

**CASE STORY** OF TRANSITION

# Good Life Orphanage



MacArthur  
Foundation

**Changing**  
THE WAY WE  
*care*

**Changing the Way We Care<sup>SM</sup>** (CTWWC) is a global initiative designed to promote safe, nurturing family care for children, including reforming national systems of care for children, strengthening families, family reunification and preventing child-family separation, which can have harmful, long-term consequences, development of alternative family-based care, and influencing others toward family care.

CTWWC is committed to supporting the transition of residential care facilities such as residential institutions, orphanages and children's homes by helping to safely reunify and sustain children with families or in family-based alternative care and helping organizations to divest or transform into

new family and community services. This case story is meant to illustrate transition, the actors involved, the challenges and the success factors; recognizing that each transition is an individual process with different starting points, different dynamics and different evolutions. This case story complements the *Transitioning Models of Care Assessment Tool* by illustrating one or more stages of change. The name and locations have been changed to maintain the anonymity of the organization. The Sky Ministries case story demonstrates the clash between policy and regulatory reforms and donor pressure, and how this clash impacts the transition.

### Definition of transition

The process of changing the model of care or service provided by an organization from an institutional care service to a non-institutional service or model of care. Transition involves change at all levels of the organization and includes, but is not limited to, the safe reintegration of children.



## Introduction

Good Life Orphanage, a charitable children's institution (CCI), first started as a community-based organization in the Kilifi South region of Kenya. In June 2007, the founders laid the foundation stone, ushering in a transformative journey that began with the opening of their first children's home in March 2008. Over the years, the CCI grew into a complex comprising of six houses, offices, and recreational areas.

Good Life's encounter with care reform initiated during meetings organized by the Department of Child Services (DCS) Sub-County Children Officer from Kilifi County, Kenya. These meetings preceded the implementation of Changing the Way We CareSM (CTWWC) in Kilifi County. The staff, aware of the government's preference for care reform, relayed the need to reunify children with their families, where safe and feasible, while ensuring continuous support for their well-being.

As the years went on, the institution's evolving needs, particularly among the infants, highlighted the necessity for specialized care. Some children enrolled in the institution had disabilities like cerebral palsy, leading to the recruitment of an occupational therapist on a part-time basis. This pivotal moment marked the inception of an occupational therapy department, signifying a significant shift in Good Life's mission.

## Embracing Care Reform

In 2019, the CCI's manager underwent training in reintegration case management facilitated by CTWWC. Subsequently, a board meeting convened to deliberate on a care reform agenda. The board unanimously embraced a case management approach and issued an order to review all institution files, ensuring the presence of essential documentation to support the safe reunification of children with their families.

The institution's social workers received comprehensive training to enable them to navigate this transition safely and efficiently. Collaborating with Kesho Kenya, in conjunction with CTWWC, the workforce acquired expertise in skillful parenting, alternative family care, life skills, child-optimized financial education, and more.

Armed with these newfound skills, the social workers were able to offer an array of services, including referrals, monitoring, life skills training, and parenting sessions for caregivers.

These transformative changes have yielded positive outcomes, with 50% of the children safely reintegrated into kinship and foster care, thriving in their family homes. A reduced number of children within the institution has contributed to a decline in indiscipline, while staff members have acquired the skills necessary for the day-to-day care of children both within the institution and at home. Collaborative efforts with Kesho Kenya have bolstered the reintegration process.

## Challenges Faced

Children with disabilities faced challenges attending therapy sessions due to poverty levels in their households, resulting in transportation difficulties. Staff members at the institution grappled with job security concerns as children embarked on their journey back to their families and communities.

## Follow-up on Children

Good Life Orphanage maintains vigilant oversight of children within the community. Social workers conduct follow-up activities to ensure sustainable reintegration into family life. This monitoring primarily takes the form of convenient phone calls and extends to both household and school visits as needed. The institution continues to provide support to families, offering psychosocial counseling services during school holidays to all the children they serve.

Good Life operates an independent school alongside the CCI, with children from the institution attending for primary education. Additionally, the CCI supports children's secondary education and vocational training for youth. Educational support endures even after children return to their families, thanks to the unwavering support of donors who champion these children's educational journeys.



**Changing The Way We Care<sup>SM</sup> (CTWWC)** is a global initiative funded by USAID, the MacArthur Foundation and the GHR Foundation, and implemented by Catholic Relief Services and Maestral International, along with other global, national and local partners working together to change the way we care for children around the world. Our principal global partners are Better Care Network, Lumos Foundation, and Faith to Action. CTWWC's vision is to be a bold global initiative designed to promote safe, nurturing family care for children, including reforming national systems of care for children, strengthening families, family reunification and preventing child-family separation, which can have harmful, long-term consequences, development of alternative family-based care, and influencing others to build momentum towards a tipping point of change for children.

### **Need to know more?**

Contact Changing the Way We Care at [info@ctwwc.org](mailto:info@ctwwc.org)  
or visit [changingthewaywecare.org](http://changingthewaywecare.org)

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Catholic Relief Services | 228 W. Lexington Street, Baltimore, MD, 21201, USA | [crs.org](http://crs.org) | [crsespanol.org](http://crsespanol.org)