



## Editor's note

A look at the ever-growing number of scientific journals on child and youth care makes an editor feel concerned about the scope and the identity of the journal he is editing. Indeed, the growing number of related scientific journals in the field of child and youth care may be considered as a positive sign in that it reflects a growing knowledge base as well as a growing exchange of theories and practice. It raises hope for a more evidence-based care to come. On the other hand, wealth may turn into overabundance and confuse readers and contributors to journals. Will they, at the end, see the wood for the trees?

As editor of the *International Journal of Child & Family Welfare*, I try to characterize the Journal as an empirically oriented journal with research reports and reviews on recent evolutions in child and youth care. I like to add the international or cross-national perspective, as our globalised world offers us many user-friendly opportunities to compare research results and good practices, to learn from each other, and to become aware of cultural differences. I do realize that these characteristics are not sufficient to make this Journal unique, even not after having stressed its European dimension. The Journal is, as the reader knows, an official publication of the European Association for Residential and Foster Care for Children and Adolescents – EUSARF – a clearly-profiled association with a strong tradition of organizing scientific congresses on the European continent and the United Kingdom. I am convinced, however, that there is a place for the *International Journal of Child and Family Welfare* among the other journals on child and youth care and that the long-term benefits of jointly living together with related journals will be greater than the benefits of competition. Together with my associate editors, I try to refine the Journal's profile and to make it more visible. Reactions from people in the field about the Journal's "resurrection" are stimulating. I mention here three recently undertaken initiatives which I hope will make the Journal more visible to researchers, policy makers and practitioners in Europe and North America. At first, the Journal now is announced on the International Child and Youth Care Network website (see <http://www.cyc-net.org>). Visitors (more than 1.200 each day!) to this site can read the editorials and the abstracts. Secondly, the Journal and the European Scientific Association for Residential and Foster Care for Children and Adolescents will be present at the 7th International Child and Youth Care Conference in Victoria (British Columbia, Canada, 20-23 August, 2003). As this conference promises to be one of the largest on child and youth care organised ever, we are proud to be represented there and grateful to the organization committee. One of the objectives is to make the Journal known to North American researchers and field workers. Further, later this year, an issue of the Journal is planned with papers presented at the Victoria Conference. Finally, it was decided to prepare a special issue on European perspectives on the mental health needs of looked after children. This issue will be the outcome of a European-funded research project and include research reports on the mental health needs of children and adolescents in residential care and on good practices in Europe to meet these needs.

I am pleased to announce the present issue (Volume 6, 1-2) to our readers. It contains six contributions from very different countries: India, Greece, Portugal, The Netherlands, Italy and South Africa. This is a truly international issue. Besides, various topics are addressed: adoption, foster care, early intervention, child maltreatment, children's rights, family law. Some of the contributions to this issue (and similarly, to the next issue) are based on presentations held at the International Congress "In the best interests of the child: Cross-cultural per-

spectives" which took place in Leuven, Belgium (9-12 April, 2003). This congress was organized by the International Association of Training and Research in Family Education and the European Scientific Association for Residential and Foster Care for Children and Adolescents. I welcome the initiative taken by these authors and I hope this may stimulate presenters at future congresses on child and youth care to consider our Journal as an outlet for their interesting work.

*Hans Grietens*  
Editor