



Country fact sheet for the CRC

COUNTRY: ETHIOPIA

REPORT N°	N° 4-5 periodic reports for the CRC
PRE-SESSION/ SESSION	Pre-session: 69 th (22 – 26 September 2014) Session: 69 th (25 May – 12 June 2015)
LAWS (THC-1993, GUIDELINES, DOMESTIC LAWS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ethiopia has not signed nor ratified THC-93 ▪ African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child ratified on 2 October 2002 ▪ Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia of 1994 ▪ Revised Family Code of 2000 ▪ Alternative Childcare Guidelines of 2009
GENERAL SITUATION OF CHILDREN DEPRIVED OF THEIR FAMILY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 44, 2 % of the Ethiopian population (est. over 96 million) is under the age of 14. ▪ In 2012, there were 4,5 million orphaned children (900,000 due to HIV/AIDS). ▪ High levels of poverty (in 2010/11, 29,6 % of the population lived under the poverty line) and HIV/AIDS still remain the major causes of children being/at risk of being separated from their families. ▪ The increasing number of refugees (UNICEF estimates a total of 570,000 refugees as of the end of May 2014) due to crisis in the neighbour countries, such as Somalia, South Sudan, Eritrea and Sudan is becoming a growing concern. The majority of those refugees are women and children whose rights are at high risk of being violated (sexual exploitation, abuse, child trafficking etc.) ▪ According to a head count of street children in 2010, commissioned by UNICEF in collaboration with the Ethiopian Bureau of Woman and Children Affairs and Street Invest London, there were about 10,710 street children living in Addis Ababa, of which 67 % were boys. However, this number needs to be taken with caution, especially due to the fact that girls are less visible (seeking protection by night in rented rooms or safe places in order to prevent sexual abuse; engaged in work as house maids or prostitution). This extremely vulnerable community is deprived of its basic needs, like shelter, food sufficiency and medical care. <p>Sources: UNICEF Ethiopia Statistics: http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/ethiopia_statistics.html#116; UNICEF Ethiopia Situation Report N° 3, May-June 2014, http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/UNICEF%20Ethiopia%20Humanitarian%20SitRep%20%233%20-%2030June2014.pdf; RETRAK, Situation analysis of services offered to street girls in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 2010, http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/pnadz026.pdf.</p>
ALTERNATIVE CARE OPTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Despite the Ethiopian legal framework (the <i>Revised Family Code</i> and the <i>2001 Alternative Childcare Guidelines, revised in 2009</i>), the legislation lacks effective responses and tools to guarantee quality and guiding standards for alternative care services, the Ministry of Women, Children and Youth Affairs (MoWCYA) is currently launching important reform measures in view of reducing reliance on institutional care. These are implemented by a draft of the Social Protection Policy which awaits approval and mainly includes the development of the National Alternative Care Strategy, which focuses on community-based alternative care solutions for children deprived of parental care, and the elaboration of Alternative Care Regulations and Service standards with the purpose to improve accountability and quality of

service provisions.

- The actual childcare system is multi-staged (the kebele and woreda-level, zone and regional level, national level) which makes the establishment of a system of coordination through monitoring and evaluation (periodic reports, field visits and consultative meetings) even more necessary and challenging.
- **Support of vulnerable families:** In the past few years, Ethiopia has taken various measures in order to prevent family separations, such as food security programs, the establishment of sub-cluster protection and gender-based violence coordination mechanisms, clan-based kinship systems, training of community care structures and child protection committees.
- **Residential care:** Based on UNICEF 2013 report, an estimated 8,620 children find themselves in 225 childcare institutions. With the support of UNICEF, MoWCYA is developing an “Approach note on working together to establish and sustain a comprehensive, coordinated and effective Child Well-Being Management Information System in Ethiopia” (including a database for children in alternative care).
- **Foster care and domestic adoption:** According to UNICEF, 1,529 children were de-institutionalized in 2011, of which 326 could be reunified with their birth parents or extended family, 272 were placed in foster care, and 795 children benefited from domestic adoptions. These statistics show a shifted conception of addressing the orphan situation in Ethiopia.
- **Informal adoption:** An Ethiopian particularity is the existence of a traditional form of adoption called guddifachaa. This term comes from the Oromo language and describes the full assimilation of an outsider (child) into a family. It has also been incorporated in the legal framework meaning the formal process of domestic adoption. In 2012, 421 children have benefited from this cultural practice in the Oromia region.

Sources: UNICEF Ethiopia Country Office, Thematic Briefing Note on Alternative Childcare of February 2013: http://www.unicef.org/ethiopia/ET_CP_Factsheet_alternativecare_280213.pdf; World Food Program <https://www.wfp.org/countries/ethiopia/overview>; UNICEF Annual Reports for Ethiopia 2013(http://www.unicef.org/about/annualreport/files/Ethiopia_COAR_2013.pdf) and 2012 (http://www.unicef.org/about/annualreport/files/Ethiopia_COAR_2012.pdf); ISS Monthly Review N°170, March 2013, Domestic adoption practices in Ethiopia, The example of the Oromia region.

ADOPTION

- Intercountry adoptions (ICA) from Ethiopia got into spotlight due to their rapid and incessant growth. Over the last years (2004-2012), the numbers have sevenfold compared to the period 1999-2003 (2,769 ICA) to reach a total of 20,663 ICA. Since then, due to the promotion of national measures by the Ethiopian Government, such as domestic adoptions, a declining tendency can be observed although the rate of ICA remains high (1,557 ICA in 2013).
- As stated in UNICEF Annual Report of 2012, Ethiopia adheres officially to the main principles of CRC and THC-1993, such as the subsidiarity of ICA and the preservation of the best interests of the child during the whole adoption process. Reality has however shown a high risk of children’s rights to be violated through criminal behaviours such as “child harvesting”, falsification of birth certificates or biological parents’ consent, persists. Under pressure from foreign media and child protection organisations, Ethiopia has therefore withdrawn accreditation from several foreign adoption agencies.
- As reported by an ISS local contact, the actual ICA situation in Ethiopia is unclear. In certain areas, adoption files in progress have been suspended. Furthermore, Ethiopian authorities seem to have taken decisions concerning for example the non-eligibility of single persons. At this time, no official statements have been published.
- According to UNICEF, a first step towards a Hague aligned system is the creation of an interministerial technical committee (MoWCYA, First Instance Court and Charities and Societies Agency) that cooperates with the Secretariat of International Family Law in the Hague and the University of Western Cape (South Africa) in order to assess the ICA situation in Ethiopia and to plan legal and structural reforms.
- With the purpose to standardize the eligibility process for ICA, MOWCYA published a

directive on November 7, 2013, which states that all letters of approval for children placed for ICA must from now on be signed by the head or vice-head of the regional bureaus of MOWCYA.

Sources: UNICEF Ethiopia Country Office, Thematic Briefing Note on Alternative Childcare of February 2013: http://www.unicef.org/ethiopia/ET_CP_Factsheet_alternativecare_280213.pdf; UNICEF Annual Report 2012 for Ethiopia, ESARO; Every Child, Adopting Better Care, Improving adoption services around the world, May 2012: <http://www.crin.org/docs/AdoptingBetterCareFINALforweb.pdf>; Australian InterCountry Adoption Network: <http://www.aican.org/statistics.php?region=0&type=birth>; US Department of States, Intercountry Adoption: http://adoption.state.gov/country_information/country_specific_alerts_notices.php?alert_notice_type=notices&alert_notice_file=ethiopia_24.

STATISTICS

Statistics remain insufficient on domestic adoption or children in foster care and no comparative analysis is made available, as far as we know.

Statistics for intercountry adoptions 2002-2013 shown by AICAN:

	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	4	3	2	TOTAL
Australia	17	18	40	33	47	35	38	56	31	72	53	46	486
Belgium	n/a	20	42	33	36	30	36	30	53	45	23	n/a	348
Canada	39	93	143	63	170	183	134	61	31	34	14	n/a	965
Denmark	47	57	80	117	125	92	39	38	30	41	40	20	726
Finland	n/a	4	13	10	17	12	15	15	5	7	6	11	115
France	140	220	288	352	445	484	417	408	397	390	n/a	n/a	3'541
Germany	n/a	n/a	64	99	73	50	30	33	21	22	n/a	n/a	392
Iceland	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	1	n/a	n/a	n/a	1
Ireland	26	32	42	75	21	26	17	14	13	16	7	2	291
Italy	293	233	296	274	346	338	256	227	211	191	47	112	2'824
Netherlands	n/a	16	19	23	39	n/a	n/a	54	77	52	32	47	359
Norway	8	12	n/a	n/a	n/a	22	33	27	36	47	46	40	271
Spain	n/a	302	441	508	722	629	481	304	227	220	107	12	3'953
Sweden	11	15	24	29	37	42	39	32	37	26	21	18	331
Switzerland	n/a	61	81	76	49	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	267
UK	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	9	7	1)	1)	1)	n/a	n/a	16
USA	993	1568	1727	2513	2277	1725	1255	732	441	289	n/a	n/a	13'524
TOTAL	1'574	2'651	3'300	4'205	4'404	3'677	2'797	2'031	1'611	1'452	396	308	28'400

1) The number of adopted children is small and for privacy reasons is neither shown and nor included in the total.

Source: Australian InterCountry Adoption Network (AICAN): <http://www.aican.org/statistics.php?region=0&type=birth>.

RISKS

- Ethiopia does not have the safeguards to comply with international and regional standards regarding ICA and THC-93. This makes the country vulnerable to risks involved in private adoptions.
- Furthermore, Ethiopia has no independent central authority competent for intercountry adoptions. Consequently, the roles and responsibilities of each actor in the child protection system remain unclear.
- Due to different regional practices, the acceptance of a national policy on child welfare across the country seems doubtful.
- Despite the promotion of national responses for orphaned and vulnerable children, there is still a lack of residential and foster care and domestic adoptions.
- Existing disaggregated statistics are insufficient.
- With the influx of refugees still expected (UNHRC: additional 200,000 South Sudanese will

	<p>seek protection in Ethiopia), Ethiopia's challenge will be to address the refugee situation with a lacking child protection system in place.</p>
POTENTIAL QUESTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Are the Ethiopian reform efforts made with the purpose to ratify the THC-93?▪ What resources the Ethiopian Government plan to allocate in order to support the necessary reforms of the child protection system?▪ Considering the weaknesses of the current adoption process that strongly threatens the rights of the children concerned, what kind of measures is the Ethiopian Government planning to implement during the transition phase in order to avoid fraudulent practices? Is the temporary suspension of ICA a possibility?▪ Regarding its multi-staged system, how does Ethiopia plan to implement a national policy, to harmonize procedures and to establish a system of supervision and coordination at regional level?