France setting up a new process for collecting data in children in care system: a challenge at local and national level.

France is suffering of a lack of data and indicators concerning children at risk, which makes impossible to assess child protection efficiency, and decision made for children trajectories (as the rate of placements, or the rate of child assistance in open custody). This situation has been pointed out by several public reports since1995.

The law of March, 5, 2007 set up a system to collect data from all administrative and judicial officials working on child protection system at a local level, in order to produce coherent indicators at national and local levels. These indicators must increase our knowledge concerning the population of children in care, local practices and activities, and efficiency of national public policies, as they are published in an annual report to the Parliament and Government.

Each of the 100 *départements* (local authority) has to create a local observatory to analyze data, produce statistics, assess practices and counsel local policy makers at local level. Once a year, data are sent to the Oned for national longitudinal analyze, studies, practices and public policies assessment.

These data are **anonymous and individual**, which is needed to reach a good level of quality and homogeneity, as they come from 100 *départements*; **longitudinal** to analyze trajectories of children; **centralized** to guarantee uniformity of treatment and calculation and to make comparisons between departments.

The challenge for the departments will be to apply this decree of law as they have different organizations, and different human and financial means to set up local observatories and data collect.

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[1] Created by law in January 2004, the National Observatory for Children at risk (ONED), a public service supported by the State and the *departments, has* among its missions, to develop more coherent numerical data and is also seeking to come to a deeper understanding of the situation of at-risk children and the issue of parental neglect.