

CONFERENCE NOTES

— SIXTH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Janine Barbour

Report of The Sixth International Congress on Child Abuse and Neglect was held in Sydney in August 1986. There were 1,500 delegates and 200 papers were delivered. There were 16 invited key note speakers, 11 of whom were from the U.S.A., 4 from the United Kingdom and one from Switzerland. The Congress was organized by the International Society for the Prevention of Cruelty, Abuse and Neglect, and the Australian Social Welfare Ministers.

The Congress took place in 3 different venues. The Sydney Hilton Hotel, the Centrepont Conference Centre and the Law School, all of which were located reasonably close to each other.

The opening session took place at the Concert Hall at the Sydney Opera House

on Monday evening. There were various speakers including Pierre Ferrier, the I.S.P.C.A.N.'s current President and the Chairperson Kim Oates from Sydney. There was a presentation of the first C.H. Kempe Award to George Brown of the U.S.A. by Ruth Kempe, followed by the C.H. Kempe Memorial Address by Brandt Steele from the U.S.A.

There was entertainment by Rolf Harris, as the Master of Ceremonies, and musical items by Sydney schoolchildren. This was followed by a Congress Reception.

The social programme included an Australian Evening at the Sydney Town Hall, Recreation Hours and a Buffet Evening and Harbour Cruise.

The Congress was organized like previous International Congresses with key note symposiums in the morning, followed by discussion groups, and poster sessions were available for those who wished to observe or assess them. There were special workshops and concurrent sessions followed in the afternoon from which one had a wide choice.

It lasted for 3 days. At lunch times there was a presentation of children's theatre called Kids on the Block and Home Safe. Much informal discussion took place at these times.

The topics of the 6 key note addresses were as follows:

- 1) The effects of Child Protection Intervention on the child and the caretakers by Richard Krugerman of the U.S.A., Margaret Lynch of the U.K. and Kee McFarlan of the U.S.A.
- 2) Cross cultural issues in child abuse and neglect, by Nigel Cantwell from Switzerland, Adam Jamrozik from Australia and J. Korbin of the U.S.A.
- 3) How to make policy and planning work, by Ann Cowan of the U.S.A., Raymond Castles of the U.K. and Ian Paxton of Australia.
- 4) The abused child before the law, by Howard Davidson of the U.S.A., Gail Gritman of the U.S.A. and Christine Nixon of Australia.
- 5) Child protection intervention that works, by Catherine Ayoub from the U.S.A., Murray Davies from England and Roland Schmidt from the U.S.A.
- 6) Child abuse and neglect from the workers perspective by Mark Myolene Karriek from Australia, Adrian Ford from Australia and Mindy Rosenberg from the U.S.A.

Selected delegates who registered early were invited to attend one of the 3 special workshops. They were as follows:

- 1) Balancing family support and legal intervention of child abuse and neglect, by Michael Wald, a lawyer from the U.S.A.
- 2) Intervention and management of the sexually abused child, by Aaron Bentovim from the U.S.A.
- 3) Qualitative research methodology in child abuse and neglect by Ray Helfer from the U.S.A.

The conference ran smoothly and the atmosphere was most enjoyable. A worthwhile quote remains in my memory which was used by one of the speakers, although I can't recall the source. It was to this effect, that when there is a wind blowing some of us build wind breakers and others build windmills. This is the challenge. Child abuse and neglect is a difficult subject. We can either deny it or accept it and work on towards its prevention.

The whole movement through the International Society really began 25 years ago. We have moved a long way from the days of the 1962 Battered Child Syndrome and we look forward to the next Congress in Rio de Janeiro in 1988.

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