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This year PACT is once again on the march, and into new territory!

Over the past year we have broken ground with the publication in October of our first major report, "*Every Five Minutes.*" This was the product of meticulous and time-consuming research into data collection in the UK on missing children. What we discovered was shocking: it is today impossible to obtain an accurate picture of how many children go missing each year, and why. Data collection is inadequate and fragmented. There is certainly no shortage of statistics. But they come from widely disparate sources, using different methods of data collection, different categorisations, and different timescales.

A month later PACT then produced an overview of the European Union's approach. Here again we found inadequate data and statistical confusion. But at least, in 2005 the European Commission had called for the creation of "National Focal Points" in each Member State to improve data collection on missing children.

So far, the UK has done almost nothing to create its own Focal Point. At the beginning of the 21st century our nation has better figures on stray dogs than missing children.

In "*Every Five Minutes*" PACT urged the creation of a Focal Point or what we prefer to call a National Resource Centre. Its purpose would be to drive policy and collect standardised data. The then Home Secretary, the Rt.Hon. Charles Clarke, responded positively to our representations. He agreed to set up a Strategic Oversight Group, chaired by the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO), to examine our recommendations. PACT is, of course, a member of the Group.

PACT has now been tasked by the Group to carry out a further major study. This will lead to the creation of a comprehensive 'map' of the different agencies, both statutory and non-statutory, relevant to the problem of missing children: how they relate to each other and the gaps and duplications in the services they provide. We expect to publish it in October this year.

We are enormously grateful to The Bridge House Trust, which has agreed to fund this work. If all goes well, we will then be able to move to the next stage: the creation of a uniform model or template for the collection, analysis, and reporting of information on missing children in the U.K.

This would have many benefits: a radical improvement in our understanding of why children go missing; in our knowledge of what happens to them while they are missing; and, above all, in developing the most effective methods for reducing the number of incidents, which we estimate at 130,000 per year. At the same time, we would hope to see the elimination of gaps and duplication between agencies, both governmental and non-governmental. Perhaps most important of all there would be one organisation, one address, one 'phone number for all missing children and their families.

This, of course, is a set of *very* ambitious tasks. But we have already obtained the support of some major NGOs, including Barnardo's, the National Missing Persons Helpline and The Children Society with whom we will be working on these projects.

Separately, we have had a very good response to our documentary on the long-term effect of abduction on children. So far, we have distributed over 1,000 copies in over 5 countries. The documentary has already been the subject of several peer reviews, including by the American Journal of Family Therapy.

On 31 October, the US engineering company, Emcor Group Inc, will be launching a major campaign in partnership with PACT and the Police to raise awareness of the Missingkids Website. As in the US, in their work with our affiliate, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, posters advertising the website will be placed on all their lorries and vans.

Copies of "Every Five Minutes" and "Victims of Another War" can be purchased through our website: www.pact-online.org