Better Care Network

Terms of Reference

- Uganda Country Care Profile -
Mapping family strengthening and children's alternative care systems and reform initiatives

Background

Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children
These terms of reference are framed within the context of the Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children[1] where the term 'child care' relates to a range of services to support the protection and well-being of children deprived of parental care or at risk of being so. These services include family strengthening such as parenting education and counselling, providing access to social protection [e.g. cash transfers], economic strengthening and day services including specialized services. Family reunification for separated children should be a priority when available and appropriate. Should it become necessary for a child to be placed outside the family, gatekeeping services are needed to assess the necessity of such a placement, and then find a placement that is appropriate to the needs of the individual child. This can be offered in a range of options including kinship care, foster care or other family-based care, and, in some cases, temporary placements in various forms of residential care. These different forms of child care services should be connected in a systemic way, with legislation, policies, budgets and service standards supporting a coherent child protection system.

Uganda alternative care context
In Uganda, some children are temporarily or permanently deprived of their parental family environment and therefore require alternative care. Factors such as HIV, child abuse and neglect, endemic poverty, migration and family breakdown have contributed to the increase in the number of children requiring alternative care[2]. It is estimated that in Uganda there are about 50,000 children who are living in children's care homes[3].

More recently, the Government of Uganda, along with numerous international, national and sub-national non-governmental partners and stakeholders has implemented a number of initiatives and processes to address children's alternative care in Uganda. These include the enacting of the Children (Approved Homes) Rules-2013, the establishment of the Alternative Care Task Force and the creation of an Alternative Care Implementation Unit (ACIU) to coordinate Alternative Care interventions in the country. In 2012, the National Alternative Care Framework was developed. The main objectives of this Framework are:
- To reduce the number of children in institutional care
- To provide actors at different levels with clear guidelines and placement options for children in need of alternative care based on a defined continuum of care

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[1] http://www.bettercarenetwork.org/docs/Guidelines-English.pdf

[2] Walakira, E.J., Dumba-Nyanzi I, Bukenya B. (2015). Child Care Institutions in Selected Districts in Uganda and the Situation of Children in Care: A Baseline Survey Report for the Strong Beginnings Project http://www.anppcanug.org/wp-content/uploads/research_reports/2015/Baseline_Survey_Report_Full.PDF

[3] Walakira, Ddumba-Nyanzi and Bukenya, 2014.

- To put in place mechanisms to support existing government structures to carry out their statutory responsibilities for overseeing the care of children in alternative care
- To ensure no child is placed in any form of institutional care, especially children under the age of three

A five-year National Action Plan on Alternative Care (2016/17-2020/21) has since been developed to guide government and other stakeholders implementing alternative care interventions in Uganda. The overall supervision of the National Action Plan on Alternative Care will be the responsibility of the Alternative Care Implementation Unit based in the MLGSD.

BCN's support to Uganda
In 2013 the Better Care Network (BCN)[4] - a multi-agency global network facilitating active information exchange, collaboration and advocacy on the issue of children without adequate family care - commenced a regional inter-agency initiative in east and southern Africa to build and share knowledge and to advocate for care reform and technically sound policy and practices around strengthening families and providing appropriate alternative care in the region. The BCN regional inter-agency initiative has also been working closely with Rwanda, Uganda and Zambia in order to identify opportunities for closer collaboration and support around child care reform and family strengthening in each of these countries.

As part of this process a consultative workshop was convened in Uganda on the 11th and 12th of November 2014 by BCN, the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD) and the National Child Protection Working Group (CPWG) – an interagency platform of national child protection stakeholders. The national consultative workshop sought to jointly identify knowledge, awareness and technical gaps which may be hindering children's care reform and identifying national priorities for action. The main focus areas of the consultation were: strengthening capacity, evidence building and sharing and strengthening advocacy. It was anticipated that the workshop consultation would result in a stronger understanding who is doing what in child care reform, the identification of priority actions, and the beginnings of a multiagency, multi-sectoral, coordinated action plan to support child care reform in Uganda. A report was subsequently produced which summarises the key points, themes, priorities and any actions identified around alternative care for children from the two days of presentations and discussions. The purpose is also to make some preliminary observations in relation to the discussions held at the workshop as well as identify possible entry points and recommendations for further BCN collaboration in Uganda.

Following this consultation meeting, in 2015 BCN provided some further support in the form of small funds in order to help facilitate the development of the National Action Plan on Alternative Care for Children (2016/2017-2020/2021) led by the MGLSD. The final, costed draft of the action plan is currently awaiting approval by Cabinet.

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4 The Better Care Network (BCN) is recognized as the preeminent information hub and global convener to influence action for children without adequate family care. BCN is an interagency initiative that facilitates global information exchange and collaboration among the growing number of organizations, governments, community groups, and individuals working to strengthen children's care. BCN advocates for technically sound policy and programmatic action on global, regional, and national levels. It is guided by a Steering Committee, which includes: Family For Every Child, Firelight Foundation, RELAF, Save the Children, UNICEF, the Displaced Children and Orphans Fund and the Office of HIV/AIDS of USAID. BCN is a fiscally sponsored project of Tides Center. For more information, please visit: www.bettercarenetwork.org

Purpose
To document efforts to support care reforms in Uganda through the development of a comprehensive 'Country Care Profile'. The report will provide an overview and analysis of the current care system in Uganda, including family strengthening and prevention of separation initiatives and services, as well as alternative care services provision; past and recent care reform efforts, including key lessons learned, successes and challenges, and make recommendations for areas for progress, and gaps in learning and best practice.

Scope of Work
The structure and contents of the report will be discussed and agreed with the consultant as part of the contract but it is envisaged that it will follow the 'Country Care Profile' matrix and format developed for BCN for 3 country care profiles mapping (see Matrix in Annexure 1). This includes the following:

An overview of national legal and policy frameworks, guidelines and strategies which relate to family strengthening, Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC), children's social welfare and alternative care in Uganda.
- An overview of the different governmental structures and systems (Ministries, Working Groups, Social Services etc.) which are mandated to, or relevant to, family strengthening and children's alternative care in Uganda.
- An overview of organisations and programmes (including governmental, non-governmental, multi-lateral, faith-based, international and national organisations) currently targeting family strengthening and children's alternative care in Uganda.
- A summary of the key socio-economic, cultural and other issues impacting on, or related to, the need for alternative care of children in Uganda.
- A summary of relevant available statistical information on children and alternative care in Uganda.
- An analysis of the current linkages, strengths, weaknesses, gaps and challenges in relation to family strengthening and children's alternative care in Uganda. This will include issues such as funding, human capacity, evidence-base and levels of knowledge and awareness.

Methodology
The consultant will start with a pre-literature review of relevant documentation and evidence available in Uganda in consultation with Better Care Network (BCN) and key identified partners.

The consultant will use available documents; in-person meetings during a field visit to Uganda and, where required, telephone/Skype consultations with key organizations, government offices, and individuals to prepare the mapping of care reform. With a view toward facilitating information exchange and cross-learning, the consultant will use the Matrix developed for BCN as part of its Country Care Profiles (Appendix I). Subject to further discussion with the consultant and findings of the literature review, it is expected that the mapping will seek to address such topics as:

- Country level understanding on what is considered "child care"
- Identification of factors that facilitated the start of child care reform
- Roles of key actors on child care reform including the role of faith based actors.
- Key mechanisms for collaboration on child care reform
- Existing legislation and legislative reform
- Policy and policy initiatives (including standards of care)

- Efforts to prevent unnecessary separation of children from families, such as public information and sensitization, use of social protection mechanisms, casework interventions, market-based economic strengthening of specific vulnerable households, etc.
- Mechanisms for case interventions and placement in care
- Gatekeeping mechanisms
- Development/promotion of different forms of alternative care, e.g. kinship care, family-based and small group homes
- Monitoring standards of care
- Deinstitutionalization, including family reunification, placements in family-based care and adoption, substantially reducing reliance on residential care facilities (with a detailed overview of the process and methods being used)
- Preparation of young people leaving care and after care services to support social reintegration and independent living
- Initiatives in relation to informal care and customary adoption, including the protection of children in such care and formalizing such placements as appropriate
- Reform measures in relation to domestic and inter-country adoption
- Compliance with, or plans to contract to, the Hague conventions on children (child protection, inter-country adoption, recovery of maintenance, and child abduction)
- Significant efforts to strengthen the child protection and care workforce
- Efforts to retrain and transition staff formerly working in residential care facilities
- Data management system and data available on formal care indicators
- As possible, figures on public and private allocations related to child care

In relation to each of the topics above, as appropriate, the Uganda country care profile should include:
- Identification of key documents and how they can be obtained
- Identification of tools, training material, and other resources
- Key lessons learned, including both successes and challenges
- Key gaps in learning/information and best practice
- Key actors and relevant contact information

Envisaged key activities
- Pre-Literature review. The team will also revise the research methodology in agreement with the BCN team.

- In depth literature review, including published and "grey" literature, a review of relevant documentation, data, and reports from governments, BCN, UNICEF, relevant organizations, and technical specialists in Uganda.

- Consultations with key stakeholders: This will include phone or "skype" interviews with key experts in the field of alternative care in Uganda.

- Field Visits to Uganda to meet key stakeholders, including the national and sub-national government officials, and conduct focus group discussions with key actors on the ground to augment the initial information gathered through interviews and literature review. The team's role is to develop TORs and FGD outlines, conduct the meetings and FGD, analyse findings.

- Draft of Country Care Profile on Uganda produced to be reviewed by reference group, including country focal points

- Incorporate feedback received from reference group and country focal points and finalize Country Care Profile on Uganda.

Deliverable
- One report of approximately 30-40 pages in English
- Dropbox folder of all reference material and documentation provided with reference list, including citations.

Consultant skills and experience
The successful candidate will be able to demonstrate skills in the following areas:

Required
- Master's degree in social science, social policy, social work, and child care issues or related field.
- High level of practical understanding of current issues around vulnerable children and international development and the ability to conduct in-depth analysis of emerging trends and historic evidence-based research.
- Expertise and experience around social welfare and child protection issues, specific to child rights and alternative care and social service workforce.
- Experience addressing these issues in lower and middle-income countries
- Knowledge of the international framework of children's rights
- Demonstrated excellent writing, analytical and research skills
- Fluency in English
- Demonstrated ability to work independently

Desirable
- Extensive experience in developing and middle income countries of children's care and protection issues, especially in Uganda and/or East and Southern Africa.
- Regional or global experience in advocacy, policy and research development

Timeframe The work is due to be undertaken between 20 March, 2017 and 30 June, 2017

Travel Field work in Uganda (10 days) required. Desk-based review and report writing from the consultant's own place of work.

Supervision Florence Martin, Director of Better Care Network

The consultant will also be expected to liaise closely with the Uganda reference group, which will be acting in an advisory and support role to this assignment, and which will include the Assistant Commissioner for Children and a member of the Alternative Care Unit at the Uganda Ministry of Labour, Gender and Social Development.

To apply

- Curriculum Vitae
- Cover letter highlighting expertise and experience in relation to this assignment
- Technical proposal of not more than 4 pages outlining proposed approach and methodology
- Proposed schedule
- Cost quotation which includes fees and any anticipated costs.
- Links to at least two examples of previous and relevant work

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Deadline for applications: 28 February, 2017

Annexure 1

Matrix

This questionnaire has been developed to guide the process of mapping the child care reform process. The questionnaire will help identify the available (as well as missing) information in regards to the country's legal and policy framework, child care/protection system, preventive services, formal and informal alternative care services, adoption, care during an emergency situation, and public awareness, advocacy and networking around this issue. The starred questions are core questions that we hope to answer for each country. Sources used to develop the Matrix: Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children (UN, 2010); The Assessment Tool for the Implementation of the UN Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children (Nigel Cantwell, for SOS Children's Villages International, 2012); Child Protection System Mapping and Assessment Toolkit (Maestral International, LLC for UNICEF, 2010).

Availability of reports, research and general information about alternative care			
	Question	List and Describe	Sources
1*	Are there country-level child protection systems or child care assessments; reports, studies, research, websites on alternative and childcare available for the country?		
2*	If reports are available what are the main issues, challenges and successes highlighted in the reports about child care reform in the country?		
Country Level Legal and Policy Framework			
	Question	List and Describe	Sources
3*	Has the country ratified key child protection human rights instruments (CRC, Hague Convention etc.)? Please list the instruments and dates of ratification		
4*	Are there laws, policies, guidelines and regulations and standards specific to childcare and alternative care?		
5*	In general, is the country's legal and policy framework in line with the CRC and Alternative Care Guidelines principles (i.e., best interests of the child)?		
6*	Does the legal and policy framework reflect the Hague Convention for the Protection of Children and Cooperation in Respect of Adoption especially the subsidiarity of intercountry adoption to domestic family-based care options?		
7*	Is there a government-approved strategy for bringing about deinstitutionalization of the alternative care system? In general For children under 3-5 years With a target timeframe		
8*	Are there existing efforts to reform the child care/alternative care policy and legal framework?		
9	Does legislation require the implementation of specific measures and services to prevent family separation?		

	Question		
10	Does legislation require the implementation of given processes and measures to ensure that the suitability of family-based alternative care for a child is considered before envisioning placement in a residential facility?		
11	Is the process of leaving and after care supported in the law?		
Description of Child Protection/Child Care System			
	Question	List and describe their roles and responsibilities in service delivery, advocacy and networking.	Sources
12*	Description of the population of children living outside of family care or at risk. This should conclude description of the particular threats to children and families that lead to children living outside of family care (i.e., HIV, disability, armed conflict, disaster, trafficking, labour, abuse etc.)		
13*	Description of the key social welfare workforce groups/cadres and service providers of children in alternative care, including government, NGOs, FBOs, for profit. Also mention if these service providers work together and if there are collaborative mechanisms in place for this type of coordination		
14*	Description of other actors involved in alternative care: alternative care networks; youth or care leavers network; foster parent association; etc.		
15	Are children and caregivers actively engaged in policy and programming that directly affect them and does the legal and policy framework support this?		
16	Description of key donors supporting child protection and alternative care		
17	Describe the political will and commitment of the government in relation to child care/alternative care. E.g., Executive Branch leadership; alternative care in national development plans etc.		
18	Does the national budget include line item on child protection and specifically alternative care?		
19	Is there a national information management system specific to child protection, in particular collecting data on children in alternative care?		
Preventive services			
	Question	List and Describe	Sources
20*	Describe the range of services and the quality of services that are available to prevent family breakdown and separation. E.g., cash transfers, day care, respite care, income generating activities, PSS, etc.		

	Formal alternative care services		
	Question	List and Describe	Sources
21*	Are there data or credible estimates of the number of children placed in formal alternative care? E.g., Residential care, formal foster care, small group homes, etc.		
22*	How many children are in residential care versus family-based alternative care (i.e., formal foster care, formal kinship care)?		
23*	What is the range of formal alternative care options available to children?		
24*	Are there legally recognised alternative care options specifically for: emergency care; short-term care, long-term care?		
25*	Are there national reform efforts in place to try to strengthen and expand family-based alternative care service provision?		
26	In general, what is the capacity of government and non-government actors to properly carry out various forms of alternative care service delivery?		
27	Are there trainings and capacity building initiatives to address capacity/skill gaps for the social welfare workforce and for caregivers?		
28	What are the main reasons/driving factors for placement in alternative care? How and who has documented this?		
29	Are there clear gatekeeping mechanisms and admission policies and procedures in place for residential care? Foster care? Other types of alternative care?		
30	Are children given clear care plans and monitored throughout placement? Residential care? Foster Care? Other types of alternative care?		
31	To what extent are children in alternative care being reintegrated into their families or communities of origin?		
32	To what extent those reintegrated children remain in those placements, 6 to 12 months after placement.		
33	Are children/youth provided with preparation and support upon leaving/exiting care? Please include who provides this preparation and support, if known. Proportion of children/youth provided with what type of support.		
34	Are formal alternative care facilities authorized, registered, inspected, and monitored by authorizing bodies on a regular basis?		
35	Are there standards of care developed, disseminated and utilized in the formal alternative care facilities?		
36	What type of formal alternative care services are		

	available for children with special needs?		
37	What is the quality of formal foster care in general?		
38	What is the quality of residential care in general?		
39	Are there general and widespread concerns about rights violations of children's rights in formal care settings?		

Informal alternative care services			
	Question	List and Describe	Sources
40*	Are there data or credible estimates of the number of children placed informally outside the parental home? E.g., with grandparents, with other relatives, with local community, in sibling groups (child headed households) etc.		
41*	Has the State taken any initiatives to establish or improve support or oversight of informal arrangements? E.g., Voluntary registration of informal carers Provision of financial allowances Making available/increasing access to support services Combating exploitative practices		
42	Are there general and widespread concerns about rights violations of children in informal care settings?		.

Adoption (Domestic and Intercountry)			
	Question	List and Describe	Sources
43*	Are there data or credible estimates of number of children placed in domestic adoption? Intercountry adoption?		
44*	How widely is domestic adoption practiced? If practiced widely, what are the reasons and good practices? If not practiced widely, what are the challenges?		
45*	How widely is ICA practiced? What are the main issues and concerns in terms of ICA?		
46*	If there are concerns with adoption practices, are there reform efforts to address these issues?		

Care During an Emergency			
	Question	List and Describe	Sources
47*	Has the country recently experienced an emergency? If so, how has it responded in terms of alternative care? Challenges? Successes?		
48*	Has the emergency resulted in childcare reform efforts? If so, please describe.		

Public Awareness and Advocacy			
	Question	List and Describe	Sources
49*	What are the key childcare advocacy initiatives in place?		
50*	Is there any national awareness raising campaign specific to childcare? If yes, please describe.		
51*	What is the role of media in childcare and awareness		

	raising? Role of government? Civil society?		
52	Has the government and/or civil society organized conferences or workshops on this issue for key stakeholders?		
53	What is the general public perception on childcare provision, role of residential care, availability and acceptance of other alternative care options, etc.?		
54	Have there been any documented and publicized abuse, exploitation and neglect of children in alternative care?		