



International Social Service

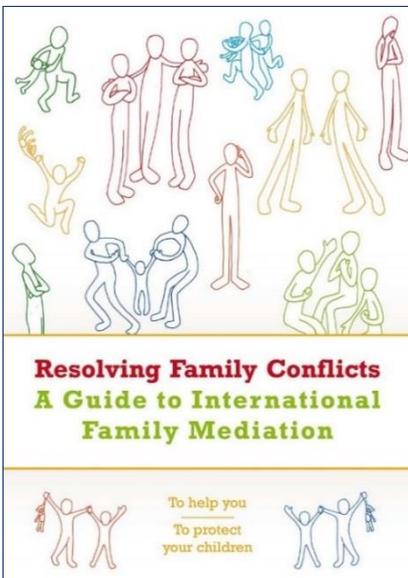
International Family Mediation A global Programme



The International Family Mediation Programme aims to better protect children involved in parental conflicts across national borders and cases of international child abduction. The projects are developed and conducted since 2010 with the help of an international Advisory Board of experts.

Project 1: A Guide to International Family Mediation

Published in 2014, this guide is intended for families and professionals from the legal and psycho-social fields supporting families. Easy to use and full of testimonies, it discusses all issues related to the recourse to international family mediation in 7 chapters, including a section with practical questions and guidance (questions to ask a legal adviser, content of mediation agreements, how to prepare for mediation, where to find appropriate help, etc.):



- What is International Family Mediation?;
- For which conflicts and when it can be used;
- Reasons for choosing mediation;
- How cross-border mediations are carried out;
- International Family Mediation and the Law;
- Child Abduction;
- Practical Questions.

The guide is drafted in conformity with all legislations and depicts the emotional impact of child abduction on all family members involved. While drawing attention to some risks that are often underestimated, it emphasises that **the interests of the children are at the heart** of international family mediations.

The Guide to International Family Mediation is available in 7 languages¹ and now being translated into Arabic and Portuguese.

Project 2: A Multilingual Website on International Family Mediation

A dedicated multilingual website will allow a wider access to reliable and continuously updated information on international family mediation. In addition, a directory by country will be a useful source for parents involved in cross-border family conflicts and professionals of the psycho-social and legal fields to find public services and charitable organisations that can help (authorities for cross-border disputes, social and child welfare services, etc.)

Online as of 30th June 2016: www.ifm-mfi.org

ISS is an international NGO of 120 national entities assisting children and families confronted with complex social problems across borders. ISS is a global actor in promoting child protection and welfare, helping approximately 75,000 families in the world each year. Training projects, awareness raising and advocacy work is at the heart of ISS's endeavour to improve the respect of children's rights and interests.

ISS's approach to support International Family Mediation is to facilitate access to families on a global scale, to unite specialised mediators and work towards global recognition of standards and competencies.

ISS has developed a series of projects to meet following key objectives:

- Address the most urgent needs in terms of information among the target audiences: families, professionals of the psycho-social and legal fields supporting families, policy makers and States' authorities
- Raise awareness on the benefits and limits of international family mediation among these actors and reinforce child abduction prevention
- Formalise cross-border family mediation by bringing together professional networks and competencies, discuss standards and qualification, disseminate information and facilitate access to mediators specialising in cross-border conflicts.

¹ <http://www.iss-ssi.org/index.php/en/2-uncategorised/139-project-1>

The website will present:

- The content of the *Guide to International Family Mediation* adapted to a web format;
- A **directory by country** informing on professional support in the field of mediation, legal advice, social services : to guide parents and professionals towards the appropriate and reliable resources in their country;
- The *Charter for International Family Mediation Processes* : to present the guiding principles for cross-border family mediations;
- A **library** with useful information and brochures to download for parents, professionals accompanying families and legal & administrative authorities.

Project 3: A Charter for International Family Mediation Processes

The *Charter for International Family Mediation Processes* will be the international document of reference for international family mediation practice across the world. ISS is in the role of the facilitator and coordinator, and has the privilege to bring together mediation structures and mediators specialising in cross-border family conflicts from all around the world.

The Charter will contain:

- the 10 core principles to be adhered to and respected when practicing international family mediation;
- a series of examples of good practices that show how these principles can be applied;
- a "How to use" and some Recommendations.

In June 2015, ISS initiated a Collaborative Process with the intention to gather family mediators from all continents to reflect on shared understandings of international family mediation practice.

This international group - 55 practitioners from 23 countries - met in Geneva in October 2015²: they adopted 10 core principles and developed more than 25 good practices to be considered in the Charter's development.



International Family Mediation Workshop
23 October 2015, Geneva

The *Charter for International Family Mediation Processes* will be published in September 2016 and posted on the ISS dedicated website. It will be distributed to administrative and legal authorities of close to 100 States and all leading social and legal actors in the field of cross-border family disputes and child abduction.

Looking forward:

- Coordinate the discussion on a qualifying procedure to be accredited to a global network of international family mediators
- Gather and make available documentation on international family mediation practice from across the world
- Draft and publish, in cooperation with the Advisory Board, an implementation guide regarding International Family Mediation
- Develop advocacy campaigns

Main goals of IFM projects:

- Develop international cooperation among family mediation practitioners specialising in cross-border conflicts from all around the world
- Bring together existing networks of qualified mediators and other practitioners in fields related to cross-border family conflicts
- Raise awareness on the legal complexity of cross-border family disputes to prevent child abduction
- Refer families, professionals and authorities to reliable and qualified actors of cross-border family conflicts

For more info: <http://www.iss-ssi.org/index.php/en/what-we-do-en/mediation-en>

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² <http://www.iss-ssi.org/index.php/en/conference-2015#family-mediation-workshop>