

## Updates on the Abandonment Emergency



### **Child Abandonment: Awareness and Responsibility to Act**

Amici dei Bambini (Ai.Bi.), Children's Friends, is an Italian association born in 1986 from a spontaneous movement of adoptive families with the goal of giving a family to all abandoned children.

Therefore, our mission targets all children worldwide without parental care and aims at allowing them to have their right to be sons or daughters implemented as provided for by the 1989 U.N. Convention on Children Rights. Our struggle is not an easy one: in accordance to the available data, child abandonment has given rise to as many as 145 millions of orphans in the whole world (UNICEF, 2003), the great majority of which is located in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

Only in Europe and Central Asia 1,5 millions of children are growing up in institutes (TransMonee, 2005)!

Due to the spreading of HIV/AIDS and the aggravating of poverty in less developed countries, these figures are likely to be much higher and they will surely increase over the next years if no concrete actions will be taken. In particular, we address the right of being legally recognized and protected of the so-called Out-of-Family Children, who are not just children without parental care, but also the ones living in institutes or those entrusted to in foster care for an undetermined period.

Figures show that only in 38 countries out of 193 on which Ai.Bi. has collected data there are more than 2 millions and 500 thousands Out-of-Family Children. Due to the proportions and its harming consequences on children, Ai.Bi. believes that child abandonment amounts to a real Humanitarian Emergency.

This is because it undermines the enjoyment of other children's human rights, it exposes them to sexual exploitation, social deviance, violence, social exclusion, human trafficking and other forms of criminal exploitation.

Child abandonment deprives children of the support and love which only a family may give them and it destructs children's relational and cognitive skills by harming their self-confidence. Even more alarming, child abandonment is likely to perpetuate itself in the society through the replication of behaviours. Despite this, to date child abandonment has not been regarded as a humanitarian emergency by the world community because of the lack of visibility which other global emergencies have.

Child abandonment is not bloody as a war neither deadly as an epidemic disease and eventually abandoned children are provided material support, such as food and shelter, when placed in boarding institutes. Nevertheless, relying on such reasoning would mean turning a blind eye and forgetting our precise responsibilities towards children, the next generations: an abandoned child is a responsibility for each one of us and his future depends also upon our actions. It is time to stand up for the human right of children to a family!

This is the goal of our newsletters: by informing and disseminating knowledge on such a humanitarian emergency, we will be raising awareness on it and contributing to eradicate child abandonment through a family-based approach.

I ask you to make your part and to join us, in our efforts to give a family to all abandoned children worldwide.



Marco Griffini- Ai.Bi. President