Better homes for children

A how-to guide for churches and organisations working with children

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Written by Jane Travis 2017

Better Homes for Children

If you are reading this, it will be because you are working with children. You may be a Pastor who has a concern for vulnerable children and families in your community; you may be the Director of a residential care establishment for children; or you may be a child-care worker or social worker interacting with and serving children on a daily basis. In each case, we want to acknowledge you and thank you for serving vulnerable children in your community. We appreciate the commitment, hard work and dedication that this involves.

It is likely that you may have felt called to serve vulnerable children and that you have a vision to see children safe, well and being cared for in the best possible way. We want to commend you for this vision and look at ways in which we can help you to fulfil it. This extends to supporting children in families.

Throughout this manual, we want to explore the concept that as Christians, we believe that children thrive, grow and develop best in families. This concept is backed by growing research and international and national trends.

'The family is the core institution for child-rearing worldwide, and decades of research have shown that strong families promote positive child outcomes'[1]. However, in all regions of the world the family is undergoing major changes, with increasing proportions of children living with one or no parent and family poverty remaining high in many countries. With this growing trend, there are currently numerous opportunities for Christians to provide support to families and vulnerable children. This not only to demonstrates the love of God to individual children and families but is a witness to whole communities as we work with them to value and protect children in our midst.

Because children do much better if they are within the care of a family, we should be making every effort to ensure that children do not become separated from their parents or have to leave the family home. Children should only be taken into care outside the family home if they are unaccompanied, unsafe, or are children whose families are unable to care for them without appropriate support. In many countries, it is becoming mandatory that children remain in residential care only on a temporary basis. This trend is also reflected in funding and donor thinking which is moving away from support of children in institutional care to the support of children in families.

Providing a safe temporary haven for rehabilitation of children who have become separated from their families is a vitally important ministry. For some, providing temporary emergency care will require a shift from offering long term residential care for children. However, the benefits to children of being able to return to their own homes or alternative families are enormous and it enables many more children to pass through the doors at a time when they are most in need of care and protection. For those children unable to return to their birth families, as Christians, we can play a vital part in providing alternative nurturing and loving families

Through this manual we will explore the reasons why children belong in families by looking at the biblical basis for the case and facts about why families are crucial for child development. We will then give you some practical guidelines about how to go about strengthening families, providing temporary emergency care and finding alternative family care for children.

The needs of children world-wide are vast and complex, but faith communities can embrace the invitation to respond to the needs to care for and protect children and enable them to flourish in families.

An Overview

Those of us that are working with children and families will be aware of the many challenges facing them in each of our localities. Those with a heart for orphans or children without parental care will know the particular issues these children face.

The following section is a very brief overview of the environment that we are working in. It does not attempt to provide any detail of the complexities of the situations of why children become separated from their families or the challenges they face. Instead it is intended to give an overview of a context from which there is a growing momentum of thought and understanding that children thrive and develop best in a family environment. The section concludes by addressing how the concept of keeping children in families may affect the work that we are currently undertaking with children and what the next steps might be.

Chapters 2 3 and 4 look at some practical ways of *how to* develop a family strengthening programme, run short term transitional care for children and reunite children with their families or find alternative families for children.

1.1 THE SITUATION OF CHILDREN SEPARATED FROM FAMILIES

The world is changing rapidly. Where there were around 5 billion people in 1990, by 2050 there will be nearly 10 billion – more than 2.6 billion of them younger than 18. Many children born today will enjoy vast opportunities unavailable 25 years ago. But not all will have an equal chance to grow up healthy, educated and able to fulfil their potential[2]. These words from the 2015 State of the World's Children report present us with a challenge. As Christians, our desire should be to see every child reach their full God-given potential across every nation of the world.

One of the greatest contributors to the vulnerability of children around the world is separation from the love care and protection of their family[3] Growing up in the care of a loving and nurturing family provides children with love, a sense of belonging and the connection to a community, shared history and culture.

It is estimated that 145 million children are orphans worldwide (UNICEF)[4.] Of the 145 million children estimated to be orphans, only about 9 per cent have lost both parents[5]. Millions more children are at risk for being separated from their parents for reasons including armed conflict, natural disaster, disease, poverty, disability, violence and discrimination.

Children separated from their parents and families because of conflict, population displacement or natural disasters are among the most vulnerable. Separated from those closest to them, these children have lost the care and protection of their families in the turmoil, just when they most need them. They face abuse and exploitation, and even their very survival may be threatened. On top of this, they may assume adult responsibilities, such as protecting and caring for younger sisters and brothers.

Many children in all parts of the world today are serving as household heads – as 'carers' for one or both parents and/or taking day-to-day responsibilities in the family home due to parental illness or other incapacity.[6] There have always been children living in households without an adult caregiver, however since the 1980's, HIV and AIDS have had a terrible toll on children and their families. During the 30 years of the global HIV epidemic, an estimated 17 million children lost one or both parents due to AIDS. Ninety percent of these children live in sub-Saharan Africa.[7]

While, abuse domestic violence, child labour or trafficking may be some of the reasons that children leave home, poverty and lack of access to education that are often quoted as reasons why children are placed in orphanages.[8] Of the estimated 2 million children living in institutional care; 80% of them having one living parent[9] At least four out of five children in residential care have one or both parents at home.[10]

1.2 A BIBLICAL BASIS FOR WHY CHILDREN BELONG IN FAMILIES

As Christians, at the core at everything we do is a belief in a God expressed through the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The God we follow is seen as all-knowing, all-powerful, morally perfect and defined by love. He is at the centre of all we do and as such, our work should imitate His nature. This includes our work with children.

The Bible offers insight into how God created and views children so we may better understand our responsibility towards them. Our attitude towards children should reflect God's own attitude and our actions should reflect His character. We know through our reading of scripture that children are precious to God. Psalm 139 v 13-14 reminds us how God creates each child uniquely and Matthew 18 v 5 shows Jesus welcoming children. Our work must reflect this value for each individual child. We are also called to protect and defend them. Part of this means that we are to do all we can to see children receive justice for wrongs done to them. In our work with children, we have a responsibility to make sure that they are safe from harm. This is called safeguarding.

Every child born into this world was created to be a son or daughter to someone and each child has a context, which is their family and their community. Children who are cared for by families within communities are more likely to thrive than those who are separated from their families. This is because children growing up in families generally receive the kind of love, attention, and care essential to their well-being. The physical family therefore is the most important building block to human society and is the most natural and conducive environment for a child to grow, develop and thrive. Significantly, the family is the only institution designed by God for the care of children.

The Bible is very clear about God's call on us to serve the needs of those children who are vulnerable, specifically those who lose parents. The word 'orphan' appears 30 times in scripture where we are asked to be kind and generous to fatherless children. Christians have a strong tradition of responding to the plight of orphans and vulnerable children. In both the Old and New Testament, the call upon the community of faith is to support orphans in the context of their families and communities. In the Bible, there is no precedence for a model, which removes children from their communities in order to respond to their needs. Instead throughout scripture, there is emphasis on the importance of relationships and of family. "He sets the lonely in families" Psalm 68:6

The Biblical model of family with its roots in Middle Eastern culture shares much with the extended family model. Across the world, there is still great emphasis on the value of the extended family and many cultures have a long tradition of families caring for children of family members, even if the parents of a child have died. What we see from successful Biblical family life does seem to imply that there are more generations present than just two involved in the raising of the child.

But more than this, the whole concept of family seems to derive from God Himself. "For this reason, I kneel before the family from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name." Ephesians 3:1415. As Christians we relate to the Father, Son and Holy Sprit in relationship with one another. We believe in a loving Father who through Christ, sought us, adopted us, and invites us to live as His sons and daughters (1 Jn 4:19; Eph 1:15; Gal 4:6; 2 Cor 6:18). Our calling as Christians is to get alongside families and support them to care for their children as God cares for us.

1.3 WHY FAMILIES PROMOTE HEALTHY CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Childhood represents a hugely important time for each of us. This is where the foundations for every person's life are laid. The most important years for a child's survival, growth and development are when the child is in the womb through to the early years, with the fastest period of growth occurring during the first three to four years of life when the child's brain is rapidly growing and adapting to the environment.[11] The first three years of life are considered a 'sensitive period', when a child needs to receive intimate emotional and physical contact. If this is not present, there is a risk that the child's development will be significantly impaired.[12]

Each of us was created with a capacity to receive love from a mother and father. Unconditional love is the most important need of every child and the cornerstone of all child-rearing. This is most easily expressed where one or two parents can respond to the individual needs of the child. Strong emotional and physical attachment to at least one primary caregiver (usually a child's mother) is critical to a child's development.

The best possible environment for a child to thrive – physically, emotionally, spiritually, and developmentally – is usually within the family and as part of a community. Children need a sense of permanence, which a family offers. Permanence is about having a 'family for life'[13] and a sense of belonging and connectedness.[14]

Attachment: Research has shown that for normal emotional and psychological development, babies need a primary caregiver who is one person who responds quickly, consistently and lovingly to their demands. This is so they learn that their needs for food, clean nappies, pain relief, etc. will be met. This allows them to develop trust and attachment[15]. Successful attachment is essential for the child's development of self-esteem and self-worth.

Children who have experienced consistency and care from one or two attachment figures (usually parents) will tend to form trusting relationships in the future. It is easier for a secure child with loving and caring parents to get along well with new people than for an insecure child. Children who have not had a significant attachment figure in their lives can suffer from attachment disorders which will continue into their adult lives and can result in them being withdrawn and not able to develop trusting relationships.

Resilience: As children grow, resilience is associated with the presence of various things in children's lives that enable them to cope with their experiences in a helpful way. These are called protective factors or resilience factors. The family is one of the most significant factors for children's resilience. Research has established that resilience in children is greater when they have access to at least one caring parent, caregiver or other supportive adult who loves and accepts them unconditionally.

Separation: A child who is separated from their family, home and belongings, and brought to unfamiliar caregivers, is likely to suffer from shock, fear, anger, sadness, and anxiety. This will be particularly traumatic if the separation is sudden, without explanation, and the move is not wanted. Boys, children under 4, and children who have experienced several moves, are particularly vulnerable. If unresolved, children will either act this stress out in aggressive or attention-seeking behaviours, or internalise their feelings and become withdrawn and depressed.

There is evidence that placing a child in institutional or residential care, away from their family, can hinder a child's development. This is because child care institutions often lack the close relationships and day-to-day interactions within a family that provide the foundation for a child's social and emotional development, self-image, and sense of belonging. Whilst well-run residential care centres can meet the children's physical and educational needs, they are not always equipped to meet a child's emotional and psycho-social needs. This can result in children suffering adverse effects such as developmental delays, attachment disorders, behavioural problems, low self-esteem and struggles with their sense of identity and belonging.

This is particularly so with babies and young children. With a ratio of one caregiver to perhaps 10 or 20 babies, Institutions cannot provide the level of one to one care provided by parents. If a baby cries from hunger, pain, discomfort or attention and receives no response, he will never develop trust that his needs will be met, which is essential for successful attachment. If as a child grows up, he is shown kindness and affection by temporary caregivers or visitors who then leave, he will feel abandoned. The feelings of loss and abandonment can lead to attachment disorders that impact a child life through to adulthood. These can result in the inability to give and receive love and the failure to form successful relationships or accept responsibility.

While families are not perfect by any means, "Families offer the best protection of children and are more likely to provide the conditions for healthy development."[16] The daily life and close relationships within a family lay the foundation for a child's social and emotional development, self-image, and sense of belonging. As children interact with members of their households and the wider community, they absorb the patterns and values of their culture and develop the language, customs, and skills they will need in their adult lives.

1.4 CHILDREN IN FAMILIES AS RECOGNISED GOOD PRATICE: A CONTINUUM OF CARE
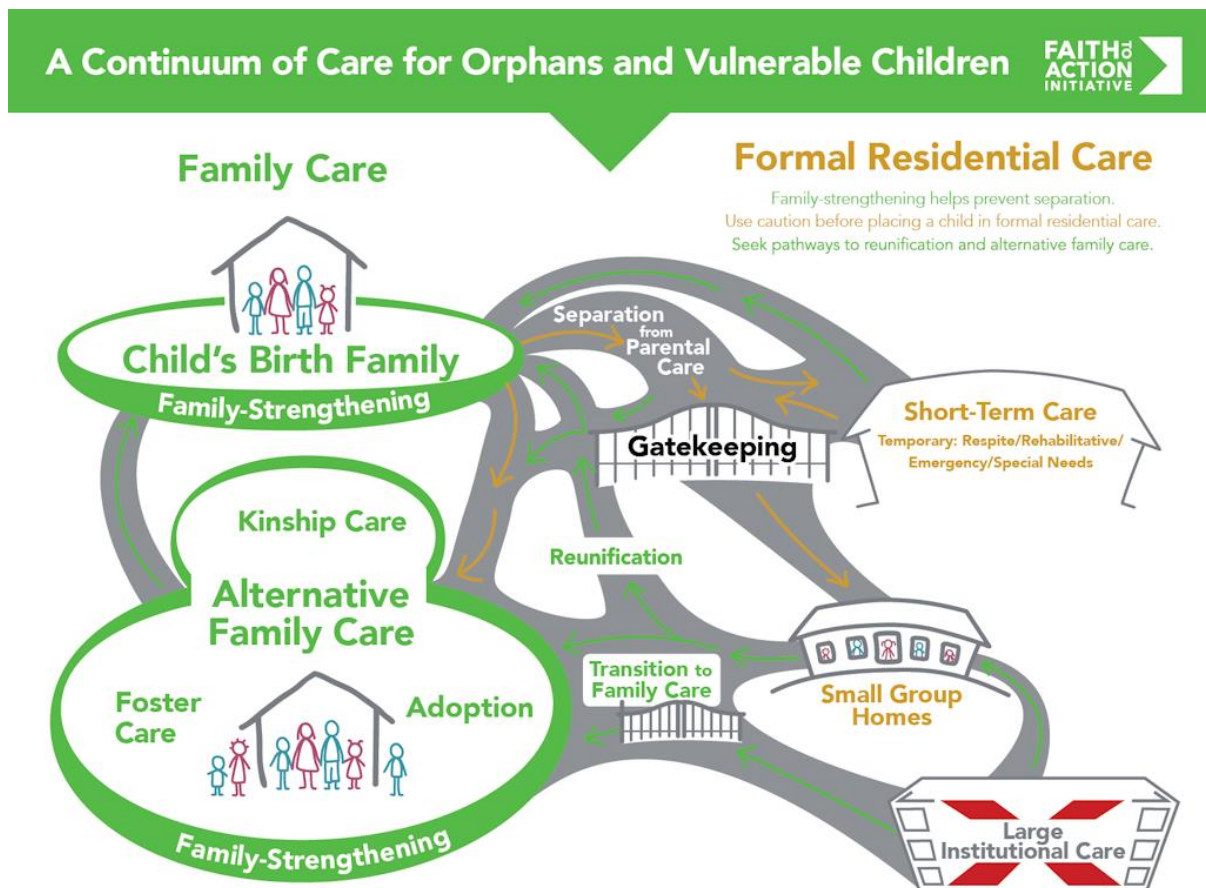
It is increasingly recognised that the best way to provide care for children is to support them in their families and if children become separated from their families that they are enabled to reunite with them or quickly be placed in a family environment. A continuum of care provides an overview of the care options for children who have been separated from their parents. It places a high priority on family care and preventing the unnecessary separation of children from their families, through family strengthening. This is by addressing the causes of why children have become separated from their families. It also recognises the important role that short term transitional or emergency shelter can play before children are either reunited with their families or placed into alternative family care for children. Alternative family care can include Kinship care, fostering and adoption, but also a range of other options, which can allow children to have access to a family environment.

The UN Guidelines for the Alternative Care for Children are based on the continuum of care model and encourage Governments to support efforts to keep children in, or return them to, the care of their family or, only after failing this, to find another appropriate and permanent solution. Many Governments have adopted this framework and have incorporated it into national guidelines.

The continuum of care involves the following elements and throughout the safety and best interests of the child are a priority

Strengthening Families to Prevent Separation:

Recognising that children thrive and develop best in the nurturing care of a family, the best way to serve children is to **strengthen the capacity of families** to care for them. The first stage in the continuum of care is to keep the family together to prevent children from becoming separated from their families.

As poverty or relationship breakdown is one of the main reasons that children become separated from their families, activities that promote income generation and family support are important to promote family strengthening.

Responding to Separated Children

Short term transitional care: A child who becomes separated from their parents is vulnerable to risks and exploitation. Short-term residential care can provide children with the physical, emotional, psychosocial and other holistic support that they need before being reunited with their families or placed in alternative family care. This type of care provides an important role in the restoration and rehabilitation of children, some of whom will have been traumatised by their experiences eg living on the streets, conflict or trafficking. It can also play a key role in reunification of children with their birth families or placing them in alternative family care.

Reunification: If a child becomes separated from their parents and it is safe and appropriate to do so, the best option is to try and reunite the child with their parents or other family members. This is called reunification. The process of reunification is made up of different steps, which starts with tracing the family, assessing the causes of the separation and addressing these, preparing the child and family to be reunited and following up the child once they are living back at home. If a child cannot be reunited with their birth family because it is considered unsafe or not in the best interests of the child, then alternative family based care can be considered.

Small Group Homes: Small group homes are where children can be cared for in smaller groups, (between 5-14 children) usually under the care of consistent live in carers. They can provide a family like environment but are not considered to be the best long term option, which is to enable children to live with their family.

Alternative Family Care

Kinship Care: Most children who do not have both living parents, can be cared for by relatives or extended family members. Kinship care includes care by aunts, uncles, grandparents and older siblings and in most countries kinship care is a traditional form of caring for children. Because it enables children to maintain a sense of belonging and family ties, it is the preferred option of alternative family care.

Foster Care: Where family members cannot be identified to care for separated children, foster care can be provided by non-family members. The definition of foster care varies in different contexts. Informal fostering takes place in many regions of the world where a child is placed in the care of a neighbour or community member. Formal foster care usually includes the involvement of the authorities which provide oversight of the process. Both informal and formal foster care can be short term or long term and sometimes permanent. It can involve the child staying for long periods of time or it can include respite care or short durations of time.

Adoption: Adoption offers a child an alternative permanent family. While domestic adoption (in country) adoption is considered the best option as it keeps children within their cultural and national context, some countries do not have formal adoption procedures, in which case international adoption can be considered.

1.4 INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL LAWS THAT PROMOTE CHILDREN IN FAMILIES

As well as biblical principles, international and national standards can guide us in our work with children. **The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)** is based on biblical principles and has been developed to ensure that children are protected and have all they need to thrive and flourish. "Rights" are things that every child should have or be able to do. As Christians we are able to view these rights in the context of God's deep love for children and the high value he places on their wellbeing, and the contribution they can make.

Every country in the world, with the exception of two have signed up to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Each country has national laws and guidelines on the care of children based on the UNCRC. Of the 54 'articles' in the UNCRC, which cover the development, protection and education of children, several of the articles concern the rights of children to be raised by, or have a relationship with their parents. The UNCRC makes clear the importance of a family environment for children and that it is the States' responsibility to support families and to ensure alternative family care for all children deprived of a family environment (Article 20).

The UN has drawn up **Alternative Care guidelines** to provide further details how Governments should respond to the needs of children separated from their families. These guidelines encourage the return of children to the care of their families or finding alternative family based solutions. Many countries have policies, laws and standards around care for children based on these guidelines.

Increasingly, National Governments are insisting that work with children should be meeting specific standards and residential care for children in particular should be working within the alternative care framework. This means that more and more Governments are making sure that child care homes are registered or licensed and that children who have families are reunited with them or alternative families as soon as possible.

As Christians, we are aware that we are ambassadors and representatives of Christ in the world. Therefore, we have a responsibility to ensure our work with children meets the highest standards, so that people see 'our good deeds and it brings glory to God'. This includes ensuring that we are aware of and meeting international and national standards and our work is operating within the law.

1.5 INTERNATIONAL LAWS RELEVANT TO OUR WORK WITH CHILDREN

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC): This is the most influential global legal instrument for ensuring children are protected and have all they need to thrive and flourish. All children and young people up to the age of 18 years have all the rights in the Convention. Some groups of children and young people – for example, those living away from home, and young disabled people – have additional rights to make sure they are treated fairly and their needs are met. The UNCRC is separated into 54 'articles'. They are connected to each other, and all are equally important. The rights are divided in the following way.

- **life**, **survival** and **development**
- **protection** from **violence**, **abuse** or **neglect**
- an **education** that enables children to **fulfil their potential**
- be **raised by**, or have a **relationship with**, **their parents**
- **express their opinions** and be **listened to**.

Each country has national laws and guidelines on the care of children, which are based on the UNCRC. These look at ensuring children's needs are met, that children are kept safe from harm, that they have education and positive experiences that enable them to grow and develop and that they are able to participate in society *(Annex 1 gives a summary of the UNCRC)*

UN Guidelines on Alternative Care for Children 2009: The UNCRC makes clear the importance of a family environment for children and that it is the States' responsibility to ensure alternative care for all children deprived of a family environment (Art 20). These international guidelines were designed to provide further details how Governments should respond to the needs of children separated from their families. The guidelines encourage the return of children to the care of their families or finding alternative family based solutions. Many countries have drawn up alternative care for children frameworks based on these guidelines.

The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child: Like the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), the Children's Charter sets out rights for children in Africa.

Safeguarding Standards: As well as the UNCRC, there are other international standards, which have been developed specifically to **protect children and keep them safe from harm**. These are called child safeguarding standards. Safeguarding includes protecting children from abuse and maltreatment, preventing harm to children's health or development and ensuring children grow up with the provision of safe and effective care and can thrive. **Keeping Children Safe Standards** are international standards to keep children safe in organisations and institutions.

1.6 NATIONAL LAWS RELEVANT TO OUR WORK WITH CHILDREN

- **Constitution** (often includes a section on children)
- **Children's Act/ National Plan of Action for Children** (Often based on CRC)
- **Alternative Care Guidelines** (Based on UN guidelines)
- **National Child Protection Laws**
- **National Children's Home regulations**

1.7 HOW AN EMPHASIS ON FAMILY BASED CARE AFFECTS OUR WORK WITH CHILDREN

We recognise that for many people, an emphasis on keeping children in families is a relatively new concept and may demand a shift in ways of working.

This may be especially so for those working in long term residential care homes for children. Our intention is not to undermine the work that you have been doing to serve vulnerable children, nor to question God's call on your life to do so. Our intention is to enhance the fulfilment of that call on your life by providing you with ways to have a more sustainable impact on the lives of many more children who could potentially pass through the doors of short term transitional care before being reunited with a family.

At the same time Governments and donors are increasingly adopting the continuum of care model, which makes family placement or a family environment a necessity for children in care. National laws and donor funding priorities are changing to reflect this. It is likely that in the future the orphanage model of care for children will need to change to align with national and international standards. Our desire is to be able to equip you to be able to make a transition to a new way of working, realising of course that this is a journey and it will take time. Chapter 3 looks specifically at the way in which a long term residential care home for children can transition to provide short term care for children. It attempts to address concerns about roles and responsibilities and dealing with donors.

For those Pastoring Churches, leading children's work in Churches or responding to the needs of vulnerable children in communities, there may need to be a shift towards working with families as well as children. Work with children can develop into engaging with families and communities about Gods Kingdom values and the protection and care of children. Chapter 2 looks at ways of how to develop a family strengthening programme and engaging with communities around valuing children and keeping children safe. It could be that the church congregation could become practically engaged in providing alternative family care for children, in which case Chapter 4 provides information about what this may entail.

We also realise that working with families can at times be challenging. We need to be realistic about the abuse, violence or neglect that sometimes take place in families, that causes children to leave home and which may prevent a child from being reunited with his/her family. Our duty must always be to protect the child from harm and the welfare of the child always takes precedence over the family. But there are ways in which prayerful, wise and skilled intervention in the lives of families can have a huge difference on the way that children are regarded and treated by them.

1.8 WORKING IN COLLABORATION HELPS TO PROMOTE CHILDREN IN FAMILIES

The issues facing children in today's world are enormous and as individuals it is difficult to tackle these alone. As a biblical principle, we are called to work together as the Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12) By working in collaboration with others, we can do so much more for children facing family separation than if we are working on our own.

We can do this by linking with churches and other believers in our neighbourhoods to help strengthen families and keep children within a family environment by offering families the support and encouragement they need. At the same time, we can be working with others to promote the best interests and protection of children in our communities. This includes working with and supporting local authorities to build child protection in our communities to keep children safe from harm.

Those children separated from their families need holistic care which usually requires the intervention of different service providers and ministries to be working in parallel for the benefit of

the child. Meanwhile, Child Care Institutions and Churches can be working hand in hand to ensure that if children cannot be reintegrated back with their own family that Church members can be offering loving and supportive families for those children in the form of fostering or adoption.

Such a co-ordinated response to the needs of separated children can be implemented through a network of Churches and Christian organisations. Viva works with networks of Christians ministries in Africa, Asia and Latin America working with vulnerable children in their localities. The members of these networks are working together to find ways to work collaboratively to ensure that children are cared for in loving and nurturing families. Each ministry in the network has a part to play in the continuum of care for separated children according to their calling, strength and experience.

Throughout the course of this manual, we will mainly be drawing on case studies and examples of the way that Churches and Ministries in Viva's partner networks have worked together to promote and implement the concept that children are brought up in a family environment.

1.9 NEXT STEPS

Step One Having decided to embark on a journey that promotes children belonging in families, the first step is to gather with others who are doing similar work with children and have a heart for children belonging in families. In a network setting, this would involve **forming e a working group or an action group.**

Step Two: Together the Action Group can identify the main **reasons** why children become separated from their families in the local context and understand the **national laws, guidelines and standards** that are relevant to work with children**.**

Step Three: Raise awareness with other network members about benefits of family care for children and share continuum of care model.

Viva's Resources and Tools

Churches

Envision Pastors with a biblical basis for **Understanding God's heart for children**

Provide sermon material for Pastors and biblical reflections for small groups on the importance of family through '**Why Families Matter**'

Raise awareness on the local need for alternative family care for children

Link Churches with those Network members offering residential care for children

Learn how to develop family strengthening programes through the **Better Homes** Family strengthening toolkit

Child Care Institutions

Run **Being Family** with network members to

Affirm and celebrate God's calling to work with vulnerable children

Understand the importance of family care for healthy child development

Understand National Laws and Standards on child care, the continuum of care model and donor trends

Run **Better Homes** capacity builing programme on How to make the transition from long term to short term care

Step Four: Develop a **vision** and a **plan** for the network's model of continuum of care

CASE STUDY

CRANE NETWORK, KAMPALA UGANDA

The Children at Risk Action Network (CRANE) in Kampala currently has 112 network members made up of Churches and Christian Ministries

CRANE's emphasis with its members over the last few years has been to see a shift towards family based care for children. The network has recognised that the local church is key to this and has been involved in training and equipping the Church to fulfil its God given mandate that children are living in safe and secure families. It has also facilitated links between local churches and child care institutions to provide foster care for children who have been unable to return to their families.

An envisioning conference was held with Pastors to highlight the key role that families play in God's heart for children. Through training, over 200 church and community leaders (parents, religious leaders, social workers, teachers, local council leaders and police working with families) were given skills to work with families. Forty-three churches identified family coaches to support families and Forty-one family protection committees were trained.

Twenty Child Care Institutions in CRANE were assisted by network staff to change their practices to conform to government requirements to ensure that 150 children a year are transited into family based care. Social Workers from the Child care Institutions have been trained on how to reintegrate children into families and they in turn work with biological and adoptive families to prepare them for receiving a child into their homes. This has included 150 families supported with economic strengthening.

The Directors of each Child Care Institution have worked with local churches to develop a working model of family based care. Fostering and adoption has been promoted throughout churches in Kampala and the network has trained Church personnel who are responsible for training families who will take children without parents into their care.

REFLECT

- Read the UNCRC (*annex 1*) at the end of this manual and see where you think there are overlaps between these rights for children and biblical principles. Mark the articles in the UNCRC which are relevant to your work with children
- Now read the summary of the UN Guidelines on Alternative Care (annex 2) for children and mark the articles which are relevant to your work with children

ACT

- Familiarise yourself with national law documents and regulations concerning your work with children. Is there anything that you may need to change as a result?

RESOURCES

Video's

A World Without Orphans: This video highlights the role of the Church in caring for orphans and vulnerable children. The video explores both the historical role of the Church and how this continues to be central to what it means to be the Church today, actively engaged in caring for vulnerable children and supporting family-based care

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ets3jQVTH3s **(also on Faith to Action website under Videos http://faithtoaction.org/media/videos/)**

The Importance of Family: A Church Perspective by Pastor Peter Kasirivu of Gaba Community Church. Pastor Peter of Gaba Community Church's inspiring video on why family is important. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ga3V1Q9fOw8 also

A World Without Orphans: This documentary highlights discussions by people on the front lines of orphan care. It is meant to encourage the church to dialogue about its role in the pursuit of a world without orphans.

Viva Resources for networks

Why Families Matter, a toolkit for Churches (Pastors, small groups, children, children workers)

Aimed at Churches, this toolkit helps us to see from the Bible why children matter and how God created families to nurture and care for children. It presents a Christian theological perspective as well as some universally acknowledged principles of keeping children safe from harm and parenting positively.

The toolkit is to be used as a six-week series in churches and includes accompanying material and videos.

- Part One provides a framework for Pastors to lead their churches in understanding how to support families and nurture children and guide discussion in Small Groups.
- Part Two is to help Children's Leaders prepare to teach Children the same principles about children needing a loving family.

Understanding Gods Heart For Children A series of 7 two hours sessions to enable participants to discover together and share insights on Understanding gods heart for children through the exploration of scripture and facilitated exercises**.**

Being Family: Facilitated exercises to raise awareness for organisations working with children on the alternative care framework and changing trends, best practice, national legislation, and shifting donor priorities on family based care for children.

2. How to Strengthen Families

2.1 WHY SHOULD WE BE INVOLVED IN STRENGTHENING FAMILIES?

Children who are cared for by families within communities are more likely to develop and thrive than those who are separated from their families. Separation of children from their families is potentially one of the most damaging and traumatic of all separation experiences. It is known that children and young people who are removed from their family suffer separation and feelings of loss, even if they have been maltreated, and children who have experienced repeated traumatic separations often become permanently damaged. To prevent the potentially traumatic and harmful effects of separation, the best possible way of helping children is for children to be protected and nurtured in their own homes.

We should recognise the important role that the family and community play in child development, child welfare and child protection. Families offer a vital connection to personal history and heritage. A child's emotional and spiritual health is supported when parents are able to share their memories, family history, and future wishes with their children.

Where families are struggling, or communities are facing poverty, we need to seek to strengthen both the family's and the community's ability to care for and protect their own children rather than removing their children from them. This approach is called **family strengthening and family preservation**[17].

Families are our hope for the future and the church has great potential to strengthen and support families.[18] As faith communities, we do not exist in isolation from the communities, which surround us. In fact, we are called to be 'salt' and 'light' to those around us. We have huge potential to be able to reach out and serve families in our neighbourhoods and to engage communities with issues about the inherent value and worth of children. As Christians, we have an opportunity to influence the communities in which we live, demonstrating how to care for and protect children.
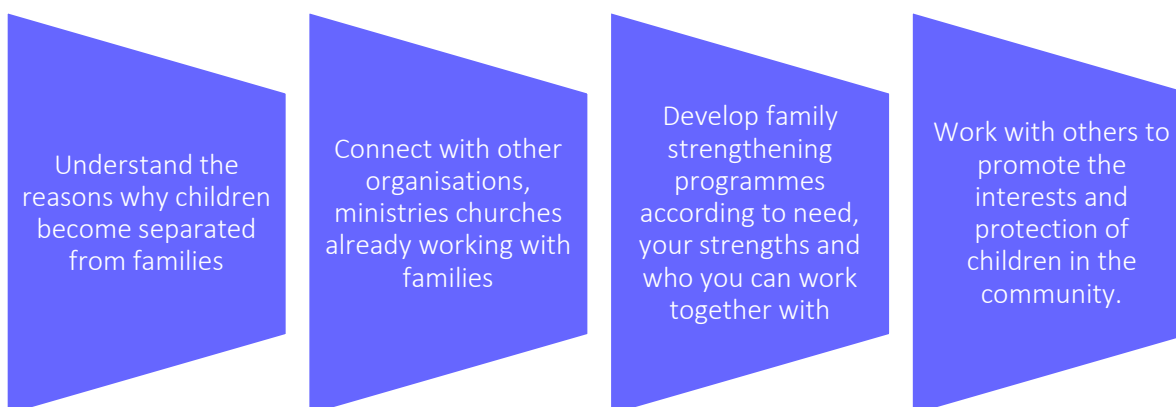
As Christians, we acknowledge that our faith is often the core of our motivation for wanting to work with children and impact our local community with the love of God. Before embarking on a series of activities to prevent children from becoming separated from their families, it is worth taking the time to listen to God, to discover what His heart is for children and families in your community? 'The starting point is a heart for God and His will for the community. For it to be changed as God intends, there always needs to be a sustained commitment to prayer'[19].

We have all fallen short of the glory of God and as human beings we are flawed. We recognise that families come with problems, breakdown and failures in relationship but when considering a child's family, we need to be careful to separate the Biblical principle of children's need for parental love and nurture from cultural norms of how families 'should' be. We should not make judgements about how a family is constituted or whether we feel they can afford to bring up their children. Instead, our responsibility as Christians is to show God's love and concern and to support families to bring up their children in a loving way.

At the same time, the safety of children in paramount, we have a duty to ensure that parents know how to protect their children and what behaviours can cause children harm. We need to feel able to speak out against harmful practices that can occur in families and communities.

We are also called to work together as the Body of Christ. We can be linking with churches and other believers in our neighbourhoods to help strengthen families and offer them support, drawing on the potential that working in collaboration can present. At the same time, we can be working with others to promote the best interests and protection of children in our communities. This includes working with and supporting local authorities to build child protection in our communities to safeguard children from harm. Working with community leaders and child protection committees can encourage understanding of some of the challenges that children face and raise awareness about the importance of family unity.

HOW TO BECOME INVOLVED IN FAMILY STRENGHTHENING

Understand the reasons why children become separated from families

Connect with other organisations, ministries churches already working with families

Develop family strengthening programmes according to need, your strengths and who you can work together with

Work with others to promote the interests and protection of children in the community.

2.2 RESEARCH WHY CHILDREN BECOME SEPARATED FROM FAMILIES

Before you can start to work to strengthen families, you will first need to understand why children are at risk of separation from them. This is so that you can address the **root causes** of family separation. These are the reasons that may cause a parent to abandon or give up a child or the reasons why a child may leave home.

Poverty and lack of access to education are often quoted as reasons why children become separated from their families.[20] Families may need basic financial resources in order to send their children to school and provide them with adequate food, clothing, medical care, and shelter. Parents and caregivers, particularly women, are limited in their ability to earn livelihoods if they are looking after children and do not have access to the necessary support for child care to enable them to work, or alternatively children are left unattended. In other cases, poor health (including living with HIV/AIDS) is another reason for the loss of primary caregivers and creation of parentless children.

Children may be abandoned or forced into domestic labour or trafficked because families feel too poor to be able to support their children, but there may be other reasons contributing to this including underlying attitudes about disability or gender. Another factor that may cause children to become separated from their families is through abuse that may happen in the family home or in the communities in which children live.

Understanding the reasons of why children do not live with their families is key to being able to intervene and act to prevent family separation and strengthen caregivers' ability to care for their children in the family home.

Research

Research is a crucial first stage in developing activities and programmes to strengthen families. This involves **gathering existing information** about children and families in your community and deepening your understanding of the issue by **observing,** and **listening** to what children and adults have to say. Undertaking research reveals a genuine desire to want to know and relevantly care. Listening to children, families and community members demonstrates respect and empathy and can build trust. This will result in activities that have a meaningful positive impact on children's lives.

Before undertaking any research, you need to:

1. Decide on the target group of children you want to help through strengthening families
2. Decide on the geographical focus of your research
3. Draw up the question that you are trying to answer
4. Find people with the right skills to conduct the research

There are a variety of ways that you can gather information. The most appropriate methods for helping you to research before starting a family strengthening programme are listed below. With all

of these methods the crucial part of is that the information gathered **is recorded** and **written down**, so that it can be **analysed before a decision made** about what you will do**.**

Desk Research: This involves reading reports publications and information that has already been written about the needs and issues of children and families in the area where you are hoping to start working

Interviews: These involve asking specific questions aimed at getting information. Questions can be open-ended (allowing for elaboration) or closed (yes/no answers). Interviews can be held with anyone who will be involved with the project you are hoping to start. If you are interviewing children, you will need someone with specific social work skills to interview them.

Key Informant Interviews are interviews that are carried out with specialists or agency or government workers who are working with families and children in your area. These people can offer useful insight and an overview of the big picture. They can be done in person or on the telephone.

Observation: This involves direct observation of events, processes, relationships and behaviours. "It is good to get involved in activities rather than maintaining a distance, but it can be a useful way of confirming, or otherwise, information provided in other ways.

Focus Group Discussions: In a focus group, a group of about six to 12 people are interviewed together by a skilled interviewer/facilitator with a carefully structured interview schedule. Questions are usually focused around a specific topic or issue. Focus group discussions can be held with adults or children.

Community Group Discussions: This involves a gathering of a fairly large group of community members to whom questions, problems, situations are put for input. Community meetings are useful for getting a broad response from many people on specific issues. It is also a way of involving people to give them a sense of ownership of the process.

The following methods can be used during meetings and discussions to collect the information you need.

Community Mapping: A Community Map highlights people, physical structures, organizations, and institutions in a community. To understand how to best help families, participants in a meeting can be asked to draw a community map to illustrate how children and families are supported locally or children are protected. You should also try and find out which other agencies organisations or government structures are supporting children and families. Community mapping can be done with adults and children and it is often interesting to compare what both groups produce.

But Why or Problem Tree's: An issue (eg family separation) is identified and the group is asked "Why?" until the group can go no further with their explanation of the causes behind the problem. A Problem Tree uses a drawing of a tree to look at causes of the issue. The trunk represents the issue, roots represent causes and branches represent effects if the issue is not addressed.

Ranking: This involves getting people to say what they think is most useful, most important, least useful etc. It can be used with individuals and groups, as part of an interview schedule or questionnaire, or as a separate session. Where people cannot read and write, pictures can be used.

2.3 ANALYSE CAUSES OF CHILDREN SEPARATING FROM FAMILIES

According to Save the Children, one of the most common reasons for placing children in residential care away from the family home is poverty or lack of access to education[21]. Other children may be leaving home due to violence or abuse. It is important to analyse the root causes of why children may be living away from their families so that these can be addressed, when trying to prevent separation.

2.4 CONNECT WITH OTHERS

Every country has national laws and guidelines on the care of children and the majority will have Government departments and personnel committed to child and family welfare at national and local level. Before starting a family strengthening programme, it is important to know what these national law and guidelines are and to be aware of the government structures and personnel who are responsible for implementing them.

At local level, there may be Child Welfare Committees or Child Protection Committees that it would be good to link with. These are usually 'a network or group of individuals at a community level who work in a co-ordinated manner towards child protection goals'. There may be opportunities for you engage with your local Child Protection Committee or child welfare Committee to promote care and protection for children in your community by becoming a committee member

At the same time, there may be other organisations, churches or ministries working with children and families that you could access for information and know how. You could consider working in collaboration with them or supporting them in the work they are already doing. Then think of in the others in the community who may have the time and capacity to help you.

CASE STUDY

ARC NETWORK KISUMU, KENYA

Viva's partner network Arise for Children Network (ARC) consist of 55 churches and 44 organisations. Research was undertaken by the network in 2013 to look at the situation of vulnerable children in Kisumu. Information was gathered from economic surveys, health reports, human development reports and recent surveys, as well as from plans and policies produced by the Government of Kenya.

Information was also gathered from key informants, parents and children about the experience of children in Kisumu. The techniques included community mapping, timelines, semi-structured interviews, and ranking and prioritising exercise. The research revealed that the prevalence of dysfunctional and broken families was an underlying cause of many of the issues facing children and this included abuse and neglect.

While there were services in place to help children, few of these services were addressing the root causes. Children Not enough is being done to prevent abuse through strengthening families, providing counselling and teaching positive parenting.

With this in mind, ARC's Strengthening Families programme supports and empowers families to better care for their children. For the 27 leaders, representing 16 churches and 240 families, who recently took part, it was the first time that they had any received practical training.

The training was run collaboratively with Family Impact, an African faith-based organisation. It covered topics including parenting skills, using positive discipline, relationship advice and counselling for children suffering from trauma. What is most exciting is that those trained are encouraged to pass on what they have learnt to others and so a ripple effect can be seen to be working its way through local communities. In one case a pastor has re-taught what he learned to 300 families in his church. In another instance, two primary teachers introduced the Family Strengthening programme to their school. After two weeks of training, five teachers realised that they were mistreating their children and promised to change their attitude, and practise becoming better parents and family members

2.5 DEVELOP FAMILY STRENGTHENING PROGRAMMES

Having developed a deeper understanding about why children become separated from their families and discovered who else is working with children and families, it is now time to develop a family strengthening programme. Family strengthening programmes are programmes that help families stay together. Most Family strengthening programmes should look to address root causes of why children are becoming separated from their families. At a secondary level, programmes are designed to provide individual counselling and support where there is a specific risk that children may be abandoned or relinquished.

It is key to ensure that there is involvement of parents in developing family strengthening programmes and in planning the support that they need. Support should be provided to families by empowering them and supporting them to utilise their own strengths and resources. Respecting the worth and value of families is key.

When designing a Family Strengthening programme, keep the following things in mind:

1. Base your programme on addressing the key causes of family separation discovered in your research
2. Decide on the geographical focus of your family strengthening programme and the numbers of families that you want to support
3. Involve children and families in designing your programme, take their expressed needs into account
4. Know the specific changes you want to see in the lives of children and families.
5. Think of ways to be able to measure and record these changes
6. Be aware of any local and national guidelines for working with families and children
7. Know how you will resource the programme with people and money

Here are some ideas taken from a collection of churches and Christian faith-based organisations working in local communities, which have worked.[22]

Poverty or lack of access to education

Working with the local church to help families with material support: The local church (often in partnership with others) and community organisations can play an important role in distributing needed material resources such as food, blankets, and clothing to families. Congregations, youth and community members can be mobilised by the church to help build or repair homes and to work in community gardens.

Strengthening families through livelihood support: To help families and caregivers living in poverty, you could think about developing income-generating activities to support them to earn livelihoods. These could include micro credit loans, income-generating activities, saving and credit activities, small business training, livestock programmes. Families can also be helped to provide for children through the provision of agricultural supplies such as seeds, tools, and livestock. Some of the most successful programmes are locally run with support from non-governmental or professional organisations specialising in micro-finance. All require some level of technical expertise to be successful.

Helping children to have access to education: Churches and community organisations can help children remain in school (girls as well as boys) and in families by providing support for education costs and providing informal education, homework clubs etc. Pastors and church members can encourage their fellow community members to make education for all boys and girls a priority and a means to end the cycle of poverty.

Poor Health

Provide day-care and other support services that ease the burden on caregivers: Churches can offer day-care, giving children opportunities to grow and learn while freeing family members to work or attend school. Easing the burden on parents and caregivers strengthens the family care and protection of children.

Support groups give parents and caregivers space to gather in a community setting, experience a sense of solidarity around shared challenges, and offer one another spiritual and emotional care. They give caregivers the opportunity to share their hardships and learn about how to better meet the emotional and developmental needs of children.

Ensure access to health care, life-saving medications, and home-based care: In addition to saving lives, access to health care and life-saving medications help prevent orphan hood and family breakdown. Churches can help community members access health care, and medicines, such as anti-retroviral to treat HIV infection. Churches can initiate and lead home-based care programmes in which trained volunteers visit the homes of the ill. The volunteers offer emotional, spiritual, and medical support.

Support HIV and AIDS awareness and prevention strategies, particularly among youth: AIDS remains a leading cause of orphan hood in Sub-Saharan Africa and other regions of the world. Churches can play a role in prevention and protection, including helping youth and others to access HIV testing and counselling centres, as well as offering family life and human sexuality education, peer support groups, and mentorship programmes that encourage faithful, healthy, and life-sustaining choices.

Provide services for children with disabilities and other special needs so that parents and families get the support they need. This could include: the provision of day care and respite care; access to education and vocational training for children; health and rehabilitation services; and physical adaptations and equipment

Child Headed Households

Provide support to children in child-headed households with specific attention to their needs including: child protection and legal protection; financial assistance; and access to a range of supportive services

Support the psychosocial as well as material needs of children: Orphans and vulnerable children have emotional, spiritual, and social needs that can leave them at risk if left unmet. Children may need help coping with great challenges: the loss of a parent, separation from siblings, the emotional toll of illness in the family, or exposure to violence and conflict. Churches support the healing process and help build children's resilience through faith, prayer, and fellowship, and by demonstrating God's love and care.

Parenting

Provide support to parenting including: parenting courses and education; providing accessible information; access to trained professionals who support families; home visits; groups where parents can meet together; family centres; and access to informal community support. Support for mothers so that both parents contribute to providing a caring environment.

Provide support to young parents/single parents including: pre and post natal care; public awareness raising to reduce stigma; financial assistance where required; and support for young parents in continuing their studies

Specialist family strengthening including conflict resolution and mediation; counselling; substance abuse treatment; and family case conferences, support to parents whose children have challenging behaviour due to behavioural or emotional problems

Raise awareness of value and protection of children in communities

Raising awareness: Many of the child protection issues facing children are because they are not valued. Churches are in a good position to be able to promote the worth, value and protection of children among their own members and with the wider community by working together with community leaders and local authorities. When children and families face discrimination due to poverty, health status, ethnicity, disability, or any other cause, they become isolated and at greater risk for harm. Pastors and other community leaders can use their voices and actions to raise awareness, change hearts and minds, put an end to harmful social attitudes, and increase a sense of community and service to those in need.

Protect children from abuse, gender discrimination, and labour exploitation. By supporting good parenting and family coping skills, you could help parents and caregivers better understand and meet children's needs. As leaders in the community, churches and particularly pastors can promote protection of children as a shared responsibility and concern among all those who interact with children: teachers, neighbours, church members, as well as those visiting the community.

Children and Youth can be taught how to recognise and report abuse wherever it occurs. Through awareness-raising campaigns and community education on issues such as child abuse, early child marriage, gender-based violence, and child labour, churches can help ensure the care and protection of children.

REFLECT

- What do you think are the main reasons that children become separated from their families either in your locality or through the work you are doing with children?

ACTION POINTS

- Read Annex 3 and think about where your strengths would be in a family strengthening programme.
- Research which agencies, churches and local authorities in the community you could link with?
- Consider sitting on your local Child Protection Committee.

RESOURCES

Videos

You can find a series of short videos by the CRANE Network in Uganda which provide a theological reflection on our commission as Christians to respond to children in families that will help you to meditate on this theme by going to http://www.cranenetwork.org/working-groups/churches/ or https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Rx8sOdUfHU

Training Resources

Why Families Matter: Sermon material and study guide for Churches

Dare to Be Different Mentoring for adolescents

Foundations for Family, a training resource developed by Family Impact in Zimbabwe. It looks at how to make God's plan for family life central to church life and programmes

TOOLS

- Questionnaire
- Ranking
- Problem tree
- Community Mapping

CASE STUDY

CHILDREN AT RISK NETWORK, NEPAL

Nepal is primarily considered to be a source or transit country for trafficking. Children are either trafficked internally from rural areas to urban centres such as Kathmandu, or across borders, to other countries in Asia and the Middle East. It is believed that approximately 12,000 children are trafficked every year from Nepal. Females make up 86% of the total number of trafficking victims from Nepal, because they are especially vulnerable due to limited economic opportunities, illiteracy or low education, and low socioeconomic and cultural status.

The Children at Risk Network in Nepal (CarNetNepal) has been working since 2008 to prevent children from becoming separated from their families through trafficking by awareness raising and family strengthening. Over 350 churches have been involved in this initiative.

The first phase of the project included working with local communities through Churches to help them understand the problem of trafficking by providing practical tools to break the silence, including the Daughter Toolkit: a simple, picture based resource that teaches people how to prevent trafficking in their own communities and how to intervene once they recognize that abuse or exploitation is taking place.

CarNetNepal then worked with local schools to help them set up school based children's clubs, where children learnt about their rights to protection and how to avoid exploitation and trafficking. These children then became involved in raising awareness in communities through drama and animation and encouraged their peers who has dropped out of school to return

Local Churches set up Child Development Centres for poor and marginalised children in their communities who were at risk of being exploited or trafficked, providing a safe space for them and involving children in learning activities after school.

Following further research in 2013 CarNetNepal recognised that supporting the economic empowerment of women was key in preventing child trafficking. Women tend to use income to support their families and enable their children to go to school. As a result CarNetNepal began to support local women with business training and provided small loans to them through the establishment of women's credit and savings groups. As well as income generation, the groups offered a space for women to learn more about the risks of trafficking.

Despite, disruption and loss caused by the earthquake in Nepal 2015 and CarNetNepal's involvement in responding, the support of women's income generating initiatives has continued and grown. With CarNetNepal's support in knowing how to access their rights, one group in Bageswori, Nuwakot were able to obtain a paddy harvesting machine from the Government of Nepal's District Agriculture office. This is the first machine in the village and has greatly enhanced the livelihoods of families there.

How to respond to children with Emergency Care, Rehabilitation and Reunification

3.1 WHY RESPOND TO SEPARATED CHILDREN WITH SHORT TERM CARE?

We recognise that God created us to be in families and that children thrive and develop when they are in a loving and supportive family. However we also recognise that families are not perfect and that we can have a role in supporting those who are struggling to keep their children with them.

Where children are abandoned, neglected or abused, there is also a role that Christians can play in offering temporary shelter and providing a safe place where children can receive the support and care they need before being reunited with their own families or an alternative family. This is a high calling, which requires compassion, selflessness and the expertise to offer separated children the right care they need during a time of trauma. It takes a special person to be able to offer a child love and support in a time of crisis, before handing them over to a family environment where they will be able to thrive. But by providing short-term emergency care, there is potential to have a positive impact on so many more children's lives and it is a more sustainable way to operate in the long run.

At the same time, increasingly national governments are changing their laws in line with international guidelines, which state that ultimately children should (where possible) be living in families, and that those offering residential care need to demonstrate that they are making efforts made to trace and reunite children with their families. As citizens and God's witnesses, we need to ensure that our work with children is of the highest standard, operating within the law and that we are co-operating with the relevant authorities for the best interests of the child.
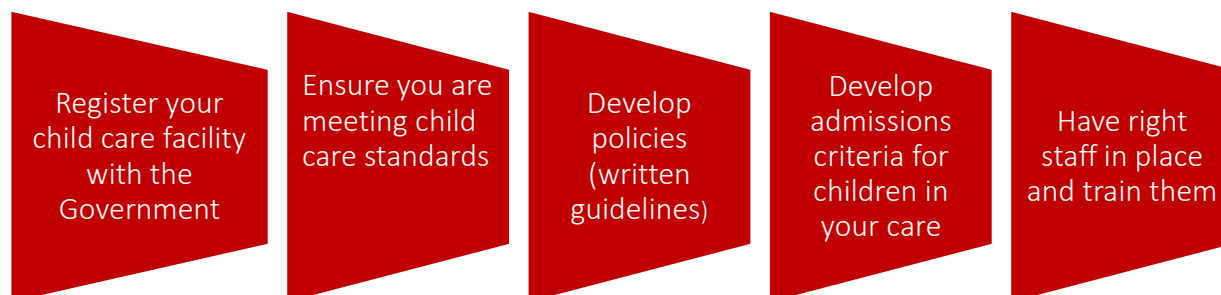
CASE STUDY

CRANE, Viva's partner network in Uganda, is helping institutionalised children to return to where they belong. In the past two years they have helped reintegrate 406 children, 233 of these returning back to their own families. Save Street Children Uganda (SASCU), a member of CRANE, is one of the homes working to find families for children. Located in one of Kampala's biggest slum communities, SASCU is no longer a permanent residential home. Instead, with the help of CRANE, it has developed into a recovery centre for traumatised and troubled children.

In the words of Jacob, SASCU's co-ordinator, "keeping former street children in a home doesn't help the problem, but by placing children back in to families, we can create room to help many more children." As well as reintegration, 35 social workers from 26 children's homes have received training, ensuring that they are better equipped and can operate in line with the government's Alternative Care Framework. Topics covered by the training include child development and counselling, social work practice and parenting skills. Nansi is one child who has recently been reunited with her mother, Sheila. After her husband's death Sheila could no longer provide for Nansi. Having never worked, Sheila was left with no choice but to take Nansi to a children's home.

The children's home was a member of CRANE network. They were keen to try to find a way for children to return to being cared for in their families. They discussed with Sheila how to help her start a business and begin working. At the beginning of this year Sheila was given start-up capital for a restaurant. She has rented a small building, turned the front room into a seating area and the back of the house into her kitchen.

She started cooking for a few people, but as word spread he customers grew. Shelia was asked by her local council to cook food for a group of important people, which has really boosted her business. She now also has a fridge so she can sell cold water and soda. Sheila eventually developed a reasonable income and so Nansi returned home to her. They are happy to be back together and both help to keep the business running. Nansi is able to attend school – something she once thought would never happen.

3.2 HOW TO SET UP EMERGENCY CARE FOR CHILDREN

| Register your child care facility with the Government | Ensure you are meeting child care standards | Develop policies (written guidelines) | Develop admissions criteria for children in your care | Have right staff in place and train them |

3.3 REGISTER YOUR FACILITY WITH THE GOVERNMENT

If you are involved in any work with children, you should be familiar with National law, Government guidelines and standards for providing care to them. It is important that your work is legal and reaching delivering good quality care.

In most countries, any work that involves running a child-care institution needs to be registered with the Government and licensed. Some government guidelines also state that a child needs a court order, some other legal arrangement or referral from a government authority to be admitted into residential care. In many countries, Government Social Welfare Officers have custodian of children in their area of jurisdiction. They then have an involvement with a child entering child-care up until the time they leave.

Increasingly, Government guidelines are stating that only children who are unaccompanied or whose family is unable, even with appropriate support, to provide adequate care for the child should be placed in care away from the family home. It is generally agreed that children under 3 years old should not be placed into institutional care and that a child's stay in temporary shelter should be limited to six months or the period of time necessary to trace family and resettle the child, or find a long-term placement for the child.

3.4 MEET CHILD CARE STANDARDS

It is always necessary to be working towards the highest standards and increasingly countries are developing national standards of care for children in residential care, which have legal implications. It is important to be aware of what the Government standards are in your country around providing care for children. It is becoming more and more common for Government authorities to inspect residential care facilities to ensure that they are registered with the government and meeting required standards.

Below are guidelines from Approved Children's Homes regulations in Uganda, which are typical of the type of standards required in residential care

- Having good governance in place and clear aims and objectives of the organisation.
- Having facilities that accommodate no more children than agreed.
- Having a child protection policy and practice in place, which includes non-physical discipline of children in our care.
- Ensuring that children have a balanced diet, health provision, play and recreational activities and education and skills training.
- Ensuring that children are treated with dignity and respect at all times, have privacy and are given information that enables them to make choices.
- Ensuring that people working for us are recruited appropriately, trained and supervised properly.

- Having good administration, including financial, policies and records for every child and personnel records, which are kept confidential.
- Having a process in place to admit children into services which includes only admitting unaccompanied children whose families cannot be traced or whose families are unable with support to care for the child.
- Having individual care plans for children, which are monitored and reviewed and that sufficient staff are in place to give enough attention and care for each child.
- Ensuring that children get enough individual attention, are supported to maintain contact with families including siblings and that their ethnic or tribal identity, language and religion is maintained where possible.

These standards can be classified in the following way:

Good Governance is the process of overseeing an organisation or ministry. It involves ensuring that an organisation or project meets its legal responsibilities and that its resources are used wisely and effectively. It also helps to ensure that its work contributes to its mission and purpose. Good Governance also involves building a board of people who will provide good leadership and accept responsibility for the organisation. The leader of the organisation must be committed to becoming accountable to the board, together with any staff and volunteers in the organisation.

Child Safeguarding is how to protect children from harm. A child protection policy is a set of written guidelines that explain how to do this and how to should respond if abuse of a child takes place. It lays out codes of behaviour for staff in their work with children, which includes appropriate ways to discipline children without using physical force. It also covers how to inform children of their rights to protection and to whom they should report if they feel unsafe. Children, staff, volunteers and visitors should all be made aware of the child protection policy.

Child Well-being looks at the physical, emotional, developmental and empowerment needs of the child including ensuring that children have proper accommodation, and sleeping arrangements, a balanced diet, access to water and good sanitation, health provision, play and recreational activities and education and skills training. Children also need to be treated with dignity and respect and have access to information that affects decisions concerning their lives.

Staff It is important that all of those working with children are properly recruited, trained and supervised. They should know how to behave with children and what their roles are. In order that children receive individual attention regularly, there are usually standards in place for the number of child care workers allocated to children. In general, caregivers should be responsible for a maximum number of 8 children over 3 years old and a maximum number of 5 children under 2 years old. It is also important to have an appropriate gender balance between children and caregivers.

Good administration includes ensuring financial accountability through good book-keeping, putting a budget in place, maintaining good personnel records for staff and keeping records for each individual child in our care.

There are training programmes available to help you put standards in place and develop policies for your organisation. These are listed in the resources at the end of this chapter

3.5 DEVELOPING POLICIES (WRITTEN GUIDELINES)

This is part of making sure that standards are in place. Policies are clear, simple written statements of how to go about things in the organisation and they provide guidelines to help with decision-making. In working with children in a child care institution, you will need a child protection policy. You will also need to develop a policy on how you will recruit, train and supervise child care workers and discipline them if needed. In addition, you will need an admissions policy, which is how you decide which children you will accept into your care.

Putting the required standards and policies in place may feel overwhelming. It may be necessary to recruit more staff to ensure that child-care worker ratios are in place; staff may need to be trained and systems may need to be developed. Meeting some of the required standards may need extra funding (e.g. improved facilities). If you have people who regularly give to your ministry, you may want to consider asking them for support for specific improvements to help you to meet the standards.

3.6 DEVELOP ADMISSIONS CRITERIA

Having Admissions Criteria for children that are accepted into care can ensure that they are not placed into care unnecessarily. In many countries, children need to have been referred by the relevant authorities. Or in cases where a child needs emergency care and they have not been referred, the relevant authorities need to be informed as soon as possible. Developing admissions criteria means that everyone will be clear about which type of children and in what circumstances children will be admitted into your care.

This regulation may be new to you and may require a change in the way that your home operates. If this is the case, then you may need to put a halt on any new admissions of children to the home. If the home does not already have an admissions policy in place, then one should be developed over time, which ensures that only children in need of temporary residential care should be admitted.

3.7 HAVE RIGHT STAFF IN PLACE

All staff working with children have an important role to play in the lives of those children. This is especially the case for children who have experienced the trauma of having been separated from their families. All Staff at whatever level in the organisation have an opportunity to positively influence the rehabilitation of the child. As such, every staff member should model good behaviour and set positive examples for children in their care.

Any person employed by a child care facility needs to be interviewed for their suitability to work with children and for the role they have been asked to fill. A job description outlining the expectations of the role should be developed before inviting people to apply. Following an interview, character references, appropriate qualification certificates and back ground checks need to be obtained before they can be employed.

Providing emergency care for children and rehabilitating them to be able to return to families demands certain expertise and skills. So staff members need to recruited with this in mind.

Social Workers: Staff working on a one-to-one basis with individual children, assessing their needs, undertaking assessments and developing care plans for the child need to be trained social workers. Tracing and reuniting a child with his or her family are also skills, found in a trained social worker.

Counsellors may be required to work on an individual basis with children experiencing loss or trauma. Counsellors may not necessarily be based at the residential care facility, but need to be available and known to the shelter home.

3.8 TRAINING STAFF

Social Workers: Those working on a one to one basis with children need specialised training. Social Work training for those working in temporary care for children generally needs to cover understanding child development and human behaviour, communication skills, listening, interviewing undertaking assessments, providing direction and guidance, crisis intervention, child protection, professional competence and accountability.

Social Workers also need to be able to liaise with Government authorities and Government Social Welfare Workers whose roles often include the supervision of institutions, provision of care orders, representing children in court family assessment (especially foster families and adoptive families) and follow up of children's cases

Child Protection and Safeguarding: It is important that all of the staff (including volunteers and visitors) are trained about how to keep children safe and protect them from harm. Everybody needs to know what is appropriate behaviour when working with children, what they should do and who they should report to in the organisation if they have a concern that a child may have been abused and what the disciplinary procedures are for anyone accused of harming a child. For those people, who have direct responsibility for children in care, it is also important to know what the local and national guidelines and reporting procedures are on safeguarding children.

Child Development: For the staff members who are responsible for children in the care facility, a good understanding of child development is important, so that they can measure and understand progress and be alert to any concerns in a child's development. This includes training on recognising and responding to trauma.

3.9 HOW TO CARE FOR CHILDREN IN EMEGENCY CARE

Registering and initial assessment of the child	Make sure you are meeting child well-being standards	Undertake child assessments for each child	Develop a care plan for each child

3.10 REGISTERING AND INITIAL ASSESSMENT OF THE CHILD

When a child arrives at a residential care centre, they may have been referred by a Government Social Welfare Officer who will talk to the child to ascertain basic facts about why they have become separated from their families. In another case, a worker associated with the project may have rescued a child from an unsafe situation, the police may have brought the child or a child may have presented himself/herself voluntarily. In all cases, it is usual that the child welfare authorities are informed.

Any child entering residential care should be registered and it is important to determine that the child is unaccompanied or does not have a family able to care for them. This involves recording as much information as can be gathered on arrival. This will include directly asking the child questions as well as collecting information from the child's caregiver and other institutions or authorities that may have had contact with the child. Any concerns about the child's physical or mental state (trauma, abuse etc.) may necessitate specialised support.

It is important to engage with the child and build rapport with them in order to gather basic background information about the child's strengths, resources and needs, taking into consideration their past experiences and circumstances. This may include street life, conflicts with the law, disabilities etc.

If a child coming into your care has been abused or exploited, it is important to carefully consider whether children should be involved in legal proceedings against their exploiters. While prosecuting traffickers or others who exploit children can be important for achieving justice, the process through the courts can take a long time and may delay a child being able to settle into a family environment.[23]

Once a child is registered, **a Case Management File** can be set up for them. This is a record of all information, data, discussions and assessments gathered about the individual child.

3.11 MEETING CHILD WELL BEING STANDARDS

Each child is unique and has different needs. For a child to develop well it is important to focus on addressing all of the needs of a child's life: physical, emotional, relational, intellectual, creative and spiritual. As well as immersing children in an environment that is nurturing and safe, it is important to include children in decisions and plans that affect their lives.

While children are in our care, we have a responsibility to ensure that their physical, social, emotional and developmental needs are met and that children are enabled to participate in decisions that affect their lives. Importantly, we have a duty to ensure that children are safe in our care and are protected from harm.

It is important to know what needs to be covered when you are looking at the healthy development of a child in your care. By law anyone caring for a child has to take responsibility for a child's

education and guidance; immunisation; adequate diet; clothing; shelter; and medical attention, but beyond the physical needs of the child, it is important to look at meeting the relational, developmental and empowerment needs of the children.

Children must be nurtured in their growth and maturing to be able to give and receive fully in relationships with God and others. The growth and development of a child is multifaceted. Holistic child development emphasizes the importance of the whole and the interdependence of all of its parts. It recognizes that interventions for children, must address all aspects of the child: body, soul, mind and spirit and the child's needs for growth in all ways, physically, mentally, socially, emotionally

Below is a framework that looks at the physical, relational, developmental and empowerment (participation) needs of the child. Most National and International standards for children in residential care fit into the following framework:

	Provision	Shelter	Health
1. Physical	We provide children with daily access to clean drinking water, suitable clothing, nutritional food and good sanitation	We provide a suitable environment for children that gives them adequate shelter, security and enjoyment such that they feel part of it. They know about security risks and how to avoid them	We make sure children have access to the right medical care and attention to help them remain healthy or live comfortably
	Self-identity	**Formal relationship**	**Family**
2. Relational/ emotional	We build up the self-esteem of children and restore their sense of identity through love and attention. Where relevant we also help them restore their legal identity	We ensure that children have good relationships with care-workers that help them trust and pursue other good relationships. We also help children to build friendships with good people in the community and get involved in healthy interests and relationships	If possible, we help children find opportunities to live within a family, building bonds with their own or substitute family at their pace with access to help to solve conflicts or find healing
	Education & play	**Guidance & loving discipline**	**Work & opportunities**
3. Developmental	We provide children with opportunities to learn and play that will help them develop appropriately and explore life	We discipline and guide children in a loving way that does not harm them but helps them make good choices in life and respect others	We make sure that children are not exploited through work, but are given opportunities to learn useful work skills and to experience work as an interesting and rewarding activity
	Access to information	**Participation**	**Influence**
4. Empowerment	We share with children information that is relevant to them in an open and transparent way, with an opportunity for them to ask questions	Children are comfortable stating their opinions and asking questions. We encourage their participation in a safe and conducive environment	Children who are of appropriate age and understanding are given an opportunity to influence decisions that affect their lives. Their views are elicited and taken into account when decisions are made

Child Participation

Children often bring valuable ideas, information, and viewpoints to the decisions affecting their lives. When children are invited to participate in ways that are appropriate to their age and maturity, they are less fearful and more responsive to change. Providing opportunities for children and youth to share their viewpoints and engage in meaningful ways in these and other important decisions helps to ensure their well-being.

Children also need to participate in training about how to protect themselves. They should be taught the difference between good touch and bad touch, how staff and visitors should behave with them and who children can tell if they have a child protection concern.

Recognising Trauma

Many children coming into the care of an emergency shelter may well have experienced trauma of some sort. For some children, trauma may involve a single, frightening incident. For others, stress is ongoing, severe and often debilitating due to neglect, abuse, poverty and war. "The more we can understand children and the impact of traumatic experiences, the more compassionate and wise we can be in our interactions and in our problem solving[24]."

It is important to be able to recognise whether a child is experiencing trauma, so that we can react appropriately and they can be referred to the right specialist help if needed.

After a traumatic event, a child will begin to process and think about what happened, attempting to make sense of it. This may result in the following reactions, which are part of normal coping mechanisms in the first 4-6 weeks after a trauma:

Re-experiencing the event: The event will play itself out in the mind of the child again and again. A host of intrusive images related to the trauma may swamp the child's thinking. These are called 'flashbacks'. This may include telling the story over and over again to friends. The child may act this event out in their play and drawings or have intrusive dreams or nightmares.

Physiological over-sensitivity or over-arousal: Following a traumatic event, children and adolescents often exhibit signs of hyper arousal (physiological and psychological tension) - including a fast heart rate and feeling tense or stressed. They may continue with their normal behaviours in most situations, but children exposed to trauma are internally agitated and therefore easily become upset or angry.

Attempts to avoid reminders of the original event: Persistent emotional distress is physically exhausting and emotionally painful. Because of the pain, energy and discomfort associated with the recurring intrusive thoughts and the 'memories' associated with these thoughts, a variety of protective ways are used to escape reminders of the original trauma. These include active avoidance of any reminders of the trauma and the mental mechanisms of numbing and dissociation. This may include children developing a phobia related to the incident or withdrawing into themselves, avoiding friends and family, and refusing to go out to play or to school.

Children who survive a traumatic event and have persistence of this low level fear state, may show characteristics which include feeling out of control, impulsive behaviour, developing obsessive rituals, withdrawal and depression, sleep difficulties, anxiety, acting younger than they are or struggling to have a sense of future. Children who are exhibiting these behaviours may need specialised support. But for all staff working with children, there are principles for responding to children who have experienced trauma, which can be found in Annex 5 at the end of this toolkit

3.12 CHILD ASSESSMENTS

Each child has his own identity, history and unique story. It is important to understand the needs of each child in care, so that interventions can be tailored to these needs.

Very soon after arrival, a trained social worker should undertake an assessment of the child. This should recognise the individual needs of the child and should be added to a child's case file. Information collected in this assessment is a tool for monitoring the well-being and development of each child. It looks at indicators of physical and mental health, emotional and behavioural development, family support, social relationships, education and protection and is used to monitor a child's progress over time.

Children with specific needs will require separate assessments, for example, those with a disability or those children who have been in conflict with the law.

During an assessment, the child should be seen on their own and interviews should minimise distress for the child and enable them to open up. Social Workers must avoid asking leading or suggestive questions. They also need to spend time building a relationship, listening to and respecting the child's views, explaining the assessment process, and enabling them to make choices where possible[25] . After the assessment, the Social Worker will need to analyse the information gathered to see which factors support and which factors undermine the child's welfare and then develop a Care Plan to enhance the welfare of the child.

The basis for collecting information on a child assessment is found in annex 6

3.13 DEVELOPING A CARE PLAN

Each child in care is required to have a Care Plan. This is a written plan of how to meet the immediate developmental needs of the child while in residential care as well as how the child will live with a family in the long term. Part of developing a care plan is listening to and taking into account the child's opinion.
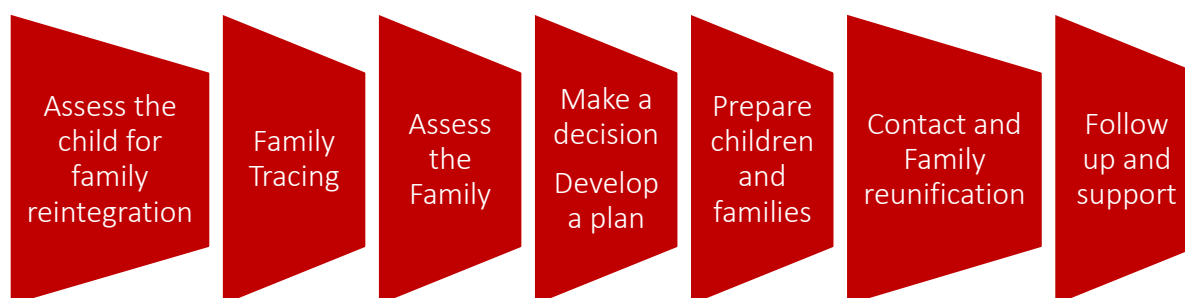
The Care Plan identifies the actions needed to ensure that the child is protected and adequately cared for and is drawn up based on information collected from undertaking assessments with the child and family where relevant. There may be inputs into the Care Plan from other relevant authorities, (eg Government Social Welfare Officers).

The Care Plan should also set out objectives about how the child will be settled into a family and should include how to promote family contact and facilitate family reunification. It contains a time frame and includes a plan of action for mobilisation of resources, services and support required for the child's reintegration with family or alternative family care. The Care Plan must be regularly reviewed as circumstances may change.

Children themselves should be involved in developing a care plan with a trained social worker, including how they will exit from the services of residential care. It is important that children of all ages, in keeping with their degree of mental and emotional maturity, are able to express their views and be actively involved in matters affecting them.

Each child should have a social worker who is responsible for co-ordinating the Care Plan. Staff and care-givers should keep children regularly updated on plans relating to their care and protection, and those of their siblings. The Care Plan should be regularly reviewed to ensure that the child's development needs are being met and that the plan is on track for reuniting the child with his/her family or alternative family care.

3.14 HOW TO REUNITE CHILDEN WITH FAMILIES

Assess the child for family reintegration → Family Tracing → Assess the Family → Make a decision / Develop a plan → Prepare children and families → Contact and Family reunification → Follow up and support

The thought of reuniting a child with their family can feel difficult, particularly if you have become attached to the child and genuinely feel that returning a child to his or her family will rob them of opportunities. However, we know that it is in the best interests of the child if a child is raised in his or her family or a family environment.

Some children are placed in residential care by their parents who have no intention of completely severing their relationship with their child. In other cases, children may have been placed in residential care at a very early age or they may be children who have become separated from their families because of difficult circumstances, for example, abandonment, trafficking or running away from home.

The safety of the child is paramount and there may be occasions when it is not safe to reunite a child with his/her biological family, in which case alternative family care should be found. We know that a child raised in a family environment is more likely to thrive.

It may seem like a daunting prospect to reintegrate children into a family environment, particularly if the residential care you offer does not have a provision for this. However, it is possible and a number of Child Care Institutions have successfully made the transition. Ideally it would be good to visit and talk to another Child Care Institution in your locality that has managed to reunite children with their families.

CASE STUDY

In 2010, CRANE, a network of faith-based organisations and churches in Kampala, worked with 5 child care institutions that were willing to trial reintegrating 75 children in their care back into their families over a 2-year period. These institutions saw the positive impact on the children as they were integrated into a family environment and it helped them to realise that family- based care is the better option for the child and the institution. Such was the success of the programme that at the end of two years, 116 children had been resettled. Since that pilot project, CRANE and its network members have helped reintegrate almost 1,000 children back into families to date.

3.15 ASSESS THE CHILD FOR FAMILY REINTEGRATION

Before children can be reintegrated with their families, there needs to be a full understanding of why a child is no longer at home. [26] If the child has been abandoned, or separated by choice from their families it is important to find out why this has happened.

A social worker should be allocated to assess a child to return to their family and work with the family to prepare them and ensure there are no risks to the child. The social worker also needs to support the family and follow up once the child has returned back to their family

One-to-one sessions can be arranged with the child to collect data. Staff conducting the interviews should be trained counsellors or social workers who are already known to the child and with whom they have a trusting relationship. The discussion should take place in a comfortable and relaxed atmosphere, where the child can be encouraged to reflect on their home situation and explain their family background and how they feel about this. Staff members must be open and non-judgemental in their attitude towards the child and what she/he may reveal. Depending on the reaction of the child, it may be necessary to have a series of one-to-one sessions, alongside other counselling and support activities, before the child is able to discuss their family and their future fully.

In one-to-one sessions, areas to discuss with the child should include: what the child liked about home; what he/she struggled with at home; who looked after him/her; who was important to her; what work family members were involved with; the financial and health status of the family; as well as the physical location of the family (as last known by the child). Questions should be asked about the names of caregivers and other significant relatives and any possible contact details for future follow-up with the child. Children should always be given space to share if there is someone in the family who has abused them in the past, at which point reintegration may need to be stopped as the safety of the child is paramount.

3.16 FAMILY TRACING

Once the child has agreed that they would like to be reunified with their family, information can be collected about the location of the family. This can be gathered through documents, direct conversation or from people who might have information about the child. The formal process of tracing should only begin once a good relationship has been established with the child by staff and social workers and information should be gained by developing the trust of the child.

After information has been collected about the likely location of the child's family and the child has given consent for their family to be traced, this information can be passed to relevant authorities. Radio and newspaper announcements and notices with details about the child can be broadcast and circulated in the child's home district as per the referral letter to the authorities.

In many countries, work is done in collaboration with the District Social Welfare Officer and Local Government authorities in the child's home district to trace his/her parents or guardians.

3.17 FAMILY ASSESMENT

The next step is a series of assessments in the family home to better understand the family's living conditions, resources, services available and reasons that the parents decided to send their children away. They should be undertaken by trained and experienced social workers and are not a single meeting with the family, but several meetings and observations over a period of time.

The topics in the assessment should be covered in conversations with the family and should be recorded. Areas to be discussed will be different for each family and may differ from visit to visit. Generally, however, discussions should cover the family's economic and livelihood security, psychosocial well-being and protection of the child as well the possibility of accessing further support from the community and public services (such as schooling, health care, self-help groups, child protection committees etc.). It is also important to determine whether the family constitutes a risk to the child and whether the family has the skills and capabilities to care for the child as well as to establish that there is not a risk of them displacing their child again to another institution.

Economic and livelihood security: Assessment questions would be around meeting the basics needs of the family and would cover household income and source of household income, does the family have enough nutritious food, does the family own land or livestock? They would also include how many children are attending school and whether there are any health needs in the family. There

would also be written observations of the accommodation, hygiene and sanitation of the family home.

Psychosocial: Discussions of the psychosocial well-being of the child and family may be needed if the family is in a situation of crisis or stress.

Child Protection: Protection and safety of the child begins at home. It is therefore important to ensure that the child is returning to a safe environment. Due to the sensitive nature of discussions around child protection, the social worker should take time to build a trusting relationship with the family and child and make a note of any risks. This includes finding out from caregivers and children whether there are any situations that make them worry about being safe at home, how caregivers respond when the child misbehaves, whether the child is left alone for periods of time, whether the child is engaged in excessive working. It is also necessary to make sure that the child is aware of their rights to protection and who they can contact if they feel unsafe.

Mapping local support and services: In assessing when a child can return to their family, it is also important to determine what support and services are available locally. This involves discovering what supportive networks are available, such as extended family, friends, neighbours, local councils and committees, who will be looking out for the interests of the child and family. It also includes finding out what services are available, such as education, health services, transport etc.

At this stage, a decision has to be made whether it is safe for a child to return to the family home. If it is not, then alternative family care can be considered (next chapter)

3.18 DEVELOPING A FAMILY SUPPORT PLAN

Before a child is allowed to stay with their family after a period of separation, a family support plan needs to be put in place to support the child within the family. The support plan is based on information collected through assessments on household security, psychosocial well-being of the child and family, child protection and support available.

Where possible, it is good if the plan can be drawn up with the child and family together, but if this is not possible then it can be done with the child and family separately. The plan puts in place a timeframe for reintegrating the child with their family and also helps to manage expectations about what can be put in place for the child to return home. The plan should also take into account the legal guardianship of the child and to whom he or she will be handed back in the family.

Finally, the plan should include ways in which support might be offered to the family to help the child to reintegrate. This could include training or supervision to build parenting capacity of the parents, life skills training or parent support groups. It may also involve household economic strengthening programmes, or one-off support for improved accommodation facilities.

3.19 PREPARING A CHILD TO INTEGRATE INTO A FAMILY

In preparing for children to integrate into a family, there should be plenty of dialogue with the child. It is important that children receive all the essential information on what they can expect if they choose to return home. In some cases, children may have had no contact with their family for years, so it is important that the process is handled carefully and sensitively.

It is important to spend time with the child's family to ensure that they are ready and willing to take the child back. Family reunification is not always easy and it takes time. Sometimes the child may want to be reunited with his/her parents but convincing the parents may take time. Some parents may not want to take full legal responsibility for their child and others may initially believe that the child would be better off in an institution. It is important never to force reunification, but instead work with families to help them to understand that children being with families is in the best interests of the child.

3.20 CONTACT AND FAMILY REUNIFICATION

Remote contact: The process of reintroducing the child to the family should be gradual and depends on the individual needs of the child. It can happen when the social worker delivers letters or pictures from the child to his/her parents and then facilitates a telephone call between the parents and their child.

Short face-to-face meetings: If the response is favourable, a meeting can take place between a child and his/her family under the direct supervision of a social worker who can facilitate the meeting. For a child who has chosen to separate from his/her parents and is meeting them again for the first time, it is best if child and parents meet at a neutral location. If the meeting works well, more short face-to-face meetings under the supervision of a social worker can be arranged.

Longer supervised visits to family home: Children and parents can meet at the parents' or family home under direct supervision. This meeting may last for several days and should be closely supervised by the social worker. During this period, it is recommended that the social worker stay outside the parents' home and keep some physical distance from the child, whilst at the same time keeping constant watch over him or her. The objective of this visit is to assess the child's ability to readjust to his or her community and lifestyle. The social worker must be prepared to step in at any time if the child is facing significant challenges.

Unsupervised stay: Over time, a child can spend time with his/her parents without supervision. This type of meeting is only performed after a supervised visit has been successful. The social worker must be confident that the child will be able to readjust to the local lifestyle and that the parents are able to care for the child in the role of being a parent again.

Reintegration kit for child returning home: Usually a child is provided with a reintegration kit for returning back to the family, especially if the family is materially poor. This may include items such as blankets, utensils, school uniform etc. The kit should be made up following an assessment of the child's material needs.

Communities play an important part in children's reintegration and whether they are willing to welcome, monitor and support returning girls and boys. Engaging with community leaders or groups (Child Protection Committees, village leaders) can help reduce discrimination against children returning to their families, especially if they are known to have suffered exploitation or abuse while away from their homes.

In some countries, when a child is returned home, the local Council Committee is informed. When the child is officially accepted back into the family, the family and child representative on the Local Committee together with neighbours and extended family members are present. This is to ensure that there are people in the local community looking out for the interests of the child.[27]

Schools: It is also important to ensure schools are ready to support returning children to integrate into education.

3.21 FOLLOW UP AND SUPPORT

Children need to be followed up once they have been reintegrated back with their families. This includes ensuring that the child is safe and well and is being well cared for. The child's Care Plan should be reviewed to ensure that the child is making progress in his/her development.

Follow-up is also needed on the Family Support Plan to make sure that agreed interventions are taking place. This may include training or material assistance to ensure that there are improvements in economic security or accommodation or that the child is going to school. Other areas to note are the interactions and behaviour between child and caregivers. Information gathered during follow-up visits needs to be written down and recorded.

3.22 HOW TO TRANSITION FROM LONG TERM TO SHORT TERM CARE

Connect with others	Assess your organisation	Convince Board of Trustees	Educate donors, church supporters	Explain to parents, children community	Be an advocate that children belong in families
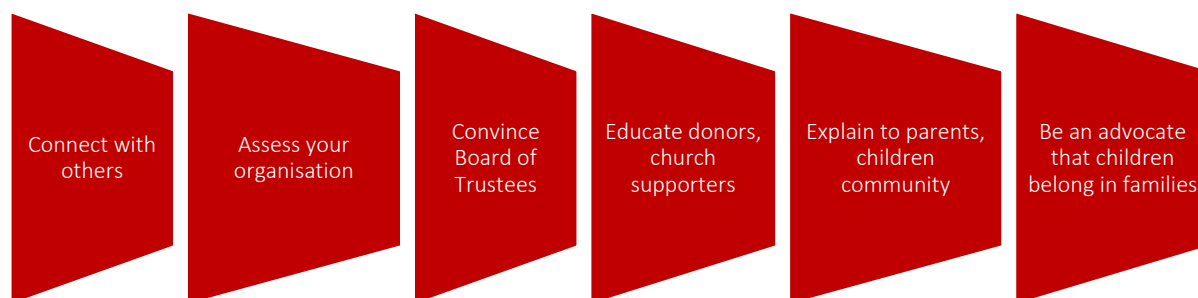
If you are currently looking after children in long-term residential care and they have been with you for some time, the prospect of changing your model of working to providing temporary shelter and helping children to integrate into a family may well seem daunting, even impossible. You may have worries about placing children into situations of deprivation. It may raise questions or fears about future roles and jobs, or concerns about the practicalities of how to reintegrate a child back with his or her family.

You may have strong attachments to the children you care for and are fearful of letting them go, feeling that you may be able to care better for them. But we know that most children want to be with their parents. The best way you can support them is to assist their families and ensure you have an on-going role in monitoring children after reintegration and retaining a connection with them. You may also have a concern for the child's spirituality or donor perceptions. But you can be assured that reaching out into a whole community provides opportunities for whole families to recognise the love of God and is more effective, sustainable and ethical.

Making a transition from offering long-term residential care to supporting family-based care takes time and needs commitment, but the benefits for children are overwhelming. And in the long run it is a more cost-effective and sustainable way of caring for children. The journey of transition is made so much easier when we work with others who have the same vision to see children protected, cared for and raised in loving families.

Be assured that a change in the way that you work with children is not a change of calling, but a reorientation of what you do. You have a critical role to play and this new and expanded role can include being a champion for change.

3.23 CONNECT WITH OTHERS

To enable you to make this transition, connect with others who are making the same journey, those who have gone ahead of you and can testify to the positive impact that restoring children to families has had on their ministry. And begin to network with other child protection and child welfare-oriented organisations in your country.

3.24 ORGANISATIONAL ASSESSMENT

In thinking about transitioning from long-term residential to emergency care and family restoration, you will need to undertake an assessment of your organisation[28.] Where do you have strengths and weaknesses in being able to make the necessary changes? You will need to think about whether you have the right staff with the necessary skills and whether you might need to hire other staff, especially trained social workers. You might need to consider how your facilities might need adapting and you could begin to think of future family strengthening programmes and roles where you have particular skills. Once you have done this, you will need to develop a budget, which looks at the cost of any changes that you will need to make.

3.25 WORK WITH YOUR BOARD

If you are operating within Government regulations for your child care facility, you would be expected to have a Board of Trustees. Both the Founder Director and the Board of Trustees will need to be approached if you are changing the way that the facility operates.

For the Board, it is useful to get them to the national child protection and legal framework for working with children, as well as the changing trends towards family-oriented child care. The Board will need to know the cost of transitioning to emergency shelter and family-based care, but also the cost savings once the transition has been completed.

3.36 EDUCATE DONORS AND CHURCH SUPPORTERS

We are all grateful for generous supporters and donors who support us in our ministry funding. There is a growing trend that donors are increasingly pulling away from supporting institutional care and moving towards initiatives that support family-based care for children.

Many churches locally and in the Western world still support orphanages and child care institutions, often sending out volunteers on mission trips. It may feel difficult to have to explain to these supporters that you want to use their money to help children in a different way. But generally, experience shows that the majority of church supporters are willing to support families to stay together. Indeed, this is a model that many Western churches are engaged in within their own local communities.

Donors who have a strong personal involvement with a child (child sponsors, orphanage volunteers or fundraisers) may find it more difficult to accept that a child will be returned to their family and may need to be assured that children will not be returned to an abusive situation. When communicating with these types of donors it is good to communicate that reunification is a positive step and that the child will still continue to receive support through family strengthening programmes.

3.27 EXPLAIN TO PARENTS, COMMUNITIES AND CHILDREN

It is important to include children and parents, and sometimes the local community, in discussions as to why things are changing, so there is not any misunderstanding about why long-term residential facilities may be closing or moving to emergency shelter. We recognise that you may need to spend time with parents to explain that you are not breaking your promise to them if you committed to educating their children up to a certain age. It is important that you are clear about the support you can provide parents or families who are reunified with their children before you begin the conversation.

3.28 BECOME AN ADVOCATE

As you move through this journey of transition, you will have challenges, but you may also be surprised by the rewards. With time, you will no doubt see the benefits of seeing children reunited with their families. You will know that you have been able to offer emergency care to children in great need, at the right time and have seen them move into a supportive and caring family environment. We trust and pray that, having travelled this journey, you will become an advocate for others to follow the same path and can become a champion of supporting children in families

REFLECT

- Look at the list of Government child well-being standards from Uganda in Annex 4 at the end of this Toolkit. Assess whether you are meeting these standards in your work with children and record where you might need to make improvements.
- Read Annex 9 and undertake an organisational assessment of your Child Care Institution to see how you could transition to providing emergency care and family support. Decide and write down where your organisation may need support and training to put standards in place and develop policies
- Read Annex 10 Family Assets. Reflect on whether these assets are present within your child care facility.

ACTION POINTS

- Familiarise yourself with national standards and guidelines on residential care for children and research how to register your child care institution with the Government.

- Arrange to train staff in child protection and child development, including the importance of participation and children about how to protect themselves and who to go to with a child protection concern.

RESOURCES

Videos

"We All Need Families at the End of the Day- Maureen" This video, presented by Better Care Network and UNICEF, tells the story of Maureen, and her two siblings, who were placed in a children's home in Kenya when their mother died. In the video, Maureen expresses her desire to reunite with her grandparents and asks: "Why do I live in a children's home?" The video also features interviews with experts, including those who have lived in children's homes, explaining some of the negative impacts of institutionalization. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2CNiekwAHy0

Stephen Ucembe, Kenya Society of Care Leavers, shares his personal experience growing up as an orphan in institutional care at the Christian Alliance for Orphans' Summit IX on May 2, 2013. http://faithtoaction.org/media/videos/

Stories, World Without Orphans http://www.worldwithoutorphans.org/video/stories Stories of children who have graduated from orphanages

Training Resources

The Celebrating Children Course is a 128-hour course with a Biblical basis, which gives people practical childcare skills based on current academic theory around child development. The training syllabus, which includes on-the-job mentoring, case studies, group work, home study tasks and individual assignments, covers the following modules:1) Understanding the child in context; 2) Issues in listening to children; 3) Risk and resilience; 4) Holistic mission to children; 5) Working with children: practical issues; 6) Child Protection and helping traumatised children; 7) Development, evaluation and monitoring of programmes; and 8) Development of self and staff.

Creating Safe Environments for children (Viva): A toolkit of training to help churches and faith-based organisations protect children from harm, giving a Christian perspective. http://www.viva.org/learn.aspx

The Quality Improvement System (QIS) Viva: A tool for use in networks of small to medium-sized Christian organisations and Church projects working with children at risk. It introduces international quality standards and Biblical principles in 6 key areas: Child protection, Child

wellbeing, Project Planning and Design, Financial Accountability, Governance and People Care. QIS provides a framework to help ensure that your organisation has minimum standards of care in place

Better Homes for Children. This programme is aimed specifically at building the capacity of child care institutions to fulfil the requirements of the alternative care guidelines and make the transition to emergency care and family reunification. It helps Child Care Institutions to reach good standards in Professional Practice, Child Wellbeing, Staffing, Facilities, Child Resettlement and Family Based care.

TOOLS

- Admissions criteria form
- Child Assessment Form
- Care Plan
- Family Assessment Form

Better Homes Foundations Assessment

Professional Practice	Yes	No	Sometimes	Don't Know
We have a clear statement of aims for our residential facility based on the best interests of the child				
Our home is registered with the Government				
We aim to reunite children with their families or place them in alternative family based care				
We have a process in place for admitting children into our care that includes informing relevant authorities				
Children are assessed on arrival at our residential facilities				
All children have a care plan in place which involves the child				
Plans are put in place for the child when they leave the care of our facility				
We have a written child protection policy, procedures and guidelines				
Staff are sensitive to signs and symptoms of abuse and know how to respond				
There are written and understood guidelines for adults and children on appropriate behaviour and discipline				
Child Wellbeing	Yes	No	Sometimes	Don't Know
Children receive a sufficient and balanced diet				
Children have health check on arrival and at regular intervals and have access to medical treatment and health information				
Children have access to appropriate quality education				
Time is made for children to play and have recreational activities				
Children are given privacy and given private space to discuss their cases or meet with visitors				
Children are given choices in their daily lives and decisions are taken with children not for them				
Children receive individual attention and carers provide safe, positive nurturing relationships				
Children are supported to maintain a sense of identity and family reunification is a priority				
Children's views are valued and children can voice their concerns				
There is additional support in place for the carers of babies or young children				
Staffing	Yes	No	Sometimes	Don't Know
There are recruitment procedures in place for all volunteers and staff				
All staff have background checks and references before having contact with children				
Staff recruited have right skills, experience and qualifications for their roles.				
Every worker has well-defined work objectives, roles and responsibilities.				
Managers have provided all workers with basic information to do their jobs and give them regular supervision				
There are enough staff to provide adequate care and attention for each child (1:8 children over 3yrs ,1:5 children under 2 yrs 1:1 for babies)				
Care staff work no more than 8 hours a day				
There is an appropriate gender balance of carers for children				
There are trained social workers working with children				
Staff and carers are provided with regular training				

Facilities	Yes	No	Sometimes	Don't Know
Accommodation houses no more children than specified by registration documents or government regulations				
Accommodation is safe and secure				
There is adequate ventilation and heating				
Rooms are adequate size for their purpose				
Boys and girls have separate sleeping accommodation				
Sanitation facilities are sufficient for the numbers of children, caregivers and staff and girls and boys				
There are written guidelines and procedures on what to do in the event of a fire or emergency.				
Accommodation is clean and tidy				
There is positive interaction between the facilities and the local community				
The facilities are located in a safe area for children				

Administration	Yes	No	Sometimes	Don't Know
Records are kept for each child where all communications, incidents and activities relating to the child are kept in a casefile				
Records are available to children				
Personnel files are compiled for each staff member				
Information on children is kept confidential				
There is a budget for activities that is accurate, up to date and complete				
Financial transactions are recorded				
Records are securely locked with limited access				
A Directors and/or managers oversee the work				
The Director/ Managers promote open dialogue with children and staff				
There are good lines of communication between our organisation and local authorities regarding child welfare				

Child Resettlement and Family Based Care	Yes	No	Sometimes	Don't Know
There are guidelines on the length of stay for each child				
Children live in a family environment (eg small group homes one live in carer for 5-14 children)				
We have a programme and activities for rehabilitating children who may be traumatised				
There is a policy on resettling children into families				
We have contact and engagement with the children's parents or guardians				
If children have become separated from families, we are involved on tracing families and reuniting children with families or kinship care				
We work to support families to care for their children				
We have a pro-active fostering or adoption programme				
We work with families or carers accepting new children into their homes				
Children are followed up once they leave us				

Finding Alternative Families for Children

4.1 WHY FIND ALTERNATIVE FAMILIES FOR CHILDREN?

The Church has a duty and a responsibility to ensure that it is welcoming and safe for children. It also has a commission to care for children without parental care and it has the capacity to lead the local and global effort to end the situation of children living outside of family care. Where this has traditionally meant providing orphan care for children through institutions, there are growing opportunities for churches to make family-based care a significant part of their life and ministry through the provision of fostering, adoption or mentoring families.

There are increasing numbers of children unable to live with their own families who need to be accepted and cared for by alternative families that can offer them the love, individual attention and stability that they require. As a large social network with the involvement of numerous families, the Church is uniquely placed to offer its help to meet this need. This is by families or caregivers from churches offering alternative family care for children, while a network of church members supports those acting as providers.

For those offering alternative family care, there are no golden rules as to what makes the perfect caregiver. But it involves them having space in their hearts to invest time and possibly raise a child who is not their own. It can be both a rewarding and challenging experience that requires a long-term commitment and dedication to offer a sense of permanence for the child. This is why it is especially important for the Church to embrace and support those who are caring for children in this way.

CASE STUDY
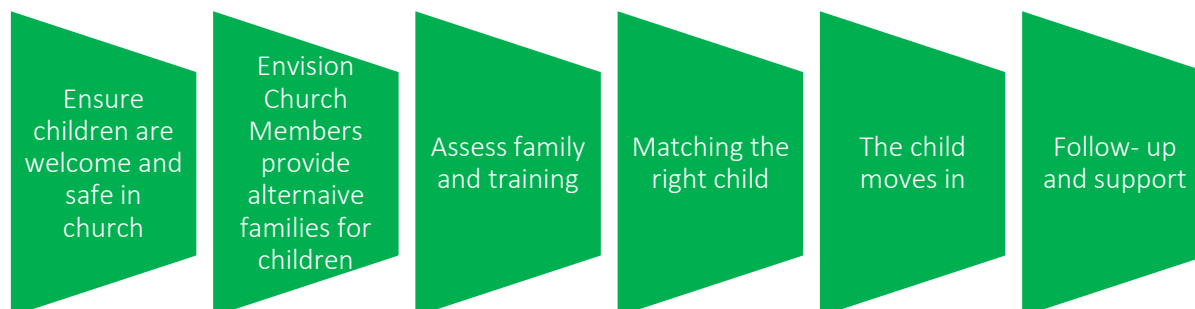
Guatemala City. Casa Vida

Red Viva in Guatemala City is a network of 30 Churches and 55 organisations. The network is one of only three organisations to have been approved by the Children's Office of the Guatemalan Government to find alternative families for children who cannot be reunited with their biological families. The programme that Red Viva is running with network members is called Casa Vida.

Currently 13 Churches in the network are participating in the Casa Vida programme of the network and promoting fostering and adoption within their congregations. Over the last 3 years, 75 families from these Churches have been found to provide alternative families.

A network team which consists of a co-ordinator, 2 social workers and a psychologist work with potential fostering and adoptive families to train them to point where they are ready for government approval. Once the placement has been approved and the child is with his/her new family the Casa Vida Psychologist and Social Workers continue to follow up with the child and the family. During regular visits, they check that the child has settled well into the family, and getting the right parental support, is safe, healthy and is doing well at school.

Forty of the 75 families have been so far been approved by government social workers and 28 children have been placed so far. At the same time, the Guatemalan Government will be using the Casa Vida model as a way to promote fostering and adoption. As a result of this programme, the relationship between the Guatemalan Government and the Church have been strengthened.

4.2 HOW TO FIND ALTERNATIVE FAMILIES FOR CHILDREN

Ensure children are welcome and safe in church

Envision Church Members provide alternaive families for children

Assess family and training

Matching the right child

The child moves in

Follow- up and support

4.3 CREATE CHILD FRIENDLY CHURCHES

The valuable contribution that children can bring to churches is sometimes overlooked. There is much that children can teach us and if we listen hard enough, we can often learn from them about the love and truth of God. Churches should be places where children feel welcome and are able to participate fully in church life.

Like other institutions, churches have a responsibility to keep children safe and protect them from harm. It is becoming increasingly necessary that churches have written guidelines about how to safeguard children and they will have a child protection policy. It is generally expected that those working with children in a church, for example, Sunday school teachers, know how to promote children's well-being and protect them from harm. They should know what is acceptable behaviour when dealing with children and what to do if they have a concern about child abuse. Children can also be taught how to protect themselves.

4.4 ENVISION CHURCH MEMBERS TO PROVIDE ALTERNATIVE FAMILIES FOR CHILDREN

Teaching on the value of families for children The bible has much to say about the way that husbands and wives and parents and children should relate to one another. Envisioning Churches about the importance of providing loving and nurturing families for children is part of the biblical mandate. It is likely that teaching on values of positive family life will be preached from the pulpit and studied in small groups. Teaching can be extended to include providing alternative families for children who cannot live with their biological families.

Understanding the need: In finding alternative families for children, the first step is to let churches know that there are children who are in need of alternative family-based care by sharing about local needs. It might be good to invite someone to speak at the church who has fostered or adopted or to create a ministry within the church to focus on addressing the needs of children who need alternative care.

Churches can be linked with Child Care Institutions in their localities. In a network setting, this is relatively easy to do. In some residential care institutions, there will be some children who cannot return immediately to their family homes and may need a period of time in a stable family environment, before being settled back with their families. There will be other children for whom it is impossible for them to return to their families. In these cases, the only option is alternative permanent family care.

Awareness Raising on different types of alternative Family care: There are different ways in which local churches can connect with children in Child Care Institutions in a meaningful way and we can be encouraging them to take children into their homes

Respite families can provide short-term care to children who live in their own families with relatives or in adoptive families. This is especially important for children who have medical problems or developmental disabilities that require parents to provide many hours of direct care.

Mentor families can provide a one-to-one relationship and specialised attention to children or young people who lack permanent family connections. Mentor families commit to share a child's life by regularly meeting and connecting with them, taking them out, sharing their joys and pains, taking interest in their lives and choices. Mentor parents can bring children a sense of continuity and stability, forming strong, family bonds.

Foster care: In foster care, the natural parents, or the state, remain the legal guardians but the child lives temporarily with another family or foster carer. This option can be used to provide the time needed to create the environment where the child can return to his or her family. It can also provide time to find the right permanent solution with a new family. Foster carers can be single adults or families. Research has shown that foster care which offers stability, security and good relationships can help children to develop and mature emotionally.

In all of the above models, the natural parents, or the state, remain the legal guardians of the child. If after work with child's biological family, the situation still remains unsafe for the child to return, then an alternative 'forever/ permanent family for the child'[29] needs to be found.

Adoption: When all efforts to enable a child to be re-unified with his or her biological family or kinship care have been exhausted, domestic adoption may be considered. Adoption is the process where the legal guardianship of a child is transferred from his or her parents (or from the state) to new parents. Those offering adoption are 'forever families' for children. Domestic adoption as opposed to international adoption is increasingly being promoted as the preferred option so as not to dislocate the child from her or his cultural heritage and national identity. This is where local church has an important role to play.

4.5 FINDING FAMILIES

A child is more likely to thrive if they are placed **permanently** with an alternative family. The stability of the placement with the family is an important element of permanence as it creates opportunities for children to develop relationships, which may take time for children whose previous relationships have been characterised by adversity.[30] Continuing high-quality relationships are important for children because they help children build security through developing secure attachments that support their ability to form relationships in the future as adults.

Because of the commitment involved, it is important that prospective alternative families go into the process with their eyes open and a clear understanding of the expectations and challenges of taking a new child into their home.

The features of an alternative family or caregiver which enable young people to develop emotionally are those which offers stability, security, and a good relationship

This includes:

- a parenting style which combines boundaries with warmth;
- an expectation that the relationship with the child will survive;
- an emphasis on the relationship and on flexible problem-solving within it;
- facilitating contact with birth parents and avoiding criticism;
- flexibility and not being easily upset;
- and encouragement about education and school.

Sinclair 1. Fostering now. Messages from research, London Jessica Kingsley

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CASE STUDY

Delhi Global family – God Parents

Global Family is an NGO that endeavours to rescue abused, oppressed and abandoned children and provide care within the context of a family. Since July 2011, it has been running shelter home in Delhi to provide a place of temporary care for girls aged 6-17. The girls are victims of trafficking, child labour, abandonment and sexual and physical abuse. The Shelter home works closely with the Government Department of Women and Child Development, Child Welfare Committee (CWC), several rescue organisations and the police.

The ethos of the home is that every girl is precious to God, just as His own daughter, and that all children deserve the love and care of a family. The Shelter Home does all it can to restore children referred to them back to their families as soon as possible. Since opening 300 girls have been at the shelter home and more than 200 have been integrated with their families. Other girls have been transferred to a group home in their state.

Working with girls who have been abused requires sensitivity and a specialist response. As well as Director of the Shelter Home and an Officer in Charge, who ensures that the home is working within Governments standards and regulations, the Shelter Home employs welfare officers, a counsellor, legal advisors, teachers as well as house mothers.

For some girls, it is not possible for them to go back to their families because of safety concerns. For these girls, the shelter home looked at starting foster care. One of the barriers to couples being able to offer fostering is the role that the whole extended family has in decision making about a child being brought into the home. Getting agreement among a number of different family members was not always easy.

Another barrier were concerns about safeguarding for girls staying in homes where a number of different extended family members may stay, or where accommodation is exposed to wider community members. Some of the girls at the shelter home have experienced severe trauma in their lives and are vulnerable to exploitation or returning back to their exploitative lifestyle.

Potential fosterer carers, often couples, felt much more at ease if they were able to provide a foster parent type role, forming long term committed relationships with a girl from the home, knowing that she would return to sleep at the shelter home, where safeguarding measures were in place and specialised support could be offered. These couples known as God Parents invest time, support and mentoring of the girls, taking them on days out and inviting them into their homes for family meals and activities. They are able to offer the girls an alternative family, while knowing that they have the continued support of the shelter home if required.

Introductory meetings: These can be held for those who have shown an interest in providing alternative families for children. The aim is to give prospective caregivers enough information to make informed decisions about whether to proceed. They could be informal sessions in the form of coffee mornings. The meetings should cover the principles and values essential for fostering, the process involved and the role of foster families. These meetings can involve parents with experience of fostering and adoption to be on hand to share their own stories and challenges and to be on hand to answer questions.

Initial checks and registration: Any caregivers wishing to take a child into their home or to mentor a child will need to register their interest with an agency or organisation facilitating the process. There must be checks in place to ensure that they are suitable caregivers and most importantly that the child will be safe.

4.6 ASSESSING AND TRAINING ALTERNATIVE FAMILIES

If a family or care giver decided to proceed, an assessment will need to be taken of the family by a trained social worker. It is the same process as if a child was going to be reunited with his/her own family. It could take 3-6 months and is a series of meetings between the prospective parents and an agency social worker. This is an ongoing conversation and at least one meeting should be at home where all individuals who live in the home will need to be present. The social worker is there to ensure that the family is prepared to have the child in the home and that they are ready to parent.

Information is recorded in a written assessment and will include details and background about the family and details of all people living in the household, including other children. The assessment will also include comments on the locality, availability of amenities and the type of accommodation where the child will stay. The report should contain the employment and educational background of the main caregivers, their motivation for wanting to offer the child alternative family-based care and their parenting capacity. Crucially, the social worker should determine whether the child will be safe staying with the family and in addition should consider the potential impact of the child on the family.

Information collected should also include any information obtained from relevant background checks and documents, including those from the local council office, law enforcement and social welfare offices and other relevant institutions.

Training

Equipping prospective caregivers to take on a child who is not their own is an important part of the process for alternative family-based care. Training should be practical as well as theoretical and should draw on the experience of other caregivers providing alternative family arrangements for children. Topics to cover could include: understanding your role as a foster carer; child development (attachment and how it impacts on development); keeping children safe from harm (safeguarding); parenting; understanding behaviour; helping children to overcome negative experiences and recognising trauma; and understanding health needs of the child.

4.7 MATCHING THE RIGHT CHILD AND THE CHILD MOVES IN

Selecting the right alternative family for the right child is a crucial task and it will include decisions made based on the assessment of the family and child and the child's Care Plan. Consideration needs to be given to the child's ethnic, cultural and linguistic background as well as the opportunities that a new family offers to the child.

The process of a child being placed with an alternative family is the same process as if a child was being integrated into their own families. There will be an initial meeting between the child and the new family, followed by several supervised visits over the next few months. Information from these visits will be recorded. In many countries, if the family is adopting the child, paperwork, such as the adoption assistance agreement, needs to be completed before the child comes to live in the home.

After the child starts residing with their new family, they should be visited and followed up in the same way as if the child was reintegrating back with their own family. In most countries, if the family or carer is adopting, they need to file a legal intent to adopt petition. The child becomes a legal part of the family once the adoptive parent/s have attended a court session where a judge finalises the adoption. The new parent/s are given an amended birth certificate, which names the new parents as the legal custodians and a certificate of adoption.

4.8 SUPPORTING THOSE PROVIDING ALTERNATIVE FAMILIES FOR CHILDREN

Adopted and fostered children and their parents and caregivers can face unique emotional challenges. Research indicates that families offering alternative family care fare much better if they have support and a strong social network to help them in good and difficult times. There is also

greater success if they are linked to other caregivers facing the same challenges and joys. In addition, adopted and fostered children should be welcomed into the church family and included in children's work.

Support for all caregivers offering alternative family-based care for children should continue throughout the child's placement. Social workers should arrange follow-up visits to monitor the progress of the child. The local church can ensure that caregivers are supported pastorally, emotionally and spiritually, given practical help when needed and that children are welcomed and accepted. Connecting with other caregivers providing alternative care can also be a good way to share experiences and the joys and challenges of fostering and adoption.

CASE STUDY

Wendy entered the Nsambya Babies' Home aged 18 months after being abandoned by her parents and neglected by her grandparents, who locked her up and left her to go hungry. She remained there over eight years, until members of Viva's partner network CRANE helped her find a foster home. Since joining the foster family, Wendy has grown more confident and developed a close group of friends at school. She plays on the school netball team, and has learnt to make other students laugh, which she never used to do. When CRANE did a follow-up at school, they discovered her face filled with joy. In the nearly five years since she left the orphanage, Wendy's relationship with her foster family has grown close. She loves her foster siblings, who think of her as a big sister. Her foster mother is so proud of her and happy that God blessed her with Wendy. CRANE's Family Reintegration Programme helps children like Wendy find a home through training foster carers and reintegrating children into families. It has been involved in the resettlement process of 250 children since the programme began in 2011, and has trained 14 new social workers in the past year alone.

REFLECT

- Read Annex 10 Family Assets. Reflect on whether these assets are present within your own family.

ACTION POINTS

- As a Church, connect with Child Care Institutions in your area to see whether they are looking for alternative families for children in their care.
- As a Child Care Institution, plan to connect with churches in your area to promote providing alternative family care.
- Ensure that the right trained staff is on hand or can be connected with if you want to develop foster care placements.

RESOURCES

- Child Friendly Church
- Sunday School programme
- Pastors Envisioning

ESSENTIALS IN OUR WORK WITH CHILDREN

- ✓ When placing children in alternative family care, the child's safety and best interests are paramount.
- ✓ The child's opinions should be taken into account in all family placements.
- ✓ Trained social workers are required to assess potential families and place children with them.
- ✓ Permanence and stability are key for a successful placement.
- ✓ Those providing alternative family care for children need follow-up and support.

Safeguarding essentials

- ✓ The local church has a Child Protection Policy in place that is in accordance with the international standards yet appropriate for our local culture and context and is reviewed at least annually.
- ✓ Those working with children in churches have a code of conduct for behaving appropriately with children and know who to go to in order to report a child protection concern

ANNEX 1

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

The Convention on the Rights of the Child has 54 articles in all. Articles 43-54 are about how governments should work to make sure all children get all their rights. A convention is an agreement between countries to obey the same law. When the government of a country ratifies a convention that means it agrees to obey the law written down in that convention.

Article 1: Definition of a child: Everyone under 18 years of age has all the rights in this Convention.

Article 2: Non–discrimination: The Convention applies to everyone whatever their race, religion, abilities, whatever they think or say, whatever type of family they come from.

Article 3: Best interests of the child: All organisations concerned with children should work towards what is best for each child.

Article 4: Implementation of rights: Governments should make these rights available to children.

Article 5: Parental guidance and the child's evolving capacities: Governments should respect the rights and responsibilities of families to direct and guide their children so that, as they grow, they learn to use their rights properly.

Article 6: Survival and development: All children have the right to life. Governments should ensure that children survive and develop healthily.

Article 7: Name and nationality: All children have the right to a legally registered name, and nationality. Also, the right to know and, as far as possible, to be cared for by, their parents.

Article 8: Preservation of identity: Governments should respect children's right to a name, a nationality and family ties.

Article 9: Separation from parents: Children should not be separated from their parents unless it is for their own good. For example, if a parent is mistreating or neglecting a child. Children whose parents have separated have the right to stay in contact with both parents, unless this might hurt the child.

Article 10: Family reunification: Families who live in different countries should be allowed to move between those countries so that parents and children can stay in contact, or get back together as a family.

Article 11: Illicit transfer and non–return: Governments should take steps to stop children being taken out of their own country illegally.

Article 12: The child's opinion: Children have the right to say what they think should happen, when adults are making decisions that affect them, and to have their opinions taken into account.

Article 13: Freedom of expression: Children have the right to get and to share information, as long as the information is not damaging to them or to others.

Article 14: Freedom of thought, conscience and religion: Children have the right to think and believe what they want, and to practise their religion, as long as they are not stopping other people from enjoying their rights. Parents should guide their children on these matters.

Article 15: Freedom of association: Children have the right to meet together and to join groups and organisations, as long as this does not stop other people from enjoying their rights.

Article 16: Protection of privacy: Children have a right to privacy. The law should protect them from attacks against their way of life, their good name, their families and their homes.

Article 17: Access to appropriate information: Children have the right to reliable information from the mass media. Television, radio, and newspapers should provide information that children can understand, and should not promote materials that could harm children.

Article 18: Parental responsibilities: Both parents share responsibility for bringing up their children, and should always consider what is best for each child. Governments should help parents by providing services to support them, especially if both parents work.

Article 19: Protection from abuse and neglect: Governments should ensure that children are properly cared for, and protect them from violence, abuse and neglect by their parents, or anyone else who looks after them.

Article 20: Protection of children without families: Children who cannot be looked after by their own family must be looked after properly, by people who respect their religion, culture and language.

Article 21: Adoption: When children are adopted the first concern must be what is best for them. The same rules should apply whether the children are adopted in the country where they were born, or if they are taken to live in another country.

Article 22: Children who are refugees: Children who come into a country as refugees should have the same rights as children born in that country.

Article 23: Children with disability: Children who have any kind of disability should have special care and support, so that they can lead full and independent lives.

Article 24: Health and health services: Children have the right to good quality health care, to clean water, nutritious food, and a clean environment, so that they will stay healthy. Rich countries should help poorer countries achieve this.

Article 25: Periodic review of placement: Children who are looked after by their local authority, rather than by their parents, should have their situation reviewed regularly.

Article 26: Social security: The Government should provide extra money for the children of families in need.

Article 27: Standard of living: Children have a right to a standard of living that is good enough to meet their physical and mental needs. The Government should help families who cannot afford to provide this.

Article 28: Education: Children have a right to an education. Discipline in schools should respect children's human dignity. Primary education should be free. Wealthy countries should help poorer countries achieve this.

Article 29: Aims of education: Education should develop each child's personality and talents to the full. It should encourage children to respect their parents, and their own and other cultures.

Article 30: Children of minorities or indigenous peoples: Children have a right to learn and use the language and customs of their families, whether these are shared by the majority of people in the country or not.

Article 31: Leisure, recreation and cultural activities: All children have a right to relax and play, and to join in a wide range of activities.

Article 32: Child labour: The Government should protect children from work that is dangerous, or that might harm their health or their education.

Article 33: Drug abuse: The Government should provide ways of protecting children from dangerous drugs.

Article 34: Sexual exploitation: The Government should protect children from sexual abuse.

Article 35: Sale, trafficking and abduction: The Government should make sure that children are not abducted or sold.

Article 36: Other forms of exploitation: Children should be protected from any activities that could harm their development.

Article 37: Torture and deprivation of liberty: Children who break the law should not be treated cruelly. They should not be put in prison with adults and should be able to keep in contact with their families.

Article 38: Armed conflicts: Governments should not allow children under 15 to join the army. Children in war zones should receive special protection.

Article 39: Rehabilitative care: Children who have been neglected or abused should receive special help to restore their self-respect.

Article 40: Administration of juvenile justice: Children who are accused of breaking the law should receive legal help. Prison sentences for children should only be used for the most serious offences.

Article 41: Respect for existing standards: If the laws of a particular country protect children better than the articles of the Convention, then those laws should stay.

Article 42: Raising awareness: The Government should make the Convention known to all parents and children.

Summary of the UN Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children

The following is summary of the some of the articles in the UN Guidelines for the Alternative Care for Children.

The Child and the Family

3. As the family is the best place for the growth, well-being and protection of children, efforts should be about enabling the child to remain in or return to the care of his/her parents, or when appropriate, other close family members.

5. Where the child's own family is unable, even with appropriate support, to provide adequate care for the child, or abandons or relinquishes the child, the State is responsible for protecting the rights of the child and ensuring appropriate alternative care.

Alternative Care

11. All decisions concerning alternative care should take full account of maintaining the child as close as possible to his/her home, in order to facilitate contact and potential reintegration with his/her family and to minimize disruption of his/her educational, cultural and social life

14. Removal of a child from the care of the family should be seen as a measure of last resort and should, whenever possible, be temporary and for the shortest possible duration.

15. Financial and material poverty, should never be the only justification for the removal of a child from parental care, for receiving a child into alternative care, or for preventing his/her reintegration, but should be seen as a signal for the need to provide appropriate support to the family

16. Attention must be paid to protecting children without parental care, and giving them access to education, health and other basic services, the right to identity, freedom of religion or belief, language and protection of property and inheritance rights.

22. In accordance with the predominant opinion of experts, alternative care for young children, especially those under the age of 3 years, should be provided in family-based settings.

23. While recognizing that residential care facilities and family-based care complement each other in meeting the needs of children, large residential care facilities should be progressively phased out

Promoting Parental Care

32. States should pursue policies that ensure support for families in meeting their responsibilities towards the child and promote the right of the child to have a relationship with both parents including

a) Family strengthening services, such as parenting courses and sessions, the promotion of positive parent-child relationships, conflict resolution skills, opportunities for employment and income generation and, where required, social assistance;

(b) Supportive social services, such as day care, mediation and conciliation services, substance abuse treatment, financial assistance, and services for parents and children with disabilities.

(c) Youth policies aiming at empowering youth to face positively the challenges of everyday life, including when they decide to leave the parental home, and preparing future parents to make informed decisions regarding their sexual and reproductive health and to fulfil their responsibilities in this respect.

d) Support and services should be available to siblings who have lost their parents or caregivers and choose to remain together in their household

Promoting family reintegration

49. Children and families should be assessed prepared and supported the child to return to his/her family.

Residential Care

123. Facilities providing residential care should be small and be organized around the rights and needs of the child, in a setting as close as possible to a family or small group situation. Their objective should generally be to provide temporary care and to contribute actively to the child's family reintegration or, if this is not possible, to secure his/her stable care in an alternative family setting.

Inspection and Monitoring

128 Agencies, facilities and professionals involved in care provision should be accountable to a specific public authority, which should ensure, frequent inspections comprising both scheduled and unannounced visits, involving discussion with and observation of the staff and the children.

ANNEX 3

The 12 strategies below are endorsed by a broad range of faith-based and international agencies serving children. They affirm that efforts to support families and children should consider all aspects of a child's well-being, including the importance of family-based care.

1. Focus on the most vulnerable children, not only orphans.
2. Strengthen the capacity of families and communities to care for children.
3. Reduce stigma and discrimination.
4. Support HIV and AIDS awareness and prevention strategies, particularly among youth.
5. Strengthen the ability of caregivers and youth to earn livelihoods.
6. Provide material assistance to those who are too old or ill to work.
7. Ensure access to health care, life-saving medications, and home-based care.
8. Provide day care and other support services that ease the burden on caregivers.
9. Support schools and ensure access to education, for girls as well as boys.
10. Support the psychosocial as well as material needs of children.
11. Engage children and youth in the decisions that affect their lives.
12. Protect children from abuse, gender discrimination, and labour exploitation.

http://faithtoaction.org/resources/journeys-of-faith-study-series 2

The following list of child well-being standards is a selection from Children's Approved Home Standards in Uganda.

PHYSICAL

Provision

- Sufficient and balanced food is provided according to the needs and circumstances of the child, especially taking note of malnourished children and those living with HIV, and special dietary needs are addressed.
- Good hygiene is practised in storage, preparation and cooking of food in accordance with the child's abilities and community norms.
- Sufficient clean water is accessed and available.

Shelter

- The institution accommodates no more than the number specified in their certificate and accommodation is safe and secure and subjected to 6-month reviews by the health inspector.
- Rooms are of adequate size for their purpose and there is adequate ventilation and heating.
- Fire and emergency action is defined and reviewed.
- Clean sanitation facilities are sufficient for the numbers of children, care-givers and staff.
- Accommodation is clean and tidy.

Health

- Children have a comprehensive health check on arrival and at regular intervals.
- There is a standing arrangement between the institution and a health provider to address emergency and general health needs of the children and children receive immunisation and any necessary medical treatment in a timely manner.
- Children living with HIV are provided with supplemental psychological, education and health services and are supported to access treatment and to stay on treatment (as per protocols).
- There are adequate supplies of basic medicines on site for first aid or prescribed treatment.
- Caregivers are trained in first aid, and in overseeing medication to children, including for children living with HIV.
- Malaria nets are allocated to each child.
- Preventive health practices and health education are provided, e.g. hygiene, safety and healthy attitudes, sexual and reproductive health for adolescents.

RELATIONAL/EMOTIONAL

Identity

- Tribal, language ability, ethnic identity, and religion is recognised as important and maintained where possible.
- Children are provided with necessary identity papers or other documentation and have access to these at all times.
- Siblings are kept together.
- Caregivers talk to children about their lives before the placement.

Formal Relationships

- Children are comfortable and relaxed with caregivers. Caregivers are able to manage expectations and allow opportunities for the children to vent their feelings and share their concerns.
- Children receive individual and positive attention, support, and encouragement and infants and young children are not left alone and are given sufficient physical affection, attention, and stimulation.
- Each child has someone he/she can speak to freely who is virtually unconnected with their placement and stay in the institution.

Family

- Children are supported in getting and staying in touch with family and friends through regular visits, family visits and open houses at children's home.
- Children eat their meals with other members of the family, or as part of a small family group, or with staff members.

DEVELOPMENTAL

Education and Play

- Children are engaged in planned or spontaneous individual and group play and recreational activities on a regular basis both in the institution and within the community where the institution is located and have access to indoor and outdoor play.
- Children have free time for rest.

Guidance and Discipline

- Children are aware of basic rules for behaviour.
- Staff are aware of disciplinary protocols and physical or other forms of degrading punishments are not used.
- Unacceptable behaviour is seen as a child's need for greater support and guidance.

EMPOWERMENT

Access to information

- Children are provided with information and opportunities to make choices in their daily lives.
- Caregivers speak and record information in a way that signifies respect and understand the boundaries of privacy and confidentiality.

Participation

- Children are listened to.
- Children are able to participate in all matters affecting them.
- Children are involved in evaluations of their placement and the programme.

Influence

- Where feasible, children have a choice of who to share a room with.
- Decisions are taken *with* children not *for* them

ANNEX 5

The following guidelines are 'Principles for Working with Traumatized Children' By Bruce D. Perry, M.D., Ph.D.

- **Don't be afraid to talk about the traumatic event**. Children do not benefit from "not thinking about it" or "putting it out of their minds." If a child senses that his/her caretakers are upset about the event, they will not bring it up. In the long run, this only makes the child's recovery more difficult. Don't bring it up on your own, but when the child brings it up, don't avoid discussion, listen to the child, answer questions, provide comfort and support.

- **Provide a consistent, predictable pattern for the day**. Make sure the child knows the pattern. When the day includes new or different activities, tell the child beforehand and explain why this day's pattern is different. Don't underestimate how important it is for children to know that their caretakers are 'in control.' It is frightening for traumatized children (who are sensitive to control) to sense that the people caring for them are, themselves, disorganized, confused and anxious.

- **Be nurturing, comforting, and affectionate, but be sure that this is in an appropriate "context**." For children traumatized by physical or sexual abuse, intimacy is often associated with confusion, pain, fear and abandonment. Providing hugs, kisses and other physical comfort to younger children is very important. A good working principle for this is to provide this for the child when he/she seeks it. When the child walks over and touches, return in kind.

- **Discuss your expectations for behavior and your "style of discipline**" with the child. Make sure that there are clear rules, and consequences for breaking the rules. Be consistent when applying consequences.. Utilize positive reinforcement and rewards. Avoid physical discipline.

- **Talk with the child**. Give them age-appropriate information. The more the child knows about who, what, where, why and how the adult world works, the easier it is to 'make sense' of it. Unpredictability and the unknown are two things which will make a traumatized child more anxious, fearful, and therefore, more symptomatic.. In most cases, the child's fears and fantasies are much more frightening and disturbing than the truth. Tell the child the truth — even when it is emotionally difficult. If you don't know the answer yourself, tell the child. Honesty and openness will help the child develop trust.

- **Watch closely for signs of re-enactment** (e.g., in play, drawing, behaviors), avoidance (e.g., being withdrawn, daydreaming, avoiding other children) and physiological hyper-reactivity (e.g., anxiety, sleep problems, behavioral impulsivity). All traumatized children exhibit some combination of these symptoms in the acute post-traumatic period. Many exhibit these symptoms for years after the traumatic event. When you see these symptoms, it is likely that the child has had some reminder of the event, either through thoughts or experiences. Try to comfort and be tolerant of the child's emotional and behavioral problems.

- **Protect the child**. Do not hesitate to cut short or stop activities which are upsetting or re-traumatizing for the child. If you observe increased symptoms in a child that occur in a certain situation or following exposure to certain movies, activities and so forth, avoid these activities. Try to restructure or limit activities that cause escalation of symptoms in the traumatized child.

- **Give the child "choices,"** and some sense of control. When a child, particularly a traumatized child, feels that they do not have control of a situation, they will predictably get more symptomatic. If a child is given some choice or some element of control in an activity or in an interaction with an adult, they will feel more safe, comfortable and will be able to feel, think and act in a more 'mature' fashion. When a child is having difficulty with compliance, frame the 'consequence' as a choice for them: "You have a choice: you can choose to do what I have asked or you can choose something else, which you know is . . . " Again, this simple framing of the interaction with the child gives them some sense of control and can help defuse situations where the child feels out of control and therefore, anxious.

ANNEX 6

Guidelines for Child Assessment Reports (Taken from Better Care Network and adapted)

These guidelines suggest the topics and the issues that should be covered in an assessment report on a child. They should be used for Prevention, Re-integration and Fostering cases but adapted as required to suit the particular circumstances. The social worker can vary the suggested headings and sections and add any other relevant information not covered by the guidelines.

Front Page:

The front page of the report should indicate: -

- the name of the child, or children who are the subject of the report.
- the type of case, eg., Prevention, Re-integration or Fostering.
- the name of the social worker preparing the report.
- the date when the report was prepared.

Basic Information:

For each child who is the subject of the report, give the following information: -

- Name – first name and last name
- Date and place of birth
- Address – indicate home address
- Name of the Children's Institution, if appropriate
- Father's name
- Nationality
- Religion
- Date of application to of admission to Children's Institution
- How did the child come into care? Referral? By whom?
- **Commission of Minors(Children's) or date Family Composition**

Family Composition

Show in a list or table format, the names of the members of the child's family, their relationship to the child, their date of birth and their address. Indicate any significant information such as the death of a family member, or that a family member is serving a prison sentence.

Indicate if any siblings of the child are resident in a children's institution.

Genogram

Provide a genogram of the family. Use a dotted line to enclose the family members who live in the household of the child. Shade the symbol of the child or children who are the subject of the report.

Profile of the Child

Health Report on the general health of the child. Any medical conditions the child has that require treatment or monitoring. Any disabilities that limit the child or which require special attention. Report on the child's attitude to his or her medical condition or disability. Indicate the medical prognosis for the condition. Report on the height and weight of the child and indicate whether the size of the child is above or below average for his or her age.

If it is appropriate for the age of the child, report on the child's knowledge and understanding about sex and reproduction, contraception, prevention of pregnancy, protection from HIV and STDs, etc.

General development Report on the general development of the child and indicate if it is normal for the age of the child. Comment on any developmental delay that the child has.

Education Indicate which school or kindergarten the child attends. Report on the attendance of the child and comment on the reasons for significant absences from school. Report on the Grade of the child. Report on the grades the child is given for his or her work. Report on the child's attitude to school. Report on the teachers' view of the child.

Report on examinations sat by the child. Report on any subject with which the child has difficulties. Report on any subjects that the child enjoys and is good at.

Religion Indicate whether the child is practising a religion and if so, how frequently the child goes to mosque or church. Particularly if the plan for the child includes fostering, indicate the views of the parents towards the child's religious upbringing. What is the view of the child towards his or her religion?

Personality, temperament & behaviour Indicate the predominant behaviour of the child. Give details of particular situations that make the child happy, angry, afraid, frustrated, etc. How does the child react to stress and change? Indicate if the behaviour of the child is appropriate to his or her age. Provide detailed information about the child's reactions to discipline.

Comment on the eating habits and preferences of the child, sleeping patterns and behaviour, personal hygiene, attitudes to clothes, ability to care for him or herself.

Leisure Indicate how the child spends his or her leisure time. What interests, hobbies, clubs or sports does the child have?

Relationships with family members Provide information about the significant relationships the child has with family members. Comment on the quality of the attachment that the child has with family members. If the child is in the Children's Institution, report on the frequency and quality of contact that the child has with family members. How often does the parent visit the child? How often does the child go home?

Comment on the child's views about his or her family members. Does the child's opinions and views accord with the social worker's observations. Does the child's opinions and views accord with the opinion of the teacher or care worker? Comment of the parent or parents view of the child. Does it accord with observed behaviour of the parent towards the child?

Relationships with other persons If the child is resident in the Children's Institution, comment on the child's relationships with the staff and other child. What is the view of the child about leaving friends and staff? To whom is the child especially attached**?**

Family & Household Profile

Provide basic information about mother, father and each member of the child's family and household: -

- Name
  Date and place of birth
- Address
- Citizenship status
- Nationality
- Religion
- First language
- Passport number

Provide brief details of the person's education, employment history and current situation and health.

If the parents are or were married, indicate if the marriage was registered. If the parents are separated or divorced, indicate if the divorce has been registered.

Other relatives Provide very brief details of other relatives of the child; name, date of birth, relationship to the child and address.

Family background

Provide information about the significant events that have happened to the family and the child, or that have affected him or her. Clearly indicate the source of information about the events. Indicate if it has been possible to corroborate the background or events with another person.

Clearly indicate the explanation the parent or parent's gives for placing the child in the children's institution, or for applying for the admission of the child.

Financial situation

Indicate the source, or sources of income of the family. Indicate if the income is regular, or irregular, whether any income is owed to the family, ie. unpaid pensions, etc. Indicate the frequency and amount of income.

Indicate any additional help that the family receives, eg. assistance from local administration with food or fuel.

Indicate details of any debts the family has.

Living situation

Provide the following details: -

- Type of accommodation – rented or owned
- Number and type of rooms
- Space available for the child
- Furniture
- Method of cooking
- Water supply
- Source of heating
  Electricity supply
- Canalisation/sewage condition
- Hygiene and sanitary conditions
- Availability of a plot

Report on any problems or difficulties the family have that relate to residence registration.

Conclusion

This section should not contain any new factual information that is not in the main body of the report. It should be a summary of the situation of the child and its family as understood by the social worker.
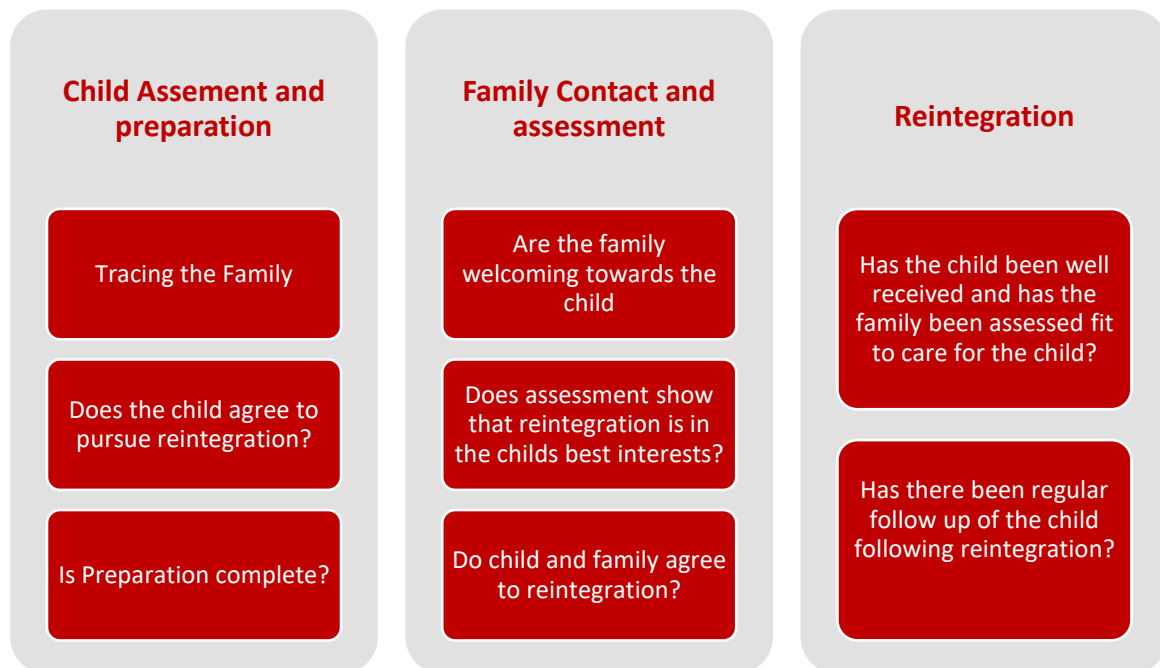
It should contain the social worker's opinions about key issues in the case, for example, the social worker's opinion about the reasons why the child was placed in the institution, or why the parent has applied for admission. The social worker should indicate her opinion about the quality of the relationship and commitment the child and the parents have towards each other. The social worker should indicate her opinion of the stresses on the family. The social worker should indicate the reasons for the failure of the family to cope with difficulties and stress. What are the coping mechanisms that could be available to the family?

The social worker should indicate the general aim of the social work plan for the family.

Proposed work plan

The social work plan should relate to the general aim as indicated in the conclusion above. It should be a series of numbered objectives. The objectives should be specific and observable. The objectives should be reasonable and achievable. The plan is not a series of working methods.

ANNEX 7: TAKEN FROM GLOBAL FAMILY SHELTER HOME HANDBOOK>

Child Assement and preparation

Tracing the Family

Does the child agree to pursue reintegration?

Is Preparation complete?

Family Contact and assessment

Are the family welcoming towards the child

Does assessment show that reintegration is in the childs best interests?

Do child and family agree to reintegration?

Reintegration

Has the child been well received and has the family been assessed fit to care for the child?

Has there been regular follow up of the child following reintegration?

ANNEX 8: TAKEN FROM INTER-AGENCY GROUP GUIDELINES ON CHILDREN'S REINTEGRATION

Family Tracing, assessment and case planning

Reunification is not possible / in the best interests of the child

Reunification is possible / in the best interests of the child

Placement into temporary alternative care (followed by ongoing monitoring and support and reassessment)

Preparation of child, family and community for reunification

All possibilities for reunification exhausted: find a new permanent home for the child

Contact between child and family

Significant risk identified / breakdown of family relationships: separation of child from family

Reunification

Ongoing monitoring and post-reunification support

Case Closure

ANNEX 9

ORGANISATIONAL ASSESSMENT – MAKING THE CHANGE FROM RESIDENTIAL CARE TO FAMILY-BASED CARE

1. FACILITIES	Yes	No	In Progress
Is your Child Care Facility registered with the Government?			
Are you meeting legal minimum standards of child care?			
Where do you need to make improvements in order to meet minimum standards? How much will this cost?			

2. POLICIES	Yes	No	In Progress
Do you have written guidelines/policies in place?			
• Child Protection • Admissions Criteria • Staff (recruitment, training, roles and responsibilities)			
What technical support do you need? 			

3. STAFF TRAINING	Yes	No	In Progress
Are staff trained?			
• Child Protection • Child Development • Social work (undertaking child assessments, tracing, family assessments, reintegration etc.)			
What training support do you need? 			

4. CONNECTIONS	Yes	No	In Progress
Have you made connections with:			
• Probation & Social Welfare Officer • Child welfare agencies • Other Child Care Institutions making the transition • A network of other Christian faith-based organisations • Other churches • Local Councils • Child Protection Committee			

5. What are the strengths, weaknesses and opportunities that your Child Care Institution has in being able to make the transition from long-term residential care to temporary care and family strengthening?

Strengths	Weaknesses
Opportunities	Threats

ANNEX 10

Family Assets

Search Institute® has identified the following key qualities that help all kinds of families to be strong. When families have more of these research-based assets, the teens and adults in the family do better in life.

Nurturing Relationships	• **Positive communication**—Family members listen attentively and speak in respectful ways. • **Affection**—Family members regularly show warmth to each other. • **Emotional openness**—Family members can be themselves and are comfortable sharing their feelings. • **Support for sparks**—Family members encourage each other in pursuing their talents and interests.
Establishing Routines	• **Family meals**—Family members eat meals together most days in a typical week. • **Shared activities**—Family members regularly spend time doing everyday activities together. • **Meaningful traditions**—Holidays, rituals, and celebrations are part of family life. • **Dependability**—Family members know what to expect from one another day-to-day.
Maintaining Expectations	• **Openness about tough topics**—Family members openly discuss sensitive issues, such as sex and substance use. • **Fair rules**—Family rules and consequences are reasonable. • **Defined boundaries**—The family sets limits on what young people can do and how they spend their time. • **Clear expectations**—The family openly articulates its expectations for young people. • **Contributions to family**—Family members help meet each other's needs and share in getting things done.
Adapting to Challenges	• **Management of daily commitments**—Family members effectively navigate competing activities and expectations at home, school, and work. • **Adaptability**—The family adapts well when faced with changes. • **Problem-solving**—Family members work together to solve problems and deal with challenges. • **Democratic decision-making**—Family members have a say in decisions that affect the family.
Connecting to Community	• **Neighbourhood cohesion**—Neighbours look out for one another. • **Relationships with others**—Family members feel close to teachers, coaches, and others in the community. • **Enriching activities**—Family members participate in programs and activities that deepen their lives. • **Supportive resources**—Family members have people and places in the community they can turn to for help.

For information on the research behind the family assets, visit www.search-institute.org/familyassets

For practical ways to build assets in your family, visit www.ParentFurther.com/familyassets

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