2017 ANNUAL REPORT
INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL SERVICE-USA

Kids Are Waiting
WE ARE RESPONDING
What We Did

In 2017, on six continents, over 1,000 vulnerable children and adults were delivered social services and connected with family around the World.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>States and Territories</th>
<th>51</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Countries</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross-Border Inquires Answered</td>
<td>650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cases Opened</td>
<td>894</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children and Adults Connected to Social Services and to their families</td>
<td>1,150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionals Trained</td>
<td>1,506</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Marianna’s Story

Three year old Marianna* was apprehended at the southern U.S. border with her father. She was taken into custody by the Office of Refugee Resettlement, under the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, after her father was deported to Guatemala. ISS-USA was asked to assess the safety of her home in Guatemala before she returned. Within a month, ISS-USA’s local partner in Guatemala conducted a home study and found the home to be a safe and healthy environment. Marianna was reunified with her family and ISS-USA continued to link the family to social services in their community to support a lasting and sustainable reintegration.

*Name has been changed to protect the privacy of the client.

Julissa’s Story

Six year old Julissa* was living in New Jersey with her mother, who suffered with drug dependency issues and could no longer care for her. Julissa entered the U.S. child welfare system and was placed in a foster home. It was then discovered that Julissa’s biological father and grandparents were living in Honduras and desired to care for her. ISS-USA conducted a homestudy on her father and extended family in Honduras, and concluded that his home was a safe and nurturing environment for Julissa to live. After six-months and several post-placement visits, Julissa remains happy and healthy while living with her father on a beautiful farm in Honduras.

*Name has been changed to protect the privacy of the client.

“Thanks to the great efforts of Felicity Northcott and ISS - Japan for first establishing communication with my birth mother in Japan and then to facilitate visiting her there.”

– LEE RICHARDSON, adoptee
UNIDAD ES LA FUERZA (UNITY IS OUR STRENGTH) CONFERENCE

In collaboration with Saint Francis Community Services, ISS-USA hosted an international summit, Unity is Our Strength: Cross-Border Cooperation to Build Capacity and Promote Best Practices in Child Welfare and Protection, from November 8-10 in El Salvador. The summit brought together over 70 experts in child welfare and migration from El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, Mexico, and the United States to build a network for cross-border cooperation on behalf of children on the move and cross-border families. Through this effort, ISS-USA and Saint Francis have connected with additional organizations to support cross-border casework in the region and created a social media presence to keep participating organizations connected on a regular basis.

EVACUATING U.S. CITIZENS DURING HURRICANE EMERGENCIES

After Hurricanes Irma and Jose destroyed the homes of many in the Fall of 2017, ISS-USA’s U.S. Repatriation Program team helped U.S. citizens find shelter and provided travel assistance for their journey back to the U.S. Due to the quick work and resilience of the Repatriation Program team, over 130 U.S. citizens were returned to safe homes and reunited with family in the U.S. after the hurricanes.

FAMILY STRENGTHENING FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES IN MEXICO

ISS-USA and the ISS General Secretariat (GS), in collaboration with a local Mexican child welfare agency, Desarrollo Integral de la Familia (DIF) Monterrey, carried out a training in Monterrey, Mexico from February 2nd - 10th to support family strengthening strategies for children with disabilities. The goal of the program was to prevent family separation and promote reintegration by training child welfare workers on best practices. Over six days of training, thirty five professionals from state and private child welfare organizations were trained.

Ashley’s Story

Ashley* is a U.S. citizen who was living in Canada with her infant daughter, Tara*. She was involved in an abusive relationship with a boyfriend who would not allow her to become employed. Her only hope was to return to the U.S. to find employment and support Tara independently. ISS-USA, in partnership with ISS Canada, helped Ashley and Tara move to Oregon, where they located Ashley’s biological Aunt, who was living close by. Ashley and her Aunt were reunited and she is now employed and able to care for Tara in a safe and healthy environment.

*Name has been changed to protect the privacy of the client.
Moving Forward

PROTECTING CITIZENS BY PLANNING FOR EMERGENCY EVACUATIONS

In 2017, ISS-USA was asked by the U.S. Repatriation Program to help them prepare states for future emergencies. ISS-USA hired consultants to help learn from recent disasters, and to prepare states for future mass evacuations and group repatriations. The goal of this project is to ensure that all states have emergency repatriation recovery plans to assist U.S. citizens living abroad in their return to the U.S. when emergencies occur. Emergencies might include natural disasters and conflict or imminent conflict.

DEVELOPING BEST PRACTICES FOR CROSS BORDER FAMILIES

In 2017 and beyond, ISS-USA and the ISS network continues to develop best practices and principles in alternative care, children with disabilities, cross border mediation, cross border surrogacy and children on the move.

FORMING ALLIANCES TO REDUCE NEGATIVE LONG-TERM EFFECTS ON VULNERABLE CHILDREN

Formed in December 2017, ISS-USA's ongoing alliance with Saint Francis Community Services will provide international social services to children and families separated by migration, adoption, abduction, or human trafficking. Saint Francis will serve as the on-the-ground liaison for ISS-USA in El Salvador. The alliance will reduce the amount of time children remain in state custody while awaiting reunification.

CAPACITY BUILDING IN THE NORTHERN TRIANGLE

To address an increase in international social service case referrals to ISS network partners in Mexico and Central America, ISS-USA has been working to build partnerships and cross-border cooperation in the region. After the success of the Unity Is Our Strength Summit in November, attendees of the summit have united to develop strategies to improve coordination for child protection across borders, including services ensuring access to a safe return and reintegration.

DEVELOPING NEW SERVICES TO HELP KIDS AND FAMILIES

ISS-USA has adapted their Community Resource Survey, used by social workers to assess the social services available to a family in their community, into a planning tool for safe and sustainable reintegration into a child’s country of origin. The survey identifies the resources and risks in the community to which a child might return, while also identifying organizations or entities in their community that will support the child’s specific needs. The Child and Community Resource Survey can be used for both pre-departure and post-return planning for separated children.

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"Thank you from our hearts...my wife and children will always remember your kindness to us. Thank you to all your team and the ISS-USA Team in Maryland."
— Repatriation Client
Dear supporters and colleagues of ISS-USA:

According to UNICEF, more than 50 million children worldwide are subject to adverse conditions due to voluntary or involuntary migration by their families. Kids are waiting!

International Social Service-USA assisted more than 3300 individuals in 2017. A total of 1150 children, adults and families were re-connected, linked to services and information, supported and strengthened, and empowered as they crossed borders and reintegrated. Another 2156 individuals received expert advice, technical assistance and training so that they could support a child, adult or family in need of services and reintegration across borders.

With thousands of children entering the U.S. alone or with families, and many thousands more children in the U.S. separated from their families and in need of care, we are continuing to expand the ways in which we respond to the needs of vulnerable cross border families.

Thank you very much for being an important part of our work.

With best wishes,

Julie Gilbert Rosicky, Executive Director
Ann Laquer Estin, Chair, Board of Directors
WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

Donate to support vulnerable children and families at www.iss-usa.org

CONTACT US

22 Light Street, Suite 200, Baltimore, MD 21202 USA
PHONE: 443-451-1200 EMAIL: question@iss-usa.org WEBSITE: www.iss-usa.org