



IACHR and Both Ends Believing Partner to Promote the Right of All Children to Have a Family

Texas-based non-profit expands impact throughout Latin America with Children First Software

Washington, DC / Dallas, TX – The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ([IACHR](#)) and Both Ends Believing ([BEB](#)) signed a cooperation agreement on October 13th, 2020 to promote the right of all children to have a family and to protect the rights of those under alternative care and living in residential institutions. The IACHR and BEB will cooperate particularly through the voluntary implementation of Children First Software (CFS) by OAS Member States.

The Children First Software program developed by Both Ends Believing works to create digital profiles of children who are currently under the care of residential institutions, activating a five-phase process that allows public officials to better advocate for the child and complete the journey for the restitution of their rights. Scalable and configurable to each country's unique needs, CFS empowers authorities to control and improve a process that has been lacking due diligence and that left children to languish for years in institutions as a consequence. UNICEF estimates that around 250,000 children are deprived of family care in Latin America and are currently living in public and private institutions.

In its thematic report on [“The Right of Boys and Girls to a Family”](#), the IACHR called on countries to put an end to the institutionalization of children in the Americas. The Commission has observed that there are many children who are unnecessarily institutionalized, and who, with adequate handling of their particular cases, could be reunited with their families or placed in a permanent adoptive family. The IACHR, in line with the United Nations Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children, has concluded that full-time placement in a residential home should be reserved for those cases in which it is determined that it is the most suitable measure to meet the child's specific needs for protection and care, taking into account the particular circumstances of the child.

In order to support States in the fulfillment of the obligation to protect the rights of children living in residential institutions, the IACHR has partnered with Both Ends Believing to equip countries to use CFS as an effective tool to modernize the handling of individual protection measures and to end institutionalization of children in the Americas. The foundation for this agreement is the parties' shared vision that every child has a basic right to grow up in a safe and nurturing family.

“Equipping countries to help each individual child realize his or her right to have a family is the heart and soul of our work. At the same time, BEB seeks to be a catalyst in bringing about systemic change to the child welfare system globally. Together, IACHR and BEB will create a roadmap to enable sustainable transformation throughout Latin America”, said Mark Schwartz, Both Ends Believing's President.

The agreement is initially set to remain in force for three years and includes cooperation with OAS Member States for the voluntary implementation of Children First Software. Countries that choose to adopt the system will receive technical support from Both Ends Believing regarding the implementation

of the system and from the IACHR regarding the inter-American standards applicable to the protection of the child's right to a family.

About IACHR

A principal, autonomous body of the Organization of American States (OAS), the IACHR derives its mandate from the OAS Charter and the American Convention on Human Rights. The Inter-American Commission has a mandate to promote respect for and to defend human rights in the region and acts as a consultative body to the OAS in this area. The Commission is composed of seven independent members who are elected in an individual capacity by the OAS General Assembly and who do not represent their countries of origin or residence.

About Both Ends Believing

Both Ends Believing was founded in January 2010 as a 501(c)(3) organization to promote systemic change for vulnerable children. BEB works to capture comprehensive digital profiles of children through Children First Software (CFS), a technology-driven advocate designed to identify a child's best opportunity for family-based care. Partnering with countries around the world, we transform the process to move children to their best future, a chance to grow and flourish in a loving family.

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