

Inter-Country Adoption

April 2012

Adoption globally

(www.un.org/esa/population/meetings/adoption)

- “ 260,000 adoptions each year globally (2 per 1,000 births)
- “ 85% of which are domestic (mostly by relatives or step-parents)
- “ China, Russia, USA and UK represent 50% of all adoptions
- “ China and Russia represent source of 50% of children adopted internationally
- “ USA is the adopting country for over 50% of such adoptions
- “ There are very significant variations by country in the proportion of children in care available for adoption!
- “ The single biggest impact of the proposed referendum on children’s rights in Ireland will be to increase the number of children available for adoption

The Hague (UN) Convention on Protection of Children

(www.hcch.net)

- “ Cooperation between contracting countries
- “ Ratified by 85 countries including Republic of Ireland (but not Russia, Vietnam, Taiwan or Ethiopia)
- “ “Recognising that the child should grow up in a family environment”
- “ “Recalling that each state should take measures for child to remain in the care of his family of origin”
- “ “Recognising that inter-country adoption may offer the advantage of a permanent family to a child for whom a suitable family cannot be found in his state of origin”
- “ “To ensure that inter-country adoptions are made in the best interests of the child”

Hague Convention – key requirements

- A. Central Authorities and Accredited Bodies
- B. Counselling for all parties
- C. Consents freely given and evidenced
- D. Consent of the mother after the child's birth

And Ireland has chosen to make such requirements a minimum rather than an ideal, causing huge transitional issues for adoptive couples/individuals.

‘Eligibility and Suitability’ under Irish law

A. HSE (www.hse.ie)

- I. Capacity to safeguard child throughout childhood
- II. Capacity to provide child with family life
- III. Promotion of child’s original nationality, race, culture, language and religion
- IV. Capacity to recognise the impact of inter-country adoption on the child
- V. Capacity to recognise the need for, and to arrange, appropriate support and intervention

B. Adoption Authority of Ireland (www.AAI.gov.ie) under Adoption Act 2010

“Excellence in adoption and adoption related service with the best interests of children as our primary consideration”

“... take independent legal advice ... “

No Hague adoptions since establishment on 1st November 2010

Typical requirements for country of origin

1. HSE 'home study'
2. Health reports and personal references
3. Police reports
4. Birth and marriage certificates
5. Statements of income and net assets
6. Post placement commitments

Countries 'open' to Irish adoption

I. Hague

- " Bulgaria
- " China
- " Florida, USA
- " India
- " Mexico
- " Philippines
- " South Africa
- " Thailand
- " United Kingdom

II. Non-Hague

- " Ethiopia
- " Russia
- " Vietnam

Ethiopia

(www.unicef.org)

- “ 80m people, compared to 40m at time of ‘Live Aid’
- “ Strong GDP growth and good progress in development
- “ However, 44% of population consume less than daily calorie requirement and 30m people live below the poverty line
- “ 13th poorest country in the world
- “ 5-8m people in Addis Ababa
- “ 13% of all children in Addis Ababa missing one or both parents
- “ 4.6m orphans of whom 0.8m orphaned by HIV/AIDS
- “ 30% of girls aged 10-14 not living with parents (of which 6% have run away from child marriages and 4% work as domestics)
- “ ‘The primary coping strategy for communities has been the extended family. However, the capacity of the extended family to support the growing number of orphans is declining.’

Most common questions

1. Did you pick your child?
2. How much did it cost?
3. Isn't he/she lovely?
4. Do you have natural children? How have they reacted?
5. Are you trying to save the world?

TCD study on IC Adoption outcomes in Ireland 2004-2007

(www.aai.gov.ie)

- “ ‘Inter-country adoption is a phenomenon about which it is not easy to generalise’
- “ ‘For the 180 children studied, the majority are performing intellectually at an average for their age’
- “ ‘Children adopted after 18 months of age had more placement adjustment problems such as indiscriminate friendliness, speech difficulties and problems with distractibility’

“Bigger” solutions - Overseas Aid

(www.irishaid.gov.ie)

“ 2010 spent €700m

“ Principles

- . Focus on poverty
- . Focus on Africa (80% to 7 countries)
- . Untied
- . Partnership
- . Effectiveness
- . Accountability
- . Coherence

“Poor Story” by Giles Bolton

Addressing the big issues requires time as well as money

1. Write!

The more personalised and detailed a letter is, the more it will be noticed

2. Sign petitions!

Get used to putting your name down for issues you care about

3. Protest

4. Lobby your friends and colleagues

5. Donate to campaigning charities

6. Vote

7. Be better informed

Faith Children's Home

(www.hopeadoptionagency.org)

- “ Three year project to support 120 orphans and vulnerable children
- “ Established by local business people in 2005 and has accommodated over 150 children to date
- “ Teacher employed to prepare 37 children over 4 years for local primary education
- “ Plan for up to 40 adoptions, 60 into full time education and 20 to be reunited with families
- “ Quarterly reports to MOWA and annual financial audits
- “ Annual running costs of €60-€70,000 (employing over 30 staff)
- “ CEO salary of €3,000 pa and salary of €500 pa for carers

IOAI

- “ Established to provide medical assistance to orphans in Taiwan in January 1996
- “ Resulted in a number of these children being adopted
- “ Recently inactive as children complete treatments
- “ Plan to continue to sponsor children in Taiwan and China
- “ Intention to extend activities by supporting orphans in Ethiopia
- “ Registered charity with associated tax recovery on donations by PAYE taxpayers, as well as full tax deductions for self-employed
- “ Account number is 05809069 – Sort Code 93-12-68 at AIB Bank, “Friends of Chinese Orphans”