INTERCOUNTRY ADOPTION BOARD

(ICAB)

CY 2018
FIRST SEMESTER REPORT
I. INTRODUCTION

The Intercountry Adoption Board (ICAB) is the Central Authority of the Philippines that carries out commitments under The Hague Convention of 1993 and responsibilities under Republic Act 8043 (The Intercountry Adoption Act of 1995). It upholds its commitment based on its mandate. ICAB activities and strategies ensure the protection of Filipino children placed for international adoption through monitoring and regulation of partner agencies and ensure compliance with international standards to deter trafficking of Filipino children.

II. ACCOMPLISHMENTS ALONG MAJOR FINAL OUTPUTS

1. Regulation of Foreign Adoption Agencies

ICAB prescribes rules, regulations, policies, guidelines, procedures, programs and services that prevent trafficking of children and ensure the protection of Filipino child adopted abroad.

There were 18 Board meetings during the semester where issues and concerns on ICAB policies and procedures, bilateral agreements and problems were discussed, deliberated upon and resolutions arrived at.

- ICAB continues to evolve the allocation system on the number of adoption applications and placement per foreign adoption agency effectively lessening the waiting period for child referral.

- Accreditation/Re-accreditation of Foreign Adoption Agencies
  - Re-accreditation/authorization with due diligence visit to the following adoption agencies as well as consultation/dialogue with the Central Authorities:
    - Canada – Based Foreign Adoption Agencies (FAAs):
      - Choices Adoption and Counselling Services, British Columbia
      - Societe Formons Une Famille Inc., Quebec
      - Cornerstone Adoption Agency, Ontario
    - Europe-Based Foreign Adoption Agency
      - Adopsjonsforum, Norway
      - AdoptionCentrum, Sweden
      - Save the Children Finland
  - The Board had consultation meeting with the Central Authority of British Columbia, the Ministry of Children and Family Development where issues on adoption allocation, matching of children and other policies and procedures were discussed and clarified.
  - Three (3) Foreign Adoption Agencies in USA terminated their engagement and participation with the Philippine Intercountry adoption program due:
    - Closure of the adoption agency (1)
    - Non-renewal of their Hague accreditation (2). FAAs must be accredited by their State to comply with Philippine ICA standards requirements.
2. Program Development and Implementation

- Seven hundred eighty-three (783) inquiries were responded to and clarified on the peculiarities of the Philippine ICA law particularly on relative adoption; its process, procedures and requirements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1st Quarter</th>
<th>2nd Quarter</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phone</td>
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<tr>
<td>Letter</td>
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<td>248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walk In</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>42</td>
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Table 1. Comparative Accomplishment on Inquiries Responded According to Nature of Request (N=783)

- Ninety-four (94) new adoption applications were accepted during the semester. One hundred thirty-one (131) applications were approved: 115 were carry-over from CY 2016-2017 and 16 new applications were approved during the semester. The adoption applicants were found to be eligible and suitable prospective adoptive parents and complied with the documentary requirements of ICAB.

Distribution of New Adoption Applications Received 1st Semester CY 2018

- Regular: 63 (67%)
- Relative: 18 (19%)
- NP: 3 (3%)
- SNC-SHE: 10 (11%)
Table 2. Distribution of Adoption Applications According to Status (Approval, Matched, Accepted and Entrusted)

Table 3. Distribution of Children Cleared According to Child Caring Agency (N=134)

- Of the 310 children were cleared in the first semester of CY 2018 and awaiting placement, 73 children were matched, and 75 were accepted. 115 children were entrusted to the Prospective Adoptive Parents who personally come to the Philippines and stay for a minimum of 5 days.
Of the 115 children entrusted to their PAPs, 52 were placed in Europe, 43 in the USA, 12 were from Canada and 8 were entrusted to Asia-Pacific-based PAPs.

The DSWD Secretary issues the Affidavit of Consent to Adoption (ACA) if reciprocal child-adoptive family bonding is proven. The outcome of the three (3) to four (4) post placement reports done every two months during the 6 to 8 month trial custody period is the basis for the issuance of the ACA. One hundred twenty-four (124) ACAs were sent to the CAs/FAAs during the semester of CY 2017.

Two hundred fifteen (215) Adoption Decrees were received during the semester. The Adoption Decrees received during the first semester were for the children whose placement was made during the period 2015-2017.
Post legal adoption services: ICAB assists the adoptive child/ren and their adoptive family (and even birth family/relatives who desire to know their child’s situation) to trace their birth family/relatives.

- For the semester in review, 20 adoptees came home to touch base with their Homeland and returned to the institutions/orphanages where they spent the early years of their life: USA (6), Australia (5), Netherlands (3), France (3), and one (1) each from Andorra, Belgium and Sweden.
- Twenty-four (24) adoptees have requested for a search and reunion meeting with their birth family. The search and reunion requests are coordinated with NGO Child Caring Agencies or the DSWD Field Offices concerned.
- Among the 24 adoptees who requested for search of birth family/parents/relatives, 3 adoptees have had successful searches facilitated by the DSWD field Offices and NGO. The reunion provides an adult adoptee the opportunity to know his roots/origin, meet his relatives, share experiences and clarified feelings and doubts regarding his/her adoption.
- Fourteen (14) adoptive families requested for the amendment of the birth certificates of the adoptees for use in the re-acquisition of Filipino Citizenship/Availment of dual citizenship and for documentation purposes of the family.

3. Networking and Advocacy

During the first semester, activities for information dissemination, promotion of programs, projects and services through consultations, dialogues, capacity building packages, media guesting’s, and website development to assist other concerned agencies (LGUs, Court, other NGAs, NGO Child Caring/Placing Agencies and DSWD Field Offices/RSCCs).

- The Inter-country Adoption Board held dialogues with the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) Bureau Directors, Field Office Directors and Social Workers; Reception and Study Center Heads and Social Workers; Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) Consular Services, DFA Legal Affairs, Department of Justice-Commission on Filipinos Overseas (DOJ-CFO) Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), Department of Health-National Center for Mental Health (DOH-NCMH), PhilDA, Department of Budget and Management, AO 25 Secretariat, Government Procurement and Policy Board (GPPB), Philippine Commission on Women (PCW), Presidential Communications Operations Office of the Philippine Government (PCOO-OP) and the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT).
- The ICAB sponsored a consultation dialogue with embassy representatives and stakeholders where issues on visa/immigration requirements were clarified for children accepted by adoptive parents of the Receiving States as well as discussion on the new Office of the Court Administrator Circular No. 213 series of 2017 regarding foreigners adopting locally but have habitual residence abroad.
The officials of the USA Embassy Immigration Section, and the Australian Embassy met with the ICAB to learn and exchange experiences in dealing with the emerging issues of children for intercountry adoption particularly children with special needs. The visit was also to better understand the Philippine adoption system and foster cooperation.

The ICAB participated in the Cy 2018 National Adoption Consciousness Day which was spearheaded by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), in partnership with rational government agencies (NGAs) and members of the Association of Child Caring Agencies of the Philippines (ACCAP). With the theme “Pagmamahal Palaganapin, Legal na Pag-aampon Ating Gawin!” (Spread Unconditional Love through Legal Adoption), the celebration aimed to promote legal adoption as a means of providing compassion and unconditional love to abandoned, neglected and surrendered children. Moreover, the celebration also encouraged families to undergo legal adoption in order to protect the welfare of adopted children and ensure that their rights are same with that of biological children. The Adoption Consciousness celebration advocates for the strengthening of the legal process of adoption to ensure that the rights of adopted children are protected and that they are justly recognized in our society.

Three new ICPC members were oriented on the Philippine ICA program, its processes and procedures, turn-around/timeline, and ICAB’s organizational structure to ensure familiarity before taking part in the Matching Conference.

Foreign Adoption Coordinator of Holt Childrens International Services, Oregon, USA visited the ICAB. The discussion focused on the ongoing conditional moratorium on adoption application, hosting program guideline, status/updates of their approved adoptive parents, adoption placements, submission of adoption decrees, post legal adoption services requests and how to institutionalize a better system of cooperation.

The ICAB Senior Social Workers were invited as Resource Persons for the DSWD Technical Assistance Forum for the Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao Cluster where they discussed the ICA programs and services, processes and procedures. The forum also focused in harmonizing the contents of the Child Study Report and the supporting documents for adoption to assist the social workers/case managers facilitate the movement of these children. Specific ICA cases were discussed for learning points in handling the cases of children particularly relative and independent placement.

ICAB’s Social Welfare Officer IV shared process and procedures on alternative placement of children specifically on intercountry adoption program to hasten the management of cases of children under the DSWD’s and NGO residential facilities.

The Social Welfare Officer V and Project Development Officer III attended and participated in the CY 2018 Special National Management Development Conference (NMDC) which dealt on the accomplishments of DSWD OBSUs, Field Offices and Attached Agencies. Challenges and gaps were also discussed particularly on the decreasing number of children cleared for inter-country adoption.
The Executive Director, the SWO V and a SWO III were resource persons in the DSWD sponsored dialogues and consultation with Family Court Judges, lawyers and court social workers which tackled process and procedures of ICA program particularly on relative adoption cases.

ICAB conducted its first On-Site Matching for CY 2018 in Antipolo City and social workers from Child Caring Agencies (CCAs), medical facilities, local social welfare and development offices (LSWDOs) were invited. It was a venue for the center social workers to clarify issues about the intercountry adoption process and emphasized the crucial role of the social workers from the LSWDOs who refer cases of children to CCAs. Social workers were reminded the necessity to record all the facts regarding the child which will be the basis for the case management and permanency planning.

The Intercountry Placement Committee Consultants and the ICAB Secretariat visited 3 CCAs (2 in Tanay and 1 in Antipolo City) and discussed concerns on the case movement of children and how best to address the delay.

Case conferences with the concerned DSWD Field Office and NGO CCAs were conducted to resolve issues and challenges

- on aborted and disruptive placements
- cancellation of the CDCLAA
- request of imprisoned birthfather to see his children
- simulated birth certificate
- transfer and pre-admission of a child in a CCA for accessibility to the required 6 months PTB treatment

Two (2) capacity building trainings on intercountry adoption program and preparing children for adoption were conducted for Region I (Laoag City on February 26- March 3, 2018) and CAR (Baguio City on April 23-27, 2018) social workers. The regional training is in fulfillment to the ICAB’s commitment to DSWD’s SG3 and re-tooling of social workers particularly on inter-country adoption programs and services. A total of 101 social workers from the DSWD FO, RSCC, NGOs, Family Courts, hospitals and P/M/CSWDO attended the training.

Technical assistance and advocacy visits provided to DSWD/LGUs/NGOs to assist in the case movement and management of children for ICA:

- DSWD FO I
- DSWD FO II
- DSWD FO III
- DSWD CALABARZON (IV-A)
- DSWD MIMAROPA (IV-B)
- DSWD FO V
- DSWD VI
- DSWD FO VII
- DSWD FO VIII
- DSWD FO IX
- DSWD FO X
- DSWD FO XI
- DSWD FO XII
- DSWD CAR
- DSWD NCR
- RSCC CAR
- RSCC VIII
- RSCC NCR
- RSCC XI
- Aloha House Inc., Puerto Princesa Palawan
- Angel House Orphanage, Davao Oriental
- Asilo Milagrosa Cebu City
- Carmelite Home for Christ, Dipolog City
- Casa de Bambini, Tagaytay
- Children Shelter of Cebu, Cebu City
- Chosen Children’s Village, Silang Cavite
- Compassionate Franciscan, Naga Bicol
- CRIBS Philippines Antipolo City
- Destiny’s Promise Taytay
- Dorcas House, Iloilo
- First Love International Ministries, Antipolo City
- Friendship Puerto Princesa Palawan
- Gentle Hands, Quezon City
- Hayag Children’s Home,Ormoc
- Healing Heart Ministries, Baguio City
- Heart of Mary Villa, Quezon City
- Home of the Angels, Manila
- Hospicio De San Jose, Manila
- House of Refuge Quezon City NCR
- Kalsahang Buhay Foundation, Quezon City
- Little Mary’s Home, Tagaytay
- Livingstone’s Network of Hope, Davao
- Merlissell Children’s World Foundation, Marikina City
- Middleman Community Support Mercy House, Tanay Rizal
- Ministries Without Borders, General Trias Cavite
4. ORGANIZATIONAL STRENGTHENING

- The ICAB complied to the Good Governance Conditions (GGC) for the CY 2017 Performance Based Bonus:
  - Civil Service Commission ARTA requirements and posting in the most public accessible area of the agency.
  - Submission of ICAB FY 2017 APP to GPPB
  - Posting of the ICAB FY 2017 APP Non-CSE in the ICAB’s Transparency Seal Page
  - Submission of FY 2017 Financial Reports to COA
  - Submission of ICAB APCI Self-Assessment Results for FY 2016 to GPPB
  - Physical Accomplishment Report
  - Financial Documents
  - Programs and Work Instructional Manual

- The ICAB participated in various conferences, dialogues, workshops and meetings which equipped the ICAB Secretariat with new knowledge and skills in the efficient and effective delivery of intercountry adoption program and services, understood strategic goals of the Department, familiarized with the performance governance system, government accounting, procurement and auditing policies/procedures:
  - Adoption Consciousness Week Celebration
  - Adoption Consciousness Celebration "Walk For Legal Adoption" Kick-Off Activity
5. ICAB Budget & Expenses

- At the end of the 1st semester of CY 2018, the ICAB operated on a total budget of Php 38,216,794.00 Million which was derived from the Regular Allotment (RA 10964) of Php 19,410,000.00 Million and Php 18,806,794.00 Million from use of income per Section 13 of RA 8043.

- A summary of allotment/obligations and balance is stated below (in Thousand Pesos) as of June 31, 2018:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Allotment RA 10964</th>
<th>Use of Income Section 13 of RA 8043</th>
<th>Additional SARO</th>
<th>Total Allotment Received</th>
<th>Obligations Incurred</th>
<th>Unobligated Balance of Allotments</th>
<th>% of Fund Utilization</th>
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<td>14,522,000.00</td>
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<td>38,216,794.00</td>
<td>38,216,794.00</td>
<td>23,564,408.76</td>
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<td>62.39%</td>
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- During the 1st semester, the ICAB earned a total of Php 13,538,231.67 of which Php 3,201,780.00 are bank to bank transfers/remittances of the Foreign Adoption Agencies/Perspective Adoptive Parents through the Philippine Central Bank and the Bureau of Treasury. The total income for the semester is 35.15% of the annual target income of Php 38,520,300.00 Million.
III. CONCLUSION:

For the semester under review it would be noted that the target vs accomplishment have not been met due to the following reasons:

1. Decrease in the number of children cleared for inter-country adoption by the DSWD as Competent Authority to determine the suitability/eligibility of a child for adoption; and
2. Delay or non-issuance on time of the Bureau of Treasury Certificate of Income.

The ICAB’s best practice in its processes and procedures is acknowledged and the expertise of the ICAB is tapped by partners and stakeholders for capacity building activities of direct service practitioners/implementers.

The close and continuous collaboration between ICAB, DSWD, NGOs and LGUs will redound to the protection of Filipino children.

IV. RECOMMENDATION

These are challenges for ICAB in the next period and in the coming years unless immediate action is pursued:

1. Limited number of children cleared for intercountry adoption as against a large number of adoptive families waiting for a match and applying.
2. Pre-identification of unrelated child for adoption
3. Pursuing domestic adoption by couples with dual citizenship but are habitual residents abroad.
4. Amendment of RA 8043.
5. Delay in the issuance of the BTR Certification for fees and charges which affects the official income earned by the agency.

Addressing the challenges:

1. Continuous provision of capacity building packages on ICA zeroing on LGUs, hospitals/Lying-In Clinics, courts.
2. Strong coordination with DSWD PSB, Field Offices and NGOs on cases of children for
Inter-country adoption.
3. Pursue legislative agenda.
4. Intense collaboration with BTR and DBM in facilitating updated certifications of fees and charges remitted directly to BTR.

Prepared by:

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PDII
Date: 9.26.2018

Noted and Approved by:

BERNADETTE B. ABEJO
Executive Director
Date: