ASSOCIATION OF CHARITABLE CHILDREN INSTITUTIONS OF KENYA

Understanding and improving reintegration models: A case study of 7 CCI in Kenya
Background information of the study

- Kenya has an estimated 45 million people, 43 percent of whom are children under the age of 15 years. Out of these, it is estimated that there are approximately 3.6 million children aged below 18 years who have been orphaned or who are vulnerable.
- Most of children without adequate parental care end up in CCIs.
- There is need to entrench reintegration in the legislation as currently only alternative care is provided for i.e. adoption, foster care and guardianship.
Objectives of the study

- To increase the understanding and experiences (positive and negative) of children living in CCIs and those who have exited that build or undermine their reintegration or exit to other forms of alternative care.

- To increase the understanding of female and male caregivers or staff’s perspectives and experiences (positive and negative) in reintegration or exit of children under their care to other forms of alternative care.
Objective cont

- To **identify, policies and child protection system** and analyze the extent to which the **existing laws** contribute or undermine the reintegration or exit of children back into the communities.

- To **develop policy, practice and funding recommendations** that capitalize on promising practices, addressing challenges on reintegration or exit of children within the comprehensive care and protection systems in Kenya.
Methodology

- The study was qualitative adopting exploratory and case study approaches.
- The population for the case study was eight counties from which it targeted a sample of seven CCIs serving distinct categories of children in need of care and protection. (Orphans and needy children, Children with disabilities, Rescue cases such as abandoned, lost, abused and neglected, Children that are HIV+, Children from the streets, Children of imprisoned mothers)
Why do children end up in the CCIs or institutional care?

- Majority of children and their parents mentioned poverty (hence lack of basic needs), desire to have quality basic education and child protection related issues such as abuse, neglect, and abandonment by the family as the main reasons why children end up in institutional care.
What children said about CCIs

- Across all sampled case studies, food, friendship, fees and to a large extent and faith were mentioned to be the main reasons why the children preferred to be in the CCI than home.

- The consistency of food supply in the CCIs was a major factor in majority of the younger informants to have children institutionalized.
What regrets children and care leavers had about CCIs

- **Family factor**— all children who had some family or relatives were of the opinion that they would want to know their family and to have a sense of belonging.

- **Freedom**— The children in the CCIs felt that the strict guidelines and structure of the CCIs denied them of their freedom and therefore meant that they felt caged.

- **Finances or access to money**— for care leavers
Factors promoting reintegration

- Most children want a **sense of belonging**, being part of a family.
- **More exposure to the community** – through attending schools within the community or church.
- **The freedom** enjoyed after leaving the CCI is a major retention factor for the care leavers
- **The access to own finances**
Factors preventing reintegration—Children

- **Fear of the unknown**—Most of the children have reasons that led them to come to the CCI, and unfortunately there has not been a structured way to allay the fears of children since the re-integration process does not give prominence in the involvement of children.

- **The protectionist mentality**—most caregivers don’t expose the children to the “real outside world” On the other hand, the caregivers or parents believe and propagate the message that the community would “spoil the child” and therefore it is better to stay in the institution.
Factors preventing reintegration—CCI staffs & parents

- **Unclear government processes** on reintegration
- **The cost of reintegration**—The cost of follow ups was a key factor when it came to children who are from outside the county
- **Potential loss of benefits.** The families of reintegrated children, benefited directly through food baskets, health cover for the child for as long as the children were still in the programme
- **Added responsibility**—reintegrated child were perceived as added responsibility to the family
Most children feared reintegration because of potential lack of food (basic need), insecurity in the community, stigmatization and labeling, and abuse through being overworked in the foster families.

The care leavers discovered that the actual life outside the CCIs was harder than they ever imagined. Majority wished that they had been given a more real life experience before reintegration.
There is fear of loss of education opportunities by children. Education remains the key worry of the children with regard to reintegration.

There is need for family and community exposure. The exposure to the immediate and larger community is key in the children understanding the realities of life outside the protection of the CCIs.

The experience of bonding with family is worth being reintegrated.

Independent Living is Very Satisfying – independent living and the ability to make some income.
Conclusion—CCI Staff & guardians

- There is fear of loss of jobs by the CCI staff
- There is abdication of responsibilities by parents and communities—The breakdown of community support systems over time has led to parents, children office, faith based organizations and community members opting to take the children they feel as a “burden” to the CCIs
Recommendations – CCIs

- **Open up or Close down.** CCIs should think on how best to manage the changes that are being advocated by government, CCIs should take positive, the strictness of DCS on de-institutionalization and not as a threat.

- **Transform or Transit.** CCIs should open up to transform from homes that bring children and keep them to hotels that only provide rest, refreshments.

- **Streamline and Expand.** CCIs need to find ways of streamlining their centre-based operations in order to expand their field-based operations.
**Recommendations to the DCS**

- **Prior planning, proper performance** – there is need to implement the current data collection and management policies on children (leveraging on technology should be a priority).

- **Collaborate and Cooperate** – Stronger collaborative arrangements with other established structures such as the Community Health Strategy
Recommendations on funding

- Improve community linkages
- Reallocation of funding – on tracing and follow ups
- There is need for more financial resources to support AACs

Recommendations on policy

- Strategic policies, more policing
Reintegration is a process. Organisations have learnt to do it in steps; Rescue, Rehabilitate, Reintegrate, Redeem, Trace, Re-Union Follow-Up, Assessment (child and family), Rehabilitation, Placement, Follow up

THANK YOU