



Il Melograno: the welcome network

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Bolivia

Il Melograno's youths on the radio.

The representatives of three Bolivian care-leavers group (Cuentas Conmigo from Chocabamba, AJUCA from La Paz and Jovisdeibi from Potosi) took part to "Sin Barreiras" a radio show broadcasted by Radio Patria Nueva, of La Paz.

Their participation was an occasion to point out the lack of social and occupational assistance for teenagers leaving boarding institutes and the difficulties met by the governmental institutions (Sedeges, Courts of Law and Defensorias) that should grant them the right to a family.



Each care leaver talked about his/her personal experience, about the discomforts caused by leaving an institution and about the psychological void originated from a life led without parental care. The radio program had a great audience success and many listeners phoned to ask questions, to express their solidarity or just to thank the young care leavers.

Anahi Moreno, the national delegate of Il Melograno took part to the program, presenting the activities of the national network of care leavers and adoptive families.



Morocco

A seminar to discuss adoption in Muslim countries

Simultaneously with the end of the PASC-INDH project, the association of adoptive families, called **Osraty**, organized on last May 28 a one-day-long study workshop about the kafala (i.e. adoption in Muslim countries). The purpose of the conference was to try to find solutions to the problems related to kafala and in particular its consequences on the child and on the adopting families.

In Morocco, in fact, legitimating adoption does not exist and it is impossible to interrupt completely the connections between a child and the biological family, because the Coranic law says so, and that is the reason why neither the receiving family nor the 'kafil' children are effectively protected.

Many researches gave their contribution in order to define a common intervention strategy and to set out concrete solutions to improve the reception network for Moroccan children without parental care. The debate focused on all the problems concerning kafala and the inferior juridical protection available to adopted people.

The meeting was a real success, especially if we bear in mind that this was the first public meeting dealing with an issue that is still a very sensible one and is also considered almost a taboo. The atmosphere at the meeting was permeated by seriousness and reflection; all interventions, both of the speakers and of the audience were extremely interesting and absorbing.

Brazil

Il Melograno introduced at ENAPA 2009.

Il Melograno has been introduced during the national meeting of the groups and associations of adoptive parents, coming from all over the nation that was held in Sao Paulo from 22 to 25 May 2009. The meeting represented a good occasion to underline the importance of the network as a strongpoint to achieve the goals that every group sets for itself both at local or national level.

GAASP association introduced Il Melograno in the first part of the event, during a meeting held to support adoption in Latin-America, where they met other associations and exchanged ideas with them. The following days had been left entirely to the groups to promote discussions and comments on the different issues concerning active research on children without parental care, on the support groups, on their activities and on the criteria and methodologies employed in the selection of the couples that want to adopt a child.

Among the issues discussed during the meeting, there were assistance and support to adoptive families, information exchange channels and the different strategies that may be used to approach such a topic.

We would like to thank the regional secretary GAASP association for the realization of this very interesting event and we hope that other important ones may follow, such as common national projects focused on adoption, on the simplifying of the bureaucratic procedures and on the help given to the couples that are preparing themselves to take care of a child without a family.



Europa

Hopes and fears of young boys and girls leaving child protection system.

The European meeting of young people grown up without parental care held in Bucharest from 28 to 30 April 2009 obtained a considerable success. The main peculiarity of the event was the fact that all the activities and the debates were entirely centred on the young participants, thus allowing them to take part actively in an international event and helping them to develop their self-esteem and self-confidence through the open expression of their needs and their concerns. This last aspect came clearly out during the three days in which the event took place.



The seriousness of the commitment and participation of these young people deserves to be mentioned because they expressed them in all the activities held during the meeting, that were the following: a description, made on the first day, of the care-leaving process they are undergoing in this period.

Specifically focused reflection workshops, held the second day, in which the participants were divided into two groups, one formed by young boys and girls who had already left the child protection system and the other formed by those who are going to leave it in a short time. An international debate held on the third day.

It is very important to underline some issues that came out during the meeting, because they coincide with the results of the ongoing research on the topic and with the findings of recent studies on European care-leavers.

The care leavers spoke clearly about the things that are worrying them: their fear in facing the transition towards an independent life, the confusion that characterizes the information they receive and the lack of specific welfare programs. They also ask for a minimal social assistance (unemployment and lodging benefits and health care).

They also pointed out the necessity (that should be seriously taken into account) for more help on the journey towards independence, asking for more flexibility on some aspects, for instance on the age in which they leave boarding institutions, on the same care leaving strategies and on the eventuality of returning momentarily into the institution (or in a family-type care) if they lose their homes. They also expressed their regret concerning the impossibility to complete their education even if they really want to and the fear of not obtaining the documents that are necessary to start an independent and autonomous life, such as the residence permit.

It appears clearly that these young people often live a situation of emergency and precariousness, having the pressing need to find a job and a place to live in and, consequently, they are more focused on the material aspects of human existence than on the relationships and they do not have enough time to try to cope with their problems. It is easy to understand the necessity to work further in order to grant them a direct involvement in the choices concerning their life and also a good training for an autonomous life and a full social inclusion.



Presenting “Il Melograno”

In this issue of our newsletter we are going to keep on introducing the groups that form the Il Melograno international network. This is the turn of the Brazilian group Doce Adoção, that supports adopting couples and that has just finished its annual cycle of support meetings for couples who want to take an abandoned child under their care.

ASSOCIATION NAME	Doce Adoção
MEMBERS / PARTICIPANTS	About 20 couples
MISSION	To become a landmark for all the couples who are experiencing adoption or for those who want to adopt a child, using the experience of the first as an example for the latter.
MAIN ACTIVITIES	To deal with the issues of adoption, abandonment and reception. Organization of meetings and seminars aimed at spreading awareness on the issues stated in the mission and to form support groups to help couples preparing to adopt an abandoned child.
TERRITORIAL DIFFUSION	Santa Luzia, Belo Horizonte and related urban areas
ASSOCIATION HISTORY IN BRIEF	The group formed in September 2007 and since then it is active in the region as a guiding institution for future adoptive couples.
CONTACTS	Roberta Orzil robertaorzil@oi.com.br