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The wellbeing of children in cases of international child abduction

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Hilde Demarré
1. Research background

1.1. Cross-border Family Mediators
1.2. Partnership
1.3. Objective
1.4. Methodology:
   => quantitative research
   => qualitative research
   => case law analysis
Cross-border Family Mediators

Find a mediator:

Map Satellite

Initial training ICERM, 22-28 September 2019 in Berlin, Germany.

This 30-hour advanced training course aims to qualify participants in family mediation to mediate cross-border family disputes, including international child abduction, access and custody cases. The course will cover the relevant legal aspects of international family conflicts, differences in national family legislation, the 1980 and 1996 Hague Conventions, the Brussels II bis Regulation as well as...
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   => quantitative research
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2. Methodology

2.1. Quantitative research: Online survey

⇒ Measuring wellbeing of children
⇒ Measuring the circumstances of the abduction

Respondents: - parents of children aged 6-18
- total amount of respondents: 354
2. Methodology

Measuring the wellbeing of children
2. Methodology

Measuring the wellbeing of children

![Bar chart showing the distribution of wellbeing categories across different domains: SDQ-Total, Emotional problems, Conduct problems, Hyperactivity, Peer problems. The chart illustrates the percentage of children in each category: Normal, Borderline, and Abnormal.]
2. Methodology

2.2. Qualitative research: Interviews

=> insight and perceptions of youngsters related to factors that protect or harm their wellbeing
2. **Methodology**

- Circumstances during the abduction
- Circumstances before the abduction
- Circumstances after the abduction
- End of abduction (return/non-return)
- Court procedure and mediation

**Child’s wellbeing**
- Emotional problems
- Conduct problems
- Hyperactivity
- Peer problems
3. Results

3.1. Circumstances before the abduction

- abduction by primary caregiver
- lack of information
3. Results

3.2. Circumstances during the abduction

- contact with left behind parent & peers
- duration of the abduction
- living conditions
3. Results

3.3. Court proceedings

- a fair solution
- children heard during the return procedure
3. Results

3.3. Circumstances upon return and after the abduction

- return vs non-return
- arrest of an abducting parent
- saying goodbye
- psychological help
- repeating of a class
- lack of information
- the aftermath
4. Recommendations

1. Professionals should encourage parents to reach an amicable solution in the best interests of the child.
Recommendations

2. In all conversations with children, professionals should be careful to interact with the necessary attention and genuine interest so that children feel respected and taken seriously.
4. **Recommendations**

3. The judgement should be accessible to the child. If it is written in legal language, the judge, a mediator, a court officer, a guardian ad litem, psychologist or social worker should explain its content and reasons to the child.
3. Professional support should be available to children during, upon and after return (e.g. through a psychologist, social worker...). The judge could suggest this in the judgement as a requirement for the return of the child. Organising a peer group could further help children to deal with their experience by giving and receiving support to or from others who have been through a similar situation.
5. Arrest of a parent should be used as a last resort only, as this is very traumatic for children. When the parent is being arrested, especially in the presence of the children, transparent communication about what is going on and what will happen in the future is necessary.
Thank you

> hilde.demarre@missingchildreneurope.eu
> www.crossbordermediator.eu