

## Global Charter on Children's Care Reform – child friendly version

### What is this Charter about?

- This is a promise made by governments and organisations around the world.
- We want every child to grow up in a safe, loving, and happy family.
- We will work together to make this happen.



### Why are families important?

The **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child** says children should grow up in a family where they feel loved and happy. **Families help children grow healthy in body, mind, and heart.** But some families have a hard time because of difficulties such as:

- Climate change and natural disasters
- Poverty and not enough food
- War and fighting
- Sickness and lack of good healthcare
- Limited access to good and inclusive schools or support services



### What happens when families are under stress?

- Sometimes children might be separated from their families.
- This can make children more likely to be hurt, abused, or exploited and to have poor physical, social, and cognitive developmental outcomes.
- These problems can last a lifetime and even affect their own children in the future.



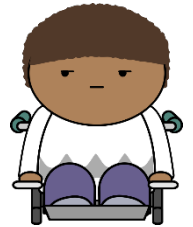
### What are institutions and why are they harmful?

**Institutions** are buildings where children live without their parents. Most children in institutions (around 80%) have **at least one living parent** or other family members. Unfortunately, living in an institution can harm children's development, learning, and happiness.

Many institutions are funded by donations and volunteers – but this can keep the system going instead of helping families stay together.

### Children with disabilities

The **UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities** says children with disabilities must have the same rights as other children. Sadly, they are more likely to be:



- Separated from their families
- Left in institutions for a long time
- Moved around between different places
- Treated unfairly and to face stigma.

Lack of inclusive schools, healthcare and services that include children with disabilities are some of the main reasons they are put in institutions.

### This problem can be solved

If we **work together** and invest money and time, we can:

- Help families stay together
- Care for children in other families if they cannot remain with their own.
- End the use of institutions for children



When disasters happen, we must prevent family separation and support children to go back to safe family care.

### What are our main goals?

*For this to happen, we plan to:*

1. Help build strong families and stop unnecessary separation.
2. Help make sure children can live with their extended family, like grandparents, (kinship care) if they can't remain with their parents.
3. Make finding new families a top priority if children can't stay with their own, e like , foster care, adoption, or kafaalah.
4. Provide the necessary support for families and young people leaving care.
5. Help children return safely to their families and communities.



6. Make sure adoption follows the law.
7. End the use of institutions for children.

### Who does this charter bring together?

- Governments and global agencies
- Donors
- Children, young people and families with lived experience
- Organisations of persons with disabilities
- Community and faith leaders
- Civil society organisations

Working together, we can create safe and loving homes for every child.

### What are our commitments?

We promise to:

- Listen to children, young adults, and families with lived experience of care.
- Make sure their voices are heard in decision-making.
- Include children with disabilities and other groups who are often left out.



### We will take action by:

#### 1. Supporting families

- Prevent unnecessary separation
- Give safe, loving family care when needed
- Use alternative family options like kinship care, foster care, or supported independent living
- Monitor the situation of children placed in care to make sure they are right for the child

#### 2. Stopping harmful practices

- End orphanage volunteering and tourism



- Stop funding that keeps children in institutions
- End violence, abuse, neglect, trafficking and forced labour
- Stop discrimination against children and families

### 3. Investing in families

- Spend money on family support, services and programmes
- Support young people leaving care
- Provide additional support to families of children with disabilities

### 3. Helping children with disabilities

- Stop discrimination and stigma
- Make communities inclusive and accessible
- Give support to young people after they leave care

### 4. Strengthening services

- Train and support social workers
- Collect and share clear facts and numbers about children in care, so they are counted, visible, and supported in the right way
- Share learning about how to do things well, in the best interests of the child

## How will we work?

We will work together so all children grow up in safe and loving families, and to stop the harms of institutional care. We will shape our actions according to these principles:

- Put the **child's best interests** first.
- Keep children safe in every action.
- Work together as partners, including with children, young people and families with lived experience
- Share learning and be open about results.
- Make sure every country has a plan to make this happen.

