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Attachment to the concluding observations on the combined third and fourth periodic report of Portugal

Instituto de Apoio à Criança – Child Support Institute

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Child Support Institute

Child Support Institute (IAC), a private social solidarity institution created in 1983, has as main goal to promote and defend Children's Rights. IAC is recognized by the State as Public Utility Institution and participated in all the previous reports for the Committee.

Having in mind the aims of the fifth and sixth periodic report of Portugal of giving answers to the concluding observations on the combined third and fourth periodic report of Portugal and showing evidence of the work that has been carried out, in this annex we followed the structure of the concluding observations highlighting the points where the activities carried out by IAC, between January 2014 and September 2017, helped to operationalize the Committee's recommendations.

Concluding observations on the combined third and fourth periodic report of Portugal

IV. Main areas of concern and recommendations

A. General measures of implementation

Independent monitoring – points 19 and 20: “complaints mechanism... toll-free telephone hotline” & “raise awareness among the general public, and children in particular, of their right to file a complain...”

The SOS-Child anonymous and confidential service was created by IAC in 1988 with the purpose of giving voice to the child. In the years that this report covers, we received the following appeals/contacts:

- ✓ 2014 – 2681 appeals; 2015 - 1857 appeals; 2016 – 2392 appeals; Until September 2017 – 1605 appeals.

The vast majority of these appeals came via helpline (1696 effective appeals) through free European lines: 116 000 to be used in situations of missing and sexually exploited children, 116 111 for situations of children and young people at risk ; and the national (payed) number +217 931 617.

The remaining requests for support to SOS-Child were received through the Online Chat of this service, created on January 2016 (122 online contacts) and the Electronic mail soscrianca@iacrianca.pt (223 emails).

Dissemination and awareness-raising - points 21 and 22: “the Committee is concerned that the Convention is not systematically disseminated...” & “strengthen awareness-raising programmes...”

IAC develops several raising awareness activities, programmes and projects either aimed at the global CRC or to specific rights under the CRC:

- Children:

- ✓ Exhibition “Children in the World - With Rights”: CRC dissemination through an exhibition that travels to schools from the north to south of Portugal;
- ✓ Board game “Refugees” that aims to raise awareness among children to the refugees’ situation and be a tool in welcoming them (article 2 – non discrimination)
- ✓ “Threat in social network! What now, Marta?” – collection Premika, book that works on children at risk in online environments (article 19 – violence against children).
- ✓ Celebration of World Play Day at institutions, including schools all over the country (article 31 – Right to Play): 2014 – 8 institutions; 2015 – 60 institutions; 2016 – 18 institutions; 2017 – 50 institutions.

- Public at large:

- ✓ World Play Day at National Palace of Belém, the official residence of the President of the Republic (article 31 – Right to Play): 2017 - 3808 visitors.
- ✓ Awareness activities with public at large, including families (article 31 – Right to Play): 2014 – 25 general public; 2015 - 25 general public; 2016 – 60 professionals and families; 2017 – 47 professionals and families.

The Committee identified in the recommendations under these points specific publics to address: “particularly health service personnel, teachers, early childhood workers, lawyers, the judiciary and the police”. For these actors, IAC develops activities like:

- Health services:

- ✓ 5th edition of the Charter “Children in Hospital” (CCH) and dissemination (CRC's application in health). Distribution, to health professionals and families: 2014 – 180 copies; 2015 – 185 copies; 2016 – 10 copies (out of print); 2017 – 2000 copies (new edition).
- ✓ Awareness activities with students about CCH (CRC's application in health): 2015/2016 – 97 participants.
- ✓ Project “Zebedeu, a Prince in the Hospital” (article 17 - Right to information) - book disseminated to national public hospitals free of charge and story animation sessions for

children and families: story animation sessions – 2014 – 50 children; dissemination: 2014 – 790; 2015 – 200; 2016 – 242; 2017 – 500.

- ✓ Project "Respect for the Rights of Children in the Hospital" (2017) (CRC application in health): tools that assess the fulfillment of children's rights in hospital (e.g non-deprivation of the right to education in hospital context).

- Teachers:

- ✓ Awareness activities regarding the Right to Play, including educational assistants (article 31 – Right to Play): 2016 – 75 educational professionals.

- Early childhood professionals:

- ✓ Awareness activities regarding the Right to Play (Dissemination of the 31st Right of CRC): 2017 – 77 educational professionals.

Training – Points 23 and 24: “ensure systematic, mandatory and ongoing training on children’s rights (...) professionals working with and for children”.

- ✓ In addition to the actions described above, we highlight that, according to the guidelines for the Curricular Enrichment Activities of the Ministry of Education, we developed training on “Free Play” among teachers in collaboration with the Municipalities.
- ✓ Also, IAC developed the European project T.A. L. E. (Training Activities for Legal Experts) that aims to offer practical and theoretical discussion to legal professionals who represent or accompany children and young people to court in the area of international instruments for the promotion and protection of their rights, as well as support the correct implementation of the child-friendly justice guidelines. This project also involves children as key actors, giving them voice in legal matters.

B. General principles (arts. 2, 3, 6 and 12 of the Convention)

Non-discrimination - Points 25 and 26: “ensure the effective elimination of any form of discrimination against children of immigrants, (...), as well as lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender adolescents through, among other things (...) in schools”

- ✓ “Mirror ME” Project in partnership with AMPLOS (Association of Mothers and Fathers for Freedom of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity) - Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/espelhoeu/>) with specific articles on gender issues in childhood.

Respect for the views of the child - Points 31 and 32: “ensure respect for the views of the child in (...) practice in all relevant areas”; “the right of the child to be heard”

- ✓ Give voice to the child in health services - Tools for children aged 6-12 and 13-18 to collect their experience in attendance and stay in hospital.

C. Violence against children (arts. 19, 24 (3), 28 (2), 34, 37 (a) and 39 of the Convention)

Abuse and neglect - Points 35 and 36: “the Committee recommends that the State party prioritize the elimination of all forms of violence against children.”; “Ensure that all professionals (...) are provided with the necessary training”

- ✓ European Project MAPCHIPP - *train the trainers* seminar for professionals working in child protection. Multidisciplinary group from health services, NGO’s, justice, education, among others, with the aim to facilitate cooperation and communication among actors in child protection and enhance the participation and involvement of children in the assessment of endangerment as well as in help-planning: <http://mapchipp.com/>

E. Disability, basic health and welfare (arts. 6, 18 (3), 23, 24, 26, 27 (1–3) and 33 of the Convention)

Adolescent health - Points 51 and 52: “to health education in schools”; “promote sexual education targeted at adolescents”

- ✓ Finding Our Self – Health Promotion, Sexuality; training to teachers and sessions with adolescents working on issues like pregnancy and sexual diseases: 2014 – 342 students; 2015 – 33 students & 36 teachers; 2016 – 209 students, 6 teachers & 6 social professionals; 2017 – 104 students.

F. Education, leisure and cultural activities (arts. 28, 29, 30 and 31 of the Convention)

Education, including vocational training and guidance - Points 59 and 60: “Strengthen efforts to reduce the premature dropout”; “mainstream gender equality policies in the education sector”

- ✓ IAC has Student and Family Support Offices (GAAF) in schools which one of the main goals is to reduce dropout rates. In those schools we have the following data: 2014/2015 – improvement of 38.4%; 2015/2016 – improvement of 67.65%; 2016/2017 – improvement of 30%.
- ✓ Project “Toys for Boys & Toys for Girls – or is it the other way around?” Awareness sessions for families and teachers, as well as raising awareness among enterprises to the need to avoid gender stereotypes in marketing: 2016/2017 – 55 participants in the sessions and 5 enterprises contacted.

We must add up in this section that the right 31 (right to play) is only superficially mentioned either on the concluding observations and the national report. This is important namely since this is an area where the State and other NGO's have been working on with guidelines to promote play on child's development and big raising awareness events like World Play Day. Regarding this specific date, we call on the United Nations to put this date on the global agenda and IAC, currently assuming the WPD Coordination, is available to help in all the process.