

CHILD IDENTITY PROTECTION

2021 Annual report



CHILD
IDENTITY
PROTECTION
Knowing origins is a right

Foreword

Despite 2021 being a year of prolonged uncertainty due primarily to COVID-19 pandemic and exacerbated vulnerability of children impacted by their isolation, it was encouraging to see the ongoing work of so many to ensure better alignment with international standards. Child Identity Protection (CHIP) was part of these efforts through its team, Executive Committee, special advisors and partners focusing on the child's right to identity (birth registration, name, nationality and family relations) and the achievement of the sustainable development goals.

In its first year, CHIP successfully positioned itself as a new player in the field of children's rights, through its communication efforts and multiple activities outlined in this Annual Report. CHIP contributed to a greater understanding of the importance of this overarching right as both a stand-alone right and as the gateway to achieving other rights affecting millions of children with a lifelong impact. CHIP's research, advocacy and policy work provided solid resources to ensure marked improvements in birth registration and full documentation of family relations, so that all children have a legal identity and can fully know their origins. Its unique emphasis on restoration of missing and/or falsified identities should bring hope and long waited remedies to many.

While the world is still holding its breath as to the continuation of this devastating pandemic and the risks it poses for adults and children, I am convinced that CHIP's first year will produce long lasting fruit. I look forward to building on these efforts with the team so that every child is able to fully enjoy their right to identity.

Maud de Boer-Buquicchio, President
January 2022, Geneva



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Introduction

Every year millions of children are deprived of their identity. Millions are not registered at birth and even when they are, fundamental information is missing about their origins, such as who is the child's mother or father.

Likewise, millions of children have had their identity falsified or illicitly modified due to issues such as corruption, trafficking, harmful traditional practices and emergency situations.

Without an identity, children invariably face problems accessing basic rights such as education, health, development, social services, and they are also at greater risk of being sold and trafficked. These problems have a lifelong impact on the child and future generations. This is particularly true when considering the child's family relations, a constitutive element of identity (Art. 8 CRC).

Since its establishment end 2020, Child Identity Protection has been working with States, international organisations and other stakeholders to uphold the child's right to know their origins as outlined in this Annual Report through a variety of activities.

Vision

Child Identity Protection strives to ensure that there is integrity, transparency and accessibility for every child's identity in name, nationality and family relations with expeditious restoration whenever elements are missing. #Norightswithoutidentity #Originsmatter

Mission

Child Identity Protection is the only international not for profit organisation solely advocating for the protection of children's identity rights in family relations.

Child Identity Protection works with States and other stakeholders to provide preventive measures and appropriate responses,



whenever a child is (illegally) deprived of elements of his or her identity.

1. Communications

1.1 Branding

As a new organisation, resources were dedicated firstly on branding of Child Identity Protection, given the thousands of child rights' NGOs in



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existence. After a competitive process, the founding members engaged [Alexandre Bouscal](#), as a designer to work on CHIP's branding. This involved the development of a logo, catch phrase as well as mood board, font and messaging for CHIP.

A marketing and branding specialist, [Mariela Demetriou](#) provided advice to the team in terms of positioning as an international NGO, in a niche domain, on a pro-bono basis. There was agreement that there would be three key messages to highlight :

- every child has a unique identity – which is why the thumbprint was used as a common element
- identity is a cross-cutting theme, that affects all countries – which is why images from both developing and developed countries are used
- contravention of this right has a lifelong impact – which is why images of older adults are included – and therefore remedies must be identified for all affected

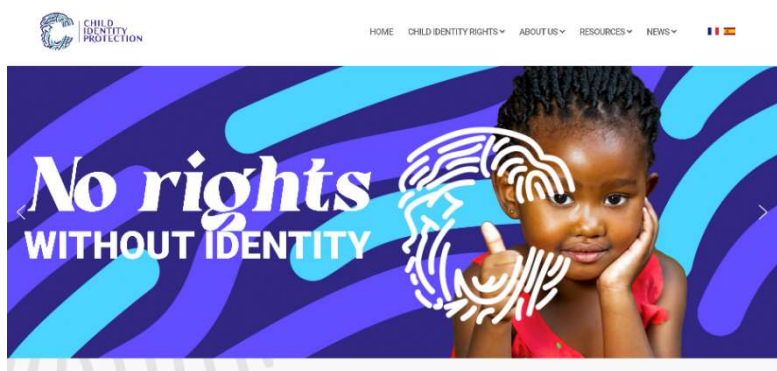


1.2 Website

Once the branding colours were selected, work began on the CHIP website with [Pascal Rudin](#) from Philantropix Web Solutions. Olivier Jeannin provided his technical assistance to purchase the domain name and subscription to Infomaniak, a Swiss based organisation, used by the EPFL. The website was designed in an interactive manner, with automatically moving windows and images, to keep the viewer's interest. It principally targets professionals, although there is likewise content for the general public.

The initial content was based on the initial concept note for the establishment of the organisation, although in a more accessible language. It was important that the website communicated the message the urgency of the unaddressed issue (e.g. using statistics in a variety of scenarios), with a particular focus on family relations. The first iteration of the website in three languages was launched virtually on 31 March under www.child-identity.org.

Throughout the year, the website has gradually expanded to include a news section, Experts CHIP in series, technical assistance projects, advocacy, policy and research work (Section 3).



1.3 Video “CHIPA”

Given the lack of understanding surrounding identity rights, a short animation was developed in combination with well-known experts, Maud de Boer-Buquicchio and Nigel Cantwell (section 2), to explain the lifelong impact from birth well into adulthood. This work was coordinated by documentary film maker Tommy Sheridan from [Polifilm](#) and artwork by [Cat Bruce Animation](#).



1.4 Launch and dissemination activities

A virtual launch occurred on 31 March with the sharing of the website details and other introductory information to CHIP’s network.

Following the launch, a Monthly Update is circulated to the CHIP network to keep them abreast latest developments in the area of identity rights, with the technical assistance of Olivier Jeannin.



Dear colleagues

We hope that you are well with the change in seasons wherever you are. With this October issue, we would like to share with the launch of new research, experts CHIP in videos as well as some developments across the world related to the child’s right to identity.



CHIP has likewise been disseminating its messaging through its news section on the website, which is later shared on social media and Monthly Updates.

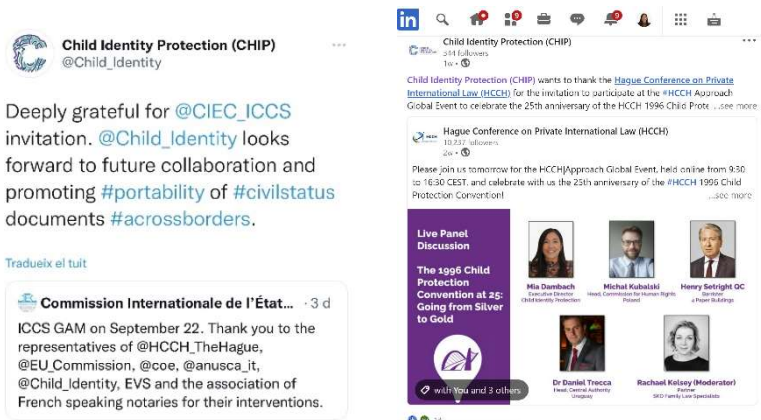


A **physical launch of CHIP** occurred on the occasion of the organisation's **first anniversary** in line with COVID-19 regulations. To commemorate this milestone, [a short documentary film](#), explaining CHIP's *raison d'être* and its main achievements for the first year was produced.



2.5 Social media

Following the virtual launch, it was clear that another priority for the team would be its social media presence. Throughout 2021, the team worked on setting up LinkedIn and Twitter allowing reactivity to ensure timely relevance. The twitter account has helped greatly with being reactive and building ties with partners, for example, with collaborative efforts. The LinkedIn account has almost 400 followers and is an excellent means of building awareness of identity rights among child protection professionals, by drawing links to current affairs and ongoing initiatives. It also provides a means for strengthening partnerships and common initiatives, such as participation in international events.



2.6 Social impact

The communications and activities of CHIP were designed in a way to be aligned with the sustainable development goals (SDG), ensuring legal identity for all (SDG 16.9) and access to justice (SDG 16.3). Measurable social impact of research, advocacy and policy work can be seen by the thousands of visits to the website, downloads of resources and those following the social media accounts. In its first year, CHIP, was able to position itself as a



thought leader in the area of identity rights, as invited to speak and train at multiple conferences/events. CHIP co-initiated with Institute on Statelessness and Inclusion, the establishment of community of organisations working on identity issues. This facilitation role can contribute to the centralisation of resources and expertise to produce sustainable impact of at least 20 organisations (many heading networks) working in all regions of the world.

2. Team

The CHIP team consists of those working on operational matters, special advisors and partners. Biographies are available on the [website](#).

2.1 Operational team

The team is primarily made up of child protection professionals, with at least ten to fifteen years' experience working on different themes including alternative care, adoption, migration, and surrogacy. Together the team have worked in over 30 countries providing technical support by way of legal and policy reform, training and evaluation missions. The team was greatly supported by a wonderful host of interns including [Betina Borisova](#), [Vanessa Cordeiro](#), [Greta Faieta](#) and [Alexandra Levy](#).

The team for the most part, worked remotely, in compliance COVID-19 pandemic regulations which created opportunities for international input into the daily life of the organisation.



2.2 Executive Committee

At the General Assembly, Maud de Boer-Buquicchio was elected President, Gregoire Bordier was elected Treasurer and Wanchai Roujanavong elected Secretary. These changes were made to leverage the competencies of the Executive Committee, positioning CHIP as an international NGO working on child rights, benefiting from the Committee’s expertise and networks.



Maud de Boer-Buquicchio
President



Grégoire Bordier
Treasurer



Wanchai Roujanavong
Secretary

2.3 Special advisors

CHIP identified a number of international experts, working in different fields in children’s rights of who they could benefit from their guidance in developing policy briefs, undertaking research and embarking on varied initiatives. The special advisors work in their personal capacities. The special advisors represent different regions, although many are recognised as international experts, many with over thirty years’ experience in child rights.



Dr Claire Achmad

Biography



Dr Nigel Cantwell

Biography



Dr Patricia Fronek

Biography



Dr Chrissie Gale

Biography



Prof. Olga Khazova

Biography



Lynelle Long

Biography



Rosa María Ortiz

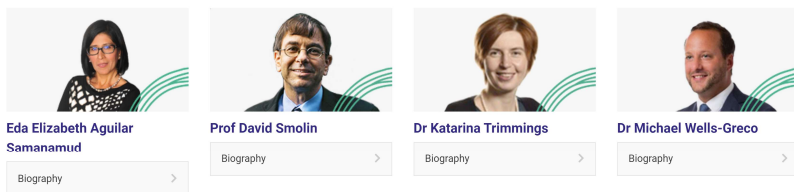
Biography



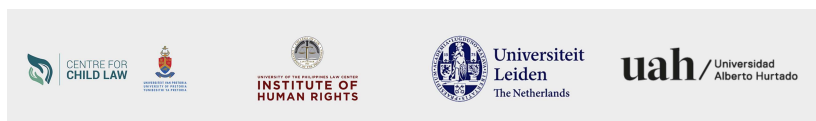
Dr Dainius Pūras

Biography





CHIP identified an initial number of leading Universities working on children’s rights to partner with, notably the following, representing each region of the world.



2.4 Partners

Throughout the year, CHIP explored different partnerships to support the achievement of its mission and vision, fostering existing contacts. CHIP had opportunities to collaborate with organisations whose mandate covers similar issues such as [Hague Conference on Private International Law](#), [International Commission on Civil Status](#), [UN Committee on the Rights of the Child](#) and [UNICEF](#). CHIP continued conversations with governments to explore their needs and identify initiatives which could help them meet their obligations under international standards.

CHIP likewise initiated conversations with fellow civil society actors such as [Better Care Network](#), [Child Rights Connect](#), [Intercountry Adoptee Voices](#), [Institute on Statelessness and Inclusion](#) and [SOS Children’s Villages International](#), as well as national organisations



such as [Origines](#), [La Voix des Adoptés](#) in France, [Human Rights Beyond Borders](#) in Korea and [Espace A](#) in Switzerland in order to pinpoint potential synergies for cooperation to explore different opportunities for collaboration.

As part of its advocacy work, the CHIP team were honoured to be **speakers at a number of events** :

- [Intercountry Adoption Research conference](#) (online Milan) in July, focusing on the child's right to identity;
- General Assembly of **International Commission of Civil Status** (online Strasbourg) in September, to introduce CHIP's work;
- [HCCH|Approach Global Event](#) (online world) to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the #HCCH 1996 Child Protection Convention in October;
- Session to the students of the Masters on Children's Rights, coordinated by the Centre for Children's Rights Studies, at the University of Geneva on setting up a NGO and jury member to select the most viable project.
- Presentation on a webinar on the child's right to identity and the Latin American perspective, organised by the [International Association of Youth and Family Judges and Magistrates](#);
- Session on adoption as part of the Centre of Constitutional Studies of the *Suprema Corte de Justicia de la Nación's* six-month diploma on 'New developments on Law and Family', aimed at judicial operators at federal and state level in Mexico;



- **Regional meeting on child protection and adoption** organised by the French Embassy in Chile and other organisations. CHIP was represented by Anne-Marie Piché to present her research on the right to identity in the South American region (recently published as in section 3.2.2);
- **Institute on Statelessness and Inclusion**, Advanced Course on childhood statelessness & the child's right to a nationality, session on reporting to the CRC Committee and identity issues;
- **Leiden University, Master in Law, Children's Rights**, presentation on Human Rights work in Geneva and the work of CHIP in that context;
- **Reproductive Health Care and Policy Concerns: Regulation of Surrogacy Arrangements in Sri Lanka and Lessons Learned from the United Kingdom** organised by the University of Aberdeen, where a presentation on global approaches to children's rights in surrogacy arrangements was made; and
- CHIP participated in multiple meetings for example **Transforming Children's Care Global Collaborative Platform** and co-organised a webinar in this framework (section 3.2.3).



3. Projects

In addition to setting up the organisation (sections 1 and 2), the CHIP team worked on a number of projects as part of a strategic plan developed with its special advisors (section 2.3) for 2021-2026 which was adopted at its General Assembly on 11 May 2021.

3.1 Human Rights Reporting to the UN

The Executive Director of CHIP with special advisors, Nigel Cantwell and Michael Wells-Greco met with the [UN Committee on the Rights of the Child](#) (CRC Committee) in a remote meeting in February to discuss the issue of assisted reproductive technology and broader identity rights. The CRC Committee expressed the importance of organisations such as CHIP in submitting information to them, to support them in their obligations in examining States parties.

CHIP submitted seven briefs, as below, including Viet Nam.



As a result of this meeting, a brief related to the need for international guidance on identity was initially drafted by Nigel Cantwell with input from the CHIP team. This brief was submitted for the CRC Committee's consideration in English, French and Spanish as part of CHIP's advocacy efforts to encourage and support their work, such as potentially a Day of General Discussion or a General Comment. A follow up meeting has been requested for the January/February session 2022.



In parallel, CHIP submitted a paper on the child's right to identity in alternative care as part of the Day on General Discussion on this theme in September 2021. This brief will become the basis of CHIP's policy brief series (section 3.2.2) to be published in early 2022.

CHIP further provided technical input for the **2022 Annual Day on the Rights of the Child** at the Human Rights Council coordinated by Child Rights Connect which will focus on family reunification in emergency and conflict settings. CHIP contributed to the [set of](#)



[recommendations](#), in collaboration with UNICEF and civil society actors, that will contribute to the upcoming resolution on children.

3.2 Research, Advocacy and Policy work

The CHIP team were active on a number of fronts, leading a number of advocacy efforts, participating in various research projects and developing policy briefs as follows:

3.2.1 Experts CHIP in series

Set up as a modest version of Ted talks, these short videos reflect the views of leading experts on pressing issues and opportunities to better protect children's right to identity. The videos will help keep viewers abreast international, regional and national trends related to the child's identity, exploring examples from both the past, present and future. Experts represent a number of disciplines and work in varied contexts. They are also presented in short snippets for communication with the wider public.



Video: Identity Rights and Child Brides



Video: The role of the HCCH 1980 Child Abduction Convention in preserving the child's identity in potential parental alienation cases



Video: Child's right to identity and child soldiers



Video: History of Identity Rights in CRC



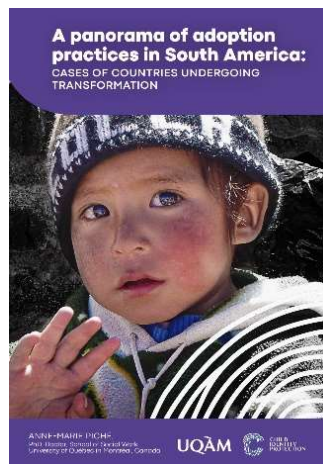
3.2.2 Research

Throughout 2021, the CHIP team carried out a number of research initiatives – notably its signature publication on **Preserving "family relations": an essential feature of the child's right to identity**. The aim of this publication, drafted in collaboration with UNICEF is to highlight the protective aspects related to the child's identity rights, with a focus on the family relations element, as embedded in international, regional and national standards. The publication seeks to provide direction on how to build identity safeguards, drawing on past lessons and capitalising on current opportunities. To do this, the right to identity is explored through a range of examples of existing challenges, promising practices and testimonies. The Chapters are divided into key moments when the right to identity in family relations may be protected and/or at risk, through its Creation, Modification, Falsification, Preservation and Restoration.

Financed by the Swiss National Science Foundation within "PNR 76, national research programme welfare and coercion" under the leadership of Professor Philip Jaffé at the University of Geneva, the CHIP team are partnering on a project on **Coercive decisions in Switzerland through the lens of international standards: foster care placements** in collaboration with experts from the University of Zurich and Institute for Studies in Children and Youth Services, School of Social Work. The research will be the first study specifically exploring coercive decision making in foster care in the Swiss context through the lens of evolving international standards. In practice, international standards have progressively created frameworks and essentially limitations on coercive decision making in order to better uphold children's rights. As such the research will examine which ways and to what extent the contemporary Swiss system complies with these evolving norms.



CHIP is honoured to have been able to provide support to strengthen the angle of right to identity throughout the field research publication undertaken by Anne-Marie Piché, Professor at the School of Social Work at the Université of Québec in Montréal (UQAM). This research brought together the testimonies of adoption professionals (national and international) concerned with **the situation of abandoned and placed children in five South American**



countries: Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia and Peru. The aim of this study is to gain a better understanding of the new realities of adoption, in a context where these countries have chosen to limit or stop their foreign adoption practices. Several transformations are at work in terms of laws and practices, with the challenge of encouraging families to adopt these children locally - allowing for a better protection of their cultural identity and a reversal of the trend towards massive intercountry adoptions of previous years.

At the end of 2021, CHIP partnered with Inspiring Children's Futures which is organising a **global study on quality alternative care**, including members of the CRC Committee, SOS Children's Villages and independent experts such as Nigel Cantwell and Chrissie Gale.



3.2.3 Advocacy through webinars

CHIP was able to seize a number of advocacy initiatives in 2021. This included a [joint newsletter with Better Care Network](#) and partnering on a number of webinars.



1 July 2021: Webinar on Child's right to identity in alternative care

As part of Transforming Children's Care Webinar Series a #5 Webinar was held on Child's right to identity in alternative care. The aim was to show the importance of preservation and access to the child's identity from birth and to when alternative care may become a need. Even when children have grown up in a loving and secure family environment, missing elements of their identity can have a lifelong impact of a legal, medical and/or psychosocial nature. Moderated by Maud de Boer-Buquicchio, president of CHIP with speakers including Cornelius Williams - Associate Director and global Chief of Child Protection for UNICEF Programme Division, Professor David Smolin, Lynelle Long - Founder/Director of ICAV, Dr Maeve O'Rourke and Professor Ann Skelton, CRC Committee member.





A hybrid event on assisted reproductive technology was held, co-hosted by the Brocher Foundation. Assisted reproductive technology, including recourse to surrogacy, is increasingly being used for family formation. Children born through these methods have the



same rights as all children under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). However, the human rights of children born through these methods are at risk of multiple violations, particularly their rights to identity (Article 8 CRC) and to not be sold according to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (OPSC).

Leading experts as well as persons with lived experiences provided food for thought and recommendations on how to uphold the child's right to identity.

3.2.2 Advocacy through policy briefs

CHIP likewise launched a new series in the form of concise policy briefs on various topics. These policy briefs seek to complement the existing work of other stakeholders and where possible, reference is made to their work, with a view of facilitating a holistic approach to protecting the child's right to identity in different contexts. As such, the policy briefs do not purport to provide a comprehensive analysis of all children's rights at stake such as non-discrimination, right to survival and development, health, education and other rights.



3.3 Technical assistance

3.3.1 Guatemala

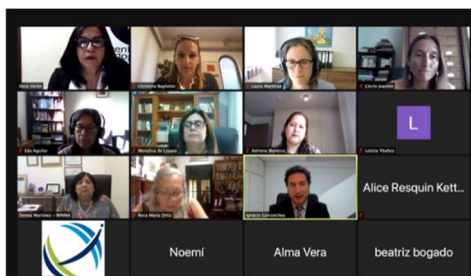
CHIP's first technical assistance project was agreed upon with UNICEF Guatemala at the beginning of 2021. 13 years after the approval of the country's adoption legislation and accession to the 1993 Hague Convention as well as the establishment of its Central Authority in adoption matters, CHIP has been called upon by UNICEF and the Consejo Nacional de Adopciones to provide technical support and strategic assistance to the latter. During the year, CHIP has reviewed, updated and strengthened the Central Authority's internal operational guidelines, which focus on the



various stages of the adoption process, from the child's identity to post-adoption services. While the Consejo Nacional de Adopciones has made important progress and efforts in complying with its mandate and in the implementation of standards and procedures in line with children's rights . CHIP's assistance should have contributed to strengthening the capacity of its multidisciplinary team, harmonising practices and ensuring quality and updated multidisciplinary tools for its operation, in particular with biological and adoptive families, prior, during and after the adoption.

3.3.2 Paraguay

Between April and June 2021 and subsequently from November 2021 until March 2022, experts from CHIP have been and are working as independent consultants for the HCCH. They are providing technical assistance to the Paraguayan Central Adoption Authorities, to discuss opportunities with them on how to improve their understanding, capacity and practices, in particular in relation to the Convention of 29 May 1993 on Protection of Children and Cooperation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption. In terms of identity protection, it is promising and innovative that the 2020 law on alternative care and adoption in Paraguay has a specific provision on promoting cultural continuity in both national and intercounty adoption (Art.55).

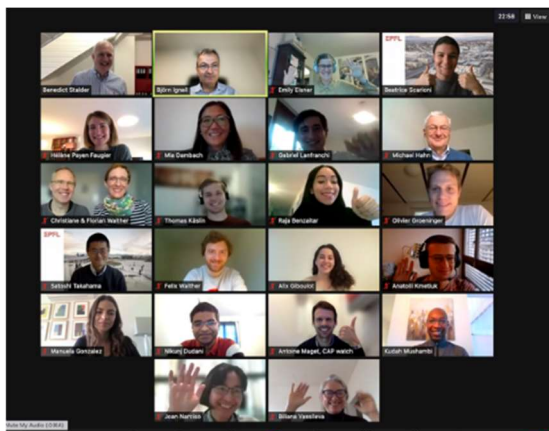


4. Financial Administration and Human Resources

The initial focus was on financial accountability and management. The organisation's foundations are outlined in the statutes officially approved on 3 October 2020. A bank account was established and documentation was prepared for purpose of being recognised as a non-profit organisation by the Swiss authorities. Tax exemption was granted on 9 November 2020 and a tax return was sent to the authorities on 23 March 2021. [Michael Wells-Greco](#) of [Charles Russell Speechlys](#) agreed on a pro-bono basis to provide a “certificat de coutume” on 26 November 2020 attesting that Child Identity Protection is a legal person according to the Swiss Civil Code. In June 2021, CHIP was registered as an international organisation in the database of the CAGI (Centre d'accueil de la Genève internationale).

Once these structures were in place, the team focused on the internal human resource structures, such as drafting of contracts and codes of conducts. This was followed by work on the child safeguarding policies and ensuring that all team members were trained Preventing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in the workplace – using the modules drafted by UNICEF:

Senior members of the team participated in different fundraising training, which contributed to the strategic plan for private and institutional donors. This included for example training on fundraising, network



development and human resources by the Social Economic and Solidarity Network (Réseau de l'économie sociale et solidaire APRÈS) based in Geneva. In addition CHIP had the opportunity to participate [Innosuisse Social Entrepreneurship Training Business Creation](#) focusing on measuring social impact and financial sustainability.

In addition, the Executive Director was successful in obtaining a full tuition scholarship, to participate in online training [G. Barrie Landry Child Protection Professional Training program, as part of FXB Harvard](#), as part of a Swiss team, during the year for mid-career professionals and will continue in 2022.

In terms of financial operations, it should be noted that team members were engaged as independent experts for other organisations – including the HCCH (Paraguay Project), University of Geneva (SNF project on coercive decisions) and Council of Europe (support for regional day of discussion).

