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International
Social Service
Australian Branch

Strategic Plan
2005 - 2008

Vision

Bridging families across the world.

Mission

International Social Service Australia (ISS) is a member of the ISS international network.

ISS works across borders with those in vulnerable situations, with a special emphasis on children. We work to ensure entitlement and protection under international human rights frameworks, through the professional delivery of casework and advocacy services.

Monitoring, review and feedback

This Strategic Plan is complemented by an internal annual Operational Plan, which is reviewed on an annual basis by the Council of Management.

This plan was developed by the staff and Council of Management following a broad based stakeholder survey. It is widely available, posted on the website and feedback is welcome.

Thanks

Thanks to the stakeholders who willingly gave their time and ideas, to the staff and Council of Management of ISS and to Linda Kelly who very ably facilitated the process.

A special thanks to the Gandel Trust who provided the funding to make the strategic planning process possible. It is a crucial foundation for our future work.

- e) Diversify the income of the organisation through the implementation of a fee for service structure, seeking funding through federal, state and territory governments, and actively working with donors and philanthropic trusts to secure project based and general financial support.
- f) Strategically involve the Council of Management in the direction of the organisation.
- g) Create a staff team that is actively involved in the implementation of this Strategic Plan.
- h) Ensure staff have access to professional development and work within a supportive team environment.

Performance Indicators

The agency is receiving secure funds from at least four different funding sources that will meet financial needs of the organisation for the next three years.

Staff and volunteers report a high degree of satisfaction with the organisation and functioning of the agency.

Values that underpin the organisation

- We respect the unique and inherent worth of all individuals.
- We recognise the impact of culture on the individual and we value cultural diversity.
- We recognise the special vulnerability of children and the need for the protection of children in international situations.
- We value international and national human rights frameworks, legislation and services that promote and support the rights of individuals.
- We are an organisation that has no religious or political affiliations.

Values that guide the work of our organisation (the way we work)

- In recognising the complexity of peoples lives, we respond in a way that is flexible, timely and professional.
- We assist people regardless of their race, religion or political affiliation.
- We work proactively and use our casework to inform our advocacy.
- We are committed to undertaking and relying upon research that will inform our practice.
- We value equally the contribution of paid and volunteer staff.
- We value the commitment of all those associated with our organisation since its inception.
- We work within professional standards such as those articulated in the Australian Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics and the Accounting Standards.
- As a non-government organisation we value our independence.
- We value working with others and seek out collaborative networks.

International Conventions

ISS works to relevant international Conventions, including (but not limited to):

1951 UN Convention relating to the *Status of Refugees*

Entered into force in Australia on 22 January 1954

1980 Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International *Child Abduction*

Entered into force in Australia on 1 January 1987

1989 United Nations Convention on the *Rights of the Child*

Entered into force in Australia on 2 September 1990

1993 Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of *Intercountry Adoption*

Entered into force in Australia on 1 December 1998

1996 Hague Convention on Jurisdiction, Applicable Law, Recognition, Enforcement and Co-operation in respect of parental responsibility and measures for the *Protection of Children*

Entered into force in Australia on 1 August 2003

2000 UN Convention against Transnational Organised Crime and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish *Trafficking* in Persons, Especially Women and Children

Entered into force in Australia on 29 September 2003

- b) Develop a national support service in response to international parental child abduction.
- c) Promote public and policy debate about the issue of international parental child abduction.

Performance Indicators

Annually fifteen percent of ISS resources are dedicated to the area of international parental child abduction.

Stakeholders recognise ISS to be a leader in this field.

Key Outcome Area 5.

ISS will be a vibrant, strong and viable organisation.

Strategies

- a) Clearly communicate the purpose of ISS through written and web-based material that is succinct, professional and accessible.
- b) Increase the visibility of ISS as a niche organisation to key national stakeholders in the areas of child protection, the legal profession and the migration field.
- c) Work pro-actively within the international network of ISS, and particularly in the Asia-Pacific region, to promote quality casework.
- d) Provide leadership in the international network of ISS on the relevant Conventions.

- d) Engage in public debate through the provision of information to organisations and the media.
- e) Engage in policy development through proactive work with relevant government departments and other stakeholders.
- f) Stimulate public and policy debate in order to specifically promote the Convention relating to protection of children.
- g) Enhance the quality of our work through the development of collaborative partnerships with other organisations and key individuals.

Performance Indicators

Annually ISS has undertaken at least one policy related activity that has resulted in improved services for clients.

Stakeholders report that they consider ISS to be an effective voice on policy issues.

Key Outcome Area 4.

ISS will be positioned to respond to the issues related to international parental child abduction.

Strategies

- a) Build on the findings of ISS research into international parental child abduction and develop expanded expertise in the area.

Key Outcome Areas

1. The focus of casework will be clear both internally in the agency and to all external stakeholders, including referral networks.
2. The focus of casework will be aligned to relevant Conventions.
3. ISS will be positioned to be an effective voice for emerging policy issues relating to the relevant Conventions, especially relating to the Convention for the Protection of Children.
4. ISS will be positioned to respond to the issues related to international parental child abduction.
5. ISS will be a vibrant, strong and viable organisation.

Our priorities

Key Outcome Area 1.

The focus of casework will be clear both internally in the agency and to all external stakeholders, including referral networks.

Strategies

- a) Prioritise the need for the protection of children in international situations through casework services and working within the context of relevant international Conventions, particularly the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Child Abduction Convention and the Convention on the Protection of Children.
- b) Continue an international family tracing service in the context of the casework undertaken by the agency, at the same time develop a strategy to address the broad demand and need for international tracing services.
- c) Focus the work in the area of intercountry adoption through working with relevant state and territory authorities to establish the role of ISS in intercountry adoption assessments and placement support.

Performance Indicators

A significant increase in referrals that are appropriate to the focus of the organisation.

A reduction in inappropriate referrals.

Key Outcome Area 2.

The focus of casework will be aligned to relevant Conventions.

Strategies

- a) All staff will be fully conversant with the relevant Conventions and their practice and implementation.

Performance Indicators

Annual statistics demonstrate that ninety percent of casework fits within the relevant Conventions.

Key Outcome Area 3.

ISS will be positioned to be an effective voice for emerging policy issues relating to the relevant Conventions, especially relating to the Convention for the Protection of Children.

Strategies

- a) Develop a body of knowledge about the human rights framework and international Conventions relevant to our work with families, and especially children.
- b) Undertake research about key issues that arise from casework.
- c) Provide high quality training to government and non-government service providers and the broader community about international instruments, legal interpretations and their work in practice.