



From Institution to Families

Early Evidence from Ghana

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Ghana's Care Reform Initiative (CRI)*

- Over 148 Residential Care Facilities (RFCs) throughout Ghana; only 10 of them registered with gov't. 4,500 known children residing there
- *Why Not Orphanages?* (cited by gov't):
 - Using institution as default placement, other family-based care ignored
 - Poor management
 - Poor caregiver to child ratio
 - Low quality staff
 - Lack of adequate bedding and space, food, medication, academic and training facilities for the children
 - Failure to comply with minimum standards
 - Arbitrary expulsion of children

* Source: National Plan for OVC, http://www.ovcghana.org/why_not_orphanages.html

Negative Impact of living in residential care settings*

- Limited contact with family and community; do not develop social networks
- Overcrowded, their right to privacy is invaded
- Ethnic and religious identities are compromised: minorities are brought up in the belief system of the majority
- Homes provide little stimulation, and children, especially babies, fail to reach developmental milestones
- Expensive; the per capita cost 5 to 10 times more than in foster care, for example.
- Unavailability of stable attachment figures
- Potential for Abuse and Labour Exploitation, Neglect
- Unmonitored homes often veer from charity to commercial status
- Children lack opportunities to express their views and forgo their individual identities
- Children with disabilities do not receive appropriate care in group settings

*Source: National Plan for OVC, Government of Ghana

Reintegration Programme

- Create “profiles” of each child in care facilities—NGO KaeMe with Gov’t
 - So far, over 2,000 profiles completed
- Reintegration process:
 - Find potential family member to reintegrate children with
 - Reintegration initiated by DSW, RCFs, children, families
 - Some children reintegrated
 - Some expelled or returned home for other reasons
 - Make room for younger children
 - Conduct problems
 - Youth aged out at 18 or older (45% +)—Not reintegration; default TAL
- No central plan or data base—location, number of reintegrated children, care leavers, not known except at facility level
- But their lists often proved inaccurate, could not be found, moved, etc.

Reintegration Research

- Funded by Brigham Young University
- Coordinated with Kae Me (“Forget me Not” in Twi) Foundation
- IRB requirements met; Ministry approval tenuous
- Modified ‘profiling’ instrument to include standardized measurement scales to include:
 - Children’s Hope Scale
 - Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire
 - Child Status Index
 - Father Involvement Scale, etc.
- Administered to:
 - 115 children reintegrated, 151 remaining in RCFs
 - Caregivers of each child in both settings

Presentations

- Jini—Lessons learned in and about the reintegration process
- Lindsay—The influence of wellbeing and social connection on children’s pro-social behavior
- Bryan—Hope levels of children in residential care facilities
- Spencer—Propensity score approach comparisons of wellbeing between facility-based and reintegrated Children
- Discussion

| AGE | Freq. | Percent | Cum. |
|-----|-------|---------|-------|
| 8 | 2 | 1.94 | 1.94 |
| 9 | 2 | 1.94 | 3.88 |
| 10 | 2 | 1.94 | 5.83 |
| 11 | 5 | 4.85 | 10.68 |
| 12 | 7 | 6.8 | 17.48 |
| 13 | 5 | 4.85 | 22.33 |
| 14 | 6 | 5.83 | 28.16 |
| 15 | 9 | 8.74 | 36.89 |
| 16 | 10 | 9.71 | 46.6 |
| 17 | 9 | 8.74 | 55.34 |
| 18 | 13 | 12.62 | 67.96 |
| 19 | 17 | 16.5 | 84.47 |
| 20 | 8 | 7.77 | 92.23 |
| 21 | 5 | 4.85 | 97.09 |
| 22 | 3 | 2.91 | 100 |

Reason for Child's Admission to RCF?

| | |
|---|-----------|
| • Both parents deceased | 20 |
| • Father deceased | 20 |
| • Mother deceased | 9 |
| • Both parents alive but not available | 10 |
| • Parental difficulties (Substance abuse, bad health, mental illness, incarceration, divorce/separation) | 10 |
| • Child "stubborn", needed to change (child stole, lied, disobeyed, ran away) | 17 |
| • Educational purposes only | 6 |
| • Poverty listed alone | 3 |
| • Child in conflict with the law | 2 |
| • Child with special needs | 1 |
| • Not known | 4 |

People influencing admission decisions

- Parents/Guardians
- Police—with Runaways and children in conflict with the law
- Women and Juvenile Unit (WAJU)
- Pastors
- Children rescued from child labour (no shelter)
- Street children shelters
- Facilities recruiting
- Mortuary staff
- Parents and relatives

Length of Stay at RCF

- Range: 1 month to 17 years
- Mean: 57.2 months (4 years 9.2 months)

What/Who initiated reintegration?

- 23% Facility closed by DSW
 - Abuse by director/staff (sexual, physical)
 - Child labor exploitation
 - Fraudulent funding schemes
 - Not educating children
- 11% Child wanted to go home
- 11% Parents/guardians wanted child back
- 11% RCF started it proactively
 - Make room for younger kids
 - Youth aging out
 - Family reunification/reintegration
- 8% Youth aging out (discrepancy between age and ed level)
- 5% Child/youth misconduct at RCF
- 4% To continue education

Planning, assessing and follow-up (N=98)

No. of Families Reporting:

- 29: contacted by Gov or NGO prior to reintegration
- 14: received an assessment as to how the child would be cared for
- 4: had an actual visit in the home(1 DSW, 2 by RCF director)
- 15: had 1-3 follow-up home visits or phone calls after placement
- 2: received help with food
- 2: received help with medical assistance
- 7: received help with educational costs (mostly through LEAP)

Who is the Primary Caregiver? (N=103)

- Mother 43
- Mother and Father 6
- Mother and Stepfather 1
- Maternal Grandparents 5
- Maternal Grandmother 6
- Maternal Grandfather 3
- Maternal Aunt 11
- Church member 1
- Family Friend 1
- Father 8
- Stepmother 2
- Paternal Grandparents 1
- Paternal Grandmother 5
- Paternal Aunt 4
- Paternal Uncle 2
- Older Siblings 6
- Self 3
- Lady at orphanage 2 (pays school fees)

Needs of the children (reported by caregivers)

In percent

| CATEGORY OF NEED | NO NEED | LITTLE NEED | CONSIDERABLE NEED | SEVERE NEED | MISSING DATA |
|----------------------------------|---------|-------------|-------------------|-------------|--------------|
| FOOD | 14.3 | 10.9 | 46.2 | 8.4 | 20.2 |
| MEDICAL ASSISTANCE | 15.1 | 10.9 | 40.3 | 13.5 | 20.2 |
| HOUSING | 31.9 | 10.9 | 21.0 | 16.0 | 20.2 |
| PSYCHOLOGICAL/ EMOTIONAL HELP | 47.9 | 4.2 | 8.4 | 8.4 | 31.1 |
| MAKING FRIENDS | 48.7 | 18.5 | 2.5 | 8.4 | 21.9 |
| COMPLIANCE with RULES | 45.4 | 9.2 | 12.6 | 8.4 | 24.4 |

Educational Needs

(reported by caregiver) *in percent*

| CATEGORY | NO NEED | LITTLE NEED | CONSIDERABLE NEED | SEVERE NEED | MISSING DATA |
|-----------------|---------|-------------|-------------------|-------------|--------------|
| SCHOOL UNIFORMS | 21.0 | 16.0 | 21.9 | 16.0 | 25.2 |
| BOOKS | 16.8 | 4.2 | 21.0 | 28.6 | 29.4 |
| SCHOOL FEES | 19.3 | 5.9 | 20.2 | 35.3 | 19.3 |

What are the challenges for the children (as reported by children)?

- Food is not enough (2), don't like the kind of food (2)
- School-related help (4)
- Finances (3)
- Water shortage (2)
- Generally—basic needs not met (2)
- Not enough time to study (2)

Summary: Material or Service Needs are relatively mild in their perspective

Psycho-social Issues (43)

- Caregiver (auntie) shouts at me, step mother treats me badly (5)
- Mum talks too much, doesn't listen to me (2), insults me (1)
- No friends, too quiet (5)
- Not living with parents, miss them (1)
- Being insulted/yelled at and hit (3), sometimes by sister (2), stepfather (1), grandfather, other kin
- Neighbors/someone (at school?) fight with me or yells at me (3)
- Neighborhood is conflicted, lots of yelling and fighting (10)
- Other adults living in the household do bad things, are bad influences (1)
- Have to do too much [farm and house] work (3), no time for school
- Harsh discipline (3)
- Didn't have a choice about coming back (2)

Lessons Learned

- Overall, lack of systematic national plan of reintegration
- Lack of a record keeping system--national or local data base
- Lack of stakeholder access to the existing records
- Lack of human resources for assessment and follow up
- Need to pay attention to psychosocial issues post-reintegration
 - Resource issues, esp in rural areas

More systemic level:

- More close monitoring of quality of care in RCFs
- Reintegration needs to begin earlier (about half are 18+)
- Need to look at prevention: gatekeeping, parenting skills, local resources
- Transition to adulthood from care facilities