



PRESENTATION

RELAF SEMINAR 2016

Title: “Deinstitutionalisation and prevention of the separation. Building subsystems for the protection of children without parental care”

Location: Panama City, Panama.

Date: October 12, 13 and 14, 2016

Organisation: Latin American Foster Care Network (RELAF)

Main ally: Ministry of Social Development (MIDES) of the Government of Panama

Strategic partners: Hope & Homes for Children (HHC) and UNICEF

Local partner: National Network of Support to Childhood and Adolescence in Panama (REDNANIAP)

Previous Seminars

Four international seminars were previously carried out by RELAF: 2007 in Mar del Plata, Argentina; 2009 in Buenos Aires, Argentina; 2010 in Foz do Iguaçu, Brazil; and 2013 in Guanajuato, Mexico. These events had participants from many countries of the region and from Europe (all four add up to over 2000 people from 25 countries) and received key actors of the region, including high governmental authorities, such as, in 2010, Lula Da Silva, who was at the time President of Brazil. These seminars were relevant places of training and incidence in the regional agenda.

Foundation

Over 240.000 children and adolescents in Latin America are institutionalised. Approximately 10% of them are younger than 3 years old. Since this consists of a blatant violation of human rights, some countries are in the process of adequacy of their protection subsystems regarding children and adolescents deprived of parental care, in light of the fulfilment of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the application of the UN Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children. In this framework, different processes of deinstitutionalisation have been launched, which means not only an advance on the transformation of alternative care, strengthening and multiplying those based in family and community, but also an active policy for the prevention of unnecessary separations and institutionalisations, by building an integral and intersectoral strategy.

RELAF is an organisation committed to building these subsystems. It currently supports and directs technically in these processes, together with the governments and the civil society. In this matter, even though there is still a long way to go, tangible results have been achieved that show the possibility of a change in the region. It is aiming to strengthen these processes and to boost more of them in the rest of the countries, creating a regional synergy, that RELAF carries out this Seminar offering a place for meeting, learning and exchanging on the concrete advances in the region, that allows to identify the remaining challenges and to



achieve the necessary commitments to guarantee the right to family and community life for every children and adolescent in our region.

Goal

Offering a place for regional exchange in regards of the advances, lessons learnt and challenges in the region, that provides incidence in the deinstitutionalisation processes launched in the framework of the adequacy of the protection subsystems for children and adolescents deprived of parental care.

Main issues

- The regional situation of children and adolescents in alternative care
- The Regional Initiative for the eradication of the institutionalisation of children under the Age of 3
- The implementation of the UN Guidelines for the Alternative Care of children
- National experiences of adequacy of subsystems: advances in the countries of the region, pilot tests of deinstitutionalisation, experiences of institutional reconversion
- Prevention of unnecessary separations and of early abandonment
- Foster Care: standards for the practices

Participants

The processes of deinstitutionalisation launched in the framework of the adequacy of the subsystems in the region involve many actors, each of them with different levels of responsibility when it comes to making decisions for the transformation. RELAF Seminar convokes all of them, considering that the plurality will lay the foundations for dialog and for the creation of an agenda of commitments that will allow advances in the fulfilment of the right to family life for children and adolescents in the short, medium and long term. For these reasons, the Seminar will have the presence of:

- Governments: governmental representatives of different levels of decision and execution of public and social policies of protection of the rights of children and adolescents
- National, regional and global NGOs: those dedicated to providing alternative care for children and adolescents in the region, as well as those involved in family strengthening strategies, incidence for the adequacy, among others
- Researchers, academicians
- International organisations
- Families, children and adolescents