

ADOPTION

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Global Trends in Intercountry Adoption: 2001-2010

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With additional commentary by William Rosen, Chair, NCFA International Committee

The decline in the number of intercountry adoptions in the United States over the past six years is well known. The aim of this paper is to go behind these numbers to explore this decline – and the rise that preceded it – in a global context. Data on 23 receiving states have been used and the analysis will extend to the end of 2010, so covering the expedited adoptions following the earthquake in Haiti, the case of Artyom Savelyev and its impact on Russian adoption, and the ongoing problems surrounding other sending countries such as Guatemala, Nepal, and Vietnam. The implications of these changes and prospects for the future will be discussed with special reference to Africa as a more recent major source of internationally adopted children.

THIS ARTICLE is based on a presentation given by Dr. Peter Selman at the Holt International Forum in Washington, DC in April 2011. Some of the charts and tables will be published in a more detailed form and with more extensive commentary in Dr. Selman's forthcoming chapter in the book *Intercountry Adoption: Policies, Practices, and Outcomes*, to be published by Ashgate in 2012 (edited by J.L. Gibbons and K.S. Rotabi). We are grateful to Ashgate and the book's editors for granting Dr. Selman and NCFA permission to make these resources available in the *Adoption Advocate* in advance of the full book's publication.

The global number of intercountry adoptions peaked in 2004 after a steady rise in annual numbers from the early 1990s. Since then, annual numbers have decreased to the point that by 2008 the total was lower than it had been in 2001 (see Figure 1), and by 2009 lower than it was in 1998 (see Table 1). During this time, the rise and fall was evident in



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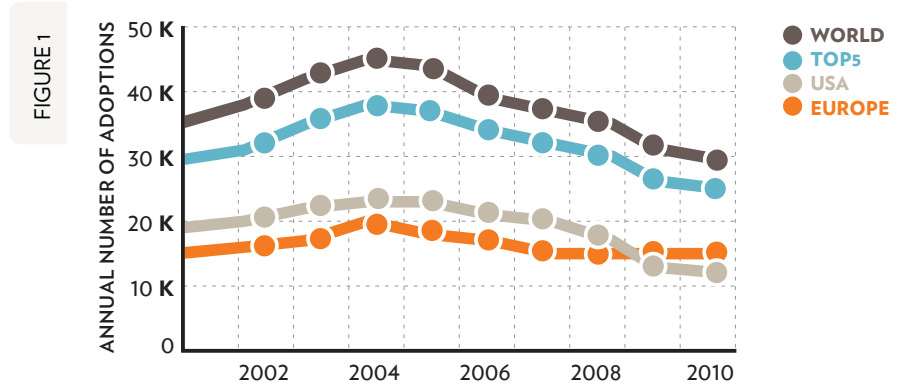
most regions and countries. In 2009, however, things began to change, with more children going to European countries than to the United States – which had, until that time, accounted for about half of all international adoptions since the mid-1980s. This paper will review these recent trends, giving particular attention to variations between key sending and receiving countries while exploring some of the factors that lie behind the numbers.

The Rise and Fall of Intercountry Adoption: 1998-2010

The period from 1998-2010 saw a remarkable rise and fall in the number of children adopted via intercountry adoption each year (Figure 1). In 1998 there were just under 32,000 adoptions; by 2004 this number had risen to over 45,000; by 2009 the world total had fallen to under 30,000 – less than in 1998 – and the decline continued in 2010 (see Table 1).

The number of intercountry adoptions rose in each of the top five receiving countries between 2001 and 2004, but since 2004 the pattern has shifted to a decline. The number of “orphan” visas granted by the U.S. has fallen by

Trends in Intercountry Adoption to 23 Receiving States, 2001-2010



SOURCE: “The Rise and Fall of Intercountry Adoption in the 21st Century: Global Trends from 2001 to 2010,” in *Intercountry Adoption: Policies, Practices, and Outcomes*.

Intercountry Adoptions to 23 Receiving Countries, 1998 to 2010, by Rank in 2004 PEAK YEARS ARE HIGHLIGHTED IN BOLD.

Country	1998	2001	2004	2006	2008	2009	2010
USA (FY) ^a	15,774	19,237	22,884	20,679	17,438	12,753	12,149 ^b
Spain	1,487	3,428	5,541	4,472	3,156	3,006	2,891
France	3,777	3,094	4,079	3,977	3,271	3,017	3,504
Italy	2,233	1,797	3,402	3,188	3,977	3,964	4,130
Canada	2,222	1,874	1,955	1,535	1,916	2,129	1,946
Total to All States^c	31,710	36,391	45,298	39,460	34,785	29,867	29,005
% to USA	49%	53%	51%	52%	50%	43%	42%
% to Europe	41%	39%	43%	42%	43%	49%	50%

SOURCES: Statistics provided by Central Authorities of the 23 receiving countries. A more detailed version of this data will appear in Dr. Selman’s article, “The Rise and Fall of Intercountry Adoption in the 21st Century: Global Trends from 2001 to 2010,” in *Intercountry Adoption: Policies, Practices, and Outcomes*.

a) The U.S. Department of State publishes data each fiscal year (FY = October through September).

b) The total for 2010 includes 1,090 “humanitarian” visas issued by the U.S. for children from Haiti; without these, the global total is 27,915 and the U.S. percentage falls to 40 percent. In 2011, the number of intercountry adoptions to the United States fell further, to 9,230 (see 2011 intercountry adoption numbers for the U.S., published online by the U.S. Department of State: adoption.state.gov/content/pdf/fy2011_annual_report.pdf).

c) 18 other countries are included in the overall totals: Belgium, Cyprus, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Luxembourg, Malta, New Zealand, Norway, Switzerland, and the UK, with the addition of Andorra and Israel from 2001. For data on the top 15, see Hillborn (2011).

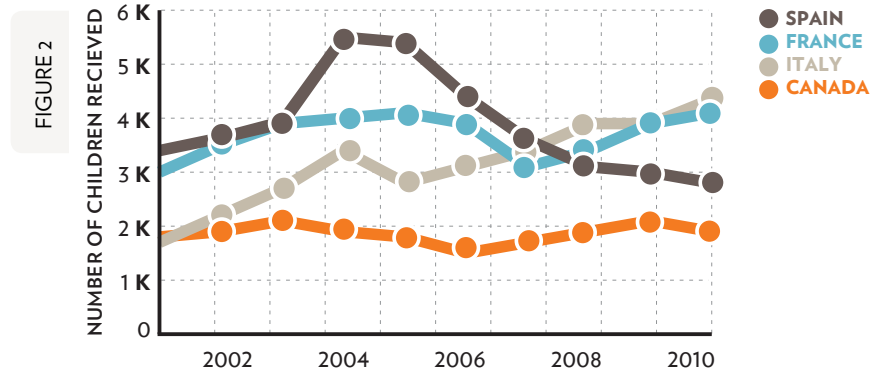
more than half, and the number of intercountry adoptions in Spain has fallen by 45 percent. In Italy, however, the total number of adoptions in 2010 was 20 percent higher than in 2004, and numbers have been rising in France as well after a steady decline up to 2009.

Figure 2 shows the contrasting trends in the four states receiving the highest numbers of children after the United States. Tables 2 and 3 examine the rise and fall in more detail (see also: Selman, 2009b and 2011).

Table 2 shows changes in nine countries between 1998 and 2004 (Selman, 2006). Eight show rising numbers, but the proportionate change is varied. The number of children entering Spain trebled and those to Ireland more than doubled, while Sweden, Norway, and France saw increases of less than 20 percent, and the number entering Canada fell.

Global numbers fell by 35 percent between 2004 and 2009. Table 3 shows the change in the same nine countries listed in Table 2, seven of which also saw a reduction in numbers. In contrast, Canada and Italy saw an increase by 2009, which in the case of Italy continued through 2010. Numbers also rose in France due in large part to a rise in adoptions from Vietnam (see Table 13) and Haiti (see Table 20). However, in 2011, the total of adoptions in France fell to 1,995.

Four Receiving States 2001-10



SOURCE: "The Rise and Fall of Intercountry Adoption in the 21st Century: Global Trends from 2001 to 2010," in *Intercountry Adoption: Policies, Practices, and Outcomes*.

The Rise in Numbers: 1998-2004

	1998	2001	2004	% change
Spain	1,487	3,428	5,541	+ 273
Ireland	147	179	398	+ 171
Netherlands	825	1,722	1,307	+ 58
Italy	2,233	1,797	3,402	+ 52
USA	18,774	19,237	22,884	+ 45
22 States	31,710	36,391	45,298	+ 42%
Sweden	928	1,044	1,109	+ 19
Norway	643	713	706	+ 10
France	3,777	3,094	4,079	+ 8
Canada	2,222	1,874	1,955	- 15

Change in Numbers: 2004-2009

	2004	2009	% change	2010
Norway	706	347	- 51	343
Netherlands	1,307	682	- 48	697
Spain	5,541	3,006	- 46	2,891
USA - FY	22,824	12,753	- 44	12,149
23 States	45,298	29,865	- 35%	29,023
France	4,079	3,017	- 27	3,504
Ireland	398	307	- 23	201
Sweden	1,109	912	- 18	(655)
Canada	1,955	2,129	+ 9	1,946
Italy	3,400	3,964	+ 17	4,130

Standardized Rates

Although the United States receives the largest numbers of intercountry adoptees, some other countries have a higher rate per 100,000 members of the population. In 2004, the highest rates were found in Norway (15.4), Spain (13.0), and Sweden (12.3). The lowest rates were in Australia (1.9), Germany (0.8), and the UK (0.6).

The Demographic History of Intercountry Adoption

Intercountry adoption began to grow in popularity in the aftermath of the Second World War. In this section of the paper, I estimate the number of children adopted worldwide since 1945, estimating numbers for each decade in reverse order. The only countries for which we can find data covering the whole of this period are Sweden and the United States. For the latter, the estimated number from 1948 to 2010 is 480,000. For much of this period, the U.S. accounted for 50 percent or more of the world total (see Table 1), so that a crude global estimate could be 950,000-1,000,000.

2000-2010 More than 400,000 children were adopted by citizens of 27 countries between 2000 and 2010 – the highest number for any decade. This figure is based on information provided by Central Authorities of the receiving states (note: relative and step-parent adoptions are excluded where listed separately).

1990-1999 Data were obtained for 15-20 countries from 1993-1999 and for 12 countries from 1990-1992. At least 220,000 children were adopted from these countries during this period. UNICEF estimates at least 10,000 children were adopted from Romania between January 1990 and July 1991. The estimated number not recorded would be at least 10,000, so the decade total would be 230,000+.

1980-1989 Kane (1993) obtained data from 14 countries – eight had good data for 9-10 years; four for 5-8 years – but Spain and Germany had data for only 3 years, and Canada had data for Quebec alone. Data sent amounted to 163,000 (78,000, or 47 percent, from the U.S.). Kane estimates a minimum of 170,000-180,000 for the decade.

1970-1979 Data for five countries (the U.S., Holland, Denmark, Norway, and Sweden) give a total of 77,000 children adopted, but we know that Belgium and France received 6,000 from Korea alone during this decade (Korean Ministry of Health & Welfare, 2010). Children were also sent by India, Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam, and several Latin American countries; and received by Australia, Canada, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, Switzerland, and the UK. A decade total of at least 90,000-100,000 is likely.

1948-1969 Altstein and Simon (1991:14) record more than 31,000 children sent to the U.S.; there were also 4,500 sent to Sweden; and children also went to the Netherlands, Belgium, and Scandinavia. Korea sent 9,000+ children from 1953-1969, most to the U.S., but some 800 to Norway, Sweden, and Denmark as well; Germany sent 30,000 (Textor, 1991; 110), with 5,000+ of these going to the U.S.; Greece sent 4,000 to the U.S. (Altstein & Simon, 1991) and 400+ to Netherlands (Hoksbergen, 1991:142). Children were also sent from Austria and Japan to several European countries (Hoksbergen, 1986). The total number adopted internationally during these years is at least 50,000. There were also a number of adoptions during World War II and immediately following, including children sent from Finland to Sweden.

Summary of Estimates: 1948-2010

If we put these estimates together, we find an estimate of over 950,000 adoptions in the period from 1948 to 2010 (see below).

Estimated Numbers of Children Adopted Via Intercountry Adoption: 1948-2010

2000-2010	410,000	} 1948-2010 970,000+
1990-1999	230,000+	
1980-1989	180,000	
1970-1979	100,000+	
1948-1969	50,000	

Countries of Origin

Many countries have been involved in intercountry adoption, and those sending the highest numbers of children have changed over time. Korea has the longest sequence of official statistics available, from 1953-2009, with a total of over 170,000 children adopted by 2010. Between 1992 and 2010, more than 125,000 children were adopted from China; from Russia, more than 110,000.

The tables below are based on statistical returns to the 2010 Hague Special Commission and on estimates from data from receiving states. Table 4 shows the changes in top states of origin between 1989 and 2010 based on data from receiving states (Kane, 1992; Selman, 2002, 2006, 2009, 2012).

The top countries differ for the four major receiving countries – (see Table 5).

The global top six are inevitably similar to the U.S., which accounted for 43 percent of all adoptions in 2009, but Guatemala is only of importance in the U.S. All four top sending countries had some states of origin of special importance to them alone.

Figure 3 charts the changes in four key states of origin between 2003 and 2010. These are the four countries sending the highest number of children to 23 receiving states during omit this period.

Table 6 summarizes the annual data for these countries and three others

Top Seven Sending Countries: 1980-2010

1980-89 ^a	1998	2004	2010
Korea	China	China	China
India	Russia	Russia	Ethiopia
Columbia	Vietnam	Guatemala	Russia
Brazil	Korea	Korea	Haiti
Sri Lanka	Columbia	Ukraine	Columbia
Chile	Guatemala	Columbia	Vietnam
Phillipines	India	Ethiopia	Ukraine

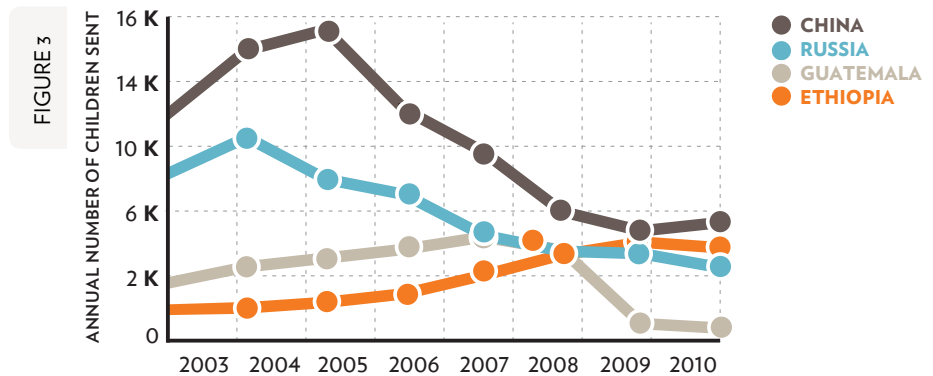
TABLE 4

Top Six Sending Countries in 2009

All States	USA	Spain	Italy	France
China	China	Russia	Russia	Haiti
Ethiopia	Ethiopia	Ethiopia	Ukraine	Ethiopia
Russia	Russia	China	Colombia	Vietnam
Ukraine	Korea	Ukraine	Ethiopia	Russia
Vietnam	Guatemala	Colombia	Brazil	Colombia
Korea	Ukraine	Kazakhstan	Poland	Mali

TABLE 5

Top Four Sending Countries: 2003-2010



SOURCE: "The Rise and Fall of Intercountry Adoption in the 21st Century: Global Trends from 2001 to 2010," in *Intercountry Adoption: Policies, Practices, and Outcomes*.

Nine Countries Sending 10,000+ Children for Intercountry Adoption: 2003-2010 – PEAK YEARS ARE HIGHLIGHTED IN BOLD.

TABLE 6		2003	2004	2006	2008	2009	2010	Total
	China	11,229	13,407	10,745	5,972	5,085	5,471	75,149
	Russia	7,743	9,417	6,776	4,140	4,033	3,387	47,856
	Guatemala	2,677	3,424	4,232	4,186	799	58	24,099
	Ethiopia	854	1,527	2,172	3,896	4,596	4,396	22,221
	S Korea	2,287	2,258	1,899	1,250	1,125	1,013	13,197
	Colombia	1,750	1,741	1,639	1,617	1,413	1,798	13,059
	Ukraine	2,049	2,021	1,046	1,577	1,516	1,093	12,903
	Haiti	1,055	1,159	1,096	1,368	1,238	2,601	10,258
	Vietnam	936	491	1,370	1,739	1,506	1,242	7,284

SOURCES: Statistics provided by Central Authorities of the 23 receiving countries. A more detailed version (15 countries) will appear in "The Rise and Fall of Intercountry Adoption in the 21st Century: Global Trends from 2001 to 2010," in *Intercountry Adoption: Policies, Practices, and Outcomes*.

Adoption Ratios (Per 1,000 Live Births) in States of Origin, BY RANK IN 2005

TABLE 7	Country	2003	2005	2007	2009
	Guatemala	6.4	8.9	10.8	1.8
	Latvia	3.6	5.6	4.8	6.1
	Ukraine	5.0	5.1	3.9	3.3
	Russia	5.4	4.9	3.2	2.6
	Haiti	4.2	3.6	2.9	4.5
	Korea	4.7	3.8	2.6	3.2
	Bulgaria	15.5	2.2	1.4	3.5
	China	0.6	0.84	0.5	0.3
	Ethiopia	0.3	0.56	0.95	1.5
	Belarus	7.5	0.26	0.2	0.3
	India	0.02	0.03	0.04	0.03

sending more than 12,500 children during this eight-year period.

The figures presented are based on data provided by the Central Authorities of 23 receiving states. Data for Korea are those provided by the Korean Ministry of Health and Welfare. Totals for Korea based on data from receiving states (see Table 9) give a slightly higher figure, but this does not affect the country's rank in Table 6.

Standardized Rates

China has the highest number of children adopted internationally, but other countries send more in relation to their level of births. Table 7 shows changes in adoption ratios (adoptions per 1,000 live births) between 2003 and 2009 for 11 countries.

In 2005, the adoption ratio in China was 0.84; in Guatemala it was ten times higher at 8.8. Over the whole period, the highest ratio is Bulgaria in 2003 (1.5 children per 100 births). Similar levels are found in Korea in the 1980s, where the ratio was 13.3 in 1985 (Selman, 2007:59). The ratio for Romania in 1991 may have been even higher.

The Rise and Fall of Key States of Origin

Figure 3 shows the dramatic decline in adoptions from China, Russia, and Guatemala, and the equally striking rise in numbers from Ethiopia. Table 8 spells this out in further detail, and also notes the

recent impact of increased numbers from Vietnam and Haiti. Further changes in 2010 are discussed later in this article.

Adoptions from Asia

Historically, children from Asian countries have accounted for more than half of all intercountry adoptions. Korea alone accounted for a majority of adoptions to the U.S. between 1972 and 1987 (Altstein & Simon, 1991:14-16), and China has been the leading country of origin for adopted children worldwide throughout the first decade of the new millennium (Table 6). Table 9 shows the trends since 2003 for the top five sending countries in Asia, with estimates for all Asian countries (excluding Kazakhstan).

China China is clearly the largest country of origin. International adoptions from China began in 1992 and grew very rapidly over the next twelve years, with many children initially placed with single women (Selman, 2009a). However, since 2005, numbers of children adopted from China have fallen dramatically (see Figure 3 and Table 9).

Tables 10 and 11 are based on data from the China Center for Adoption Affairs (now the China Center for Children's Welfare and Adoption), submitted to The Hague Special Commission in June 2010.

As important as the steady decline in numbers is the change in the characteristics of children adopted from China. They are now older:

Contributions of Key Countries to the Decline in Intercountry Adoption: 2005-2009

	2005	2007	2009	2005-9	TABLE 8
Total to 23 States	43,710	37,260	29,867	-13,843	
China	14,496	8,750	5,085	-9,411	
Guatemala	3,872	4,851	799	-3,073	
Russia	7,480	4,880	4,033	-3,447	
All 3 States				-15,931	
Ethiopia	1,778	3,033	4,565	+ 2,787	
Haiti	958	783	1,238	+ 280	
Vietnam	1,198	1,695	1,506	+ 316	
All 3 States				+3,383	

Top Five Asian States of Origin – Number of Children sent to 23 Receiving States: 2003-2010 – NUMBER IN PEAK YEARS HIGHLIGHTED IN BOLD

	2003	2004	2005	2007	2009	2010	% sent to USA in 2008	TABLE 9
China	11,228	13,404	14,496	8,750	5,085	5,471	64%	
Korea	2,309	2,238	2,086	1,223	1,421	1,154	77%	
Vietnam	935	483	1,195	1,695	1,506	1,242	43%	
India	1,172	1,083	873	1,003	725	613	41%	
Philippines	406	414	503	574	600	515	49%	
All Asia	16,508	18,504	20,192	14,673	10,413	10,048	56%	

the proportion aged five and older rose from 1.4 percent in 2005 to 10.9 percent in 2009; and a higher proportion are male (5 percent in 2005 vs. 26 percent in 2009). Central to these changing trends is the increase in the number of children with special needs (Table 11) following China's decision to move towards increasing the numbers of these placements.

Figure 4 shows trends for four other Asian countries during the period from 2003 to 2009.

Korea and India Historically, Korea is one of the most important countries in intercountry adoption, sending some 170,000 children since the 1950s. Most children adopted from Korea are children of unmarried parents (Dorow, 1999). In 1986 the annual number of children adopted from Korea peaked at 8,680 (Selman, 2007: 69), but fell dramatically over the next five years following the 1988 Olympics in Seoul. Since 2003, numbers have again been falling – and in 2007, for the first time in many years, there were more domestic than intercountry adoptions in Korea.

Still, the annual number of intercountry adoptions remains high for a country that is now quite wealthy and has the lowest fertility rate in Asia. In 2011, the Korean government announced its intention to end its intercountry adoption program by 2012, through legislation drafted by adoptees and birthmothers (Dobbs, 2011; Tae Hoon, 2011).

International Adoptions from China: 2005-2009, to the Six Countries Receiving the Most Children from China in 2005

TABLE 10

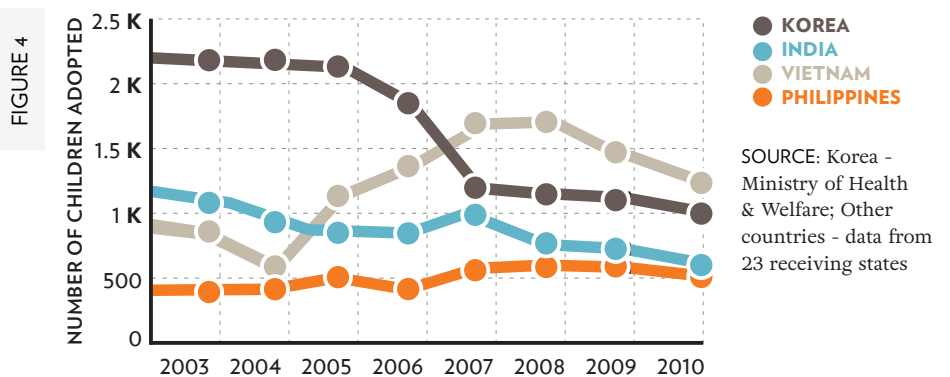
COUNTRY	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
USA	7,933	6,138	4,736	3,515	3,029
Spain	2,608	1,909	1,269	738	817
Canada	928	748	496	294	379
Netherlands	667	367	330	297	297
Sweden	432	335	248	198	255
France	439	331	178	139	95
Total	14,221	10,648	7,858	5,531	5,294

Children with Special Needs Adopted from China to Six Key Receiving States, RANKED BY PROPORTION IN 2007

TABLE 11

	2005	2007	2009
Netherlands	13%	42%	66%
USA	14%	42%	61%
All States	9%	30%	49%
Sweden	6%	25%	69%
Canada	2%	14%	40%
France	6%	13%	34%
Spain	0.1%	4%	9%
Australia	1%	0%	5%

Number of Children Sent by Four Asian States of Origin, 2003-2010



Intercountry and Domestic Adoptions in India and Korea: 1989-2010

YEAR	INDIA Adoptions		KOREA Adoptions	
	Intercountry	Domestic	Intercountry	Domestic
1989	1,213	757	4,191	1,872
1990	1,272	1,075	2,962	1,647
1995	1,236	1,424	2,180	1,025
2000	1,364	1,890	2,258	1,641
2005	867	2,284	2,101	1,461
2007	770	2,494	1,265	1,388
2008	821	2,169	1,250	1,306
2009	666	1,852	1,125	1,314
2010	593	5,309	1,013	1,462
Population 2009	1,198,003,000		48,333,000	
Live Births 2009	26,787,000		450,000	
Ratio (per 1,000 births)	0.025	0.07	2.5	2.9

TABLE 12

SOURCE FOR INDIA: Central Adoption Resource Agency; Damadoran 2000, 2004
SOURCE FOR KOREA: Ministry of Health and Welfare

Intercountry adoption numbers have also been falling in India, where domestic adoptions are now far more numerous, but the rate of adoptions in India is much lower and the extent of corruption much greater despite India's ratification of the Hague Convention (Dohle, 2008; Smolin, 2005).

Table 12 shows trends in both intercountry and domestic adoptions in the two countries since 1989, using data provided by their Central Authorities together with the standardized rates in 2009.

Other Asian Countries Two Asian countries – Vietnam and Nepal – have been of particular concern in recent years due to allegations of irregularities and corruption. Vietnam has a long history of intercountry adoption, dating back to the Vietnam War and the infamous Operation Babylift. Numbers fell in the 1980s and early 1990s, but have risen since – albeit interspersed with adoption moratoria – and ongoing concerns about the intercountry adoption process and regulation have been voiced (e.g., ISS, 2009).

Table 13 shows the pattern of international adoption from Vietnam since 1998. Numbers have been falling since 2008, with several countries, including the U.S. and Sweden, halting adoptions in 2010. In the same

year, Vietnam's numbers to France, Italy, and Spain (which received 320 children, compared to only 65 in 2009) increased. In 2011 Vietnam ratified the Hague Convention, effective starting in February 2012.

Adoption from Nepal operates on a lower scale, but in recent years concerns expressed by UNICEF and Terre des Hommes (2008) led to intervention by The Hague (Degeling, 2010), and adoptions from Nepal were halted in 2009. There was small rise in 2010, but numbers remain below the level reached between 2006 and 2008.

Adoptions from Eastern Europe

European countries sent few children for intercountry adoption in the 1970s and 1980s, but the fall of Ceausescu in 1999 and subsequent media coverage of the Romanian orphanages led to an estimated 10,000 adoptions in 1990 and 1991. Romania continued to send children until 2005, when the government called a total end to non-relative intercountry adoption, responding to ongoing allegations of malpractice (Dickens, 2002; Post, 2007).

Since the mid-1990s, Russia and other Eastern European States have sent many children for adoption, but these numbers have fallen in recent years (Selman, 1998; 2009a; 2010).

Table 15 shows the pattern in seven countries from 2003 to 2010, a period over which the total numbers of adoptions from Europe

have fallen by half. The proportion of intercountry adoptions from Europe fell from 31 percent in 2003 to 20 percent in 2010. The number of international adoptions declined substantially in Bulgaria from 2003 to 2006 and in Belarus from 2003 to 2008, but rose slightly in recent years. The 99 children adopted from Belarus in 2010 all went to Italy, and were predominantly older children.

The number of children – mainly older or with special needs – sent from Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, and other new EU States has risen (Selman, 2010). However, the numbers from Russia and Ukraine, who accounted for over 80 percent of adoptions from Europe in 2004, have continued to decline. Table 16 maps the decline in numbers from Russia since 2004.

Adoption from Vietnam: 1998-2010 – to the Six Countries Receiving the Most Children During that Period

COUNTRY	1998	2003	2004	2005	2007	2008	2009	2010
France	1,343	234	363	790	268	284	308	469
Italy	0	59	6	140	263	313	231	251
USA (FY)	603	382	21	7	828	751	481	9
Ireland	0	39	16	92	130	182	136	10
Sweden	186	32	16	92	54	50	65	2
Canada	79	45	6	0	86	105	159	139
TOTAL	2,361	936	491	1,198	1,695	1,739	1,506	1,242

NEPAL – Four Countries Receiving the Most Children from Nepal: 2003-2010

	2003-10	2003	2006	2008	2009	2010
Spain	623	38	173	184	0	41
Italy	436	64	90	80	8	59
USA	375	42	66	54	6	30
France	302	36	61	58	3	19
Other	147	14	20	29	3	22
Total	1,883	194	410	405	20	171

Since 1992, Russia has sent over 110,000 children for intercountry adoption, and in recent years has accounted for more than half of all adoptions from Eastern Europe, but ratios have been higher in other European countries such as Romania and Bulgaria – and, more recently, Latvia and Lithuania (see Table 7).

In the past decade, a small number of adoptive parents in the U.S. have been charged and found guilty of abusing or murdering their adopted children from Eastern Europe. In 2009, Russia threatened the temporary suspension of adoptions to the U.S. after Artyom Savelyev, a 7-year-old adopted child, was rejected by his American mother and sent back alone to Russia (Abrams, 2010; Rotabi & Heine, 2010; Selman, 2012).

The adoption of children with special needs has been a feature of adoptions in EU sending countries for some years (see Table 17, which compares three EU States with Chile and China). The adoption of older children is also being promoted in Poland, Ukraine, and, more recently, Belarus (ISS, 2011:5).

Adoptions from Africa

At one time, intercountry adoptions from Africa were rare. However, the growing number of prospective parents wishing to adopt young infants – and, in the U.S., the publicity surrounding “celebrity adoptions” of children from African nations – has changed

that (Mezmur, 2009a). In 2003, Africa accounted for 5 percent of all intercountry adoptions; by 2009 and 2010, this had risen to 22 percent. Table 18 shows the rise in the number of children sent by nine African countries between 2004 and 2010.

Much of the rise is attributable to Ethiopia, where the number of children sent rose from 620 in 2000 to 1,527 in 2004 and 4,565 in 2009 (when Ethiopia accounted for over 70 percent of children sent from Africa). In 2009 and 2010, Ethiopia replaced Russia as the second largest sending country, after China, and the most important source of children adopted by citizens in Belgium, Denmark, Germany, and Switzerland.

The number of children sent from Ethiopia fell slightly in 2010, and in 2011, the Ministry of Women's Affairs announced that it would drastically reduce the number of intercountry adoptions being processed after March 10, 2011. While the number of children adopted from Ethiopia has in fact rebounded to that of former years, the process is under additional scrutiny, after the needed training and hiring of new staff.

From 2003 to 2010, Ethiopia sent over 22,000 children for adoption. Five other countries – Liberia, Madagascar, Mali, Nigeria, and South Africa – sent over 1,000. The number of children adopted from Liberia and Madagascar has fallen in recent years, but numbers sent by

International Adoptions from Selected Eastern European States to 23 Receiving States, 2003-08, RANKED BY THE NUMBER SENT IN 2003

	2003	2004	2006	2008	2010	TABLE 13
Russia	7,743	9,417	6,776	4,140	3,387	
Ukraine	2,049	2,021	1,046	1,577	1,093	
Bulgaria	963	393	96	132	248	
Belarus	656	627	34	5	99	
Romania	473	287	0	0	0	
Poland	346	406	395	407	325	
Lithuania	85	99	90	121	113	
Hungary	69	68	92	115	139	
EUROPE	13,061	13,949	9,044	7,023	5,817	

Russia, International Adoptions: 2003-2010

	2004	2005	2007	2009	2010	2004-10	TABLE 16
US (FY)	5,865	4,639	2,310	1,586	1,082	21,049	
Spain	1,618	1,262	955	868	801	7,693	
Italy	739	628	492	704	707	4,436	
France	445	357	402	288	301	2,505	
Ireland	189	131	160	100	80	920	
Israel	95	73	108	75	77	613	
Total	9,417	7,480	4,880	4,033	3,387	40,103	

Adoptions of Children with Special Needs from Europe, Compared with Chile and China

	2005	2007	2009	TABLE 17
Chile	100%	100%	100%	
Lithuania	94%	42%	92%	
Albania	59%	42%	66%	
Latvia	53%	42%	80%	
China	9%	30%	49%	

SOURCE: The Hague Special Commission, 2010

Adoptions from Africa: Countries Sending 500+ Children Between 2004-2010

TABLE 18		2004	2006	2008	2009	2010	2004-10
	Ethiopia	1,527	2,172	3,896	4,565	4,396	21,367
	S. Africa	242	206	230	283	190	1,580
	Liberia	87	369	249	36	52	1,320
	Nigeria	94	104	223	184	259	1,046
	Madagascar	335	137	15	36	55	936
	Mali	82	126	107	191	132	889
	Burkina Faso	93	107	82	54	79	590
	Congo D. R.	12	62	62	149	188	583
	Ghana	32	34	116	116	129	530
	All of Africa	2,977	3,855	5,607	6,393	6,322	33,209

Adoptions from Ethiopia: 2003-2010 – Countries Ranked by Number of Children Received in 2009

TABLE 19	COUNTRY	2003	2004	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
	USA FY	135	289	732	1,255	1,725	2,225	2,513
	Spain	107	220	304	481	629	722	508
	France	217	390	408	417	484	445	352
	Italy	47	193	227	256	338	346	274
	Canada	14	34	61	135	183	170	112
	Belgium	52	62	88	124	144	143	120
	Denmark	40	41	38	39	92	125	117
	TOTAL to All States	854	1,527	2,172	3,033	3,896	4,565	4,396

SOURCES: Statistics provided by Central Authorities of 23 receiving countries. A more detailed version will appear in “The Rise and Fall of Intercountry Adoption in the 21st Century: Global Trends from 2001 to 2010,” in *Intercountry Adoption: Policies, Practices, and Outcomes*.

other African countries have been rising (see Table 18). Nigeria sent more children in 2010 than in any previous year, and similar recent increases have been noted in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Kinshasa), Ghana, Kenya, and Ivory Coast (Dambach & Selman, 2011).

Adoptions from Latin America and the Caribbean

In the 1980s, eight of the top 12 sending countries were in Latin America. In 2008, only three Latin American nations – Guatemala, Colombia, and Haiti – were in the top 12; and in 2009 and 2010, only Colombia and Haiti were. Brazil still sends 400-500 children a year, and most of these children are older or have special needs. In 2010, Peru and Mexico sent 169 and 119 children respectively; Chile and El Salvador sent less than 100.

Figure 5 shows the striking changes in the three Latin American countries that have been in the top 10 sending countries in the last decade.

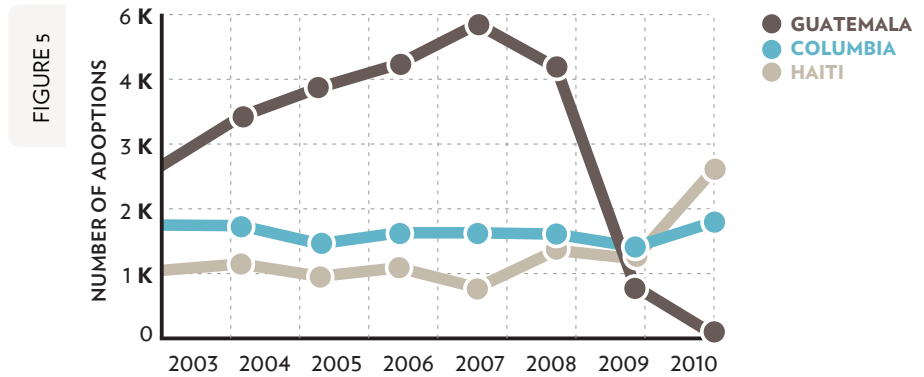
Numbers from Colombia have remained at a steady level and rose slightly in 2010 (see Table 6), but the changes in the other two countries are striking. The dramatic fall in numbers from Guatemala has had a great impact in the U.S., where it has been widely discussed (Bunkers, et al., 2009; Rotabi, 2010).

Haiti The plight of orphaned and vulnerable Haitian children and attempts by some in the United

States following the devastating earthquake of January 2010 to hasten intercountry adoptions has been discussed in a previous issue of the *Adoption Advocate* (Issue No. 28, October 2010, available online at www.adoptioncouncil.org/publications/adoption-advocate-no-28.html).

A review of the global pattern of Haitian adoption can be found in a detailed study from International Social Services (Dambach & Biglietto, 2010), which includes estimates of the number of children moved from Haiti in January and February 2010. We now have official data from most countries receiving children (see Table 20 below), which show that the U.S. had by far the biggest increase in Haitian adoptions, if we include the 1,090 children for whom humanitarian visas were issued. Overall the number of adoptions from Haiti in 2010 was more than double the number in 2009, and most of these adoptions occurred in the first two months after the earthquake. However, in 2011, there were less than 100 children adopted from Haiti by French and American families (Selman 2011).

Adoptions from Guatemala, Colombia, and Haiti from 2003 to 2010



SOURCE: "The Rise and Fall of Intercountry Adoption in the 21st Century: Global Trends from 2001 to 2010," in *Intercountry Adoption: Policies, Practices, and Outcomes*.

Intercountry Adoptions from Haiti: 2003-2010

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
France	542	507	475	571	403	731	651	992
USA	250	356	231	309	190	302	330	1,223 ^a
Canada	149	159	115	123	89	148	141	172 ^b
Netherlands	69	42	51	41	28	91	60	108
Germany	n/a	35	37	23	31	61	30	n/a ^c
Spain	17	36	24	15	22	27	13	0
Other	28	24	25	14	18	8	13	30 ^d
TOTAL	1,055	1,159	958	1,096	779	1,368	1,238	2,525

a) Includes 1,090 humanitarian visas issued by the U.S. Department of State.

b) Canadian total from CIC. ISS estimate is higher at 203.

c) ISS estimates 62 children adopted by German citizens in 2010. ISS also estimates 14 sent to Luxembourg. If these estimates are included, the total number of adoptions from Haiti in 2010 rises to 2,601.

d) In 2010, there were 16 adoptions from Haiti to Switzerland and 14 to Belgium.

The United States

One final country merits consideration in this review of states of origin. The United States has sent an increasing number of children for overseas adoption in recent years. Most of these children have been adopted by Canadian citizens, but a significant number have also been sent to the Netherlands (see Table 21), where many are said to be adopted by same-sex couples. Most of the children are young infants – many of mixed race – and they are largely placed privately, with few being known to the U.S. Department of State, which recorded only 30 outgoing cases in 2009. These numbers raise more questions than they answer about the U.S. as a sending country.

The United States as a State of Origin: Children Sent to 7 Receiving States from 2004-2010

TABLE 21

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Canada	81	102	96	94	182	254	148
Netherlands	16	32	38	39	56	34	26
UK ^a	13	18	14	23	19	n/a	n/a
Germany	4	7	9	6	8	2	4
Switzerland	7	4	4	9	10	15	14
Sweden	3	4	10	2	7	5	0
Ireland	0	2	2	5	4	4	7
TOTAL	126	166	178	178	287	315	205

The Most Recent Numbers: What Happened in 2010 and 2011?

Global adoption numbers continued to decline in 2010, but determining the extent of this decline can be problematic, as there are mixed messages about likely future trends. The number of adoptions to Sweden, Denmark, and Norway increased in 2009, but this trend was not maintained in 2010, although the decline in numbers to Sweden is due in part to a change in that country’s method of counting adoptions. However, numbers to Italy continued to rise. In 2010 France recorded its largest annual number of international adoptions since 2006 – 3,504 – but in 2011, the total fell to 1,995.

The impact of changes in the number of children sent by different states of origin (Table 6) is also varied. The decline in global numbers was largely due to the continuing moratorium on adoptions from Guatemala to the United States, a fall in the numbers of children from Russia and Ukraine, and a reversal of the prior increase in adoptions from Ethiopia. However, these declines were partially offset by increases elsewhere. The number of adoptions from Haiti doubled after the earthquake, and the decline in adoptions from China was temporarily reversed as more children with special needs have been adopted. More children were also sent from Colombia.

a) The number adopted from the U.S. in 2009 and 2010 was less than five, and so not listed.

Government statements suggest a continued reduction in adoptions from Korea and Ethiopia, but numbers are rising in other African countries, such as Congo DR. The number of adoptions from Haiti to the U.S. fell to just 33 in 2011, according to the U.S. Department of State. Currently, Guatemala and Vietnam remain closed to the U.S. Uncertainty surrounds China, as the CCCWA continues to promote its adoption program for children with special needs.

Even if global intercountry adoption numbers are maintained or rise above their current level, their characteristics will be very different from in the peak years from 2002 to 2006. Overall global trends point to a further reduction in the total number of intercountry adoptions, which some will see as a response to the scandals of recent years. The U.S. Department of State's November 2011 publication of intercountry adoption numbers for FY 2011 confirmed the continued decline of adoptions to the United States in FY 2011: 9,320 children in total were adopted from abroad by U.S. citizens, the lowest annual total since 1995, and numbers have also fallen sharply in France.

There are many who argue that various governments' failures to deal with adoption fraud and corruption (Graff, 2008), and the problem of trafficking and child laundering (Mezmur, 2010; Smolin, 2006; 2007; 2010a & b) indicate that intercountry adoption should be slowed down or halted. But NCFA and other adoption advocates, while consistently urging transparency, best practices, and much-needed reforms to the process, maintain that intercountry adoption should remain a part of a complete, holistic child welfare system, in order to ensure that as many children as possible find loving and permanent families. Current uncertainties and the continuing debate over the future of intercountry adoption make it vital to continue to seek and analyze all available statistics on intercountry adoption, in order to explore what lies "behind the numbers."

NCFA Commentary: The Continued Decline in Intercountry Adoption

BY WILLIAM ROSEN, CHAIR, NCFA INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE

The National Council For Adoption believes that, while it is crucial to acknowledge and work to address legitimate abuses and issues of concern in intercountry adoption, the current and continued decline in intercountry adoptions is neither right, nor good for children. As intercountry adoption programs close, increasing numbers of orphaned and abandoned children remain in institutions and temporary care situations, aging out without ever securing their basic right to a permanent loving family of their own.

All child welfare advocates have the responsibility to work to prevent family dissolution and child abandonment. Families should also receive the support and services they need in order to remain together whenever possible. Domestic and international adoption programs should also be encouraged and supported, so that children in need of permanent care have the option of an adoptive placement as early in life as possible.

The Hague Convention on Intercountry Adoption has provided both sending and receiving countries with guidelines in support of an ethical, more transparent intercountry adoption system that adheres to international standards. The Hague Convention is also intended to facilitate and promote adoptions for children in need of families; however, in practice, this does not always occur. Many who oppose intercountry adoption offer no viable alternative for orphaned, abandoned, and vulnerable children, other than a continuation of the status quo. While ethnic, cultural, and national identity are all important, children also need love, security, nurturing, education, and purpose — all of which is best provided by a permanent, loving family.

It is critical for governments, non-governmental organizations, child welfare advocates, and international aid organizations to recognize and uphold each child's right to a family. Even with the best of intentions, institutional care or other temporary alternatives can never provide the permanent family every child deserves. For children who have no home, no family willing or able to care for them, and no realistic in-country permanent care option, intercountry adoption may represent their only chance for a safe, loving, permanent family of their own. Tragically, the decline in intercountry adoption means that too many of these children will never realize their intrinsic right to a family; too many will move from temporary placement to temporary placement, or spend all their young lives in institutional care; too many will experience great hardship, loneliness, abuse, inadequate nutrition, poor healthcare, and substandard education in underfunded and under-staffed orphanages; and too many will then age out of the system with no real home and no family, ill equipped to support themselves and overcome the enormous challenges they face.

Numerous studies have clearly proven the destructive effects of institutionalization on the physical, emotional, and mental wellbeing of children. Yet for many orphaned and abandoned children worldwide, an orphanage is the only “home” they will ever know. In contrast, studies of adopted children have shown the tremendous benefits of adoption for children's overall health, development, sense of security, and long-term outcomes. Given the large and increasing number of children in need of care who deserve permanency, NCFCA believes that intercountry adoption must remain an important part of a complete, holistic child welfare policy.

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