

Institutionalised Children Explorations and Beyond (ICB) has been published bi-annually by Udayan Care, a leading child rights NGO in India, since 2014. From 2020, now, this journal is being published in partnership with SAGE Publications (Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore, Washington DC and Melbourne).

The March 2020 is the 13th issue of the academic journal, with a special focus on “Deinstitutionalisation: Policies, Strategies, Practices and Implications for South Asia,” with funding support from SOS Children's Villages. Kiran Modi, the Founder Managing Trustee of Udayan Care, also, the International Liaison Editor of ICB, expressed her motivation for inviting the team of Hope and Homes for Children (HHC) as Guest Editors in these words, “we wanted the leading experts on the subject of deinstitutionalisation to partner with us in successfully focussing on bringing out research studies, discussions, debates and research on this important global issue, that could lead to better practices of care for children and young persons in alternative care in south Asian region and I am thankful to the team of HHC for this successful partnership.”



Editor-in-Chief of ICB, **Dr. Monisha C. Nayar-Akhtar**, Psychotherapist & Psychoanalyst; Clinical Assistant Professor, University of Pennsylvania, USA said “ **We are delighted that the online version of the 13th issue (Vol. 7, No. 1) has been launched and is now being represented by Sage publications. This special issue has in-depth research articles on alternative care for children; interview with an expert in reforms of child protection systems; opinion pieces from professional and youth perspectives; making for a thorough exploration of significant and positive changes required in the lives of children; what lessons can be learnt and how the lives of children in Alternative Care be impacted positively**”. We thank all our editors for their collaborative efforts in bringing this issue together with a special mention of our Guest Editors from Hope and Homes for Children (HHC), particularly, **Dr. Delia Pop**, Director of Programmes and Global Advocacy **Tessa Boudrie**, Regional Director Asia; and **Mark Riley**, Technical Lead for HHC's Strategic Project in Jharkhand.

This specialist publication provides a platform for academics, researchers, policy makers and child-protection professionals to share research and discuss and debate care alternatives to orphanages and other institutions for vulnerable children and young people in South Asia.

In her foreword to the publication, Delia Pop reflects on 2019 as an instrumental year for deinstitutionalisation and for transforming the lives of children, marked by the anniversaries of both the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the UN General Assembly's Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children. “We have increased the awareness of the harm from institutions, across the world, as well as the recognition that sometimes helping is not helping, and orphanages contribute to the displacement of children out of their families and communities”, she writes.

Other articles in the March 2020 issue of ICB explore how deinstitutionalisation can lead to significant and positive changes in the lives of children, the lessons that can be learnt so that wider, broader systemic change can be brought about.

Delia goes on to explain how, with competent staff, committed donors and deep roots into the communities they serve, existing residential care facilities like children's homes and orphanages, are ideally suited to reinventing themselves as providers of support and care for children within families instead.

“Instead of investigating and separating, we need to prepare communities and support them... We should start working from a strength based starting point, looking at the positive aspects in a family or community, and see how we can build upon that.”

The journal also includes an interview with Professor Andy Bilson about the impact that separating children from their families has, even in high income countries. A leading expert on the UK care system and recent Hope and Homes for Children trustee, Professor Bilson, cites research that exposes the damage that family separation can cause to children. This includes reducing children's levels of education and chances of employment and increasing their risk in adult life of becoming involved in crime or living on the streets.

Good news for readers of ICB is that the March issue is available online free of cost until June 2020 and complete soft copies can be accessed at the SAGE website: <https://journals.sagepub.com/toc/ICB/current>