

THE DANISH CHILD PROTECTION NETWORK

is pleased to invite you to our sixth seminar

“The role of religion and religious actors in the protection of children deprived of parental care”

The seminar is part of a series of seminars organized by The Danish Child Protection Network under the overall theme of child protection through the promotion of transition homes and alternative family- and community-based care.

- **When:** Wednesday the 23rd of March 2021 at 14:00-16:30 (UTC+01:00)
- **Where:** Online on Zoom. *Please register [here](#)*
After registering, you will receive an email with a zoom link to participate in the seminar.
- **Participants:** Civil Society Organizations, researchers, or individuals with an interest in exchanging experiences and methodologies to promote the UN Resolution on the Rights of the Child. We invite organizations and individuals both from Denmark and the Global South to join.
- **Organizers:** The Danish Child Protection Network (100% for the Children, ATOS, CKU, and SOS Børnebyerne)

Seminar content

Historically, faith communities have been among the greatest advocates for the world's neediest children, providing aid and comfort to disadvantaged families. In fact, the Convention on the Rights of the Child – the most widely accepted human rights treaty in the world – reflects deeply-held values embedded within religious traditions that uphold the inherent dignity of every child and the centrality of the family in building strong communities. Often though, the concern of religious groups for the children have led to the separation of children from their families, as they were institutionalized into boarding schools, orphanages etc. In more recent years these practices have been documented to potentially be deeply harmful to the children. Therefore, dialogues have been launched with and within faith communities to develop new approaches to better serve the needs of children deprived of parental care.

In this seminar we will explore the 2019 UN Resolution, 'Promotion and protection of rights of children' with a focus on the role of religion and religious actors. We will consider how these actors can be drivers of the agenda of transition and alternative care. National and international experts working in different regions of the world will share their experiences in this and give participants the opportunity to engage in discussions to shed further light on the problems and solutions.

Expert presentations



The seminar will feature **Dr. Chrissie Gale**, International child protection consultant with specialism in child protection systems and alternative care. She holds a Doctorate from the University of Bristol and is an associate of the Alice Salomon Hochschule University, Berlin. Chrissy has had a long career working for CELSIS, UNICEF, Family for every child, among others. Dr. Gale will give an introduction to the 2019 UN Resolution, 'Promotion and protection of rights of children' and what it says about religion.



Gritt Holm Hedeus is National Director of Viva Denmark, a faith-based children's rights organization working in Central America, Zimbabwe and the Philippines. Viva focuses on child protection, preventing and combatting violence, abuse and exploitation of children. For the past 6 years Viva has changed strategy and is today committed to de-institutionalization moving towards family-based care. Gritt holds a Master of International Studies and Political Science and has previously worked with Oxfam Ibis, DanChurchAid, and Act Alliance. She will speak to the role of the church and of Western funding in the de-institutionalization agenda.



Philip Aspegren, Executive Director at Casa Viva in Costa Rica. Philip and his wife, Jill, pioneered caring for children in local families in Latin America when they co-founded Casa Viva in 2003 as a Christian child and family agency that develops foster care, adoption, and family reunification, working closely with Costa Rican churches and government. Casa Viva Solutions hosts conferences and consults with children's homes, governments, and churches around the world to help them develop and implement plans to successfully connect children to families. Previously, Philip and Jill directed orphanages for six years in the Dominican Republic. Philip will speak about their model of working with alternative care and the trends he sees in this work internationally.



Maria Luna is director of Viva Honduras. They work with children who have grown up in institutional care settings, pioneering the transitioning out of institutional care and towards family-based practices instead. Viva Honduras supports and counsels children through workshops, job opportunities, and other trainings, and creates networks of support through connections among churches and communities. Maria Luna will be presenting a practice-oriented approach to the move from sponsorship/orphanage to temporary transition centers and alternative care.



Filip Buff Petersen, Political Advisor at CKU, the Danish Centre for Church-Based Development, is working together with politicians, civil society organisations and academia to promote freedom of religion or belief in foreign- and development policies. To conclude the seminar, Filip will shed light on issues around the protection of children's Freedom of Religion and Belief as stated in international conventions, especially with a focus on the special situation arising when institutions are instructors or take over the role as guardians.

The full seminar series

In this seminar series, we invite organizations engaged in international development to discuss and learn more about issues related to child protection and children living in alternative care. In December 2019, the annual Resolution of the Rights of the Child addressed for the first time ever children without parental care in recognition of the vulnerability of this group of children. The purpose of these seminars is to explore how to use the Resolution and the UN Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children, in order to safeguard and promote the rights of children who have lost or are at risk of losing parental care.

The seminars take place online in 2021-2022 and offer expert presentations on topics related to the Resolution and are an opportunity to discuss and share experiences to learn from promising practices and improve the protection and the quality of alternative care.

Seminar 1) The right of every child to care

Seminar 2) Domestic violence

Seminar 3) Children on the move

Seminar 4) Exploring preventive strategies

Seminar 5) Education

Seminar 6) Religion

Seminar 7) Preventative Strategies

Seminar 8) Climate change

The Danish Child Protection Network is a network of NGOs that work with child rights and child protection and have a special focus on Alternative Care. The network constitutes a learning platform for exchange of knowledge and promising practices that strengthen and consolidate member organizations' capacity to support the development of quality alternative care programmes in the framework of child rights and child protection.

If you are interested in becoming a member of the Child Protection Network in Denmark, please contact: info@childprotectionnetwork.dk

Alternative Care Talks

Following the seminars the Child Protection Network will publish ACTalk videos related to the topic of the seminar, which will present the highlights of the workshops through interviews with relevant specialist. These ACTalks will be available on the website [The Child Protection Network of Denmark](#) and shared widely on social media.