

XIII EurAdopt International Conference

The Intercountry Adoption Dilemma

“How can we provide the highest level of protection to abandoned children?”



THE IMPACT OF THE IA FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF AN ORIGIN COUNTRY:

THE CASE OF BURKINA FASO

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PLAN

INTRODUCTION

- ❑ **The positive impacts of the IA in Burkina Faso**
- ❑ **The negative impacts of Intercountry Adoption**
- ❑ **Some solutions to make intercountry adoption a good option for abandoned children**

CONCLUSION



INTRODUCTION

- ❑ Intercountry Adoption as a measure of protection for children deprived of their family, has developed a great deal over the last ten years in Africa, in the West African sub-region and particularly in Burkina Faso.
- ❑ Statistics show this clearly. In Burkina Faso, for example, from 2006 to 2016, 867 children were adopted abroad compared to 355 at the national level for the same period.
- ❑ As a well-guarded protection measure, it has positive impacts at three levels: institutional, programmatic and at the level of human resources and cooperation.



INTRODUCTION

- ❑ However, challenges remain to ensure that intercountry adoption remains a good option for the protection of abandoned children.
- ❑ **What are its positive impacts, what are the major disadvantages and what solutions to make IA a better option to ensure the highest level of protection for abandoned children?**



THE POSITIVE IMPACTS OF INTERNATIONAL ADOPTION

At institutional level

- ❑ the IA has led Burkina Faso to ratify the 1993 Hague Convention. This has made it possible to draft and revise specific texts regulating adoption;
- ❑ the IA has shown a political will, more visible at the level of the authorities of the country, by the search for a better organization of the sector of the adoption: the creation of specific direction in charge of adoption
- ✓ Establishment of an interministerial Central Authority (with fairly clear missions);
- ✓ clear regulation of national and international adoption process



POSITIVE IMPACTS OF INTERNATIONAL ADOPTION

- develop tools for the management of national and international adoptions in the country;
- Settlement of Adoption Costs;
- Better consideration of the issue of care for children deprived of families that has become a specific program in the Ministry's action plan

(Inclusion of a budget line to support childcare centers and families, to carry out social surveys for children, to supervise the supervision of childcare centers, to hold reflection workshops and matching session etc.);



POSITIVE IMPACTS OF INTERNATIONAL ADOPTION

At the program level

- IA allows systematic and strict adherence to the principles of subsidiarity and non-discrimination at the level of children in need of family
- The IA remains the only solution for a certain category of children (those with special needs, victims of socio-cultural considerations)
- With IA, there is real awareness at the stakeholder level that adoption is a child protection measure
- There is also a better empowerment of actors in relation to adoptions



POSITIVE IMPACTS OF INTERNATIONAL ADOPTION

- ❑ there is also an awareness among the population that recognizes that the IA is above all a solution to the problems of children deprived of family and not their rejection or denial
- ❑ the international adoption allowed to give a permanent and secure family to each of the 1681 Burkinabe children from 1998 to 2016
- ❑ The success of intercountry adoptions has sparked national interest in adopting children. Of 20 children in 2006, 52 children were recorded in 2005 and 56 in 2011.



POSITIVE IMPACTS OF INTERNATIONAL ADOPTION

- ❑ The IA has allowed better care for children deprived of family both in the centers and in host families by developing several actions with the technical and financial support of partner, Central Authorities and Accredited bodies (CIA, MIA, CIAI, ARAI, NOVA, AC Child support, Shalom movement, Saint Egidio, etc;
- ❑ The IA has made it possible to envisage a better coordination of relevant and sustainable actions in the area of adoptions with all partners through the development of action plans. These plans serve as a tool for assessing impacts in the area of adoptions



POSITIVE IMPACTS OF INTERNATIONAL ADOPTION

At the level of actors and cooperation

- ❑ The IA has provided frameworks for reflection and permanent exchange of experiences to improve practices in the implementation of the Hague Convention in Burkina Faso
- ❑ IA has helped develop and strengthen collaboration between actors at the internal level (Judges, social workers, psychologist---,)
- ❑ The IA has allowed the development of external cooperation (with Central Authorities, Accredited bodies, Permanent Bureau, ISS and UNICEF staff in the country, etc.).
- ❑ At the macro level, the development of the IA has made it possible to strengthen sub regional and international bilateral cooperation. Indeed, the actors exchange among themselves on the questions of adoptions and standards of care for children,



NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF INTERNATIONAL ADOPTION



At the procedural level

- ❑ the IA puts strong pressure on the actors of the countries of origin (some candidates pass (interventions) by knowledge usually of high authorities (wife of the president, deputies, prime minister, etc.) of the country to make finalize quickly their project of adoption.
- ❑ Insistent requests from prospective adopters, especially those not supervised by an Accredited bodies but also some Accredited bodies.
- ❑ Another negative consequence of adoption is the still existence of dubious practices (falsification of birth certificates, acts of consent to the adoption of the non-conforming family council, etc.) with a strong tendency to hide steps of the adoption process



NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF INTERNATIONAL ADOPTION

- ❑ Unrestrained money research can also lead some actors to resort to illegal practices (including money to facilitate or speed up adoption process, falsification of signatures, aggravation of medical diagnosis, hasty assessment of the child's adoptability without respect principle of subsidiarity etc.)
- ❑ The development of the IA leads to unfair competition (comparisons between host countries and between Accredited bodies compared to the number of children received at the same time)
- ❑ The IA has led to the multiplication of reception centers for children in distress in countries such as Burkina Faso (40 centers in 2007, we increased to 75 centers in 2010)



NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF INTERNATIONAL ADOPTION

- ❑ The development of the IA brings a huge workload with often unqualified staff. As a result, there is a lack of organization of post-adoption services, including the archiving of adoption files (lack of a reliable database on intercountry adoptions, etc.)
- ❑ Non-compliance with the post-adoption monitoring commitments of some host countries. Many children have left and have remained unheard of often, even in simple adoption;
- ❑ The fashion of the IA has been fashionable and everyone is going all over the place to have children at all costs while the situations are not the same (intra-family adoption all-out, adoption by non-resident nationals and expatriates residents, adoption-migration, etc.)



NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF INTERNATIONAL ADOPTION

- ❑ All of these situations have negative repercussions on the IA in many countries of origin.

At the level of the parties (child, biological parents)

- ❑ One of the negative impacts of the IA is the fact that the majority of children adopted internationally lose their roots (full adoption in the legal sense is not perceived as, such in Africa, especially in Burkina Faso)
- ❑ The question of returning to the country of origin remains the child's entire life and requires a better view at the level of the actors.



NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF INTERNATIONAL ADOPTION

- ❑ Another negative aspect is the fact that the biological parents will remain for life mark by this absence, this emptiness caused by this history of abandonment and adoption (parents return to social services or childcare centers for ask for news of their child)

At the level of the population in general

- ❑ IA makes the country of origin lose some valid arms;
- ❑ At the social level, the IA is poorly perceived by the population, which sometimes considers it, a disguised form of slavery; (justifying the refractory positions of many actors and some people for IA)



SOME SOLUTIONS TO MAKE IT A GOOD OPTION FOR ABANDONED CHILDREN



- Despite the existence of some negative impacts of IA, we dare to believe that it still constitutes a relevant solution to the problems of children deprived of family.
- To optimize its positive impacts and make it really a good option, we need actions to prevent the risks of malfeasance:
- Continue advocacy for the ratification and effective implementation of the provisions of the Hague Convention by the various countries to better secure the parties and prevent abuses;



SOME SOLUTIONS TO MAKE IT A GOOD OPTION FOR ABANDONED CHILDREN

- Establish a strict regulation of the costs of national and international adoption
- Respect the internal texts of the countries of origin in particular concerning the criteria of choice of the candidates for the adoption
- provide on-the-job training for actors in the field
- Intensify public awareness actions



SOME SOLUTIONS TO MAKE IT A GOOD OPTION FOR ABANDONED CHILDREN

- Provide institutional support to the national adoption management system
- Strengthen frameworks for consultation between competent authorities both at national and international level
- Controlling the creation and operation of host centers and families



SOME SOLUTIONS TO MAKE IT A GOOD OPTION FOR ABANDONED CHILDREN

- ❑ To develop a culture of return to origins for adopted children
- ❑ Write an ethical charter on adoption for the attention of all concerned and involved in national and international adoption process to **moralize international adoption.**



CONCLUSION

- ❑ IA is a good measure for deprived children,
- ❑ It has good impacts if it's better practiced
- ❑ It's has also some inconvenients but if the solutions proposed are taken into account, mainly the moralization of adoption, it can help make IA be a better measure for children deprived of family.



THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!

**A FAMILY FOR EVERY
CHILD AND NOT A
CHILD FOR EACH
FAMILY**

