

Together.

Creating change for children

Our strategy 2017-2020



Family
for every child



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Foreword

Family for Every Child was set up based on the shared conviction that local civil society organisations, and the families and communities that we work with, hold vital knowledge and capacity to improve the provision of children's care.

We believe that national child care and protection systems around the world can be significantly strengthened and improved through more effective engagement of national civil society.

We are an alliance of independent organisations working together to foster collaboration between civil society, governments, and other development actors, such as international agencies and the private sector.

Our aim is to bring about large-scale improvement in national children's care provision in the countries where we work and more widely.

We are excited about our Strategy 2017-20, which sets out how we will work towards this over the next three years.

Our strategy at a glance



About Family

Family for Every Child was launched in April 2014 as a unique space for national civil society to generate and be part of a global movement of change for and with children without adequate family care.

The alliance was created by like-minded local civil society organisations together with the international NGO EveryChild. At the time of writing, Family for Every Child comprises 27 member organisations working across 26 countries.

Vision and goals

Family for Every Child provides a platform for civil society organisations (CSOs) to collaborate and influence policymaking, ensuring that the views of children and communities are heard and listened to in national and international arenas.

Our knowledge is drawn from years of practitioner experience working with children and communities to develop solutions to improve children's care that are culturally appropriate and specific to their context.

We improve children's care by sharing our resources, learning and expertise and undertaking joint research, pilot projects, advocacy and technical assistance to improve care policy and practice from local to international level.

We have a common vision of a world where every child can grow up in a permanent, safe and caring family, supported by temporary, quality alternative care where needed.

We work together on 5 shared goals:

- 1 Enabling children to grow up in permanent, safe and caring families
- 2 Ensuring a range of high quality, appropriate alternative care choices for children
- 3 Taking steps to prevent children from having to live outside of any adult care, without the care of families or their carers, and in the interim protecting these boys and girls
- 4 Promoting better and more participatory decision-making about children's care
- 5 Building strong child protection systems that strengthen families and promote quality care for children



Governance

Family for Every Child is led by its members with a member-elected Board. Our operations are coordinated by a Secretariat, working across a number of locations globally, and with a small administrative office in London.

The Assembly of Members is the principal body in the governance structure. It elects the Board and provides it with strategic guidance.

The Board of Trustees is responsible for the development and oversight of the strategy, governance of the organisation, and the selection of new members.

The Secretariat is responsible for implementing the agreed strategy by facilitating and working with Family's members.

At a glance

27 member organisations

5 shared goals

1 alliance

External context

The following trends present both opportunities and challenges during the next strategic period.



Global trends affecting the role of local civil society

Since the 1980s there has been a growing emphasis on the role of civil society in development. Local organisations are now widely recognised as development actors in their own right, with a central role in project implementation and service delivery, and increasingly in informing and shaping national policymaking. The Sustainable Development Goals envisage a key role for local organisations in implementing, monitoring and reviewing progress against the goals.

However, more recently, civil society space has been shrinking in many of the countries where we work. Local organisations are having to reconsider their role and levers of influence.

Meanwhile, the digital revolution has transformed communication and has led to a significant growth of online civil society activity, enabling networks to be built across geographical, social and physical divides and opening up new opportunities for funding.

Civil society organisations increasingly deliver services contracted by government and many are highly dependent on outside sources of funding and the priorities of international donors. As international NGOs move towards decentralised structures, local organisations are experiencing greater competition for national funding.

Global trends affecting children's care

Over the last decade, there has been a noticeable rise in the level of disasters and conflict, resulting in unprecedented migration and displacement of children and families. Migration is likely to remain a key issue affecting children's care in coming years, due to geopolitical instability.

While progress has been made in addressing the reasons why children experience inadequate care, such as poverty and HIV infection, and in increasing access to schooling, progress has not been universal and these remain significant drivers of inadequate care in poorer and more vulnerable communities.

Abuse and neglect within families and domestic violence remain high, and the use of the internet for child sexual exploitation is on the rise.

Despite numerous child care reform efforts directed at de-institutionalisation, damaging large-scale institutions are still widely used in many contexts. Despite some reluctance in a few contexts, foster care is increasingly seen as a potential solution that needs to be better understood.



Internal context

During the last three years, Family for Every Child has established a vibrant alliance with effective member-led governance, operational systems and processes. These have enabled us to deliver improvements in children's care through joint research, advocacy and practice exchange.



Some examples include:

- By sharing knowledge and resources we enabled our member in India to work with the government to develop India's first guidelines on foster care
- Through joint advocacy efforts, our member in Ghana convinced the national government to increase financial support to 90,000 families at risk of separation due to child labour and target all vulnerable families nationwide resulting in support for over 200,000 families
- Through joint efforts, our member in Rwanda successfully advocated for the provision of day care services for 150 families working in national public services
- We chaired an inter-agency group to develop Guidelines on Children's Reintegration with the support of the GHR Foundation. UNICEF and other agencies are now using the Guidelines to influence national policies and practice in a number of contexts
- We collaborated with the Oak Foundation and other partners to set up RISE, a global learning network on Recovery and (Re) integration from Child Sexual Exploitation.



▲ *Guidelines on Children's Reintegration*



▲ *Two of our recent reports*

Based on an evaluation of our work and results to date, we have identified key lessons that will inform our development over the next 3 years:

- Knowledge sharing and practice exchange have yielded significant outcomes and are highly valued by members as a means to strengthen practice and their ability to influence national policy makers
- We are particularly effective in influencing policymaking at a national level, although we have also had an impact at the international level
- Our impact is amplified when we collaborate with other agencies and partners outside the alliance
- Collaboration with external funding partners has been critical to enabling us to pioneer new research and approaches to improve children's care
- National networks convened by members, with support from Family, have enabled local organisations to work together to influence national child care reform

As we move forward into a new phase of development and growth, we will apply this learning to further enhance our effectiveness in improving children's care.



Improving children's care



A family-centred approach to change

All of our work is focused on improving children's care. We put families and communities at the centre of our efforts to reform child care and protection systems and children's perspectives are integral to this.

Based on past learning, we believe we can most effectively achieve change in two main ways:



Leveraging the power of local civil society to improve children's care



Joining forces for enhanced impact



Leveraging the power of local civil society to improve children's care

By 2020, Family for Every Child will be recognised as the leading global alliance of local civil society organisations working to strengthen families and provision of children's care. We will support our members across at least 40 countries in developing civil society capacity to care for children at local and national levels.

We will achieve this by:

- Exchanging knowledge and practice around children's care and building skills in research, documentation, programme piloting, advocacy and technical assistance
- Developing new ideas for joint initiatives to improve children's care policy and practice
- Fostering civil society dialogue and engagement in national policymaking through, for example, the development of national civil society networks on children's care
- Building strategic relationships and growing our sphere of influence with partners such as government agencies, other practitioners and CSO networks, research partners and professional bodies





Joining forces for enhanced impact

By 2020, Family for Every Child will have supported substantial improvements in children's care policy and practice at local and national levels across a wide range of countries where our members work. Using this evidence base, our members will be effectively collaborating to influence wider policy change at regional and international levels.

We will achieve this by:

- Implementing 3-5 ambitious joint initiatives, at any one time, on a set of core thematic priorities

Through these initiatives we will:

- Test and roll out approaches to improving children's care
- Strengthen care practitioners working directly with the most vulnerable children and families
- Collaborate within and across regions to influence key policymakers and target specific improvements or reform at national, regional and international levels
- Develop impactful campaigns to ensure that families and the care and protection of children are put first for the wellbeing of children and wider societies

Our goals for change

We review the thematic priorities that guide our joint initiatives annually at the Assembly of Members, identifying strengths that we can build on in our existing work, as well as important emerging care issues to take forward. Our current thematic priorities are aimed at achieving the first two of our five shared goals (*see page 3*) as an alliance. The current goals for change in 2017-2020 are:

1. Enabling children to grow up in permanent, safe and caring families
2. Ensuring a range of high-quality alternative care choices

Goal 1

Enabling children to grow up in permanent, safe and caring families



Care within families

Improving the effectiveness of care within families

For example by:

- Developing mechanisms for reducing sexual violence in families
- Developing therapeutic approaches to working with families to reduce violence
- Disseminating families' and children's perspectives on effective care
- Improving care within all families, including when relatives care for children (kinship care)



Child Protection, Social Protection and Education Systems

Ensuring that child protection, social protection and education systems help prevent family separation and child abuse and neglect

For example by:

- Enabling schools to support children and families to develop skills and knowledge to prevent separation, child abuse and neglect
- Strengthening the links between families, schools and the wider community to enable better care for children in families
- Influencing governments and regional bodies to improve law and policies for a safer and more caring education system, and child protection and social protection systems that enhance family care.



Reintegration

Improving approaches to the reintegration of separated children

For example by:

- Disseminating and implementing the global inter-agency Guidelines for Children's Reintegration
- Supporting further development of RISE, a global learning network on Recovery and (Re) Integration from Child Sexual Exploitation
- Researching and developing approaches to reintegrate children on the move such as refugees, asylum seekers, trafficked and unaccompanied children





Goal 2

Ensuring a range of high-quality alternative care choices



Strengthening existing, locally developed forms of alternative care such as kinship care and *kafalah*



Ensuring that foster care is used when appropriate and is of high quality



Promoting de-institutionalisation especially for children under three, whilst recognising that high quality, small-scale residential care has a place in the continuum of care choices in certain circumstances



Working to ensure that all children have equal access to a range of quality care options, including children with disabilities and other vulnerable and discriminated against groups

Strengthening the alliance



Growing our membership

During the next strategic period, we will seek to grow the alliance from its current size to between 40-50 members. We will phase this growth across the three-year period in order to ensure that we maintain a high level of quality and engagement within the alliance.

We believe that greater scale will increase our capacity for joint action and our ability to achieve substantial policy and practice change. We will grow in a strategic way, targeting key gaps in our expertise and knowledge base. We will build our geographic footprint in areas where we can have significant impact and in a way that ensures critical mass at regional and sub-regional level.

Collaborating with others for impact

We will continue to amplify our impact by increasing our collaboration with other actors where we share common objectives. Over the next three years, we will aim to build a movement for change in children's care through collaboration with a range of partners, for example:

- Other CSOs, agencies and networks who share our overall policy and advocacy objectives
- Practitioners, research partners, and professional bodies who can work with us in developing new research and implementing new approaches to care
- Funding partners who share our priorities for children's care and our commitment to the central role of civil society in development.

Mobilising our collective expertise

We recognise that our ability to influence large-scale policy and practice change will increase as the profile of the alliance increases. We are building from a strong foundation, based on the credibility and years of practitioner experience of our members and the legacy of EveryChild's experience, expertise and relationships in advancing child care reform.

Over the next three years, we will focus on developing the profile and visibility of our work at national, regional and international level. We will establish a communications plan, prioritising audiences and themes that will enable us to most effectively advocate for and influence better policy and practice in children's care.



Remaining accountable

We are committed to regularly reviewing our results in an open and reflective way in order to learn where and how we can be more effective in achieving outcomes for children.

We will carry out and publish evaluations on each of our major joint actions. We will also carry out an annual outcome harvesting evaluation to identify and review the outcomes that we have achieved as an alliance.

We are interested in reviewing and learning from the outcomes that we plan for, but also the outcomes that we don't anticipate and that emerge through the rich interaction between our members.

We will continue to publish our financial performance through our annual accounts.

Enhancing our leadership

The vibrancy and effectiveness of the alliance is dependent upon strong and cohesive leadership between the Assembly of Members, the Board of Trustees and the Secretariat.

During the next three years, we will work to ensure that all members understand the governance structure and their accountabilities and role in decision-making. We will strengthen communications between the different leadership bodies, in particular between the President of the Assembly of Members, the Board, and the wider membership.

Succession planning will also be a key priority. In preparation for future office holders, we will work with the President to define clear processes and tools to support the role. We will implement a phased approach to appoint and induct new members onto the Board. We will carry out workforce planning with the Secretariat to ensure that we have the required skill base and succession plans for key roles.

Ensuring our sustainability

At the present time, Family is supported by around 15,000 individual donors whose financial support is crucial to the work of the alliance. During the next three years, we will work with our individual donors to maintain their engagement and to introduce new individual donors to the work of the alliance.

We will also seek institutional funding partners who can work with us to deliver a range of ambitious joint initiatives, aimed at achieving large-scale improvements in children's care policy and practice. We have set ourselves the target to more than double this income stream between year one and year three of the strategy in order to achieve greater impact for children.

We will work hand in hand with Family Alliance (USA) and Family for Every Child New Zealand, two organisations we have established to mobilise the support of donors and thought partners in those two countries for the fulfillment of our mission.

Using the one-off gift received from EveryChild in October 2016, we will invest in further development and growth of the network over the next three years,

as well as investing to ensure the long-term financial sustainability of the alliance.

We are committed to continuously reviewing the cost-effectiveness of our operations and ensuring that value for money is reflected in our decision-making.



