

position is shared by other organisations and bodies, in particular UNICEF, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, the Committee on the Rights of the Child, the International Committee of the Red Cross and ISS⁷. Indeed, the principle of subsidiarity should be fully implemented for those children, who are truly orphans of the emergency or are at risk of family separation, i.e. as provided for in the Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children, efforts should

be drawn towards preventing the child's separation from his family, the provision of alternative care should be aimed at family reintegration, and when this has not been possible, domestic adoption should be given priority over intercountry adoption, and decided after a reasonable period of time dedicated to tracing potential family members, who could care for the child.

Thus, the Ebola outbreak in Western Africa has seen the sensible implementation of those principles and standards enshrined in the UNCRC, the Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children and other relevant child rights instruments. Indeed, UNICEF and other organisations in the region have promoted and acted in order to ensure that those children affected by Ebola, in particular those who have become orphans, benefitted from family tracing and were appropriately cared for by their families or communities.

References:

¹ UNICEF, 'More than 16,000 children lost parents or caregivers to Ebola - many are taken in by the communities: UNICEF', 6 February 2015, http://www.unicef.org/media/media_79742.html.

² WHO, Ebola Situation Report – 4 February 2015, <http://apps.who.int/ebola/en/ebola-situation-report/situation-reports/ebola-situation-report-4-february-2015>.

³ UNICEF, see fn. 1.

⁴ Save the Children, Ebola response in West Africa, http://www.savethechildren.org/site/c.8rKLIXMGIpI4E/b.9208421/k.244F/Ebola_Response_in_West_Africa.htm.

⁵ Better Care Network, Provision of Alternative Care to Children Affected and Infected with Ebola in Liberia (DRAFT), 28 September 2014, <http://bettercarenetwork.org/BCN/details.asp?id=32576&themeID=1005&topicID=1033>.

⁶ The Hague Conference on Private International Law, Information Note: Haiti earthquake and intercountry adoption of children, 2010, http://www.hcch.net/upload/haiti_infonote_e.pdf.

⁷ UNICEF, Intercountry adoption, 31 July 2014, http://www.unicef.org/media/media_41918.html.

Tracking Progress Initiative – Monitoring the Guidelines' implementation

Florence Martin, Director Better Care Network and co-lead of the Tracking Progress initiative provides this brief overview of the project and potential implications for users of the tool.

In 2013, a group of international NGOs and UN agencies discussed how to further support national actors to track how they are doing on the implementation of the Guidelines. These agencies recognised that effective monitoring of the use of the Guidelines will allow for the identification of both progress and gaps in policy and practice. This, in turn, can inform improvements in services and support evidence-based advocacy and strategic planning. Promising practices identified in monitoring can then be shared for replication and to be contextualised with others. In these

ways, systematic monitoring will help to ensure full implementation of the Guidelines, improving the quality of care for children, and above all, creating positive change for children and their families. The *Tracking Progress* initiative was born!

Development of the Monitoring Tracking Tool

This inter-agency initiative, supported by the [Oak Foundation](#), is co-facilitated by the [Better Care Network](#) and [Save the Children](#) and a Steering Group that also include [Family for Every Child](#), [Hope and Homes for Children](#), [ISS](#), [RELAF](#),



[SOS Children's Villages International](#), [UNICEF](#) and a member of the [Committee on the Rights of the Child](#). The Centre for Excellence for Looked after Children in Scotland ([CELCIS](#)) was commissioned to support the development of the tool. To ensure the tool addresses the need of a range of actors working on care reforms at national, regional and global levels, a broad e-consultation was held involving more than 160 individuals from all regions, including representatives of governments, NGOs, treaty bodies and UN agencies, among others. Using this feedback and the input from the Steering Group, a draft was developed, which has been revised and refined through field tests in three countries: Rwanda, Romania and Paraguay. The tool is currently going through a final set of revisions to ensure the feedback from the actors on the ground, who are leading and supporting the reform process shapes the final draft. The tool is expected to be finalised by June 2015.

Brief description of the Monitoring Tracking Tool

The *Tracking Progress Tool* will be an interactive, strengths-based diagnostic and learning tool to help governments and NGOs determine the

extent to which a state or region has effectively implemented the Guidelines, and the priorities for change still ahead. A web-based version of the tool will be available so that teams can work on completing it over a period of time, saving the data as they go along. Recognising that the Internet is still limited in many areas, a paper version of the tool will also be available, which can later be used to enter the data into the web-

version. It is envisaged that it will take a multi-agency team of people to identify the data and sources of evidence to answer the questions in 'Tracking Progress' in order to develop as accurate and complete a picture as possible of the alternative care system in their country. As the principal duty-bearers with regard to children's rights and the monitoring of alternative care resources, government officials should be part of any Tracking Progress team, though it is likely that a team

will draw on resources and expertise from across sectors. The report produced from this process will also assist national actors in providing comprehensive information when their country report under the treaty body mechanisms, including the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

In 2009, the UN General Assembly welcomed the Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children ([A/RES/64/142](#)) to guide the progressive implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child for children at risk of being separated from their family or without family care. The Guidelines provide guidance and policy orientations to ensure that children do not find themselves separated from their family unnecessarily and, when separated, appropriate individualised high-quality alternative care is provided. The Guidelines have been promoted through a variety of approaches including training, country assessments and the development of resources led by agencies at national and international level. Across all regions, countries have used these Guidelines to inform their care reform process.

Reference:

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INTERDISCIPLINARY RESOURCES

RELAF's new handbook on the human rights of child and adolescent migrants

In the context of a renewed focus on the situation of migrant children in the Americas, RELAF published a handbook on their human rights, aimed at training activities as well as at the reform of public policies in this respect and across the region.

In March 2014, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) released a report on the situation of unaccompanied children leaving Central America and Mexico

titled *Children on the Run*¹. More controversially, President Obama called upon Congress to approve emergency funding in order to respond to the number of unaccompanied children, who

