

# Intercountry

INTERCOUNTRY ADOPTION PROGRAM



ADOPTION PROGRAMS OF  
LUTHERAN SOCIAL SERVICE OF MINNESOTA

# Intercountry

## INTERCOUNTRY ADOPTION PROGRAM

### WHAT IS THE INTERCOUNTRY PROGRAM?

LUTHERAN SOCIAL SERVICE OF MINNESOTA (LSSMN) BEGAN 145 YEARS AGO AND HAS BEEN WORKING TO FIND PERMANENT HOMES FOR CHILDREN FROM ACROSS THE WORLD FOR NEARLY 40 YEARS. LSSMN IS FULLY HAGUE-ACCREDITED AND WORKS IN COOPERATION WITH COUNTRY GOVERNMENTS, ORPHANAGES, AND AGENCIES TO FACILITATE ADOPTIONS THAT SERVE THE NEEDS OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES. THROUGH OUR OWN COUNTRY PROGRAMS AND THROUGH OUR CONNECTIONS WITH AFFILIATE AGENCIES, LSSMN IS ABLE TO ASSIST FAMILIES WITH ADOPTIONS FROM MANY COUNTRIES THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.

THE NEEDS OF THE WORLD'S CHILDREN AND THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARENTS TO BUILD THEIR FAMILIES THROUGH INTERCOUNTRY ADOPTION ARE GREAT. EACH YEAR NEARLY 13,000 CHILDREN COME INTO THE UNITED STATES THROUGH INTERCOUNTRY ADOPTION. HOWEVER, THROUGHOUT THE WORLD, THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN WHO ARE IN NEED OF PERMANENT HOMES IS STILL GREATER THAN THE NUMBER OF FAMILIES COMING FORWARD TO ADOPT.



### THE CHILDREN

*The children in need of adoption come from many diverse backgrounds and cultures and range in age from a few months old to 16 years of age. Their histories may consist of short stays in hospitals to extended periods of time in foster homes or orphanages. The amount of information about the children's medical, social, and parental backgrounds varies according to the children's countries and individual situations.*



...He who can reach a child's  
heart can reach the world's heart.

*Rudyard Kipling*

## THE ADOPTION PROCESS

### 1) Pre-Adoption Education

Families participate in a required two-day, Hague-accredited educational workshop to learn more about intercountry adoption. The goals of this education are to provide prospective adoptive parents with the information necessary to choose the type of adoption best for them, and to prepare them to successfully parent their adopted children. The education covers topics such as Attachment, Grief & Loss, Institutionalization and Cross Cultural Issues.

### 2) The Adoption Study

All families must complete an Adoption Study. The Adoption Study process includes several meetings with your adoption worker, the educational workshop, and a visit to your home. The study also includes a complete criminal and child abuse background check, medical examinations, reference letters, and other state- and federally- mandated requirements. Your adoption worker will guide you through the adoption study process, as well as other pre-adoption requirements.

### 3) USCIS Approval

All families must petition to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) for approval to adopt. This is typically completed toward the end of your adoption study process. Again, your adoption worker will guide you through this process.

### 4) Intercountry Program Application

Once you have an approved adoption study and USCIS approval, you will make an application to the orphanage, program, or country from which you wish to adopt.

### 5) Preparation of Your Dossier

The preparation of the dossier (legal papers that support your adoption study) is the final step that you need to complete before a child can be referred to you. These documents are time sensitive so your adoption worker will guide you through the process at the appropriate time.

### 6) Referral of a Child or Children

Typically, a specific child is referred to you. The referral papers are translated into English for you and you are encouraged to review the information with your physician or other experts prior to formally accepting



the referral. Families must be aware that the amount of information available may be limited due to a lack of medical resources, abandonment of children, and other factors. Once you formally accept a child referral, we will assist you with the process to obtain USCIS approval to bring your child home to the United States.

### 7) Travel

Traveling to your child's country of origin is usually required. Prior to your departure, the necessary arrangements are confirmed with the representative in the country.

- a) The representative arranges for a driver to meet you at the airport and bring you to your hotel.
- b) The representative serves as your official translator and accompanies you on your official appointments, as well as arranging

or accompanying you for optional sight-seeing and cultural outings.

- c) The length of time that you spend in the country varies depending on the country from which you choose to adopt. Your stay could last anywhere between 1 to 6 weeks (or more) and some countries require families to make multiple trips.

### 8) Post-Placement/Post-Adoption Services

The post-placement / post-adoption period includes meetings with your adoption worker, a home visit, and the U.S. adoption finalization. Reports and photographs are sent back to your child's country of origin informing the orphanage, those dictated by the country's laws, and possibly the birth parent(s) how your child and family are adjusting. Ongoing educational opportunities are also offered to adoptive families.



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### Do I have to be a Lutheran to use your services?

No. While our agency's heritage is rooted in the Lutheran Church, LSSMN serves all people, regardless of religious affiliation.

### How Long Does The Intercountry Adoption Process Take?

While the actual length of time varies by country, an adoption placement generally occurs within 12-24 months after the completion of an adoption study.

### How Long Does It Take To Complete The Adoption Study?

The adoption study typically takes 2-3 months to complete. You can impact this timing by how quickly you submit your required documents as well as your availability to meet with your adoption worker.

### Why Are Children Available For Adoption?

There are various social, political, cultural, and economical reasons why children become available for adoption. Many countries do not have the strong child welfare systems that exist here in the United States. Because of this, adoption is often the best or only option available to some of the birth mothers who may lack the resources to support themselves and their children.

### How Do I Get Started?

Registration is the first step. Once your completed registration is received you will be contacted to begin the adoption study process.



**Lutheran Social Service**  
*for changing lives*

LUTHERAN SOCIAL SERVICE OF MINNESOTA  
ADOPTION & BIRTH PARENT SERVICES  
2400 PARK AVENUE  
MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA 55404

*To find out more about this or  
our other adoption programs call  
612.879.5230 or  
1.888.205.3769  
[www.minnesotaadoption.org](http://www.minnesotaadoption.org)  
[adoption@lssmn.org](mailto:adoption@lssmn.org)*