. I am always struck by how similar our issues and challenges are irrespective of where we come from. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is a very effective glue to bind us together and keep our focus on children’s rights and improving children’s daily life experiences. I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible in Istanbul and continuing to share our learning.

Jenny Gray, ISPCAN President Elect

ISPCAN Country Partners

- African Network for the Prevention and Protection Against Child Abuse and Neglect (ANPPCAN), Ethiopia
- African Network for the Prevention and Protection Against Child Abuse and Neglect (ANPPCAN), Kenya
- African Network for the Prevention and Protection Against Child Abuse and Neglect (ANPPCAN), Nigeria
- African Network for the Prevention and Protection Against Child Abuse and Neglect (ANPPCAN), Uganda
- Against Child Abuse (ACA), Hong Kong
- American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children (APSAC), United States of America
- Asian Regional Network, Asia
- Asociación Argentina de Prevención del Maltrato Infantil-Juvenil (ASAPMI), Argentina
- Asociación Contra El Maltrato Infantil (AFECTO), Colombia
- Association Française d’Information et de Recherche sur l’Enfance Maltraité (AFIREM), France
- British Association for the Study and Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (BASPSCAN), United Kingdom
- Cameroon Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (CASPSCAN), Cameroon
- Danish Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (DASPCAN), Denmark
- Enfants Solidaires d’Afrique et du Monde (ESAM), Benin
- Federation of Associations for Prevention of Child Mistreatment (FAPMI)
- German Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (GESPCAN), Germany
- INGO “Ponimanie” (“Understanding”), Belarus
- Italian Network of Services for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (CISMAI), Italy
- IUS et VITA (I.E.V. - Justice and Life), DR Congo
- Japanese Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (JaSPCAN), Japan
- Malaysian Association for the Protection of Children (PPKM), Malaysia
- National Association for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (NAPCAN), Australia
- National Family Safety Program (NFSP), Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
- National Society for Child Abuse and Neglect (NS-CAN), Romania
- Nordic Association for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (NASPCAN), Denmark, Finland, Greenland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden
- Singapore Children’s Society, Singapore
- Turkish Society for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (TSPCAN), Turkey
ISPCAN Country Partner Spotlight:
Turkish Society for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect

The Turkish Society for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (TSPCAN) was founded in 1988 with the efforts of several pioneers, including Esin Konanc and Sezen Zeytinoglu, who were in close collaboration with ISPCAN and who were also ISPCAN Councillors at the time. TSPCAN gradually expanded and today has more than 300 members throughout the country.

TSPCAN aimed to raise awareness about child abuse and neglect as the subject was totally denied in the 1990s in Turkey. Having a common mission with ISPCAN, TSPCAN has organized national and international conferences, symposia and congresses, offered trainings to various professionals in identification of child abuse and neglect, management and working together, and initiated services for prevention.

TSPCAN worked in close collaboration with ISPCAN and, in 2001 organized the ISPCAN European Regional Conference in Istanbul. The Society became a Country Partner of ISPCAN in 2006; and TSPCAN will be hosting the XIXth ISPCAN International Congress on Child Abuse and Neglect in Istanbul this year on 9-12 September 2012.

Organizational Structure:

The TSPCAN board consists of 9 members who serve 3 year terms. The structure of the board reflects the multidisciplinary approach of TSPCAN to child abuse and neglect and consists of lawyers, pediatricians, child psychiatrists and social workers.

Prevention Programs:

1. Family Training Programs:
   a. For parents of children ages 0-6 years: This program, which lasts for 12 weeks, consists of communication skills and positive parenting methods, helping to raise physically and mentally healthy children and preventing child abuse and neglect.
   b. For parents of adolescents: This program, which also lasts for 12 weeks, focuses on characteristics of the adolescent period and educates parents about how to communicate with their adolescents and prevent abuse in this period.
   c. Shaken baby prevention program: This program consists of a training video that is shown to pregnant women who come to hospitals for their last trimester check-ups and to mothers of newborns either in nursery or during well child care visits.

2. Training Programs for Children: Developed and carried out by young college student volunteers, this program aims to teach primary school students how to protect themselves from physical and sexual abuse.

3. Training of Professionals Working in Child Protection Area: TSPCAN provides training courses for teachers, school counselors, police, social workers, family physicians, nurses and lawyers on the identification of risks for child abuse; the identification and management of the victims; and emphasizes the importance of a multidisciplinary approach to prevent secondary abuse by the system.

We hope to see you in Istanbul at the XIXth ISPCAN International Congress on Child Abuse and Neglect in September 2012.