

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS
DEVELOPING A NETWORK OF INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS IN YOUR CITY OR REGION

Individual schools do a lot for their students, from on-site services to professional referrals. Often professional referrals are other expatriates, and often equally as transient. Services such as counseling and support for child protection issues, due to their nature, are best served by professionals that understand specific cultural elements – at times even the need for the same use of a particular language facilitates effective service. Due to the transient nature of our community, international schools tend to have to renew their resource list annually, as well respected counselors or therapists will move with their spouse to their next post.

Each international school cares for their students. Each international school will have their list of resources to help their students and families when needed. ***A network of international schools that share resources would increase effective referrals and build ongoing relationships with a wider group of professionals. An idea that three international schools have used is to invite peer schools in a city or region to join a network that focuses on child protection. These schools help each other build policy and procedures, share training of teachers, and even share parent evenings. This network joins all the schools' resources into one list, increasing each school's access to help. This network meets at regular intervals with at least one participant of each member school attending meetings.*** In the three example settings, the group was called CRAN – Child Rights Advocacy Network. When like-minded schools are together, supporting each other, it is less difficult to build relationships with local authority such as the police and doctors. When your school experiences cases of suspected abuse, there is support from peer professionals. Parent evenings bring together a larger group of parents who can help each other. Building child protection in your school can be challenging, so doing it together with peer international schools can only help.